

The new Amban, or Assistant Amban, who was murdered, had been delaying his journey at Batang for some months, and his followers had been guilty of pillaging the Tibetans.

The considerable party which was still attached to the deposed Grand Lama had been active in intrigues against the Chinese officials, who, it was argued, had been proved by recent events quite incapable of safeguarding the privileges of the Lamaist body, and incompetent to exercise the rights of suzerain over Tibet—that is to say, the Lamas had realized the utter feebleness of the Chinese Government.

Before the outbreak at Batang the probably false rumour was spread about that the deposed Grand Lama had “descended from Heaven,” had arrived in Tachien-lu, and was about to return to Lhasa.

It was said that secret orders had been issued by the great lamaseries at Lhasa to Batang and other places for the murder of all Chinese and Europeans near the Tibetan frontier.

The Lamas about Litang had a further feud with the Chinese officials, who in the previous year seized the kenpu, or chief steward, of their lamasery and chopped off his head.

It may be noted that on March 30—that is, four days before the attack on Feng took place—Consul-General Campbell had written to our Minister saying that Feng was headstrong, and that it was evident that his plans must create serious disturbances unless the Chinese garrisons in East Tibet were strengthened.

Later, on May 12, Consul-General Goffe wrote from Chengtu that a Chinese official at Batang stated that the local tribes had no intention of rebelling against the Chinese Government, and that Feng had brought his death upon himself by his harsh and unpopular measures. The local chiefs also sent a petition to the Chinese Viceroy of Szechuan complaining of the various unpopular changes introduced by Feng, which had incensed the people beyond measure. They repudiated any intention of throwing off their allegiance to China, but they warned the Viceroy that any despatch of troops to Litang and