

## **CHINA'S RAPE OF TIBET**

### **George N Patterson**

The saga of the imminent and illegal Chinese military invasion of Tibet began with a thousand-mile ride in mid-winter from the eastern border of Tibet with China, through snow blizzards and 20,000-foot passes in unexplored and unmapped regions, across the world's worst mountainous terrain, to reach Calcutta and New Delhi in India with the news.

For three years I had been a missionary from the small village of Laurieston, near Falkirk in central Scotland, to the remote Kham tribal areas of Eastern Tibet. After a year's medical training in London I had lived among the warrior descendants of the fearsome Genghis Kham warriors, whose leaders were planning a second major revolt against the feudal government in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in central Tibet. Their first attempt to overthrow the regime ten years earlier in 1934 had failed but, with the imminent Communist overthrow of the Nationalist government in China in 1949, the Khamba tribal chieftains decided to launch a second revolution. I learned the language listening to the plans for the revolution.

However, they had not anticipated that the Chinese Communists, who were involved in the Korean War, would take action against Tibet. When they received a communication from the new Chinese Communist authorities in Beijing to cooperate or be invaded, the tribal chieftain, Topgyay Pangdatshang, asked me to travel the thousand-mile journey in a direct journey across a hitherto unknown region of the country in a race for assistance from India, Britain, the United States, or the United Nations Organisation.

I was able to make the memorable journey in just under three months of morning-to-night riding, arriving in Calcutta in India as an unknown missionary without the slightest idea of how to go about contacting government officials with my news of imminent Chinese invasion of Tibet. To complicate the situation Britain had withdrawn from governing India only five years earlier, and India was a newly independent nation.

Five years earlier, when I had left Scotland at God's command to go to Tibet I had very little knowledge about the country. I had to go to the local library to find out that very few people knew about the remote country in Central Asia, and only about a half-dozen Europeans had ever visited the capital, Lhasa. Because of its strategic geopolitical situation between India, China and Russia, its 750,000 square miles of territory, average altitude of 15,000 feet, and encircled by 25-30,000-foot mountains on all sides, it was an ideal "buffer state" for the major neighbouring powers who colluded in keeping everyone out of the country in their own interests.

So, when I arrived at the British High Commission in Calcutta to begin my attempt to find assistance for Tibet I was met by blank stares

and sniggers. It took me an hour of teeth-gritting patience to meet the First Secretary, David Anderson, but with him I struck gold. I not only had tea with him but two hours of serious conversation, with detailed questions and a wall map; also an invitation to have dinner with him and two undesignated "officials", one Indian and one American. This led to other meetings in India's capital, New Delhi with higher officials including the US Ambassador, Lou Henderson. Both British and US in official exchanges with the newly independent Indian government decided nothing could be done to assist Tibet in the circumstances of an emerging Chinese Communist government and the Korean War. With this rejection I made preparations to return to Tibet clandestinely with medical supplies to help the Khamba tribes in their resistance to the invading Chinese but, unfortunately, first an unusually savage monsoon, an unprecedented 8.3 earthquake in the south-east Tibet region, and a crippling illness delayed me further, and in the interim the Chinese Liberation Army moved to the eastern Kham border of Tibet threatening invasion.

However, the Chinese Army military command had underestimated the physical problems of the 15,000-foot altitude, vast and empty distances, road-less terrain, remote habitations, and sixty tribes of China-hating Khamba warriors. But in the Kham province they found an older brother of the Dalai Lama, Thubten Norbu, or Taktser Rimpoche as the abbot of Taktser Monastery where the Dalai Lama had been born, and they began negotiations with him.

Here I must digress for a few months to describe the unique functions of the Dalai Lama. Historically, he is described as "god-king" of Tibet, but there are actually three religious leaders of Tibet: the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and the State Oracle. In Tibet's "Lamaistic Buddhism" the Dalai Lama is really third in importance because he has forsworn absorption into the Infinite in order to participate in secular matters to help others on the upward path. The Panchen Lama, on the other hand, does not involve himself in secular affairs, and is therefore considered spiritually superior. The State Oracle supersedes both as the sole intermediary with the "gods", whose supernatural powers have to be obtained in any action being contemplated. This arcane relationship was to have profound consequences in Tibet within the next several months.

The Chinese Communist proposal to Taktser Rimpoche to take to the Dalai Lama was that it was the intention of the Chinese "to bring Tibet into the motherland of China" as well as all other "former territories such as Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal". If Taktser was successful in effecting a peaceful agreement, and was interested, he instead of the Dalai Lama would be their recognised representative. His journey from Kham to Lhasa took a few months and, when he had informed the Dalai Lama, he and the leading members of the government fled Lhasa for Yatung on the Indian border, some seventy miles from the Indian border town of Kalimpong where I was living.

The news of the Chinese Liberation Army approach to the eastern border of Tibet had brought a large number of Asian and international media journalists to Kalimpong as the nearest point of the Tibetan border. As I was the only one with knowledge of the situation inside Tibet as well as the language I was the necessary interpreters for them as well as interested government officials and intelligence agents.

Among the fleeing Tibetans seeking refuge in Kalimpong was the Dalai Lama's mother and other members of the family, and they rented a house not far from mine. Another key Tibetan official was Yangpel Pangdatshang, the Minister of Trade, also appointed *pro tem* governor of the Yatung region of Tibet during the current emergency. He was the eldest of the three Pangdatshang brothers, the other two of whom were Rappa and Topgyay, who were my close friends in Kham and who had requested me to go on their behalf to India for assistance against the invading Chinese.

Shortly after the arrival in Kalimpong of the Dalai Lama's mother and family Yangpel told me that he and I had been invited to have tea with them and, when we arrived, I found that Taktser Rimpoche was also there. As we were leaving Taktser drew me aside and asked if he could visit me, and I said "Certainly, anytime"; Tibetan custom did not require me to fix a date on the spot. However, two hours later, as it was growing dark, Taktser appeared accompanied by three or four companions, who proceeded to check the garden and close the curtains on the windows.

While I was still adjusting to such unusual actions by usually polite Tibetans Taktser explained the need for secrecy because he had a message of the highest importance for me: Would I assist him to go to the United States, to be followed by the Dalai Lama later? He was carrying two letters which he now handed to me to read, one confirming him as the Dalai Lama's official emissary, and the other a letter to the President of the United States seeking asylum.

I was speechless. Fortunately, I did not need to say anything as I was busy translating the documents. In the ensuing conversation I learned that it was Yangpel Pangdatshang who had recommended me to Taktser Rimpoche as intermediary, someone with knowledge of the Tibetan language and current circumstances, a proven willingness to help Tibet, and with recent access to high officials in Calcutta and New Delhi. I agreed to do what I could and arranged a code between myself and Yangpel in which the "goods" mentioned in telephone and cable transmissions would be used, "first sample" to be Taktser, and "second sample" the Dalai Lama. From the time of my arrival in Calcutta the telephone and cable lines between Calcutta and New Delhi, Washington and London, were buzzing with the momentous political implications.

What made the situation even more volatile than my earlier arrival in India from Tibet was that the various government principals involved now knew that a Tibetan delegation was on its way to Beijing at the request/demand of the Chinese for discussions regarding "the question of Tibet". In fact, two delegations were on their way, one led by the governor of Kham, approved by the Chinese and travelling overland, and the other appointed by the Dalai Lama, led by his brother-in-law, Yapshi Sey to travel by air to Beijing. Both delegations were informed by the Dalai Lama that they were for exploratory purposes only and were not to make official decisions.

What complicated the situation at all levels was that the Dalai Lama at the time was only sixteen years of age, had only been unusually and hurriedly confirmed before leaving for Yatung. Between the previous Dalai Lama and himself there was a period of two warring Regents ruling the country, Takta and Reting, and it was rumoured that the former had the latter murdered, and the "*Kashag*", or governing council, was in disarray.

Finally, with the Dalai Lama's family in Kalimpong and being the only individuals permitted to be alone in the Dalai Lama's presence, Yangpel Pangdatshang could not be alone to communicate with him at any time. He had to arrange with the trusted tutor of the Dalai Lama, Trichang Rimpoché, to be present for his reports.

It was in this unprecedented confusion that my communications between the principals in New Delhi, Washington and London had to be translated by me, while explaining the arcane customs of the Tibetan feudal and tribal politics and Lamaistic tantric practices. At one point there was a trans-Pacific crisis as I tried to explain the explosive difference between an agreed "autonomy" of limited freedom (no word in Tibetan) being urged by China and Washington on the Dalai Lama, and freedom in Tibetan, (*rang wang*, or "personal liberty") being demanded by the Dalai Lama, in the text to be read to the world by him when he arrived in the United States and denounced China's planned invasion.

While this crisis was still unresolved in Washington the Chinese Communist authorities in Beijing announced to the world that the Tibetan delegation had agreed and signed a "*May 17<sup>th</sup> Seventeen Point Agreement*" with Tibet accepting the status of "autonomy" defined by China. At the time of the announcement Taktser and his servant/companion had arrived secretly in Calcutta at my urging, *en route* to the USA, and were living under assumed names with me in a hotel while final travel details were being made for their departure.

At that critical point the Dalai Lama-approved delegation to Beijing arrived in Calcutta en route to Tibet, accompanied by Chinese officials who were to oversee the transition to "autonomy" of the *17<sup>th</sup> May Seventeen Point Agreement*. The Chinese ambassador to India flew from New Delhi to meet the Tibetan and Chinese delegation members. The leader of the Tibetan delegation, Yapshi Sey, the Dalai Lama's brother-in-law, by sheer coincidence visited the hotel where we were in residence and found Taktser and his companion in western clothes with suitcases packed ready for departure to the United States.

In the ensuing confrontation Yapshi Sey insisted Taktser should meet with the Chinese ambassador at the Chinese Consulate, which Taktser adamantly refused at first, but finally agreed to a thirty-minute meeting while I would stay outside the consulate, with an Indian intelligence official ready to confront the Chinese with a major diplomatic incident if they attempted to detain Taktser inside by force as he feared. When he gave to the Chinese ambassador his reason of "medical consultation" for being in Calcutta the ambassador said that he should go to China for the best treatment and Taktser said he would consider it. Taktser and his companion left for the United States secretly a day or two later.

But the crisis was not passed. Yapshi Sey had informed Taktser that the delegation had NOT signed the *17<sup>th</sup> May Agreement* as stated by the Chinese. When the Tibetan delegation refused to sign anything, saying they were not authorised, *the Chinese had produced a prepared Tibetan seal and forced them to use this on the document*. In other words, the key document permitting Chinese "autonomy" over Tibet was a fake and without legitimacy, obtained by a criminal act and intimidation.

The political drama was not finished. The Chinese delegation left Calcutta for Kalimpong en route to Tibet believing that everything was

secure, only to hear and read in the following days from the media in the USA that Taktser Rimpoche had arrived there, speculating that the Dalai Lama was about to follow.

Later the same day I arrived in Kalimpong with my plans prepared for the secret removal of the Dalai Lama from Yatung in Tibet to India and the USA. To appreciate the enormity of the operation, when the Dalai Lama was leaving Lhasa thousands of people threw themselves on the ground pleading with him not to leave the country. Even when emerging from his palace he was surrounded by an entourage of monks and officials.

I had devised a plan with Yangpel in Kalimpong that he would go to Yatung and, when Yapshi as a member of the family personally delivered the USA official approval for him to proceed to the USA, together with the outline of my plan for his journey to the USA, Yangpel would have two hundred of his Khamba warriors ready to escort him from Yatung through Bhutan, to India where a plane would take him to the USA. I had already obtained the approval to go through Bhutan from the Bhutanese prime minister. The Dalai Lama would just have to arrange the transition from palace to Yangpel's waiting escort.

In the letters being carried by Yapshi Sey to the Dalai Lama was the prepared text of an approved message from the US State Department repudiating the *17<sup>th</sup> May Seventeen Point Agreement* which the Dalai Lama would read to the world on his arrival in the United States.

As I waited tensely in Kalimpong for word from Yapshi Sey, the response when he finally arrived was stunning. According to custom the Dalai Lama had submitted his intention to the State Oracle for a "decision from the gods". This involved the State Oracle going into "trance possession" in which the selected "guardian deity" would give a positive or negative reply. The response had been negative and, when it looked as if the Dalai Lama, would proceed with my plan, the three abbots of Tibet's leading monasteries had said, "you must follow the direction of the gods". It was over. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa with his entourage, and in Kalimpong Yapshi and the family said it was his wish to destroy the letter of his rejection, and I watched it go up in flames.

It would be eight years, and a savage war of attrition by the Khamba warriors before the Dalai Lama could escape from a ravaged Tibet. A few months later, on 9th September 1951, the Chinese Liberation Army entered Lhasa. On 13<sup>th</sup> March they entered Yatung, and deployed along the Himalayan borders to Ladakh in the north and effectively, physically and politically, isolated Tibet. Inside Tibet the Liberation army in its advance from the east had left garrisons every five miles to maintain the only trans-Tibetan road, and to guard the supply lines into Tibet for its reported 200,000 occupying troops. In Kham China formed the *East Tibetan People's Government* with six vice-presidents, among them the two Pangdatshang brothers, Topgyay and Rapga.

The Chinese military occupation of Tibet was precarious, as they soon discovered. They imposed a series of taxes, ostensibly for the "Aid to Korea Fund", on crops, wool and herds of animals, until the people were paying more for the Chinese occupation than they were paying to their feudal nobles and Buddhist monasteries. The increasing intransigence of the Tibetans, especially in Kham, was such that the Chinese "advisory" representative in Lhasa, Chang Ching-wu, refused to meet with the

Tibetan cabinet ministers and demanded personal meetings with the Dalai Lama. For the first time a powerful anti-Chinese group calling itself the *Mi-mang Tsong-du* (or "People's Party") began operating in Lhasa, denouncing the *17 Point Agreement*, holding demonstrations, and placarding the walls with anti-Chinese posters. In Kham there were sporadic incidents of local rebellion as infuriated groups from within the many tribes attacked the isolated Chinese garrisons.

Meanwhile, in the United Nations Organisation a major realignment was taking place with the emergence of India as an Asian power-broker, and Tibet became a threat to Indian and Chinese ambitions in their ambitions to be the third of the geopolitical concentric power circles, with the West and the Soviet Union.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1952, a Resolution ending the Korean war drafted by India and the various Arab-Asian delegations. It was approved by China, and India's ambassador Pannikar became the leading diplomatic figure in Peking as a channel of communication for Britain and America as well as the Arab-Asia bloc of representatives. This rise to international prominence for India was further increased when the twelve nations of the "*Arab-Asia*" bloc were increased with the addition of African nations and became the "*Afro-Asia*" bloc.

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 1953 in New Delhi Prime Minister Nehru outlined India's new pro-China Asian "third force" policy in international affairs:

*"It would be absurd for a number of countries in Asia to come together and call themselves a third force or a third power in a military sense. It may, however, have a meaning in another sense. Instead of calling it a third force or a third bloc, it can be called a third area, an area which – let us put it negatively first – does not want war, works for peace in a positive way and believes in cooperation...Those countries who do not want to align themselves with either of the two powerful blocs (namely the West and the Soviet Union) and who are willing to work for the cause of peace, should by all means come together; and we, on our part, should do all we can to make this possible..."*

Unfortunately, for both Tibet and the right wing of India's ruling Congress Party the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, who bitterly opposed the pro-China policy, died at this critical juncture and Nehru's "*third bloc*" policy was confirmed. The first and immediate consequence was India's silence over the invasion of Tibet by China, a policy approved by the two world super-powers of the West and Soviet Union and described as a "*third-leg stool*" international policy in association with India/China as the Asian third leg.

With its foothold in international affairs ensured, and its position in Korea and Tibet assured, the Chinese Communist government were now confident enough to intervene in Viet Nam with recognition of the Ho Chi Minh government in Viet Nam, plus military assistance, to extend its influence in Asia. America and other Western nations recognised the alternative Viet Nam government to the south, and the battle for Asian dominance was centred in the Viet Nam conflict over the following twenty years.

On 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1954, India and China signed an agreement in Bandung, Indonesia, entitled "*Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*" which were: (i) *mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and*

sovereignty; (ii) mutual non-aggression; (iii) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (iv) equality and mutual benefit; and (v) peaceful coexistence." In the text of the communiqué which was issued on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1954 it stated that the question of China's occupation of Tibet was settled between them in the phrase "*the Tibet region of China*".

Acharya Kripalani, the Leader of the Opposition Party, declared his disagreement:

*"Recently we have entered into a treaty with China. This treaty concerns the whole of India. It does not concern a party or a person, it affects us all. We feel that China, after it had gone Communist, committed an act of aggression in Tibet. The plea is that China had the ancient right of suzerainty. That right was out of date, old and antiquated. It was theoretical; it had lapsed by the flux of time...I consider this as much colonial aggression indulged in by Western nations..."*

Meanwhile, on the Indian border, the Chinese military build-up inside Tibet began to look ominous to the Indians. Military drill and army exercises were reported to be taking place from dawn to dusk along the Himalayan borders, airfields were being constructed, and there was a constant stream of propaganda to the Chinese troops regarding imminent invasion of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan leaked to the media in India. It eventually provoked a visit to the areas by Prime Minister Nehru and his military advisers as a silent warning to the Chinese that it had been noted. When he did raise the matter with the Chinese under pressure from his political opponents he was bluntly informed that China's claims to these border territories were based on the same claim as for their invasion of Tibet.

Nehru visited Viet Nam on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1954, and both agreed on the implementation of the Geneva Agreements relating to Indo-China. After the success of India's "*friendship for China*" policy – in Korea, Tibet, and Indo-China particularly – Nehru was invited to Peking and given a mammoth reception. China had also pressured Tibet's two religious leaders, the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, to attend. The *pièce de résistance* of the meeting was an arranged meeting between the two Lamas and Prime Minister Nehru, calculated to visually demonstrate that China's annexation of Tibet was officially approved.

The Canadian correspondent of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, William Stevenson, was present, and in his later book, *The Yellow Wind*, he described how the meeting between these principals was carefully stage-managed to bring Nehru and the two Lamas suddenly together in a dramatic *coup de théâtre*, with a phalanx of permitted media writers and photographers to record the occasion. Both Lamas later expressed their anger at this blatant manipulation to the Chinese authorities and Prime Minister Nehru.

During their visit to Peking the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama were forced to submit to the Chinese proposal for a "*Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet*" consisting of fifty-one members: fifteen from the Lhasa administration, ten from the '*Panchen Lama's Bureau*', ten from the Chamdo '*People's Liberation Committee*', eleven from monasteries and '*People's Organisations*', and five representing the Chinese Government, with the Dalai Lama as chairman. The members of

the Committee were appointed *"with the approval of the Chinese State Council"*, and the three provinces of Tibet were subordinate to it.

Later, the Dalai Lama in exile declared:

*"In practice, even this body had little power and decisions in all important matters were taken by the Chinese authorities."*

What the Chinese authorities did not know at the time was that the Dalai Lama, on his journey to Peking accompanied by two senior government ministers, had held secret meetings with the Pangdatshang brothers in Kham. After their humiliating treatment in Peking, which also included an insulting scolding of Tibet's Chief Minister Surkhang by Chairman Mao, the Tibetan delegation were convinced that China was committed to total subservience of Tibet to China.

On his return to Tibet the Dalai Lama passed through Chengdu in West China at the same time as China's Prime Minister Chou En-lai was returning from the Bandung Treaty Conference. At a pre-planned meeting the Dalai Lama was publicly insulted by the Sichuan Communist First Secretary by being excluded from the platform, and then publicly humiliated by Prime Minister Chou addressing him as "Vice-Chairman Dalai Lama". It was after leaving Chengdu that the Dalai Lama and his ministers met again with the Pangdatshang brothers and the Amdo leaders, Geshi Sherab Gyaltso and Lobsang Sherab, on their return journey through Kham and Amdo to give the Lhasa government's official approval to them to launch their prepared revolt against the Chinese with promised assistance at an appropriate time.

Shortly after Nehru returned in triumph to India following the critical meeting in Peking I was approached by a high-ranking Indian intelligence official to discuss with me the possibility of arranging a meeting with influential Tibetan leaders to mitigate the damage done to the already sensitive Indian relations with Tibet after the Chinese pre-arranged tableaux in Peking. I informed the agent that there was no such influential Tibetan among the exiled Tibetans in India, or even in Lhasa. The Khamba leaders were bitterly opposed to any official of the Lhasa regime – except for the senior ministers, Surkhang and Yuthok, recently accompanying the Dalai Lama to Peking, who were now isolated in Lhasa. However, if the Indian government was prepared to cancel Rapga's order of expulsion and permit him to enter India he was equipped politically to speak for Tibet. I did not mention to him the secret meeting of the Lhasa officials and Pangdatshangs in Kham. I was surprised when the Indian government agreed to my proposal. I sent word to Rapga and he arrived in Kalimpong, on the Indian border, in March, 1955.

His arrival created consternation among the exiled feuding Tibetan officials in India representing various aristocratic and religious interests because of his known radical theories. He created even greater consternation to the Indian officials as he adamantly refused to participate in their proposed long-term subversive propaganda campaign, and insisted that his only interest was in revolt against Chinese military occupation and a subsequent independent and democratic government for Tibet.

Although this alarmed the Indian authorities it was of great interest to the Americans. Rapga wanted supplies of modern weapons for the warring Khambas and he asked me to introduce him to American diplomatic and

intelligence people. A CIA official, John Turner, was appointed to meet with Rapga, with me as interpreter (Rapga was fluent in English but wanted me there with him), in typical spy-cover arrangements on a certain seat in the open Mall promenade of Darjeeling's shopping area, over a period of four days.

When Rapga outlined the situation as he had done with the Indian officials the CIA agent stressed that military help from the USA through India was unlikely because of India's pro-China policies, and it was unrealistic to attempt it from any other possible place because of Tibet's mountainous terrain. Rapga then laid out his plan of a Kham bridgehead in south-east Tibet encompassing the Markham region which they controlled. A weapons supply line from Assam to this area (the route down which I had travelled to India seeking help!) would provide a base for the Khambas to attack the Chinese and make it impossible for them to occupy Tibet for any length of time.

It was sufficient for the CIA agent to seek further discussions and, in his reply to the agent's subsequent questions regarding his personal vision for Tibet, Rapga replied that he envisaged making the Kham region the political and commercial centre for Tibet, with Chamdo as the capital, and making Lhasa a religious centre only. He envisaged a short period of rule to educate former feudal officials and the public in democratic principles, the monasteries would become temporary education centres until a secular administration was formed, hopefully followed by a popularly elected democratic government for Tibet in the future, with the Dalai Lama as religious leader only. The programme would require ten years to implement, five years for the preliminary stages of a revolt, and five years for education and elections. Rapga described Tibet's natural economic resources in return for aid. In addition to its strategic geopolitical advantages there were untapped supplies of known sources of oil, gold and possibly uranium which would adequately pay for any internal development and external trade.

This was not just breath-taking for the CIA official, it was probably too much for the US leaders in Washington because there was no further response. Rapga concluded from the discussions with the CIA and, later, other officials in Calcutta and New Delhi that both America and India were playing a double political game: on the one hand placating China in agreement with India's "*third bloc*" policy on the Bandung Treaty's so-called "*Peaceful Coexistence*", while at the same time exploring what might be done realistically to aid Tibet to counter Sino-Indian domination in Asia. Whether this might have developed into something positive for Tibet was quickly wiped out.

In March 1955 China had announced the nomination of a committee to prepare for autonomy for Tibet to bring the country under stricter control like other national minorities under their jurisdiction. In Lhasa, the Dalai Lama made a public speech condemning China's ruthless manipulation of the newly introduced "*Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet*", of which he was the titular chairman. At the annual, hugely attended public Monlam Festival in Lhasa, the leaders of the "underground" *Mi-man Tsong-du* with other popular Tibetan officials, also denounced the increasing Chinese political and military actions.

When three of the leaders were arrested and condemned to death they were visited in prison by a Khamba minor tribal chieftain called

Andrutshang Gompo Tashi. He was so angered by the decision he returned to Kham, organised a group of rebels in the region of Litang under the banner of *Chu-zhi Kang tru* (a popular local name for Kham meaning "Four rivers, Six mountains"), and launched armed insurrection. He was only one of some sixteen major tribes combining from Batang in Kham to the Amdo northern border with Sinkiang to drive the Chinese out of Tibet. Little of this unrest filtered out to the outside world, except from my reports.

There was a lull in the fighting when the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, visited India during which he agreed with Prime Minister Nehru to send a "Peace Mission" to Tibet under the leadership of China's Deputy-Prime Minister Chen Yi, to negotiate with the Tibetans. They persuaded the Dalai Lama to send a delegation to the Khamba leaders to call off the revolt but, instead, they defected to the Khambas and the fighting escalated, to the fury of the Chinese authorities in both Lhasa and Peking.

In August 1956 the Chinese official *New China News Agency* finally admitted that a rebellion had taken place "*in some areas in Western Szechuan*", but that reports in Western media were based on "*distorted and grossly delayed information*". After denying any widespread unrest in Tibet their propaganda declared "*Indian expansionists and British imperialists have not given up their ambition to invade Tibet and enslave its people*". The centre of this subversion was said to be "*Kalimpong, the commanding centre of the revolt*", and went on to describe how I had laid the groundwork of the revolt with my contacts with the Pangdatshangs and concluded:

*"In the summer of 1955 Surkhang Wangcheng Galei and Tserijong Lozong-Yeihsi and other rebel elements in Tibet, after following the Dalai Lama to Peking passed through the Szechuan Province on their way back to Tibet. Surkhang and Tserijong went by separate routes to the Northern and Southern parts of the Kansu Autonomous Chou to instigate and direct rebellion along the way. Data now at hand proves that Surkhang directed the reactionaries in the area..."*

In late 1956 the Chinese authorities in Tibet arrested the two top Amdo leader-colleagues of the Pangdatshangs, Geshi Sherab Gyaltso and Lobsang Sherab, and this precipitated a wide uprising against the Chinese in Amdo, led by the Golok tribe. The Goloks captured several hundred Chinese, cut off their noses, and sent them back mutilated. The Chinese replied by sending several thousand troops into the area, but the Goloks were helped by a neighbouring tribe of some 100,000 families in the Dzachuka area, and they slaughtered between 7-8000 Chinese and forced their retreat. This led to spontaneous outbreaks in a spreading revolt throughout Kham and Amdo.

The *Mi-mang Tsong-du* leader in Lhasa, Alo Chondze, escaped to Kalimpong and reported that the fighting had spread from Golok, Batang and Litang areas to Nyarong, Taofu, Chatreng and Mili, an area of about 10,000 square miles involving more than a million people. Bridges had been destroyed and roads made impassable, isolating the Chinese soldiers in their garrisons and make them easier to attack.

In September, China's Prime Minister Chou En-lai paid a visit to India on a "Peace Mission" to resolve the Tibet crisis, and Deputy Prime Minister

Chen Yi went to Lhasa. In Chen Yi's report he said that "*Tibet's roads to socialism would be long, and would have to be travelled slowly*", but that there should be "*guarantees about the political position and living standards of Tibetan nobility and lamas*", and saying nothing about the Khambas or the causes of their revolt. One month later, on November 8<sup>th</sup> they set up another committee – "*The Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee*" – in Lhasa in an attempt to control the ravaged country. It consisted of fifteen members and included the tutor of the Dalai Lama, Trichang Rimpoche, Surkhang as Director of the Office, and Puntshok Wangyel, the former Khamba quisling Communist as Vice-Director, but this was ineffective to quell the revolt.

In India, Gyalu Thondup was working in close collaboration with the CIA's Kenneth Khaus, and it was agreed to take six members of Andrutshang's *Chu-zhi-Kang-tru* to Taiwan and the USA to receive training in the use of radio transmitters, parachute-jumping and modern weapons, to fly back into Tibet secretly to aid the Khamba revolt. It was a ridiculous gesture, owing more to Washington's political guilt over its inability to provide realistic aid to Tibet through Rapga and the Khambas, because of bondage to the Indian and Chinese "*third bloc*" Bandung Agreement of "*Peaceful Coexistence*".

Meanwhile, the Khamba revolt was sweeping westwards and creating panic among the Chinese military and officials, who were now starving as the single supply road from China was rendered inoperable in the Khamba advance. The Khambas, in turn, were finding extra supplies of weapons from the Lhasa officials who had made the agreement with them during the earlier visit to Peking. By mid-1958 it was estimated by the Tibetans that 20,000 Khambas were approaching Lhasa.

Tibet's geographical and political isolation was further compounded by Prime Minister Nehru's strenuous attempts to suppress all news of the revolt, strongly condemning all media reports – mostly sent by me. On February 28<sup>th</sup> 1958 I was ordered to attend the office of the local Deputy Commissioner and told that unless I "*discontinued sending misleading and exaggerated reports messages about Tibet to the Daily Telegraph or other foreign papers, the Indian Government would be constrained to interdict his residence*".

On March 10<sup>th</sup> the Khamba revolt reached Lhasa. On that day the Dalai Lama had received a curt message from the Chinese authorities to attend a meeting with the Chinese officials in Lhasa, without his customary escort. It looked ominous to his advisers and they persuaded him to refuse and to consider preparations to leave Lhasa. At the same time the city demonstrations had escalated rapidly with the rumoured arrival of the rampaging Khambas, many already inside Lhasa while the majority were surrounding the city, and thousands of demonstrators remained around the Norbulinka Palace where the Dalai Lama was in residence to prevent the Chinese from forcing an entry.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> the Dalai Lama secretly left the city disguised as an ordinary armed soldier, with his senior ministers, and escorted by some two hundred armed Khambas. On March 17<sup>th</sup> the Chinese shelled the Norbulinka Palace assuming that the Dalai Lama was still there. On the same day in the Indian *Lok Sabha*, or Parliament, Prime Minister Nehru was addressing the question of my expulsion, declaring "*Mr Patterson accepted every bazaar rumour as fact*", that what was happening in *Tibet*

*"was a clash of minds rather a clash of arms. There is no violence in Tibet"*. There was pandemonium in Parliament when he was forced to announce later that day that *"fighting had broken out in Lhasa and the Indian consulate was damaged in the shelling"*.

Even the arrival of the Dalai Lama on the border of India was announced by the Chinese before the Indians, to Nehru's further embarrassment in India's Parliament. The Indian Prime Minister reluctantly agreed to asylum for him and his government ministers, but he was forbidden to set up a government-in-exile, and Nehru imposed strict conditions of no political activities or recognition other than as religious leader of Tibet. However, the Dalai Lama in his first public address did repudiate the 1951 *May 17<sup>th</sup> 17-Point Agreement* imposed by the Chinese authorities without his permission.

In November 1959 a three-member delegation went to the UN to request that the question of Tibet be put on the agenda. This was sponsored by Ireland and Malaya, and a mildly worded resolution was passed – but rejected by both India and Britain and the USA abstained. The issue was raised again in 1961 and 1965, but no effective action was taken. There was not even a comment from the so-called *"Afro-Asian bloc"*, even when the *International Commission of Jurists* found that the crime of genocide was sufficiently established.

The *International Commission of Jurists* agreed to establish a *Legal Enquiry Committee* and concluded that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate genocide against China, but there was sufficient proof to show that the Chinese *"had violated the Tibetan right to exist as a religious group...but not the right to exist as a national, ethnical (sic) or racial group"*. They classified this as *"cultural genocide"*.

It was the end of any realistic expectation that the question of China's illegal occupation might be settled in Tibet's favour. With the Dalai Lama silenced except for religious addresses by the Sino-Indian *"third bloc"* Bandung Agreement stranglehold, there was no effective international spokesman or sponsor for Tibet. The Dalai Lama's brother, Gyalu Thondup, was the favoured intermediary, but he was found to be a broken reed, because he was felt to have betrayed the Khamba cause over the mishandling of the Dalai Lama's treasure, and his overt association with the feeble CIA response.

I returned to Tibet twice, in 1964 to secretly film Khamba guerrillas destroying military convoys inside Tibet, and again in 1987 as adviser to a Hollywood film project. I was appalled at the Chinese cultural destruction of Tibet. Monasteries were devastated ruins. The trans-Tibet road was crowded with Chinese military vehicles. The vibrant Tibetans I had known were sullen and without hope. Everywhere there were featureless Chinese buildings, troops, merchants, officials and dress. For the tourists there were Chinese hotels, restaurants, singers, dances, and operas. I found only one small restaurant in Lhasa serving Tibetan food.

I learned that the Pangdatshang brothers had all been executed. Yangpel was abducted from Hong Kong, taken to Peking and, later, to Lhasa where he was paraded through the streets and killed. Topgyay was taken to Peking for "medical treatment" and pronounced dead from some unstated illness. Rapga was shot on the main street of Kalimpong in India and died soon afterwards, and no assailant found.

The Dalai Lama is in an impossible situation, even with a Nobel Peace prize and a declared willingness to remove himself from political leadership in Tibet. Deeply committed to a non-violent solution, yet he knows that any possible solution must include Kham and Amdo, and the warrior Khambas will never agree to Chinese domination. On the other hand, the Chinese, having arbitrarily annexed Kham and Amdo, and only recognising the single central province of U-Tsang as "*the Tibetan autonomous region*", will never agree to their return to Tibet. Time, millions of Chinese colonisers and international unconcern will confirm their rape of Tibet.

In conclusion, an interesting speculation by hindsight is: if the United States had agreed with Rapga's proposals and supplied Tibet with sufficient weapons instead of radios, they might not have been defeated in Vietnam; and instead might have modified China's current arrogance and threatening expansion in Asia.

George Patterson lived in Asia for thirty years as a missionary, journalist, radio and television broadcaster on "Asian affairs". He has published several books, including *God's Fool*, *Tibet in Revolt*, *Peking versus Delhi*, *Requiem for Tibet*, and autobiography *Patterson of Tibet*.