

Simla Accord (1914)

Convention between Great Britain, China and Tibet: Simla^{[1][2]}
(1914)

The plenipotentiaries of the high powers who signed the treaty

- related portals: United Kingdom, China, Tibet.

The convention was initialled and sealed on 3 July 1914. As this Convention was not signed and ratified by all three parties, the current Chinese Government does not consider itself bound by the terms of this convention.^[3]

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, being sincerely desirous to settle by mutual agreement various questions concerning the interests of their several States on the Continent of Asia, and further to regulate the relations of their several Governments, have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department;

His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, Monsieur Ivan Chen, Officer of the Order of the Chia Ho;

His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Lonchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje; who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and due form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in eleven Articles: —

Article 1.

The Conventions specified in the Schedule to the present Convention shall, except in so far as they may have been modified by, or may be inconsistent with or repugnant to, any of the provisions of the present Convention, continue to be binding upon the High Contracting Parties.

Article 2.

The Governments of Great Britain and China recognising that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and recognising also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country, and to abstain from interference in the administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which shall remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa.

The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

Article 3.

Recognising the special interest of Great Britain, in virtue of the geographical position of Tibet, in the existence of an effective Tibetan Government, and in the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and adjoining States, the Government of China engages, except as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, not to send troops into Outer Tibet, nor to station civil or military officers, nor to establish Chinese colonies in the country. Should any such troops or officials remain in Outer Tibet at the date of the signature of this Convention, they shall be withdrawn within a period not exceeding three months.

The Government of Great Britain engages not to station military or civil officers in Tibet (except as provided in the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet) nor troops (except the Agents' escorts), nor to establish colonies in that country.

Article 4.

The foregoing Article shall not be held to preclude the continuance of the arrangement by which, in the past, a Chinese high-official with suitable escort has been maintained at Lhasa, but it is hereby provided that the said escort shall in no circumstances exceed 300 men.

Article 5.

The Governments of China and Tibet engage that they will not enter into any negotiations or agreements regarding Tibet with one another, or with any other Power, excepting such negotiations and agreements between Great Britain and Tibet as are provided for by the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet and the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China.

Article 6.

Article III of the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China is hereby cancelled, and it is understood that in Article IX(d) of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet the term 'Foreign Power' does not include China.

Not less favourable treatment shall be accorded to British commerce than to the commerce of China or the most favoured nation.

Article 7.

(a) The Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 and 1908 are hereby cancelled.

(b) The Tibetan Government engages to negotiate with the British Government new Trade Regulations for Outer Tibet to give effect to Articles II, IV and V of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet without delay; provided always that such Regulations shall in no way modify the present Convention except with the consent of the Chinese Government.

Article 8.

The British Agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhasa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Tibetan Government regarding matters arising out of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet, which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.

Article 9.

For the purpose of the present Convention the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet, shall be as shown in red and blue respectively on the map attached hereto.^[4]

Nothing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions.

Article 10.

The English, Chinese and Tibetan texts of the present Convention have been carefully examined and found to correspond, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

Article 11.

The present Convention will take effect from the date of signature.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, three copies in English, three in Chinese and three in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this third day of July, A.D., one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Chinese date, the third day of the seventh month of the third year of the Republic, and the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Initial of the Lonchen Shatra (Initialed) A.H.M.

Seal of the Lonchen Shatra Seal of the British Plenipotentiary

[5]

Schedule

1. Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet, signed at Calcutta the 17th March 1890.
2. Convention between Great Britain and Tibet, signed at Lhasa the 7th September 1904.
3. Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet, signed at Peking the 27th April 1906.

The notes exchanged are to the following effect:—

1. It is understood by the High Contracting Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory.
2. After the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama by the Tibetan Government, the latter will notify the installation to the Chinese Government, whose representative at Lhasa will then formally communicate to His Holiness the titles consistent with his dignity, which have been conferred by the Chinese Government.
3. It is also understood that the selection and appointment of all officers in Outer Tibet will rest with the Tibetan Government.
4. Outer Tibet shall not be represented in the Chinese Parliament or in any other similar body.
5. It is understood that the escorts attached to the British Trade Agencies in Tibet shall not exceed seventy-five per centum of the escort of the Chinese Representative at Lhasa.
6. The Government of China is hereby released from its engagements under Article III of the Convention of March 17, 1890, between Great Britain and China, to prevent acts of aggression from the Tibetan side of the Tibet-Sikkim frontier.
7. The Chinese high official referred to in Article IV will be free to enter Tibet as soon as the terms of Article III have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of representatives of the three signatories to this Convention, who will investigate and report without delay.

Initial of the Lonchen Shatra (Initialed) A.H.M.

Seal of the Lonchen Shatra Seal of the British Plenipotentiary

[6]

Anglo-Tibetan Declaration

3 July 1914^[7]

We, the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Tibet, hereby record the following declaration to the effect that we acknowledge the annexed convention as initialled to be binding on the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet,^[8] and we agree that so long as the Government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid convention she will be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom.

In token whereof we have signed and sealed this declaration, two copies in English and two in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this 3rd day of July, A.D. 1914, corresponding with the Tibetan date the 10th day of the 5th month of the Wood Tiger year.

(Seal of the Dalai Lama)

A. Henry McMahon British Plenipotentiary (Seal of the British Plenipotentiary)

(Signature and seal of the Lonchen Shetra)

(Seal of the Drepung Monastery) (Seal of the Sera Monastery) (Seal of the Gaden Monastery)

(Seal of the National Assembly)

Notes

[1] McKay, pp. 95–98

[2] Goldstein pp.832–

[3] von Overbeck, Alfred; p.443

[4] "The two maps (27 April 1914 and 3 July 1914) illustrating the boundaries bear the full signature of the Tibetan Plenipotentiary; the first bears the full signature of the Chinese Plenipotentiary also; the second bears the full signatures along with seals of both Tibetan and British Plenipotentiaries. (V. Photographic reproductions of the two maps in *Atlas of the North Frontier of India*, New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs 1960)" (Sinha, p. 37)

[5] The note above originated from the Foreign Office as Aitchison (which was published under the authority of the Foreign and Political Department, Government of India (Gupta, p. 524)) did not include the text from the Anglo-Tibetan Declaration:

The first volume of Aitchison in which this note appeared in was a 1936 edition that had a backdated publication date of 1929 (*International Affairs*, Volume 51, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Blackwell, 1975. p. 287).

[6] At this point the McKay source contains the following:

which seems to be a reference to the next section "Anglo-Tibetan Declaration" which is sourced from the "Text of the Anglo-Tibetan Declaration as recorded on page 140 of the Report of the International Commission of Jurists entitled *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, (Geneva 1960)" (Sinha pp. 36,37). It is not clear that the paragraph appears in the original text of the accord.

[7] "Text of the Anglo-Tibetan Declaration as recorded on page 140 of the Report of the International Commission of Jurists entitled *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, (Geneva 1960)" (Sinha pp. 36,37)

[8] "Tibetan signature: It is appropriate to point out that the Tibetans do not and cannot initial. Both their custom and script rule out initialling as known in the West. The Tibetan signs or not; for a Tibetan there is no third category between the two.

In affixing signature to a treaty or such state paper a Tibetan dignitary has to prefix in his own hand his lineage (monastic or lay) and his rank (and/or designation). In keeping with this tradition the Tibetan Plenipotentiary at the Simla Conference prefixed his signature with such details as he suffixed it with the seal."(Sinha p. 37)

References

- Gupta, Karunakar. *The McMahon Line 1911-45: The British Legacy* (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/652324>), *The China Quarterly*, No. 47 (Jul. - Sep., 1971), pp. 521-545, Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Stable URL: . pp. 524,531 ([http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=wxCoAAAIAAJ&q="Plenipotentiary+was+not+signed+or+rati+ed+by+the+Chinese+Government"&dq="Plenipotentiary+was+not+signed+or+rati+ed+by+the+Chinese+Government"&pgis=1](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=wxCoAAAIAAJ&q=))
- McKay, Alex. *The History of Tibet*, Routledge, 2003, ISBN 0415308445, 9780415308441 pp. 95–98 (<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=3BPsOQe654IC&pg=PA97#PPA95,M1>)
- Namoyal, Gyalmo Hope; Gyaltshen T. Sherab; Sinha, Nirmal C. (editors). *Bulletin of Tibetology, Gangtok Sikkim* (http://thdl.org/texts/reprints/bot/bot_03_01_full.pdf), Vol III No. 1. 21 February 1966, Director Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gantok.
 - Sinha, Nirmal C. Article " Was the Simla Convention not signed? (http://www.thlib.org/static/reprints/bot/bot_03_01_04.pdf)" pp. 33–38
- Goldstein, Melvyn, and Rimpoche, Gelek. *A history of modern Tibet: 1913-1951, the demise of the Lamaist state*, University of California Press, 1989, ISBN 0520075900, 9780520075900. pp.832– ([http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Upwq0I-wm7YC&pg=PA834&lpg=PA834&dq="the+British+Agent+who+resides+at+](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Upwq0I-wm7YC&pg=PA834&lpg=PA834&dq=)

Gyantse"&source=bl&ots=p6FSsBpFSe&sig=yqdImTqmo_TJHyHoBK3CXyWv_no&hl=en&ei=8jvGSaCbKuTGjAfi-IyGCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=2&ct=result#PPA832,M1)

- von Overbeck, Alfred; *et al. Recueil Des Cours: Volume 132 (1971/I)*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1972 ISBN 9028600523, 9789028600522. p.443 (http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=zRechsi9RLMC&pg=PA443&dq=It+is+understood+by+the+High+Contracting+Parties+that+Tibet+forms+part+of+Chinese+territory.&as_brr=3) Inconsistencies in the treaty and notes.

Article Sources and Contributors

Simla Accord (1914) *Source:* <http://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?oldid=2904072> *Contributors:* Billinghurst, Carlo58s, PBS, Rédacteur Tibet, 7 anonymous edits

Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors

Image:Wikisource-logo.svg *Source:* <http://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=File:Wikisource-logo.svg> *License:* logo *Contributors:* Guillom, INeverCry, Jarekt, Leyo, MichaelMaggs, NielsF, Rei-artur, Rocket000

License

Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0
[//creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)
