

# Russian Sources on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's Secret Buryat Escort in Khalkha Mongolia (1905–1906)

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## Introduction

**R**ussia and Tibet were connected to each other through Russian subjects, the Buryats and the Kalmyks, who were converted to Tibetan Buddhism about 250 years before the events discussed in this study. Eventually, a pro-Tibetan “lobby” emerged in Russia which consisted not only of representatives of these two peoples, but also of Russian Orientalists and some governmental and military officials. Consequently, various expansionist projects concerning Tibet also arose, and the Tsarist government generally treated them with consideration.<sup>1</sup> In the early 20th century, the so-called Russo-Tibetan rapprochement was initiated by the Buryat lama Agvan Dorzhiev (1853–1938),<sup>2</sup> which served as a pretext for the British military expedition to Lhasa led by Colonel Francis Younghusband (1863–1942) in 1904.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Tubten

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a well-known project on the “peaceful annexation” of Mongolia, Tibet and China was authored by Petr Badmaev (1851–1920), a Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, see Andreev 2006: 70–71.

<sup>2</sup> Agvan Dorzhiev had gone to Lhasa in the 1880s to continue his Buddhist studies and eventually became one of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's confidants and his main representative in Russia.

<sup>3</sup> The British expedition to Tibet (1903–1904) was the temporary invasion by British Indian Armed Forces led by Col. Francis Younghusband, with a view to

Gyatso (Thub bstan rgya mtsho, 1876–1933)—who did not trust that Qing China would help—fled to Mongolia hoping to receive Russian assistance to resist the British military invasion.

When, in November 1904, news that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was approaching the Mongolian border reached the Russian imperial court in St. Petersburg, the bureaucratic machine began to work with its usual diligence despite the military difficulties of the ongoing Russo-Japanese war.<sup>4</sup> In addition to various levels of Russian officialdom, the Dalai Lama's arrival in Mongolia aroused great interest among Russian Orientalists, as well as great excitement among Russian Buddhists, namely the Buryats and the Kalmyks. One of these enthusiasts was the well-known explorer of Inner Asia, Captain Petr Kuz'mich Kozlov (1863–1935), who travelled from St. Petersburg to Urga (modern Ulaanbaatar) in early spring 1905 to greet the Tibetan hierarch on behalf of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGS).<sup>5</sup> Another one was the Russian Sanskritist Fedor Ippolitovich Shcherbatskoi (1866–1942), who went to Mongolia as a representative of the Russian Committee for the Study of Inner and East Asia,<sup>6</sup> a unit under the auspices of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RMFA).<sup>7</sup> Surely, both wanted to take advantage of the Dalai Lama's stay in Mongolia, and also for personal reasons: Shcherbatskoi wanted to learn more about Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts in Tibet, while Kozlov endeavored to accompany the Dalai Lama back to Lhasa by providing a Russian military convoy under his command. Kozlov's ambitious plan, however, could not be fulfilled. Instead, a secret escort consisting of Russian Buryat Cossacks, disguised as Buddhist pilgrims, was organized to accompany the Dalai Lama at least until late 1906 and probably beyond. To this day, we know surprisingly little about how and when this obscure escort was formed. In this study, I demonstrate that the Buryat escort did, indeed, exist and even with—although unofficial—support from the Russian authorities and personal knowledge of the tsar. Furthermore, I argue that the secret escort was of great significance for the Dalai Lama for two reasons: first, to successfully resist persistent attempts by the Qing Court (1644–1912) to remove him from Mongolia

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establishing diplomatic relations with the Dalai Lama and counter the Russian Empire's perceived ambitions in Tibet.

<sup>4</sup> The Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905) was due to rival imperial ambitions in Manchuria and the Korean Empire. It resulted in the crushing defeat of the Russian navy.

<sup>5</sup> Rus. Imperatorskoe Russkoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo Императорское Русское Географическое Общество (ИРГО).

<sup>6</sup> Rus. Russkii komitet dlia izucheniiia Srednei i Vostochnoi Azii Русский комитет для изучения Средней и Восточной Азии (РКИСВА).

<sup>7</sup> Rus. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Министерство иностранных дел (МИД).

and away from Russian influence, and second, to protect the Tibetan Pontiff from perceived Qing Chinese and British threats to his life.

By using rare Russian archival documents—such as those from the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire in Moscow (AFPRE)<sup>8</sup>—and the understudied travel diaries of the explorers Kozlov and Shcherbatskoi, I shed new light on these issues. The AFPRE holds a number of unique documents on the history of the Russo-Tibetan rapprochement and the Anglo-Russian Great Game from the late 19th to the early 20th century. A special collection (Rus. *opis' onuch*) titled “The Dalai Lama and Tibet” contains thirty-four files (Rus. *dela dela*) of various documents, eleven of which are related to the Dalai Lama's sojourn in Mongolia, including correspondence between the Dalai Lama and Russian Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918), memorials of Vladimir Lamsdorf (1845–1907), the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, correspondence between Agvan Dorzhiev and the ministerial officials, and diplomatic reports from Urga, Beijing 北京, Calcutta, and London. In 2005, Russian scholar Evgenii Belov published 122 documents from the AFPRE in *Rossia i Tibet: sbornik russkikh arkhivnykh dokumentov, 1900–1914* (Russia and Tibet: A Collection of Russian Archival documents, 1900–1914).<sup>9</sup> Among them, documents nos. 23–70 are related to the Dalai Lama's stay in Mongolia.<sup>9</sup>

These AFPRE materials have already attracted the attention of several Russian scholars, but under different research foci, such as Tatiana Shaumian's chapter “The Dalai Lama's Sojourn in Mongolia Gauged through Russian Diplomatic Activity,” and Aleksandr Andreev's chapter “Prebyvanie Dalai Lamy v Mongolii” (The Dalai Lama's Sojourn in Mongolia), which describe in detail the Tibeto-Russian relations during the Dalai Lama's sojourn in Mongolia according to Russian official diplomatic sources. A thorough and critical study of the Russian policy towards the Thirteenth Dalai Lama during his flight to Mongolia is provided by Inessa Lomakina in her *Velikii Beglets* (The Great Fugitive), while the most recent studies by Sergei Kuz'min, namely “Prebyvanie Dalai-lamy XIII v Mongolii i plani provozglasheniia nezavisimosti” (Sojourn of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in Mongolia and plans for the proclamation of independence) and “The Tibet-Mongolia Interface in the First Half of the Twentieth Century. Data from Russian Archives,” mainly focus on Russian sources in the context of the Tibetan and Mongolian independence movements.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Rus. Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi imperii Архив внешней политики Российской империи (АВПРИ).

<sup>9</sup> Belov 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Shaumian 2000; Andreev 2006; Lomakina 2001; Kuz'min 2014; Kuz'min 2022.

I, for my part, found additional and previously unresearched and unpublished documents in the AFPRE that reflect the dynamics of the often contradictory and changing Russian policies towards the Dalai Lama in Mongolia and on the escort matter. The most important among these documents are reports written by Vladimir Lamsdorf and Alexandr Izvolskii (1856–1919), Ministers of Foreign Affairs; Pavel Lessar (1851–1905) and Dmitrii Pokotilov (1865–1908), the Russian envoy plenipotentiaries in Beijing; Vladimir Liuba (1861–1928), the Russian Consul in Urga (1904–1906), and Mikhail Kuzminskii (1875–1938), a Secretary of the Russian Consulate. Furthermore, these AFPRE documents help understand how Tibet and the Dalai Lama became a new focus for Inner Asian politics for Qing China, Great Britain, and Russia, and also shed light on the political atmosphere in Urga at that time, marked by controversy and intrigues. They also reveal that, besides the above-mentioned parties, another party, namely the Buryats, had its own interests and played an important role in the course of events.

*Kozlov's plans as expressed in his diary*

Captain Kozlov, author of the *Travel Diary to Mongolia, April 1905*, was a well-known explorer of Inner Asia.<sup>11</sup> During his lifetime, Kozlov led six long expeditions to the mountain range Nanshan 南山 on the border to the modern Provinces of Gansu 甘肅 and Qinghai 青海, to Sichuan 四川 and eastern Tibet, namely Amdo (A mdo) and Kham (Khams), to Eastern Turkestan/modern Xinjiang 新疆 and Mongolia, and published about seventy articles and books. Following the example of his teacher, the famous Russian explorer Nikolai Przhevalskii (1839–1888), Kozlov was a staunch supporter of Russia's Forward Policy in Asia and, like his teacher, cherished a passionate dream of reaching Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. For him, the Dalai Lama's arrival in Urga was the "historical moment" (Rus. *istoricheskii moment* исторический момент) that might help him fulfil this lifelong desire. Kozlov spent two months, from June 6 (May 24) to August 31 (August 18), 1905, in Urga.<sup>12</sup> He kept a detailed diary of it, which is preserved at the Archive of the Russian Geographical Society in St. Petersburg. For political reasons, he did not use these diary notes in the book he published in 1920, entitled *Tibet i Dalai-lama* (Tibet and the Dalai Lama), after having been stripped of all his former tsarist titles in

<sup>11</sup> For Kozlov's biography, see, e.g., Andreev and Yusupova 2015.

<sup>12</sup> The dates in the Russian sources are according to the Julian calendar, used in Russia until 1918. I converted the dates used in the sources into the modern Gregorian calendar and left the old-style dates in brackets for convenience.

Soviet Russia. However, this important diary was more recently re-edited by Sergei Kuz'min under the title *Dnevnik po poezdke v Mongoliu, aprel' 1905 goda* (Travel Diary to Mongolia, April 1905).<sup>13</sup>

The published diary is 31 pages long. At the beginning, Kozlov relates how those interested in Tibet, i.e., mainly Orientalists and Yakov Shishmarev (1833–1915), the former Consul General in Urga (from 1882 to 1904), met privately in St. Petersburg and all agreed that the Dalai Lama's arrival in Urga was the "historical moment" they could not miss. Therefore, they began to discuss the issue with some leading officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Headquarters, the Russian Empire's highest body of the Armed Forces' military-strategic administration.<sup>14</sup> Eventually, these entities decided to send Kozlov to Urga as a representative of the IRGS, with the following mission: a) to greet the Dalai Lama and offer him some gifts, in recognition of his hospitality during the IRGS's 1899–1901 expedition;<sup>15</sup> b) to find ways to assist Tibet; and finally, c) to conduct some covert intelligence in eastern Mongolia.<sup>16</sup>

The main personal reason for Kozlov's travel to Urga was, however, to furnish a Russian escort for the Dalai Lama under his own command—an idea that Kozlov came up with in St. Petersburg, before his departure to Mongolia, and one that very much pleased the Dalai Lama when it was introduced to him, as the explorer noted.<sup>17</sup> This will be discussed in more detail further below. Kozlov's diary covers a wide range of topics such as his several meetings with the Dalai Lama, Dmitrii Pokotilov's arrival (1865–1908), the new Russian Ambassador in Peking (from 1905 to 1908), and the latter's meeting with the Tibetan Pontiff, various gossip about the "drunkenness and debauchery" of the Eighth Jebtsundamba Khutagt, Agwaan luwsan choiji Nyima danzan wangchug (Tib. Ngag dbang blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma bstan 'dzin dbang phyug, 1870–1924), the Dalai Lama's complaints regarding the Russian Consulate and the Khutughtu, the drawing of portraits of the Dalai Lama by painter Nikolai Kozhevnikov (n.d.), and, last not least, the Dalai Lama's and his own disappointment caused by the Russian authorities' refusal to provide the planned convoy for the Tibetan Pontiff.

<sup>13</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Rus. *Glavnyi stab* Главный штаб.

<sup>15</sup> See Kozlov 1906. Towards the end of the expedition, in April 1900, Lhasa sent two envoys with a large retinue who apologized to Kozlov on the Dalai Lama's behalf for not allowing the expedition to enter Tibet, and who then provided assistance to the expedition. For more details, see Garri 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 101.

<sup>17</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 105.

*Shcherbatskoi's observations*

Fedor Shcherbatskoi, who also kept a diary during his stay in Urga, had other reasons for his journey.<sup>18</sup> He was a well-known Sanskritist and the first to study the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophy in Russia. In 1903, he published his first major work *Teoriya poznaniya i logiki po ucheniyu pozdneishih buddistov* (A Theory of Knowledge and Logic According to the Teachings of Later Buddhists),<sup>19</sup> then a Tibetan translation and a Sanskrit text of Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*,<sup>20</sup> the only published treatise on Buddhist logic in the West at that time. A full-fledged study of Buddhist philosophy required, however, an extension of the source base. His hopes therefore turned to Tibet, where ancient Sanskrit manuscripts were allegedly preserved. To investigate this issue, Shcherbatskoi—together with Sergei Oldenburg (1888–1940), Secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences and initiator of the Russian expeditions to Inner Asia<sup>21</sup>—trained a young Buryat student named Bazar Baradin (1878–1937) for three years.<sup>22</sup> The latter was supposed to make a trip to Tibet disguised as a Buddhist pilgrim, just as his fellow countryman Gombozhab Tsybikov (1873–1930)<sup>23</sup> had done in 1900. Incidentally, the Dalai Lama's arrival in Urga provided a very fortunate opportunity to both teacher and disciple to directly encounter the Tibetan Buddhist world for the first time already in Mongolia and through its most famous master.

After returning to St. Petersburg, Shcherbatskoi published a three-page long "Summarized account of a trip to Urga"<sup>24</sup> in which he very briefly recounted his acquaintance with the Dalai Lama, adding he would later write a more detailed article (which he did not). From this account, we learn the Dalai Lama would welcome further Russian

<sup>18</sup> Excerpts of this diary have been published in Andreev 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Shcherbatskoi 1903.

<sup>20</sup> *Nyāyabindu* 1904; *Nyāyabindu* 1918.

<sup>21</sup> Oldenburg was a Russian orientalist and Sanskritist, the founder of the Russian School of Oriental Studies, and head of the Ethnographic Department of the IRGS (from 1904 to 1928).

<sup>22</sup> Bazar Baradin was a Buryat scholar, politician, writer, and People's Commissar of Education. Together with Zhamtsarano he studied at St. Petersburg University under the guidance of Shcherbatskoi and Oldenburg from 1902 to 1905. Later on, he stayed with the Dalai Lama in Mongolia, then went to Labrang Tashikhyil (Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil) Monastery in Amdo for research purposes from 1906 to 1907. He also kept a diary, see Baradin 2002 and I. Garri and A. Andreyev in this RET issue

<sup>23</sup> Gombozhab Tsybikov was a Buryat-Mongolian scholar and politician. In 1900, he made a secret journey to central Tibet under the guise of a Buddhist pilgrim. For his travel account, see Tsybikov [1919] 1981.

<sup>24</sup> Shcherbatskoi 1906.

expeditions to Tibet and personally invited Shcherbatskoi to accompany him on his return journey to Lhasa.

More information about Shcherbatskoi's trip to Urga can be found in his unpublished diary that his widow donated, along with other papers, to the USSR Academy of Sciences Archive after his death in 1942.<sup>25</sup> "Notes" from the diary were mentioned for the first time in the issue of selected works by Shcherbatskoi, published by I. V. Vasil'kov, which includes the above-mentioned "Summarized account of a trip to Urga."<sup>26</sup> Thereafter, the diary was referred to and cited by Inessa Lomakina and, finally, excerpts from the diary were published by Aleksandr Andreev.<sup>27</sup>

Although far detached from politics, Shcherbatskoi had no choice but to fully immerse himself in political matters. Being a man with a critical mind, Shcherbatskoi keenly noticed everything around him and put it down in his diary, such as his meetings and conversations with the Dalai Lama and the latter's entourage, mainly with the Dalai Lama's Buryat interpreter Namdak Dylykov,<sup>28</sup> as well as with Kozlov and Russian Consulate officials. He also recorded rumors about the debauchery of the Jebtsundamba, about the *gurum* (a magical ritual) performed against the Dalai Lama and allegedly sponsored by the Jebtsundamba, the Russian military escort issue and other controversies and intrigues around the Dalai Lama. His observations are often very critical of Russia's Tibet Policy and the Russian consulate officials who were responsible for contacts with the Dalai Lama. Like Kozlov,

<sup>25</sup> Rus. Arkhiv Akademii nauk SSSR Архив Академии наук СССР. Unfortunately, I did not get access to the diary during my field research in September 2022, because the St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences was closed, due to the relocation of the archive.

<sup>26</sup> Vasil'kov 1989: 250–253.

<sup>27</sup> Lomakina 2001; Andreev 2017. As mentioned by Andreev in his introduction, the diary is a black leather notebook, 18 x 22 cm in size, with entries on forty-two pages. Shcherbatskoi's handwriting is extremely difficult to read.

<sup>28</sup> Namdak Dylykov (n.d.) played a very important role in the events described in this article. Mentioned in the biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as Namdak Noyon/ Rnam dag no yon (Ishihama 2022), Dylykov was a Buryat public and political figure. According to the biography written by the director of the National Archive of the Buryat Republic, based on the National Archive's collections (Zhal-sanova 2015), Dylykov graduated from the Nerchinsk district school in 1877. He then served as an interpreter for Mongolian people at the Chita District Police Department and as a Mongolian language teacher at the Aga Parish School. From 1890 onwards, he held several political offices. Interestingly, Zhal-sanova does not mention that Dylykov served as the Dalai Lama's interpreter during the latter's sojourn in Mongolia in 1904–1906. Most likely, this has not been recorded in the Buryat archives. However, there is plenty of evidence of it in the sources used in this article. In 1898, Dylykov had also travelled to St. Petersburg, together with Dorzhiev, for an audience with Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918).

Shcherbatskoi was deeply distressed by the failure of the plan to organise a Russian convoy meant to protect the Dalai Lama.

*The escort issue*

"Kozlov will command the convoy, [and] instead of Dorzhiev there will be Dylykov attached to the Dalai Lama. Then Baradin and Zhamtsaranov<sup>29</sup> would be right there. I pictured some solemn procession of the Dalai Lama back to Tibet with a half-Russian retinue," wrote Shcherbatskoi in his letter to Oldenburg in 1905.<sup>30</sup> This plan, however, was never implemented. Instead, a secret Buryat Buddhist escort to the Dalai Lama was organised eventually in lieu of Kozlov's desired official convoy.

We still know surprisingly little about this mysterious escort. Shaumian sporadically mentioned a "Russian convoy" and "Buryat agents."<sup>31</sup> A "security squad" (Rus. *okhrannyyi otriad* охранный отряд) and "Buryat volunteers" (Rus. *buriaty-dobrovol'zy* буряты-добровольцы) are mentioned in the collection *Rossia i Tibet* edited by Belov.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Andreev suggests that the idea of the Russian convoy originated from Agvan Dorzhiev and that the Russian Tsar personally supported it.<sup>33</sup> Apart from these references, there is no other information on this squad or convoy in the published Russian sources as far as I know. I shall now try to examine this issue in more detail.

Before Kozlov's and Shcherbatskoi's arrival in Urga in May 1905, the Dalai Lama had already stayed there for six months, while waiting anxiously for a favorable Russian response to his appeals for support. His position was rather difficult. Pavel Lessar, the Russian Ambassador in Beijing and Lamsdorf, the Foreign Affairs Minister, were reluctant to interfere in the Tibet Question, in consideration of the ongoing Russo-Japanese war. However, they tried to keep the Dalai Lama well-disposed toward Russia by showing him ostensible concern. In contrast to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Pro-Tibet "lobby"—the General Headquarters, the Orientalists, and most of all the Russian Buryat Buddhists—favored more active assistance to the Dalai Lama.

Primarily, the Buryat party was headed by Agvan Dorzhiev, but the leader of the Buryat Buddhists, Khambo Lama Choizon Iroltuev

<sup>29</sup> Tsyben Zhamtsarano / Zhamtsaranov (1881–1942) was a Buryat scholar and politician, a member of the Buryat National Committee and a deputy minister of Mongolia's Internal Affairs Ministry. From 1903 to 1905, he was a student at St. Petersburg University.

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Sergei Oldenburg, July 11, 1905, published in Vigasin 2008: 291–292.

<sup>31</sup> Shaumian 2001: 165–172.

<sup>32</sup> Belov 2005: 75, 84.

<sup>33</sup> Andreev 2006: 148.



(1843–1918), also fully supported the Dalai Lama. Iroltuev personally came to Urga with hundreds of Buryat Buddhists to greet the Tibetan Pontiff and met with the Dalai Lama privately on December 1 (November 18), 1904.<sup>34</sup> To help the Dalai Lama, Dorzhiev and Iroltuev managed to attract several Buryats, whom they trusted and considered capable.<sup>35</sup> The Russian government, however, trusted neither Dorzhiev nor Iroltuev, suspecting that both were only acting in their own Buryat Buddhist interest. Lessar wrote to Lamsdorf:

There is no doubt that Iroltuev, Dorzhiev and others intend to incite a big movement among the Mongols with the arrival of the Dalai Lama in Urga. All these individuals, ignorant of the current political situation, hope that if they manage to involve Russia in these affairs, they will be able to carry out the most expansive, probably little-thought-out plans, not to mention the fact of ordinary greed, many of them mostly thinking about the possibility of receiving a subsidy from Russia. As a result, unrest will inevitably occur, very undesirable for us and probably disastrous for the Dalai Lama himself. Of those persons who are telegraphing, each tries to involve all their good and close acquaintances among the Russian Mongols who know of the affair, while for us it is necessary to solve it from *the Russian point of view and in Russia's best interest* (italics added) in the Far East.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> All sources are unanimous in recording the great influx of Buddhist pilgrims to Urga at that time (70 to 80 percent of them were Buryats), and according to the report of Qing Amban Yan-zhi 延祉 ((1848–1924), then just appointed Xining amban, Yan-zhi was redeployed to Urga in 1904 for handling the Dalai Lama affair; Urga amban from 1904 to 1909). According to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's biography, six hundred Russian pilgrims (*ru yul mi*) came to meet the Dalai Lama in Urga, see Ishihama 2022: 45–46. For more information on Iroltuev, see Ishihama in this issue.

<sup>35</sup> These persons were Buda Rabdanov (1853–1923), Tsokto Badmazhapov (1879–1937), Bimbaev (n.d.), Dabdanov (n.d.), and Galsanov (n.d.). Buda Rabdanov was a Buryat scholar, Gombozhav Tsybykov's teacher, and a member of the Potanin expeditions. In 1904, he was sent to Dartsedo (Da rtse mdo) in Kham (Kham) by the RMFA as a secret agent on Agvan Dorzhiev's recommendation. Tsokto Badmazhapov was a Buryat Cossack, an explorer and permanent member of the Kozlov expeditions to Inner Asia, who discovered the ancient city of Khara-Khoto. As for Bimbaev, Dabdanov, and Galsanov, we know very little about them. According to a note in Belov (2005: 103), they were "Tsarist secret service agents who stayed in Van Khüree during the Dalai Lama's sojourn there." In fact, they served as interpreters, guides, and low-level officials, and were also Agvan Dorzhiev's confidants. For instance, Dorzhiev asked the authorities to transfer the above-mentioned Buda Rabdanov from Dartsedo to Urga, while Iroltuev telegraphed to the authorities it would be very desirable to bring back both Yakov Shishmarev, former Consul General in Urga, and a certain "Peking Gomboev."

<sup>36</sup> APPRE, f. Kitaiskii stol, Secret telegram from Lessar, Peking, November 11, 1904, op. 491, d. 1454, l. 44. The Tsar noted on the document: "To be reported."

To implement this “Russian point of view” for handling the Dalai Lama affair in Urga and to contain Dorzhiev’s Buryat party, Lessar promoted Vladimir Liuba as the new Consul to Urga. Thereafter, Liuba became the main actor on the Russian side.

Apart from the Russians, Qing China also sent several imperial envoys to handle the Dalai Lama affair, such as the above-mentioned former Xining and newly appointed Urga Amban Yan-zhi. His main task was to remove the Dalai Lama from Mongolia, away from Russian influence, and he acted accordingly. From a report written by Liuba, we learn that, on December 14 (December 1), 1904, Amban Yan-zhi visited the Dalai Lama and requested him in the Qing Emperor’s name to leave for Xining immediately.<sup>37</sup> The Dalai Lama and the Buryat party felt both scared and outraged by such a categorical request by Yan-zhi and began to think about moving on to Selenginsk instead, located in the neighboring Russian dominated Transbaikal region, where the Buryat Khambo Lama resided.<sup>38</sup> In this tense situation, even the RMFA decided to support the Dalai Lama. Lessar told Lian Fang 聯芳 (1835–1927), the then Qing Foreign Vice-Minister (from 1903 to 1904)<sup>39</sup> that the Dalai Lama’s removal to Xining, which Lessar equated to imprisonment, “would inevitably lead to huge unrest in Mongolia and Siberia, and Russia would be obliged to take retaliatory measures.”<sup>40</sup> In response, the Qing backed down and allowed the Dalai Lama to spend the winter in Urga.

Eventually, on February 1, 1905, Lamsdorf summarized his views concerning the Dalai Lama in his memorandum to the Russian Tsar.<sup>41</sup> He examined in detail four options for the Tibetan Pontiff: 1) to stay in Urga, 2) to go to Xining, 3) to relocate to Russia, and 4) to return to Tibet. He concluded that the fourth option would be the best solution, but without mentioning any kind of official Russian support. In case the fourth option was chosen, as outlined by Lessar, the Russian government’s main responsibility would be to ensure the Dalai Lama’s security on his return trip to Lhasa. Meanwhile, as Liuba reported to Lamsdorf, Amban Yan-zhi ordered the Dalai Lama to immediately return to Tibet, designating March 20 (March 7), 1905, as the last day for

<sup>37</sup> AFPRE, f. Kitaiskii stol, Secret telegram of Liuba, December 9, 1904, op. 491, d. 1454, l. 81.

<sup>38</sup> AFPRE, f. Kitaiskii stol, Secret telegram of Liuba, November 26, 1904, op. 491, d. 1454, l. 69.

<sup>39</sup> Lian Fang was Vice-Minister (*zuoshilang* 左侍郎) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*waiwubu* 外務部).

<sup>40</sup> AFPRE, f. Kitaiskii stol, Secret telegram of Lessar, December 2/15, 1904, op. 491, d. 1454, l. 75.

<sup>41</sup> Memorandum of Lessar, February 1, 1905 in Belov 2005: 67–68.

his departure.<sup>42</sup> However, according to Liuba, the Dalai Lama refused to leave Urga without any security guarantees from Russia and told Consul Liuba that he preferred to go to Russia instead.<sup>43</sup> At that point, even the RMFA began to seriously consider the possibility of relocating the Dalai Lama to Russia, as a measure of last resort, since the idea was supported by the Russian military and, of course, by the Buryat community.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Khambo Lama Iroltuev already began with preparations for the Tibetan Pontiff to be received in Transbaikalia.

Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama continued to wait for more substantial support from Russia regarding the British, particularly for security guarantees, and sent Dorzhiev to St. Petersburg for this purpose.<sup>45</sup> To gain time and after long negotiations, he promised to the Qing Court to leave Urga on May 17, 1905.<sup>46</sup> Just at that time, Kozlov turned up in St. Petersburg, his mind set on staging a Russian convoy to accompany the Dalai Lama back to Tibet. It was then that Lessar, an advocate of the Wait-and-See Policy toward Tibet, suddenly passed away in Beijing on May 4 (April 21). These new circumstances instilled the Dalai Lama with new hopes, and he once again postponed his departure, claiming he was down with a cold and therefore could not travel.

Kozlov left Moscow on April 30 (April 17), 1905. Before his departure, he submitted his convoy plan to Evgenii Alekseev (1843–1918), Governor General of the Far East. Then, on his journey to Urga, he met Agvan Dorzhiev in Verkhneudinsk (modern Ulan-Ude, Buryatia), and when they heard of the Russian naval defeat by the Japanese at Tsushima<sup>47</sup>, it “struck them terribly.”<sup>48</sup> As Kozlov noted in his diary, the Dalai Lama knew all about Kozlov's convoy plan through his correspondence with Dorzhiev.<sup>49</sup> Eventually, Kozlov arrived in Urga on June 6 (May 24), 1905. Shcherbatskoi had already been there since May 30 (May 17).

Upon Kozlov's and Shcherbatskoi's arrival in Urga, they found the Russian Consulate officials and the Tibetans eagerly waiting for

<sup>42</sup> Secret telegram of Liuba, February 26, 1905 and Secret telegram of Lessar, February 28, 1905 in Belov 2005: 68.

<sup>43</sup> Secret telegram of Liuba, March 6, 1905 in Belov 2005: 69.

<sup>44</sup> For more details about the Dalai Lama's relocation to Russia, see Shaumian 2001: 133–156.

<sup>45</sup> Dorzhiev had been trying to go to St. Petersburg starting from early May 1905, which Consul Liuba endeavored to prevent. Unyielding, Dorzhiev overcame all obstacles however, and finally arrived in the Russian capital in October 1905.

<sup>46</sup> Bulag 2013: 7.

<sup>47</sup> The battle of Tsushima was the final naval battle of the Russo-Japanese war, fought on May 27–28, 1905. It ended with the devastating defeat of the Imperial Russian Navy.

<sup>48</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 102.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Dmitrii Pokotilov (1865–1908), the new Russian Ambassador to China in Beijing, who was on his way from St. Petersburg to replace the deceased Pavel Lessar, hoping that a change in ambassadors might also bring a change in Russian politics. On June 13 (May 31), 1905, a meeting was held between the Dalai Lama and Pokotilov. The new Ambassador presented gifts from the Russian Tsar, namely a ring with the Emperor's portrait encrusted on it, together with thirty big diamonds and a watch, and also conveyed assurances of the Emperor's goodwill toward Tibet's ruler.<sup>50</sup> Pokotilov promised him to obtain guarantees from China and Great Britain regarding his personal safety.<sup>51</sup> On the next day, June 14 (June 1), Kozlov met the Dalai Lama for the first time and presented gifts from the IRGS. According to Kozlov, the Dalai Lama warmly welcomed the idea of a Russian military convoy, all the more so as half of it would consist of Buryat "lamaists," and also his Tibetan entourage was very pleased about the goodwill shown by Russia to the Pontiff. Shcherbatskoi only met the Dalai Lama for the first time on June 18 (June 5).

### *Intrigues in Urga*

After meeting the Dalai Lama, Kozlov and Shcherbatskoi were eagerly awaiting the decision of the Russian higher authorities regarding the convoy issue. Meanwhile, Kozlov was looking for a painter to draw the Dalai Lama's portrait, while Shcherbatskoi was busy studying religious life in Urga and pondered on the Dalai Lama's difficult situation. As Shcherbatskoi's diary reveals, the relations between all the parties involved in the Tibet issue and present in Urga were rather strained. The Russian Consulate turned out to be a hotbed of various intrigues, including corrupt consular officials. The Tibetan party was most unhappy with Consul Liuba's disrespectful attitude towards the Dalai Lama.<sup>52</sup> The Consul apparently envied the two "outsiders" Kozlov and Shcherbatskoi. The Tibetans did not like Kozlov and curiously enough, Shcherbatskoi also disliked him.<sup>53</sup> Not to mention the

<sup>50</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 103–104; Shaumian 2017: 102–104.

<sup>51</sup> Shcherbatskoi in Andreev 2017: 60.

<sup>52</sup> That Liuba as the representative of the Russian government in Urga had not welcomed the Dalai Lama personally on his arrival, but had sent the official Dolbezhev instead, had offended both the Tibetans and the Buryat party.

<sup>53</sup> In his diary, Shcherbatskoi noted a curious story about a Buddha statue of amazing Chinese artisanship. Kozlov himself liked the statue very much, but he one day asked the Dalai Lama to present it to General Alexei Polivanov (1855–1920). The Dalai Lama was reluctant to give the statue as a present, arguing he had received it from a Mongolian prince and friend. The next time they met, Kozlov told the Dalai Lama that Polivanov had become the head of the General Headquarters, and on that occasion it would be very nice to endear himself by making such a special

intrigues of the Jebtsundamba Khutagt and the Chinese amban... Obviously, the atmosphere in Urga at that time was fraught with tension.

Before long, on June 23 (June 10), the Russian Consul Liuba conveyed some bad news to the Dalai Lama and to Kozlov. However, he tried to present them as good ones. According to Kozlov, Liuba said "the authorities considered the Kozlov expedition to Tibet to be untimely, because it could jeopardize the good outcome just achieved for Tibet, i.e., that the British formally waived the 1904 Lhasa Convention, so that the Dalai Lama could safely return home."<sup>54</sup> When Kozlov met the Dalai Lama the next day, the latter confirmed the Russian government had assured him the British would give up those rights in Tibet that were specified in the 1904 Convention. Although this information later proved false, the Dalai Lama therefore decided to leave Urga in early July 1905. At the end of his meeting with Kozlov, the Pontiff expressed his regret that Kozlov's convoy plans had failed.

As the alleged "good news" clearly outweighed the bad, the Dalai Lama and Kozlov were not too disappointed. The latter at least received permission from the Russian authorities to go to Tibet separately from the Dalai Lama, while the Tibetan side—together with the Buryat party—decided to secretly organize an escort for the Dalai Lama. It was to be made up of Buryat Cossacks disguised as Buddhist pilgrims under the command of an experienced sergeant.<sup>55</sup> While stationed in Lhasa, this bodyguard would be sponsored entirely by the Dalai Lama.<sup>56</sup>

Very soon, however, the Dalai Lama began to realize that things were not going as smoothly as the Russian Consul kept reassuring him. He was very worried because both the Chinese and the Russians were hiding from him the full contents of the Anglo-Chinese negotiations taking place in Calcutta, in which the British agreed not to annex any Tibetan territory and not to interfere with the Tibetan

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present. "As a result, the Dalai Lama gave Polivanov the *burhan* (Buddha) as a present, but Kozlov, most likely, appropriated it for himself," wrote Shcherbatskoi (Andreev 2017: 62–63). The latter's suspicions probably proved to be right as Kozlov ([1905] 2004: 119) noted in his diary: "On the 13th there was almost a farewell audience with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama presented gifts to the Geographical Society—cult objects. For me personally—a wonderful *burhan* with (kashmir) cloth."

<sup>54</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 108. Unfortunately, I did not gain access to the original report by Liuba (stored at the AFPRE).

<sup>55</sup> It seems that the Dalai Lama's Buryat party did not really deplore that Kozlov could not lead the convoy as originally planned. Lomakina (2001: 107) cites from Shcherbatskoi's diary about talks in the Russian Consulate: "Dylykov [a Buryat] told Griaznukhin [a Russian] about Kozlov: 'We got rid of this guy'." She suggests that this quote probably refers to Kozlov's planned lead of the convoy. Dylykov apparently preferred the idea of a secret Buryat Cossack escort without Kozlov.

<sup>56</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 121.

administration in return for indemnity payments.<sup>57</sup> The Tibetan Pontiff also seriously feared the Chinese would assassinate him on his way back to Tibet, out of revenge for seeking independent relations with Russia.<sup>58</sup> Besides, he suspected the Russians regarded the Tibet issue as of minor importance and accordingly disregarded his wishes. Shcherbatskoi described the situation as follows:

At present, the Gegeen [Jebtsundampa Khutagt], the Chinese government, and the Russian Consul are unanimously zealous to remove the Dalai Lama from Urga to Lhasa. The Gegeen for financial reasons, the [Russian] Foreign Ministry to get rid of the problem and the Chinese government for some obscure reasons. Negotiations are currently under way in Calcutta between Chinese officials and the British viceroy [of India] to work out an agreement to replace the withdrawn Younghusband, i.e., Lhasa Convention. However, the Chinese government does not inform the Dalai Lama about the progress of the negotiations, but requests the Dalai Lama to leave as soon as possible [...] Pokotilov did not disclose the content of the agreement, referring to it as a state secret [...] The Dalai Lama told us: 'It is kept secret from me.'<sup>59</sup>

Under these circumstances, the Buryat escort, if approved, would be the Dalai Lama's only safety guarantee. To press ahead with this issue, the Dalai Lama and Dorzhiev petitioned the Russian government, and requested their friends among the military and the diplomatic circles, including Kozlov and Shcherbatskoi, that this issue should be dealt with at the top level. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was reluctant, however, to approve of the escort, despite strong support on the part of the Russian military.<sup>60</sup> Surprisingly, Consul Liuba who, at first, had countered the matter in the ministry, suddenly backpedaled and, as Shcherbatskoi noted on July 25 (July 12), 1905, gave his consent:

<sup>57</sup> On these negotiations which led to the Anglo-Chinese Adhesion Agreement in 1906, see, e.g., Lamb 1986: 272–273.

<sup>58</sup> Shcherbatskoi (in Andreev 2017: 56) noted: "[To the question] 'What is the reason for the Dalai Lama's concerns that the Chinese may kill him while he is traveling?', Dylykov replied that the Chinese wanted to take revenge for his treachery and his relations with Russia independently from China. This is possible, the more so because, after the Japanese war, the prestige of Russia has considerably declined and the Chinese began to speak in a completely different tone, and the Mongols, who used to be afraid of Russia and thought that their joining this country was only a matter of time, all radically changed their attitude. The value of Russia, he said, has dropped considerably. Dylykov believes that these views of the Chinese and the Mongols are wrong, because Russia has not yet been wiped out and still remains a very powerful state."

<sup>59</sup> Andreev 2017: 58, 61.

<sup>60</sup> Evgenii Alekseev, governor general of the Far East, supported the convoy idea from the very beginning. Fedor Palizin, head of the General Headquarters, supported both the convoy and arms for it. See Andreev 2006: 148.

"Today, the Consul visited the Dalai Lama and said he allowed him to have a Buryat Cossack convoy, but this was only his personal permission, given under his own authority."<sup>61</sup> So, it seems that the Russian government eventually decided to turn a blind eye on the issue and approved the convoy unofficially, considering it "a moral obligation toward the Dalai Lama."

At the same time, we must not forget that we are somehow bound by some moral obligations towards the Dalai Lama and therefore cannot help but take all measures available to us to ensure his personal safety and, as far as possible, to preserve his position and authority.<sup>62</sup>

In the meantime, a Buryat monk named Shazhib Tsyrenov (n.d.) arrived in Urga from Lhasa via India on July 16, 1905. He reported the British had occupied Tibet as far as Gyantse (Rgyal rtse,) stationed a garrison, constructed a telegraph line, and built a road in Phari (Phag ri) and Tuna, while "committing much violence."<sup>63</sup> This news shocked the Tibetans. "Why were the Russian Consulate and the Chinese government in such a hurry to assure me that there are no Englishmen anywhere in Tibet? ... The British occupy more than half of my domain, whereas I am assured there is no one there." This was the Dalai Lama's reaction on July 17, as quoted by Shcherbatskoi. In his diary, the Russian scholar replied: "... because they have no other aim than to get rid of the Dalai Lama as soon as possible and to go on vacation."<sup>64</sup>

#### *Departure from Urga and stay in Van Khüree*

In this unfavorable situation, the Dalai Lama decided to leave Urga. He informed the Russian government of this decision through Consul Liuba in August 1905 and asked the Russian authorities for permission to leave Dorzhiev as his chief representative in Russia and four "intelligent" Buryats as his permanent agents in Lhasa, Dartsedo, Beijing, and Urga.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he "expressed his deep gratitude for allowing Buryat volunteers to accompany him to Tibet under the guise of pilgrims" (italics added).<sup>66</sup> By the end of the Dalai Lama's sojourn in Urga, relations with Qing officials had become so strained that the Tibetan Pontiff

<sup>61</sup> Andreev 2017: 62.

<sup>62</sup> RMFA report on the Tibet issue of June 6, 1906 in Belov 2005: 97.

<sup>63</sup> Kozlov [1905] 2004: 122; Andreev 2017: 63.

<sup>64</sup> Andreev 2017: 65.

<sup>65</sup> These should be the afore-mentioned Badmazhapov, Bimbaev, Dabdanov, and Galsanov; see FN 35.

<sup>66</sup> Secret telegram from Consul Liuba to Lamsdorf of August 3 (July 21), 1905 in Belov 2005: 75.

considered it possible to leave Urga without saying goodbye to the Urga Amban, who had come to see him off.<sup>67</sup> Thus, without any actual guarantees from the Russian government, the Dalai Lama left Urga on September 15 (September 2), although not directly for Tibet, but first for Van Khüree, the seat of the banner of the Mongolian Prince Khanddorj<sup>68</sup> and its monastery (Mong. Daicin Vang-yin Kūriy-e). It was close to the Russian border, 373 km (350 *versts*) from Kiakhta and the same distance from Urga, where he arrived on September 20 (September 7), 1906.

Despite the Qing Emperor's orders and against the advice of the Russian authorities, the Tibetan Pontiff refused to return to Tibet as long as the British were there. His nearly one year-long stay in Mongolia—as well as his meetings with Mongolian princes, Buryat Buddhists, and representatives of the Russian military, diplomatic, and academic circles—had contributed to the emergence of nationalistic views of the Dalai Lama regarding Tibet's status. As testified in Russian sources, the Dalai Lama had indeed acquired considerable knowledge about modern international politics. Kozlov, for example, noted in his diary:

Other political issues were also discussed in the Dalai Lama's monastic cell. There was a discussion about the unification of Mongolia and Tibet. Now, eventually, everyone may see and understand that the present disastrous, unfortunate war for Russia in the Far East, which took Manchuria away from our country, will turn in a different and more proper direction as it was advised earlier,—namely, towards Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan. A wave of future developments and connections with the east of China through Kalgan and Beijing must be rushed in here. The Manchurian railway branch must be replaced by the Gobi one—Kiakhta-Kalgan, not Manchuria, but Mongolia must play a revitalizing role! If so, then, of course, a better relationship with the Dalai Lama will be of great importance! The latter would only help the most peaceful occupation of Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan by the Russians. The border would pass along the borderline of Tibet—side by side with the domain of the Dalai Lama. Russia should strive in that direction, not to Manchuria [...].<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, when Agvan Dorzhiev finally managed to arrive in St. Petersburg, he straight away petitioned the RMFA on September 29, 1905, that under the current circumstances, Tibet aimed at nothing less than independence:

<sup>67</sup> AFPRE, f. Chinese table, Report of Pokotilov to Lamsdorf of November 9 (October 27), 1905, o. 491, d. 122, l. 69.

<sup>68</sup> Khando-vang in the Russian sources.

<sup>69</sup> Kozlov, "Dnevnik," 118.



[...] the Tibetans seek solely the protection of Russia and other powers, wishing to achieve final recognition of their autonomy and independence, and expressing their readiness to allow all states that might be interested, to send their representatives to the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, thereby facilitating the desirable communication of Tibet with these powers on trade and other matters.<sup>70</sup>

The RMFA, however, was still not willing to get directly involved in the Tibet Question, communicating to Dorzhiev that the Dalai Lama's main objective in the current situation should still be to return to Lhasa.

Meanwhile, Qing officials suspected the Dalai Lama was contemplating fleeing to Russia and, on October 6 (September 23), 1905, delivered an urgent order to the pontiff in Van Khüree demanding him to return to Tibet immediately.<sup>71</sup> The categorical order caused real indignation in the Tibetan camp, thus further alienating the Dalai Lama from the Chinese. Thereupon the Tibetan Pontiff and his associates wrote numerous letters to various levels of Russian authorities. The interpreter, Namdak Dylykov, reported to the RMFA that the Dalai Lama was in danger of being forcibly taken from Mongolia back to Tibet.<sup>72</sup> The Dalai Lama personally wrote letters to the Qing Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (r. 1875–1908) and Russian Ambassador Pokotilov. In his petition to the Qing Emperor, sent through the Uliastai Amban, the Dalai Lama complained about the Jebtsundampa Khutagt and the Urga amban's unacceptable behavior towards him, which had caused him to leave Urga and temporarily stay at Prince Khanddorj's headquarters.<sup>73</sup> In his letter to Pokotilov (October 9, 1905) the Dalai Lama asked him to take all possible measures to forward his petition to the Emperor and to protect the said amban from the harassment that can be expected from the capital's dignitaries for submitting a report without their mediation.<sup>74</sup> Pokotilov himself seemed to have sympathized with the Dalai Lama. In his very polite reply, he informed the Dalai Lama that he was always glad to assist him and that he had received permission from the Qing government for the Dalai Lama to stay in Khalkha over the winter. He also promised to support the Dalai Lama's envoys in Peking in every possible way.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Belov 2005: 72.

<sup>71</sup> Shaumian 2017: 109.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>73</sup> AFPRE, f. Chinese table, The Dalai Lama's letter translated from Manchu, o. 491, d. 122, l. 77.

<sup>74</sup> AFPRE, f. Chinese table, Approximate translation of the Dalai Lama's letter to Pokotilov, September 26 (October 9), 1905, o. 491, d. 122, l. 90.

<sup>75</sup> AFPRE, Pokotilov's letter to the Dalai Lama, September 26 (October 9), 1905, Chinese table, o. 491, d. 122, l. 91. The correspondence mentioned above (the Dalai

On November 18 (November 5), a delegation of Khorchin Mongols from the Jirim seim came to visit the Tibetan Pontiff and invite him to their homeland.<sup>76</sup> The delegation was guarded by disguised Russian intelligence agents from Manchuria under officer Kostritskii (n.d.), Lieutenant-Colonel Hitrovo's assistant (1860–1921).<sup>77</sup> Kostritskii personally met the Dalai Lama and apparently had long conversations with him. Based on Kostritskii's intelligence data, Hitrovo reported to the Russian authorities as follows:

In the entire region traversed by him, the Dalai Lama, from Tibet to Urga within the borders to the north and west up to the frontiers of Russia, all the population is on his side, all as one. The people of Inner Mongolia, represented by the populous Jirim and Ordos seim, were eager to see him at their homes and followed him. Guided solely by justice and following the needs and natural historical desires of the vast Lamaist flock, the Dalai Lama and like-minded Khutughtu-Gegeens irrevocably decided to secede from China to form an independent union state executing this operation under the auspices and with the support of Russia, thus avoiding bloodshed (*underlined*. – E. Belov). If Russia refuses, [the Dalai Lama], without changing the decision to separate from China, will do this under the auspices of another Great Power, at the very least, Great Britain, which offers all sorts of services to the Dalai Lama.<sup>78</sup>

As Pokotilov reported to Foreign Minister Lamsdorf, the Russian military authorities in Manchuria were in favor of using the Tibetan Pontiff in Mongolia “in order to implement the broadest political plans for this country,” i.e., “separation of Mongolia from Chinese rule and the creation of an independent Mongol-Tibetan state.”<sup>79</sup>

Around the end of 1905, the Buryat military escort finally arrived at the Dalai Lama's camp in Van Khüree and, remarkably, with Tsar Nicholas II's approval.<sup>80</sup> It was probably the same detachment that

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Lama to the Qing Emperor, the Dalai Lama to Pokotilov, Pokotilov to the Dalai Lama) is attached to Pokotilov's report to Lamsdorf from November 13 (October 31), 1905.

<sup>76</sup> Baradin, *Amdo-Mongolia*, 61–62. For more detail, see I. Garri & A. Andreev “Bazar Baradin and his Recollections of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama” in this RET issue.

<sup>77</sup> A.D. Hitrovo was lieutenant-colonel of the General Staff, Khyakhta border commissar, and organizer of the Tsarist intelligence service in Mongolia. Before 1906 he served in the intelligence service of the Trans-Amur military region in Harbin.

<sup>78</sup> Belov 2005: 109–110.

<sup>79</sup> AFPRE, Report by Pokotilov to Lamsdorf, January 30, 1906, Chinese table, o. 491, d. 123, l. 28.

<sup>80</sup> I thank Aleksandr Andreev for sharing an archival document with an excerpt from the RMFA's telegram containing the Emperor's glosse: “We should help him with the convoy,” Doc. F. 6, o. 8/2, d. 149, l. 26, Archive of the Military Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineering and Signal Troops (Arkhiv Voenno-istoricheskogo muzeia artillerii, inzhenernikh voisk i voisk svyazi Архив военно-исторического

later on trained Tsarong Dasang Damdul (Tsha rong zla bzang dgra 'dul, 1888–1959), Tibet's future Commander-General, in Van Khüree for two months.<sup>81</sup>

And, very importantly, Agvan Dorzhiev was granted a personal audience with the Russian Tsar. It happened the next year, on March 7 (February 22), 1906. On behalf of the Dalai Lama, Agvan Dorzhiev conveyed to Tsar Nicholas II assurances of “unwavering loyalty and gratitude.” He promised as well that the Dalai Lama would leave Mongolia very soon, on the Russian government's advice, while closing his address by saying the Dalai Lama would welcome Russian scientific expeditions to Tibet.<sup>82</sup> It is worth quoting the words of Tsar Nicholas II in reply to Dorzhiev's appeal:

I have always held dear the interests of the millions of my subjects—the flock of His Holiness, as well as Tibet. Let them believe that I, along with Russia, am always ready to help Tibet to the extent that we have the means and strength, and I hope that, in some time, we will provide His Holiness with even stronger and more desirable assistance for Tibet.<sup>83</sup>

Although these vague promises were not accompanied by any specific measures to implement them, the Tibetan side was very happy with it and paid it the highest attention, considering it as encouragement for further collaboration. On March 8 (February 23), the day after the audience, Consul Liuba reported in a secret telegram to Lamsdorf that the Dalai Lama had agreed to return to Lhasa while continuing to ask: “Is it possible, without complications with England, to fulfill the promise made to Dorzhiev regarding assigning to the Pontiff in Lhasa a Russian diplomatic official and a guard detachment (Rus. *ohrannii otriad* охранный отряд), which are already in Van Khüree?”<sup>84</sup>

#### *At Zaya Bandida Monastery. Covert Chinese Threats*

On March 21 (March 8), 1906, the Dalai Lama—accompanied by the new Buryat escort—left Van Khüree and arrived at Zaya Bandida Monastery on March 31.<sup>85</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Russian Consul Liuba arrived, supposedly bringing a telegram from the Russian Tsar

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музея артиллерии, инженерных войск и войск связи). For more information, see Andreev 2006: 148.

<sup>81</sup> Tsarong 2000: 20.

<sup>82</sup> Belov 2005: 83.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>85</sup> Zain-khure Зайн-хурэ in the Russian sources.

Nicholas II.<sup>86</sup> Cecil Spring-Rice (1859–1918), a British diplomat in charge of negotiations with Russia in London, reported about the Tsar's telegram to Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933), the Foreign Secretary, as follows:

In the course of conversation with Count Lamsdorff today I alluded to the subject of the telegram sent by the Emperor to the Dalai Lama of Thibet. His Excellence informed me that the policy of his Government with regard to that country was the same as that of His Majesty's Government, namely, that of non-intervention. They wished the Dalai Lama to return as soon as possible to Lhasa, as they considered his continued presence in Mongolia undesirable, but he has fears for the safety of his person on his return and has asked for the promise of protection. The telegram has been sent in place of this promise, and was designed to reassure, not only the Dalai Lama himself, but also the Emperor's Buddhist subjects, with regard to whom the Russian government would find themselves in a very embarrassing position should any mishap befall the Lama [...].<sup>87</sup>

Most likely, the telegram reflects what the Russian Emperor said to Agvan Dorzhiev during the above-mentioned audience. A detailed report on the conversation between the Dalai Lama and Mikhail Kuzminskii (n.d), a secretary of the Russian Consulate in Urga who visited the Pontiff on July 27 (July 14) in Sain Noyon Banner, seems to confirm this assumption.<sup>88</sup> According to Kuzminskii, the Dalai Lama considered this telegram as “the most significant moment in the history of relations between Tibet and Russia” and “the main guarantee for his inviolability on his return trip to Tibet.” The aim of Kuzminskii's visit will be discussed in the last part of this paper.

Meanwhile, rumours about the secret Buryat guard had leaked to the British and to the Chinese.<sup>89</sup> On May 7, Spring-Rice handed Lamsdorf a Memorandum on the Anglo-Chinese Agreement and then asked about “the recent incident of the Buriat Guard.” The Minister

<sup>86</sup> Shaumian 2017: 127–128. Describing the visit, Shaumian didn't mention the Tsar's telegram. I don't have Liuba's report at my disposal but suppose that delivering the telegram was the main reason for Liuba's arrival.

<sup>87</sup> British National Archives (BNA), FO 371/176-1906, Thibet Confidential: Spring-Rice to Grey, April 9, 1906, 353. I am grateful to Bianca Horlemann for sharing this and other important documents of the British Foreign Office.

<sup>88</sup> AFPRE, Kuzminskii, *Sekretnaia zapiska Kuzminskogo general'nomu konsulu v Urge ot 26 iul'ia 1906 goda* Секретная записка Кузминского генеральному консулу в Урге от 26 июля 1906 года [A secret note of Kuzminskii to the Consul General in Urga, July 26, 1906 (August 8)], *Kitaiskii stol*, d. 1208: 49–50. The Dalai Lama, through Kuzminskii, asked the Russian authorities to re-send this telegram officially, i.e., via the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry.

<sup>89</sup> BNA, FO 371/177-1906, Thibet Confidential, Carnegie to Grey, May 7, 1906, 545.

explained to his British counterpart that the escort (in addition to the Tsar's telegram) is, actually, the only guarantee for the Tibetan Pontiff's safety the Russian government can provide:

[...] he [the Dalai Lama] had, as it appeared, refused to return unless he received some solid guarantees that his life not be in peril. These guarantees the Russian government had been unable to give him. But it was difficult for them to refuse a request proffered by the Russian Buddhists that some of their number might accompany their master to his home in order to defend him from possible attacks on his sacred person.

The Russian government, acting on the advice of the officials who had special knowledge about the temper of the Siberian Buriats, had agreed to this request, but nothing was further from their thoughts than a desire to intervene thereby in the internal affairs of Thibet.<sup>90</sup>

Spring-Rice, for his part, explained the British attitude towards the Dalai Lama and his return to Lhasa:

I pointed out that the antecedents of the Dalai Lama were well known; that if he returned to Lhasa it was quite possible that he would take an active part in politics, and would initiate or carry out a policy directed against British interests, as had previously been the case; and that if this was his policy, and if he were known to be surrounded by an armed guard of Russian subjects who had accompanied him on his return, it would be quite impossible for His Majesty's government to remain indifferent to such a situation, and that the results would be unfortunate for those good relations which we have so much in heart, and would be quite inconsistent with those assurances which had already passed between the two governments.

Count Lamsdorff informed me in reply that there never had been any question of the Buryats remaining in Lhasa.<sup>91</sup>

It appeared that the Chinese were in cahoots with the British on the matter of the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet, not wishing him to go back to Lhasa just yet, in consideration of the just concluded agreement. It seemed that the main intention of the Qing officials in Urga, when pressuring the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet, was to remove him from the Russian border and influence. So, when the British informed the Chinese about the Russian Buryat escort, the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry assured that "China will take all necessary steps, and will not allow the Dalai Lama to create any disturbance in Thibet or return to Lhasa for the present."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> BNA, FO 371/176-1906, Thibet Confidential, Spring-Rice to Grey, May 2, 1906, 545.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> BNA, FO 371/176-1906, Thibet Confidential, Carnegie to Grey, May 3, 1906, 506.

On April 21, 1906, Qing Emperor Guangxu sent the Mongol Bodisu 博迪蘇 (1871–1914),<sup>93</sup> the Grand Minister in Attendance (*yuqian dachen* 御前大臣), and Da-shou 達壽 (1870–1939), a Manchu Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs (*Lifanbu* 理藩部).<sup>94</sup> The Qing dignitaries arrived on June 6, 1906, bringing the Dalai Lama a personal letter and presents from the Manchu Emperor.

The Emperor's letter was conciliatory. The Qing Emperor, Bogdo Khan<sup>95</sup> in Russian sources, admitted the Dalai Lama "maybe deeply dissatisfied with some personas or with the government", stating at the end of his message:

In view of this, we have now urgently dispatched the Adjutant General Bodisu and State Secretary Da-shou, and have ordered them to, upon arrival, most carefully take care to finding a convenient place for You to stay and to find out once and for all whether You will or will not remain in Mongolia. We order that the above be taken into consideration.<sup>96</sup>

As Kuzminskii noted in his report, "A heavy burden for him [the Dalai Lama], and fettering the will and decision of the Pontiff to return to Lhasa, was the secrecy surrounding the agreement recently concluded between England and China on Tibetan affairs<sup>97</sup> and the mutual rights of the said powers to Tibet."<sup>98</sup> However, Bodisu and Da-shou, notwithstanding the repeated requests and insistence of the Dalai Lama, could only provide him with the following written note: "At present, Tibet is not subject to the British, and they should not interfere in its internal affairs. Otherwise, just as with interference in the internal affairs of any other country, the Middle Kingdom will not tolerate such interference. All this is firmly established once and for all."<sup>99</sup> The Dalai Lama was very worried when he realized there was absolutely no information on how Great Britain and the Qing Court intended to guarantee his

<sup>93</sup> Bo-gong 博公 in Russian sources. Bodisu was a high-ranking Mongol bannerman with the title of Bulwark Duke (Fuguo gong 腐國公), Rus. Bogun Боргун.

<sup>94</sup> Da-shou, a Manchu, was the Right Minister 右侍郎 of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs. According to the Dalai Lama, in contrast to Bodisu, Da-shou was very rude and unfriendly.

<sup>95</sup> Bogdo Khan (Holy Khan) is an honorific title for the Manchu Emperor (and for the Jetsundamba between 1912 and 1924) used by Mongols and Russians as well.

<sup>96</sup> See the Russian translation from Manchu of the Emperor's letter intitled: "A handwritten letter from the Qing Emperor to the Dalai Lama from April 22, 1906 (translation from Manchu);" Kuzminskii 1906: 60.

<sup>97</sup> The Anglo-Chinese Adhesion Agreement was concluded on April 27, 1906.

<sup>98</sup> Kuzminskii 1906: 43.

<sup>99</sup> Translation of the official note on the Anglo-Chinese Agreement regarding Tibetan affairs presented to the Dalai Lama by the Chinese dignitaries Bo-gong and Da-shou in Kuzminskii 1906: 76.

personal safety in case he returned to Lhasa and how his rights over Tibet would be protected as well. He was greatly disturbed because the Qing dignitaries refused to give him a full text of the Anglo-Chinese Adhesion Agreement.<sup>100</sup>

Moreover, Bodisu and Da-shou arrived, accompanied by Chinese officer Li Tingyu 李廷玉 (n.d.), with thirty cavalymen who, as well, were supposed "to protect the Dalai Lama" on his way back to Tibet. In addition to presenting letters and gifts from the Emperor, Bodisu and Da-shou were entrusted with the mission of forcing the Pontiff to return to Tibet after ascertaining his loyal feelings and obedience to the Qing Emperor. As proof of his devotion to the Da Qing [Great Qing] Dynasty, the Dalai Lama had to perform a ceremony of bowing three times in the direction of Beijing, in a suitably solemn atmosphere, in the presence of the said Qing dignitaries.<sup>101</sup> This was probably the same ceremony held on June 17, as described by Bodisu in his diary:

[The Dalai Lama] dispatched numerous monks who, carrying banners and blowing trumpets, invited me to enter the monastery. The Dalai Lama thereupon knelt to receive the imperial edict, while presenting two yellow ceremonial *hadags* [Tib. khatak (kha btags)], reverently passing his respects to the Emperor [Guangxu]. I then handed over the objects awarded by the Empress Dowager [Cixi 慈禧 (1835–1908)] and the Emperor, and the Dalai performed a ritual of kneeling three times and kowtowing nine times, reverently expressing his gratitude for the heavenly grace.<sup>102</sup>

As Uradyn Bulag commented, "the Dalai Lama was obliged to do so under duress, as Li Tingyu told the Dalai Lama's Chinese speaking bodyguard that he had been ordered by the Emperor to kill the Dalai Lama if necessary."<sup>103</sup>

As for Li Tingyu, he knew about the forty Buryat Buddhists accompanying the Dalai Lama as bodyguards from the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry, and he quickly identified them and their officer Damdin

<sup>100</sup> According to Bianca Horlemann's paper in this RET issue, British intelligence from Lhasa stated that the Dalai Lama had learned about the Anglo-Chinese Adhesion Agreement – while still in Mongolia – in a letter from the Qing Emperor, in which the Qing government requested the Tibetan hierarch to return to Lhasa as soon as possible. The Dalai Lama then sent letters from Mongolia to the regent in Lhasa and to his superintendent, to inform them accordingly. British Library, IOR/L/PS/20/259, Political Officer, Sikkim, to Indian government, Dec. 20, 1906 and "East India (Tibet). Further Papers Relating to Tibet. In Continuation of CD. 2370," *Parliament Papers* 1910: 68–69, doc. 130, encl. 6, dated Dec. 13, 1906.

<sup>101</sup> Kuzminskii 1906: 46.

<sup>102</sup> Cited according to Bulag 2013: 8.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

(Ch. Damuding 打木丁, n.d.).<sup>104</sup> On June 22, 1906, Li Tingyu noted in his diary *You Meng Riji* 游蒙日記 (*Mongolia Travel Diary*):

When I was in Zhangjiakou 張家口, I received a telegram from the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry. It told me that Hu,<sup>105</sup> an Ambassador to Russia, had reported in a telegram that the Dalai Lama would return to Tibet and that Russia had dispatched forty Tibetan Buddhists accompanying him as bodyguard. I have already led thirty cavalymen to compete with them in Xuanhua Prefecture. After I arrived at Zaya Bandida Monastery, tens of Russian Buryat Buddhists have come here every day. They are led by one military officer (his name is Damuding 打木丁) and some soldiers. All of them are dressing as Lamas and, on the pretext of worshipping the Dalai Lama, they remain here and have decided to escort the Dalai Lama to Tibet. I think that the forty Tibetan Buddhists mentioned in the telegram from the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry must match with this troop. The military officer looks handsome and the soldiers have fighting spirit.<sup>106</sup>

It is evident here that Li was mentioning the Buryat *escort volunteers*, actually Cossacks, who had been dispatched by the General Headquarters with covert support from the Russian government.

Bodisu met the Dalai Lama nine times, constantly urging him to leave.<sup>107</sup> Having now a Qing escort forced upon him, the Dalai Lama had no choice but to promise to Bodisu that he would leave as soon as his departure caravan was complete and ready for the journey.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the Dalai Lama left Zaya Bandida Monastery on July 18 (July 5), 1906 and arrived in Sain Noyon Banner on July 21 (July 8), where he stayed for one more month, waiting for the completion of his caravan.

*In Sain Noyon Banner. A change in Russian policy*

With all this happening, it is easy to imagine the Dalai Lama's mood. He was almost ready to leave Mongolia, when five days after his arrival at the Sain Noyon Banner, to the Tibetan Pontiff's great joy, the Russian consulate official Kuzminskii arrived.

<sup>104</sup> Wada 2022: 73.

<sup>105</sup> Hu Weide 胡惟德 (1863–1933) served as a Chinese Ambassador to Russia from 1902 to 1907.

<sup>106</sup> Cited according to Wada 2022: 73–74.

<sup>107</sup> Bulag 2013: 8.

<sup>108</sup> According to the report of the Uliastai Governor-general (*jiangjun* 將軍), the Dalai Lama's caravan required 300 horses, 500 camels, 30 yurts, and 20 tents. See Kuzminskii 1906: 64.



First of all, I presented the Pontiff with gifts and a khatak on behalf of the Imperial Consulate on the occasion of his departure from Mongolia, and then, after the removal of superfluous persons from the chambers, in the presence of only two of his confidants, the Emchi [i.e., his personal physician] and the Soibon Khambo Lama [*\*gsol dpon mkhan po*], I began to outline the final goal of my mission. Having reported that the Imperial Government had received information from entirely reliable sources about the extremely negative attitude of the English towards his return to Lhasa and about the possibility of unrest in the country, which, without a doubt, the English could use for new interference in the affairs of Tibet, I warned him on behalf of the Ambassador [Pokotilov] about the need to postpone his return to Lhasa in the process. This news greatly embarrassed the Pontiff.<sup>109</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Russian government knew from the British government itself that the British rejected the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa. Since the latter—being bound to the Anglo-Chinese Agreement not to interfere with Tibet's administration—wanted Russia to give the same assurance, the British government approached the Russian authorities in June 1906 proposing to reach an agreement on mutual non-intervention in Tibetan affairs and recognition of China's suzerainty over Tibet.<sup>110</sup>

The Russian government reacted favorably to the British initiative in the expectation of concessions from Great Britain on other issues, such as in Persia and Afghanistan. As for the Dalai Lama issue, Pokotilov

<sup>109</sup> Kuzminskii 1906: 42. The Emchi Khambo (Tib. *em chi mkhan po*) Lama probably refers to the Dalai Lama's personal physician, Tekhang Jampa Tubwang (Bkras khang byams pa thub dbang, 1863?–1922), and the Soibon Khambo Lama possibly to the *gsol dpon mkhan po*, the food and tea steward. For more information, see Horlemann in this RET issue.

<sup>110</sup> Proposal for an agreement between Great Britain and Russia presented to the Russian Government by the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg on June 12 (May 30): 1) The Russian Government will doubtless recognize, as His Majesty's Government have done, the suzerainty of China over Thibet, engaging at the same time to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration; 2) It is clear that, by reason of its geographical position, Great Britain has a specific interest in Thibet in seeing that the external relations of Thibet are not disturbed by any other Power and I have no doubt that the Russian Government will recognise that fact; 3) The British and Russian Governments to severally engage not to send a representative to Lhasa; 4) The British and Russian Governments to agree not to seek or obtain, whether for themselves or for their subjects, any concession for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights in Thibet; 5) The British and Russian Governments agree no Thibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to them or to any of their subjects; 6) It is doubtless unnecessary to add that no Russian officials should be present in Tibet in any capacity whatsoever. See AFPRE, f. Mission in Peking, o. 761, d. 402: 221.

cautiously suggested a change in Russian policy towards the Tibetan Pontiff. He wrote to the RMFA in the context of the British proposals:

We could even promise Great Britain to influence the Dalai Lama in the sense of delaying his return to Tibet. I think that our presentation to the Pontiff in this sense would undoubtedly make a great impression on him and he would think hard before deciding to return to Lhasa under such circumstances. The Tibetan Pontiff is very optimistic about the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese treaty and undoubtedly strongly counts on our support in his upcoming struggle against English influence. The Chinese government is apparently concerned about our constant relations with the Pontiff and, mainly because of their fears, wants his speedy withdrawal from our borders and return to Lhasa, where, in the opinion of the Chinese, the Pontiff will be their ally against the aggressive plans of the British. It is unlikely, however, that the Chinese will decide to resort to force against the Pontiff, and he can undoubtedly, if he wishes, remain in Mongolia for an indefinite period of time. If we were to decide to abandon the plan that we have adhered to so far in relation to the Pontiff, namely, insisting on his speedy return to Lhasa, then we could use the Pontiff's continued presence within Mongolia to strengthen and develop our influence in that country. Currently, the Dalai Lama is in the area of Zain-khure [Zaya Bandida Monastery], 400 versts [427 km] southwest of Urga, planning to move from there to Tibet in August.<sup>111</sup>

Eventually, Alexander Izvolskii (1856–1919), who succeeded Lamsdorf as Foreign Minister, accepted Pokotilov's suggestion and Kuzminskii was sent to the Dalai Lama with the message quoted above. The latter, greatly surprised by the turn of events just before his final departure and after sharing all his concerns with Kuzminskii, decided to think carefully again and make a decision later. Thereafter, the Pontiff, clueless about the negotiations being underway between Great Britain and Russia, immediately raised the issue of the Buryat agents, asking to send them as soon as possible. He strongly petitioned to keep the Buryat escort with him as long as possible, and to place these soldiers at the locations planned for the Buryat agents. On the next day, the Dalai Lama's confidants informed Kuzminskii that the Pontiff would stay at the Sain Noyon headquarter for twenty days, as previously planned, while waiting for answers to his new petitions. Upon those results he would decide one way or the other. This meeting

<sup>111</sup> APPRE, Secret telegram of Pokotilov to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 18 (June 5), f. Mission in Peking, o. 761, d. 402: 212. On June 19 (June 6) there was a discussion on the Dalai Lama's fate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended by many friends and sympathizers of the Dalai Lama, such as Academician Sergei Oldenburg and Captain Petr Kozlov. According to these Tibet experts, the best place where the Tibetan Pontiff could temporary settle, was Kokonor. See Belov 2005: 95–98.

with Kuzminskii was the Dalai Lama's last direct engagement with an official Russian representative in Mongolia. On August 26 (August 13), 1906, the Tibetan Pontiff left the Sain Noyon Banner and thus, Khalkha Mongolia.

As for the Buryat military escort and the "Dalai Lama's agents," as Dorzhiev's confidants were called in the Russian sources, the story didn't end there. We know that the Russian government, in light of the Anglo-Russian negotiations, decided to put an end to relations between Russia and the Tibetan Pontiff in any "official or semi-official (Rus. *официозной*) form."<sup>112</sup> Therefore, the Buryat agents were dismissed from Russian official service and were not allowed to enter in the Dalai Lama's service either. As for the escort, on meeting with Arthur Nicolson (1849–1928), the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Izvolskii assured him that the Russian government "took all measures to ensure that the Buryats, volunteering to accompany the Dalai Lama, would not cross the border of Tibet under any circumstances."<sup>113</sup> However, the Buryats continued to assist the Pontiff unofficially while the RMFA turned a blind eye to this taking into consideration to use both of them—the Pontiff and the Buryats—in its further policy in Mongolia.<sup>114</sup>

After the Dalai Lama had left Khalkha Mongolia and arrived at Kumbum (Sku 'bum) Monastery in November 1906, the Buryat escort was no longer mentioned in Russian official records but continued to trouble both the Qing Court and the British. According to Wada Daichi, the Buryats continued to accompany the Dalai Lama from 1906 to 1908 and served as intermediaries between the Tibetan Pontiff and the Russians, as evidenced in Chinese and Japanese sources, and in the memoirs of Carl Gustaf Mannerheim (1867–1951), then a Finnish officer and Inner Asia explorer in the Russian army.<sup>115</sup> In fact, according to Amban Lian-yu 聯豫 (1856–?; posted to Lhasa from 1906 to 1912), there were still twenty-four persons dressed in Russian military uniforms who had one thousand Russian rifles at their disposal and trained Tibetans when the Dalai Lama stayed at Kumbum in 1909.<sup>116</sup> Very likely, the

<sup>112</sup> Shaumian 2017: 132.

<sup>113</sup> Secret letter of Izvolskii to the Russian Ambassador in London Benkendorf, June 16 (June 3), 1906, in Belov 2005: 93.

<sup>114</sup> Secret letter of Izvolskii to the Russian Ambassador in London Benkendorf, October 29 (October 16), 1906, in Belov 2005: 104–105.

<sup>115</sup> Mannerheim who later became the first president of Finland, met the Dalai Lama at Wutaishan while he was on expedition in Inner Asia. For more details and Japanese sources on the Buryat-Tibetan relations from 1906 to 1908, see Wada Daichi 2022: 76–75 and 2019: 72–81.

<sup>116</sup> *Eguo xuzhuangzhe ershisi ren ji Eqiang yiqian zhi, you Zang diaobing wang cao* 俄国戌装者二十四人及俄枪一千枝，由藏调兵往操. See Wada Daichi 2019: 79. I wish to

Dalai Lama intended to use these Buryats as military instructors in Tibet, as part of his reform plans for the Tibetan military.<sup>117</sup> Thus, the Buryats not only played a very important role during the Dalai Lama's troubled sojourn in Mongolia, but continued to do so in Amdo and at Mount Wutai (Wutaishan 五台山).

### *Conclusion*

In this study, I investigated the rather obscure case of the secret Buryat convoy attached to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama during his sojourn in Mongolia by analyzing rarely used Russian sources such as official documents from the AFPRE and the travel diaries of Petr Kozlov and Fedor Shcherbatskoi. These sources, indeed, confirm that the secret Buryat convoy was formed with the—unofficial—approval of the highest Russian authorities and Tsar Nicholas II. However, it has also been demonstrated that the Russian government's initial willingness to get more deeply involved in the Tibet issue by actively supporting the Dalai Lama politically—and practically through an official Russian military escort and military training for Tibetan soldiers—was finally given up in light of Russia's greater interest in concluding the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement. However, the Russian civil and military authorities in St. Petersburg and on the spot in Mongolia and China continued to be divided about the Tibet Question. It appears that, in order to make up for Russia's turnaround in her Tibet Policy, the issue of an escort for the Dalai Lama became such a heavy "moral obligation" that it led to the minimal consensus to assist the Dalai Lama at least covertly, thereby even risking new conflicts with the British and Qing China.

For the Dalai Lama, now disillusioned about the amount of support he could expect from Russia, the secret escort became of even greater significance: first, to successfully resist persistent attempts by the Qing Court to remove him from Mongolia and away from Russian influence, and second, to protect the Tibetan Pontiff from perceived Chinese and British threats to his life. As Wada Daichi remarked: "It is well known that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama has repeatedly ignored the Qing government's orders to leave, and there is no doubt that the presence of these Buryat Buddhists, despite 'modern diplomacy', was a major factor behind his ability to act in such an autonomous manner."<sup>118</sup>

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thank Wada-san for sharing Chinese official correspondence on this matter found in the Archives of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan.

<sup>117</sup> See B. Horlemann's article in this RET issue.

<sup>118</sup> Wada 2019: 80.

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