

Government of Bengal, with the countenance and support of the Imperial Government, had long ago dealt directly with the Lhasa authorities, Chinese and Tibetan matters might have been arranged more expeditiously and satisfactorily. At any rate, it cannot be safely assumed that the Central Government method is necessarily the best.

In this case, for instance, all that resulted was that the Chinese Government, in the Chefu Convention concluded three years later, undertook to protect any mission which should be sent to Tibet—an undertaking which was literally valueless, for when a mission was actually sent to Tibet they were unable to afford it the slightest protection, and the Chinese representative in Lhasa confessed to me in writing that he could not even get the Tibetans to give him transport to enable him to meet me.

The Government of Bengal had therefore to content themselves with improving the road inside our frontier, and with doing what they could on our side to entice and further trade.

But in 1885 a renewed effort was made to come to an understanding with the Tibetans. The brilliant Secretary of the Bengal Government, Colman Macaulay, visited the frontier to see if any useful relationship could be established with the Shigatse people by the route up the head of the Sikkim Valley. The Tashi Lama, who resides at Shigatse, had always been more friendly than the Lhasa people, and this seemed more promising. Macaulay saw a local Tibetan official from the other side, entered into friendly intercourse, and found, as Bogle and Turner had found, that apart from Chinese obstruction there was no objection on the part of the Tibetan people themselves to enter into friendly relationship. Macaulay was filled with enthusiasm. He threw his whole soul and energy into the matter. He secured the support of the Government of India. And, more important still, he fired the Secretary of State for India with ardour. Never before had such enthusiasm for improving our relations with Tibet been shown. And as it happened that this Secretary of State was the best