

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #21D – Pasang Tsewang
May 23, 2012

The Tibet Oral History Project serves as a repository for the memories, testimonies and opinions of elderly Tibetan refugees. The oral history process records the words spoken by interviewees in response to questions from an interviewer. The interviewees' statements should not be considered verified or complete accounts of events and the Tibet Oral History Project expressly disclaims any liability for the inaccuracy of any information provided by the interviewees. The interviewees' statements do not necessarily represent the views of the Tibet Oral History Project or any of its officers, contractors or volunteers.

This translation and transcript is provided for individual research purposes only. For all other uses, including publication, reproduction and quotation beyond fair use, permission must be obtained in writing from: Tibet Oral History Project, P.O. Box 6464, Moraga, CA 94570-6464, United States.

Copyright © 2014 Tibet Oral History Project.



TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #21D
2. Interviewee: Pasang Tsewang
3. Age: 74
4. Date of Birth: 1938
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Phari
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1974
9. Date of Interview: May 23, 2012
10. Place of Interview: Hotel Tibet, Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India
11. Length of Interview: 3 hr 31 min
12. Interviewer: Matthew Akester
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Ronny Novick
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Pasang Tsewang hails from Phari, near the board with Bhutan. His family farmed and paid taxes to the government of Tibet. His father also engaged in trade between Kalimpong in India and Phari. He purchased goods in India which he then traded with nomads for wool and butter.

The Chinese appeared in Phari when Pasang Tsewang was 12 years old. He recounts that the Chinese first lured Tibetans with gifts and silver coins and assisted them in their daily chores. He goes on to relate in depth the larger acts employed by the Chinese to befriend Tibetans, such as opening a hospital, starting schools, constructing roads, giving aid to the poor and salaries to the wealthy. After the initial friendliness, the Chinese revealed their plans to “liberate” Tibetans and confiscated land and possessions from many townspeople, including Pasang Tsewang. He describes witnessing and participating in *thamzing* ‘struggle sessions.’ He also gives an account of the extensive interrogations, tortures, forced labor, starvation and executions that the Chinese carried out. He himself was imprisoned for 2.5 years and forced to study Communist doctrines.

Pasang Tsewang gives a vivid account of the underground association that was established with the objective of escorting His Holiness the Dalai Lama back to Tibet. He describes the founders and activities, which were mainly tracking the movement of Chinese troops. After eight years of secret meetings, 21 members were imprisoned after the association was discovered.

Topics Discussed:

Childhood memories, education, first appearance of Chinese, oppression under Chinese, imprisonment, forced labor, brutality/torture, *thamzing*, commune system.

TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

Interview #21D

Interviewee: Pasang Tsewang

Age: 74, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Matthew Akester

Interview Date: May 23, 2012

[Note: In Interview #21D, the interviewer occasionally directs questions to the interpreter, who then asks the questions of the interviewee.]

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:07

Interviewee #21D: My name is Pasang Tsewang.

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked us to record your experiences, so that we can share your memories with many generations of Tibetans, the Chinese and the rest of the world. Your memories will help us to document the true history, culture and beliefs of the Tibetan people. Do you give your permission for the Tibet Oral History Project to use this interview?

#21D: I offer you my permission.

Q: Thank you and during this interview if you wish to take a break, please say so.

#21D: [Nods]

Q: If you do not wish to answer a question, you can say that you do not wish to answer it.

#21D: [Nods]

Q: If this interview was shown in Tibet, China or anywhere else in the world, would it pose a risk or problem for you?

#21D: Initially when I left Tibet to come to exile, I had the hope that the people of the world will know the details of my story. So I do not have any objection to it being shown anywhere.

Q: Thank you. So *gen-la* ‘respectful term for teacher’ is from Phari Zong ‘District.’

#21D: Phari. Phari Zong.

Q: Is it Phari Zong?

00:01:38

#21D: I come from Phari Zong. In the olden days it was called Phari Zong but after the Chinese arrived, Phari is a *ten* 'township.' It is called Phari Ten and came under Dromo Shen 'County' and Shigatse Panchue 'Prefecture.'

Q: Where's Takdhogang?

#21D: Yes?

Q: Where's Takdhogang?

#21D: Takdhogang?

Q: Yes.

#21D: I do not know Takdhogang.

Q: The monastery?

#21D: The monastery is Dakdhogang. The monastery is Dak-dho-gang.

Q: Where is Dakdhogang located?

#21D: Dakdhogang is located at a distance of about five minutes from where I lived. It is located atop a small hill.

Q: So it's very close to town.

00:02:58

#21D: Yes, it is close. Actually there are three monasteries in my region.

Q: Just to be clear. His village is the town of Phari, not a village outside Phari?

#21D: It is Phari.

Q: Can he tell us those three monasteries?

#21D: Samdup Choeling, Richung Pothoe and Gonpa Gung.

Q: Did his family have any particular connection with one of them?

#21D: We had much connection with the monasteries because my parents were very religious and frequently made offerings of tea and also had many prayers read to overcome various obstacles and for good fortune.

Q: So his household was a farming household?

#21D: My parents were basically farmers and were taxpayers to the Tibetan Government. [They] also dealt in trade.

Q: Could you tell us something about trade?

#21D: My father used to come to Kalimpong in India to purchase soap, likewise sugar, tea leaves, likewise candles, likewise fabrics, likewise things that Tibetans required and took them to Phari.

Q: Was this a profitable trade? And was it taxed?

00:06:21

#21D: The profit was good depending upon the situation because there were not many traders. Since there were few traders, there was no fear of the goods not being sold. All the goods were things that the nomads and farmers needed to use from time to time.

Q: Did you have to pay tax?

#21D: There was no tax payment.

Q: Does he have anything to say about the wool trade in Phari at that time?

#21D: The goods that my parents bought from India were taken to the nomadic sites close to Phari. [Father] went to trade in places like Dhulnag, Chiprung, and other nearby nomadic sites. In return [he] collected butter and wool. The wool was unloaded in Phari where it was rolled and packed and sent to Kalimpong. Besides wool, there was yak tail and yak hair. Such things were collected and traded for goods in India.

Q: *Gen-la* was 12 years old when the Chinese came; Chinese army first came to Tibet—12 or 13 years old. What's his first memory?

#21D: I must have been around 10 when the Chinese first arrived in Tibet. When the Chinese first appeared, though they were soldiers they were gentle, dressed in yellow [khaki], spoke softly, seemed good-natured, gave candies to the children, helped the old people fetch water and extended such help. At that time I felt that these people were very good.

At the same time [the Chinese] formed relations with the rich families. They became friends with the rich families and gave them monthly salaries in the form of *dhayen* 'Chinese silver coins' and served feasts. There were dances during the parties. I felt that these people were maintaining very good relations with everybody.

Q: How did they actually settle in Phari when they first arrived? What did they do? Was it military camps? Did they build buildings or how was their presence set up?

00:12:07

#21D: When they first arrived in Phari there was no military camp as such because they set up tents and lived in them. [They] also hired empty houses belonging to rich families and lived there.

When the Chinese appeared, they [drove] horses, mules and camels. [They] were on foot and carried loads. There were no motor roads then.

Q: He said he was 10 years old. Does he remember actually what year this was, like Tibetan year?

#21D: I think it was 1949 or 1950 but I am not clear about it.

Q: So when they arrived in Phari, presumably they also went down to Dromo and set up there. Can you tell us about how they entered Dromo and set up on the border?

#21D: After arriving in Phari, [they] also went to Dromo. They travelled between Phari and Dromo and their presence filled every region until Gyangtse. Gyangtse, Khangmar, likewise Phari, Dromo...all these regions were overrun with Chinese.

Q: Apart from getting involved in road construction, what else did he and people like him have to do with the Chinese at that time in those early years?

00:15:02

#21D: At that time it was constructing roads and besides, the Chinese formed a youth organization in Tibet. Likewise [the Chinese] conferred titles like *uyon* and *tsugdang* on the leaders. They assembled for meetings at times though I would not know the agenda. At times [the Chinese] went to the homes of the poor people and asked questions—like you are doing now—“Who is your leader? What work did the leader make you do? What are the problems that you face?” They asked such questions.

Q: Can he say who these leaders were like specifically and what was their attitude towards having these positions?

#21D: The *uyon* was someone called Nyima Tsering, the *tsugdang* was Tashi and Nyima Logya was the *turing* ‘Chinese-appointed leader.’

Q: Who were they in Phari?

#21D: [They] were from poor families, not families that were rich.

Q: Earlier he said that the Chinese soldiers also made connections with the well-off families and gave them money and feasted them and so on.

#21D: The rich families were Gapshi, Sipon, Rading, likewise Ngodup Khangsar—there were two Ngodup Khangsar [families]—likewise Gengkhor, likewise there was Dhiwa, Tsarong and Pondha. There were many such rich families and traders.

Q: What did they do for the salaries that they were given and the positions? What kind of positions?

00:19:35

#21D: [They] were not given any positions as such. However, as we look back now, in order to familiarize with [the rich families], the Chinese questioned a family, say for instance the Sipon, “What does Rading do? What does Dhiwa do? How many subjects are under them? What is the size of their land holding?” [The Chinese] cross-questioned by asking one [family] about the other. Initially the Chinese came to the people and questioned them extensively.

Q: And how did people feel about that? What was being said at the time among people?

#21D: To speak honestly about the actual circumstances, some families were facing problems in Tibet at that time. There were oppressions to a certain degree because there was a man tax and likewise, the *dhuwa namdhue*, ‘smoke making’ [a tax on every family unit that cooked], which meant that during the time of removing manure and sowing the fields of [a rich] family, such taxes were imposed on poor families.

For example, taxes were imposed in springtime during sowing season and autumn time during the harvest. There were no wages paid for the work but food was provided.

There were many different types of [wealthy] families. Some of them had 10, 15 or 20 [poor] families working for them while others had 30-40 families that attended to their work. Depending upon the size [of land holdings (?)] of the [rich] families, they were assigned various numbers of [poor] families to work for them.

Q: So when the Chinese came to these people and asked them many questions, would it be fair to say that they were interested or hopeful that they saw this as a possibility of change in their society or how would you describe their attitude?

00:24:16

#21D: There was not any hope [from the Chinese] at that time. However, if asked a question, one must give an answer whether it was good or bad. However, the Chinese at that time stated, “We have come to help you. We have come to liberate you, to rise up against the feudal lords.” [They] made this announcement.

Q: What did people say about that?

#21D: They [the Chinese] established a hospital when there were none in my region. There was just a small Indian clinic and none else. The Chinese started a hospital; likewise a school, likewise built roads, likewise gave aids to the poor and paid salaries to the big leaders. When such things were done, people felt that they had found someone that was a great help and highly benevolent to the Tibetans. “[We] have come to solve your problems,” [the Chinese said].

Q: There was still an Indian presence in Phari at that time?

#21D: There were Indian traders in Phari then. Then there were Nepalese and Bhutanese traders.

Q: But an Indian government presence, like the clinic was set up by the Indian government and was there a representative of the Indian government?

00:27:24

#21D: The building belonged to the Indian government. Later the Chinese used it.

Q: The building that housed the clinic?

#21D: Yes. Later the Chinese started a veterinary hospital to treat cows and other animals. At that time they used to take medical bags and visit the villages to give treatment.

Q: Does he remember when the Indians left Phari?

#21D: The Indians left in 1959 after the Chinese occupied Tibet and the Tibetan government collapsed and the Chinese took over everything.

Q: He's talking about the Indian traders and I'm talking about the government representatives of the government.

#21D: At that time there was no Indian representative in Phari. [He] was in Dromo. There was no representative in Phari. There were Indian postmen in Phari and a post office. There was also a telegraph office.

Q: Does he remember when that was closed?

#21D: Everyone returned following the [occupation] of 1959. Then the Chinese did the telegraph work as well as ran the hospital. There were no Indians to be seen and no Indian workers.

Q: *Gen-la* was talking about a youth association. Did he join it? What was that about?

00:30:41

#21D: I never joined the youth association. Though I wanted to join it, my old parents did not like the Chinese at all. [Laughs]

The Chinese gave me an opportunity to go to China. There was a Tibetan teacher who worked for the Chinese called Gen Chonphel-la. [He] was a teacher in the school. He told me, "It would be good if you go to study in China. Do you want to go?" I agreed, "I will go to China if permitted." The parents said, "[We] will never send you to China. If you go, you will be given horse meat, dog meat and donkey meat. You will not have the mind to practice the Tibetan religion. Hence, you cannot go to China." And in that way I was barred. At that time numerous children from Phari and Dromo were sent to China.

Q: To school?

#21D: Yes, to school in China.

Q: If he didn't join the youth association, who did?

#21D: The majority of those that joined were children of the rich families.

Q: Does that mean that the rich families didn't have the same attitude as his parents?

00:33:27

#21D: It was different. At that time the Chinese were treating them very well and they must have had the feeling that they had found people who were helping them well. Everybody felt happy to see the Chinese as they were being given *dhayen*. Everybody was happy. [Laughs]

Q: What did the youth association do?

#21D: The youth association did not have any work to do. It was just a youth association that was formed. At times they were taught Chinese script and Chinese language. Furthermore, [members of] the youth association and the Chinese went together to help in fieldwork, like harvesting, transporting manure and other such types of work.

Q: Were there any other associations like women's associations or patriotic associations or religious or anything like that?

#21D: There was no women's association. No other except the youth association.

Q: Did people from Phari go to Shigatse prefecture to do, to take up posts in the government or something like that?

#21D: Following the Chinese' arrival in 1959 and just before the Reformation, 15-20 children from Phari were sent to school in Gyantse. Not just Phari but there were numerous children from Dromo, likewise from Kala, Kham and other counties.

Q: So this is before 1959 or after?

00:36:47

#21D: After '59.

Q: Before we get there, there was something happened in 1959, so did the situation in Phari continue like this after 1959? Was there any change before that?

#21D: There was no other change prior to 1959. Children belonging to the rich families were sent to China.

Q: Did the traders in Phari continue trading as normal?

#21D: Prior to '59, there was the opportunity to trade as usual. There was nothing untoward.

Q: How did all this change?

#21D: When we were sent to study, we had no knowledge what we were to study or what we would be taught. The school was called Gyangtse Yana Lekhung Tsungchilinka Sidhon Lapta. We [Tibetans] believe that we originated from a compassionate monkey father and an ogress mother. The Chinese said that we had originated from a *ta* and not from the union between an ogress and a monkey. [They] taught us that [we] evolved from a *ta*. The main reason for teaching it was to educate [us] how the Tibetan race came about and how the kings became [kings]. [They] taught that. The reason given was that the Tibetan kings usurped people's wealth and suppressed them to become kings. [They] taught this.

Q: What's a *ta*?

00:40:12

#21D: *Ta* is a monkey that is like a human, which stands up and is hairy. It is like a human. It is not actually a monkey but looks like a monkey.

Q: He means that people evolved from the apes or something like that.

#21D: They put up posters of how a human evolved from a *ta*. When the *ta* stood up, it used the heel part of the feet like this [gestures off camera]. If we make a baby stand up, [it] will not stand on its legs like this but use this part [heel]. [They] taught such things.

Q: Sorry. Can we have the name of the school again?

#21D: Gyangtse Yana Lekhung Tsungchilinka Sidhon Lapta. The teacher was the wife of Tangchiwu, a military leader in Tibet called Li Goudrog and spoke exceptional Tibetan. She was our teacher and spoke very good Tibetan.

Q: Tangchi...?

#21D: Tangchiwu, a senior military commander.

Q: And how did he come to be sent to this school?

00:42:35

#21D: It was once again the teacher Chonphel-*la* who had told me to go to China. [He] said, "If you do not go to China, it will be good for you to go to Gyangtse to study. Do you want to study?" [I] replied, "I want to study. Please explain to my parents to send me to school." And then I was sent there.

Q: And his parents agreed.

#21D: [They] agreed and sent [me].

Q: How long did he stay there?

#21D: We were six months at the school in Gyangtse.

After six months, once again a group of children were sent to China. Our teacher Li Goudrog told me to go. [She] called me *shaokhoay* as I was short in stature. [She] told me to go to school [in China]. I told her I would go. Then I wrote to my parents, “I am being sent to China. I shall go to China to study.” My parents replied, “If you go to school, there is no one to take care of us. Do not go [to China]. Come back.”

At that time the Tibetan currency was replaced by the Chinese *renminbi* since the Chinese stopped the circulation of Tibetan currency. [Parents further mentioned,] “We received *renminbi* for the coins and the old notes. [The Chinese] did not give replacements for the new notes claiming that they are rebel money. A lot of notes have been rendered useless. Do not plan on going to China but come back.” So I could not go to China. “We have not received quite a sum of money. Do not go to China. Come back.” Saying that, I was called back.

In my place a girl called Namgyal who too hailed from Phari was sent [to school in China]. On the day that they were to leave [for China], they [the Chinese] assembled all the students. They [students] were dressed in long coats and fur caps and were given three stacks of *dhayen* [indicates stacks in left palm] as travelling expenses. I felt a great loss then, “How nicely they are being treated but my parents do not allow me.” We were sent to see them off to school.

Q: And what happened when he got home?

00:47:58

#21D: When I returned home, the Chinese gave [me] work. The work involved serving tea at the office and delivering letters. [I] did it for a few months. After a few months, those of us in Phari that had been to school gathered and were given the name *hurtsonchen* ‘activists.’ “You are activists and must collect the knives and guns. [You] must collect all the knives and guns from the families in Phari.”

Then we were divided into groups of two, three or four and visited every family informing them to surrender their swords and guns if they possessed them.

Earlier when I was living in Gyangtse, [the Chinese] had captured influential people and imprisoned them. I saw the first *thamzing* ‘struggle session’ in Gyangtse when the students were taken there.

Q: Did he know who those people were?

#21D: [I] witnessed the *thamzing* of Phala. Then [I] witnessed the wife of Dewa Nyishap of Gyangtse being subjected to *thamzing*.

How the *thamzing* was conducted was like this. “The wife of Dewa Nyishap has oppressed the people such that even her food is cooked and served by the people. If made to cook, she would not know how to cook. [She] has led a life of making people serve her. Likewise, they have numerous tenants. The tenants are imposed with labor tax and they [Nyishap family] utilize the revenue. The tenants get nothing but clothing and food.” The tenants thus conducted the *thamzing* claiming, “We have suffered” and slapped, pulled [her] hair and kicked [her]. [Charges] were similar with Phala that he had oppressed the people.

Q: Did this also happen in Phari after he returned to Phari?

00:53:36

#21D: After we had collected the guns, people were called for a meeting. After people had gathered [the Chinese said], “The reformation will start. The three great *ngadak* ‘leaders’ of Tibet have been overthrown.” The three great *ngadak* were the monasteries, the aristocrats and likewise the private [families]. [They] said that these three had been overthrown. “Now it is the time for the farmer serfs to rise,” thus it was announced. I told you about the wealthy families like Serpon, Dhengo and Gapshi; all the influential people were given education [political indoctrination] and jailed in a house.

“It is the time for the farmer serfs to rise and the three great mountains have been overthrown. The Dalai Lama has escaped to India. Hence, you can reveal all the oppression that you have suffered,” such things were announced to the people.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: When you said the reformation had started in the previous translation, didn’t he say *shungyuk*? Do you remember what he said?

Q: So did he participate in this *thamzing* process? He was an activist, right?

#21D: Yes, [I] was among those that participated. The reason I participated in the *thamzing* was because when other people declared their sufferings with great feelings, you hear it and feel deeply for them. Moreover I, as the child of a *telpa* ‘tax payer’ and having lived as one from the age of 13 after the demise of my parents—I had witnessed the sufferings caused by the leaders then, like chiding or beating someone if things were not done immediately. [I] participated in the *thamzing* because of the misery suffered by them.

The one on whom I carried out *thamzing* was a representative of the district office called Tsenyi Gyaltzen. [I] carried out [*thamzing*] on him because Tsenyi Gyaltzen was a very aggressive man. [He] was quick in giving lashings and other things. Therefore, after what the other people said about him, I had to carry out *thamzing* for the sufferings he had caused. [I] participated in the *thamzing*.

After arriving in India, I related about carrying out the *thamzing* to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Q: I don't think he told us that his parents had died in the meanwhile?

00:59:39

#21D: [My] father had passed away when I was little. I just about knew his name. Mother passed away when [I] was 13 years old. When mother passed away, I took the responsibility of discharging the [labor] tax at the age of 13. There were many people in my region who know about it.

According to people, my father was a very capable person. [He] was good in trade and a very hard worker. I had never seen [my] father. However, when my parents passed away, the economic situation was sound because we owned two plots of land, one in Phari Thanka and another at Khambu Chutsen, which was at a distance of six hours journey from Phari. In this land [at Khambu Chutsen] one could grow potatoes and barley. There was also a house. In Phari, one could only reap grass but no grains.

[We] possessed animals like *dzo* 'animal bred between a yak and a cow' and oxen. However, when the Reformation began, except for some cows, everything was taken away when the People's Commune was formed. Lands, agricultural tools, everything including the two plots of land were taken away. Therefore, except for a cow or two, I did not get anything.

Q: I think we just need to go back a bit and make it clear who were the parents that he wrote to when he was at school and who told him to come back.

#21D: I had [my] mother, grandfather and grandmother. There was no father.

Q: I think we have his date of birth wrong. He would have been 13 in 1951. What was the name for this, what we call the People's Commune, Mimang Kongri?

#21D: Mimang Kongri.

Q: Mimang Kongri?

#21D: Kongri. In Tibetan it is called Mimang Chikhang 'People's Commune.'

Q: Is Kongri Chinese?

#21D: Kongri.

Q: Mimang Chikhang?

01:04:05

#21D: All the lands were cultivated collectively and so also the output.

Q: Did this happen at the same time as Mangtso Choegyur 'Revolution of Democracy'?

#21D: The People's Commune was established soon after the implementation of the Mangtso Choegyur. It was in 1960.

Crops did not grow well after the People's Commune was started. The government allotted half a kilogram of grain—it was equal to one *gyama*—per day for those people that performed hard labor. People that did not do hard work did not receive even half a kilogram. Likewise the butter ration was half a *gyama* per month. Likewise tea was rationed at half a *gyama* per month.

In view of such conditions, [we] faced immeasurable problems. [Cries] People faced problems on account of lack of food, which had never happened during the old system. Numerous people suffered diarrhea and died for want of food. Even if one had money, there was nowhere to purchase [food]. There was only one government shop in the whole of Phari.

According to the government plan, [each person] was entitled to five *pungri* [appropriate amount for a pair of pants and a shirt] of cloth per year. Nobody ever bought any fabric; there were patches upon patches—if this were the pair of pants [points to pants], there would be a white patch here and at times a blue patch. Everyone wore patched dresses and no one had clothes to wear like we do here. [Becomes emotional]

01:08:08

Looking at the situation at the time of the Chinese' appearance and the situation after the Reformation of 1959 did [I] at last realize that the Chinese were bad and that what they spoke and what they did were different.

At the time of the *thamzing*, [I] got the feeling that the Tibetan aristocrats were bad. However, during the period the Chinese inflicted such suffering, [I] felt that they were worse than the Tibetan aristocrats because though the Tibetan aristocrats did cause some suffering then, there was never any case of starvation deaths. If you had money, you could buy any quantity of food from anywhere. After the Chinese imposed Reformation and established the People's Commune, apart from the quota, one did not have anything more than half a kilogram [of grains] even if one was not satiated that day nor could one take a loan from someone. How could someone loan you when he did not have enough to eat?

In view of such conditions, during plowing of the fields there were many instances of people picking up and eating round white worms that lived underground. Numerous people also ate green plants that led to diarrhea. [I] came to detest the Chinese after witnessing such things. I thought to myself, "Oh, the Chinese have created such a bad situation."

I worked for the Chinese in 1960 and '61 at Dromo, at the Dromo Gako Lekhung 'Customs Office of Dromo.' After working for two years at the Dromo Gako Lekhung, upon orders from Liu Ruchi 'Chairman' [Liu Shaoqui, deputy leader under Mao Zedong] that there were fewer farmers and more soldiers and craftsmen, so farmers were to go back to farming. Hence, [I] was told to return home and work in the fields. There was someone called Shiu Ruchi in Dromo County [office] and he said, "After you return home and

should you face any problems, you must approach the People's Office of the Prefecture and they will solve your problems.”

I was not given my share of grain quota and did not have *tsampa* to eat. So I approached the then head of the prefecture that was someone called Suen Ruchi. He told me to approach the People's Office of the Shang 'Village' and the Shang Office in turn directed [me] to the Durig Lekhung 'Office of Grains.' Thus [my] problem remained unsolved.

Since [they] did not solve [my] problem, I spoke about this at a meeting of the people, “Initially when the Chinese appeared they said they had come to liberate the farmer serfs and to uplift [them]. Similarly when we were relieved from work, Shiu Ruchi said, ‘Whatever problems you have will be solved by the People's Office of the Prefecture.’ Therefore, we approached the People's Office of the Prefecture, ‘We have nothing to eat for many days. Please give us food and solve our problem.’ The *chue* told [me] to tell the *shang* and the *shang* directed [me] to the Durik Lekhung and nobody has solved the problem. Hence, from my observation what [the Chinese] are doing is similar to giving *buram* ‘brown candy’ to the eyes and feeding *laja* to the mouth.

Q: *Buram* to the eyes...

#21D: Showing *buram* to the eyes and feeding *laja* to the mouth.

Q: What's *laja*?

#21D: *Laja* is what you use to seal something. You know putting a seal on something?

Q: The black one?

#21D: The *laja* that is used to seal something. It looks like *buram*.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Goko means...?

Q: Is it Dromo Gako?

#21D: Dromo Gako Lekhung is...when goods are brought from India and goods from Tibet are taken to...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Customs.

Q: Liu Ruchi means? Dromo Zong?

#21D: Yes?

Q: Who was Liu Ruchi?

#21D: Liu Ruchi was the head of Dromo County.

Q: What does *ruchi* mean?

#21D: *Ruchi* means the highest leader.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Chairman. Head of the county or government in Dromo.

Q: Was his name Liu?

#21D: Yes, his name was Liu and *ruchi* was his designation.

Q: Did he say that everybody must go to work in the fields...

#21D: Yes, we were sent to work in the fields, as it was said that there were fewer farmers and more office workers. Hence, we were to work in the fields and were sent there. I was sent to work in the fields from the Customs Office.

01:16:53

Q: Isn't *chue* and *shang* the same?

#21D: If we take Dharamsala and McLeod Ganj for instance, they are *chue*.

Q: If [you] take Phari for instance...

#21D: *Shang* is different area.

Q: How was it in Phari? Were there a *chue* 'prefecture' and a *shang* 'village'?

#21D: There were three *shang* under Phari *chue*.

01:17:55

Q: [*Laja*]... with a seal?

#21D: You have the *laja* that you [heat] with a candle and it becomes a red stamp on the cloth. After making this statement, I was grilled, "You have to prove how the Communist Government under Mao Zedong has shown *buram* to the eye and sealed the mouth with *laja*." I was assaulted and subjected to *thamzing* twice. [I] was not imprisoned then because numerous [people] were finally turning against the Chinese; many came to hate them.

After that in 1962, the Dheydhon Tsokpa 'Welfare Association' had been started everywhere in Tibet. It was also started in Phari and [I] became a member. At that time Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen, Serpon Tsenam and Rading Dungyi Topgyal were still in prison. They said, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama has secured a seat in the world. China has not secured a seat. Therefore, the world is greatly supporting His Holiness the Dalai Lama." There was an uprising in 1962 in Mon Tawang in India. "India is attempting to wage a war. There could be a war in our region. For instance, there could be a war in Dromo. Should there be a war, what can we do to help India win the battle? If there is a great

attack from India, [we] should undertake to infiltrate the [Chinese] army, destroy offices, cut telephone lines; [we] must carry out such activities. If India wins the war, His Holiness the Dalai Lama can be escorted to Tibet.” Thus the association was formed.

Q: They had been sent to prison. Which prison were they sent to?

01:22:20

#21D: Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen and the others were sent to the prison at...Twenty-one of us were captured at 3 o'clock Peking time in the night of the 26th day of the 12th Tibetan lunar month of 1970.

Q: Were [they] captured that night? In which prison were they...?

#21D: [We] were captured. The reason for apprehending the 21 men was because the Welfare Association was discovered. The reason for the disclosure of the Welfare Association was a member of the association, a man from Amdo called Lowang. The husband was called Lowang and the wife was Sangay. Usually we held our secret meetings at the house of Serpon Tsenam. Serpon Tsenam's house was located at the edge of Phari. [Makes a cone shape of left-hand fingers] One could go this way or enter from the door or gain entry by climbing over a wall [points to three directions on the cone]. [We] used to hold meetings in this house.

In the year 1965 countless number of troops moved from Lhasa to Dromo. The army vehicles plied day and night transporting artilleries and horses and mules. We used to report about what the vehicles carried, whether horses, artilleries or soldiers at the meeting. We reported everything at the secret meetings to Serpon Tsenam, Rading Topgyal and Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen.

Serpon Tsenam was an *ngatsab* 'deputy leader,' a political leader, a Chinese political leader who was held in esteem by the Chinese. Serpon Tsenam said, "It is not correct to hold the meetings at my house. We must change the venue. I am an *ngatsab*, a political leader and if everybody comes to know about our meetings, it will not remain [a secret] and [we] will be discovered. Therefore, [we] have to change the venue."

Then we discussed about the change and selection of a house. There was a house called Dalung where Amdo Lowang and Sangay lived. Amdo Lowang was an ironsmith; one who made stoves, iron stoves. "It will be good to meet in Dalung because there is an entry from the back of the house by climbing over [a wall] as well as through the door. He, Lowang the Amdo, was a poor farmer, a poor family. Besides, Lowang was a craftsman and there would be less suspicion when people visited [his house]. Furthermore, being a poor person it would not raise any doubts, so let us meet there."

01:26:56

However, there was a neighbor called Dolma Chonzom. An old lady called Dolma Chonzom who was a Chinese informer. "Chonzom must be silenced. Lowang has the means to silence Chonzom," said Serpon Tsenam. When Serpon Tsenam mentioned that, Lowang planned to eliminate Chonzom. Lowang mixed poison in the *chang* 'home-brewed

beer’—Dolma Chonzom lived alone—and gave the *chang* mixed with poison to her. She started to suffer from diarrhea, such that the whole room, the blankets and the pillow were soiled with excrement.

Unfortunately Turing ‘Leader’ Tashi of the *shang* was holding a meeting then. Attending the people’s meeting was a young boy named Kalsang Tsering. He was sent to ask Dolma Chonzom to come to the meeting. When Kalsang Tsering arrived to convey the message to Dolma Chonzom, she was in a room filled with filth. She could not get up.

Dolma Chonzom told the boy, “Please ask Turing Tashi to come immediately. The officials of the *shang* must come. If I die, Lowang and Sangay are solely responsible. They fed me *chang* and I am suffering from diarrhea. Please call them.” The boy was shocked to see her condition and ran to report to Turing Tashi, “Dolma Chonzom says she cannot come to the meeting. She is suffering from diarrhea and cannot get up. Dolma Chonzom has asked Turing Tashi to come to her home and that if she died, Sangay and Lowang were solely responsible for it.” So when Turing Tashi, Liu, the head of the prefecture, and others went to Dolma Chonzom’s home, she died. Dolma Chonzom could not utter a single word and died.

01:29:40

When they looked in the room, there were a lot of feces. They immediately telephoned Dromo County from where three doctors and an ambulance arrived. Chonzom’s body was taken to Dromo County where an autopsy was conducted to find [the cause] of the diarrhea. Perhaps they must have telephoned [Phari officials] immediately because soldiers surrounded the house of Sangay and Lowang. The soldiers did not enter the house but kept watch around the house.

There was someone called Tseten-*la* who was a member of our association. He used to transport wood from Dromo to Phari in a horse cart. Tseten-*la*’s wife was from Kham. [Tseten-*la*] was a member of our association. She told Sangay, “Sangay, you must not remain like this. You must plan to flee, as there are soldiers all around your house. In case you are caught, everybody will be too. All the members of the Welfare Association will be captured. So I will hide you in my barn where I keep hay for the horse. Tseten-*la* will arrive in a day or two. Once he is here, [we] will immediately put you in a sack and take you to Dromo. You can then make a getaway from Dromo.” So Ashi-*la* ‘respectful term for Khampa woman’ hid [Sangay] in their barn. She was hidden just behind the door under a stack of hay.

01:32:01

“Sangay is lost.” The members of the Youth Association and other officials went everywhere in search but could not locate Sangay. Unfortunately, [they] reached near the door where Sangay was hidden. Ashi-*la*, in nervousness had put two locks on the door. “Open this door. Whose [barn] is this?” “This barn belongs to the wife of Chedang-*la*.” “Open the door” and she was questioned, “What is the reason for putting two locks on the door?” Ashi-*la* replied, “I did not put [the locks]. The children did it by mistake. I did not.” The door was opened and [they] looked under the hay but could not locate Sangay. [They] did not find [her] and everyone went out.

There was a *turing* of the Dhamar whose name was...I cannot recall his name but it is mentioned in the paper [an article written by the interviewee]; he was a young man. He came back, entered [the barn], closed the door and started searching the hay stacked behind the door. Sangay was hiding there. "Sangay is here!" and everyone dragged Sangay by the hair.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: We need to explain that the reason why they were doing this was because in 1965 at some point there was a big movement of troops going down to Dromo from Lhasa and they were concerned about tracking this.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes. Do you want to ask questions about this or should I carry on?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: It should be in the translation to explain why they're doing this.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Okay.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: This was a special event.

Q: Sangay was found behind the door and seized.

#21D: Sangay was caught by the hair and dragged and taken to the *chue*. Sangay was put in prison at the *chue* and interrogated, "What is the reason for poisoning Chonzom?" She was subjected to *thamzing* and questioned. Being unable to endure the tortures, Sangay said, "We have a Welfare Association in Phari. The leaders of this association are Serpon Tsenam, Rading Dungyig Topgyal, Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen and the teacher, Chonphel. We have this and this member." Having stated that, every one of us was captured at 3 o'clock Peking time on the night of the 26th day of the 12th Tibetan lunar month of 1970.

At that time we were in Dromo cutting wood for the Chinese. I was at Dromo then and so were some of the other members [of the Welfare Association]. The wood was for the army and we were working as coolies. We left Dromo on the 25th day of the 12th Tibetan lunar month. Normally we were free to go anywhere. [The Chinese] might have had knowledge but we were unaware. They sent us [back home], four or five men each in army vehicles. Normally we used to go by any [vehicle]. We were brought home. That evening around nightfall, people were moving hither and thither around our houses. We were totally unaware. That night as [I] slept, [I] dreamed disturbing dreams. [We] were totally unaware. Then around 3 o'clock Peking time, someone knocked on the door as I slept. [My] wife said, "What could it be? Someone is knocking on the door." I said, "Why do you knock. Push the door and come in."

01:44:09

In came two soldiers armed with rifles, Shiu, the head of the prefecture, and an interpreter called Dano, a person from Dromo. They came in [and said], "You must go for [indoctrination] classes. Get up at once." My wife started to cry, "What has happened? Why should [he] attend [indoctrination] classes?" "You will know that tomorrow. Come [with us] immediately." I tied my blankets with a rope and left with it. When [I] came out,

there were two soldiers on either side of the door with rifles. Then [I] was taken away. There was a school where [I] was taken to. Lights from flashlights shone everywhere. We were at the school and there being no [electric] light, candles had been lit.

When we entered the door of the school, there were men standing here and there. Then [we] were frisked. [They] untied the shoelaces and waistbands and took them away. [We] were put inside a room. [We] could not recognize each other in the night. It was dark and there was no candle. When day dawned the next morning, [we] were all the members [of the association], I swear. One was kept there, one there, another there and another here [points to four corners of the interview room], far away enough not to touch or hear each other. There were 21 men, housed in four or five rooms.

[End of DVD Part 1]

[Start of DVD Part 2]

Q: Then what happened?

#21D: Twenty-one men were captured and jailed. Then the next day was Losar ‘Tibetan New Year,’ the 1st day of Losar. We could not celebrate the 1st day of the Tibetan New Year as interrogators arrived. Each one was led here or there, to a corner, upstairs or downstairs and told, “Accept your [crime]. We are aware of all your wrongdoings. Each of you must admit [to your offence].” We were questioned and the person who carried out the interrogation was a Tibetan official. [I] expressed that I had nothing to say but was told that that was not adequate. [I] was beaten, punched on the head, slapped on the cheek, felled [to the ground] and stamped upon and assaulted in various different ways.

00:01:16

Finally, following the *thamzing* [I] accepted, “We have an association and I have worked for it.” When questioned, “Why did you work for the association?” [I] replied, “We formed the political association in order to escort His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Besides, we supported India hoping that if India could wage a strong attack, the Chinese army would be defeated in which case His Holiness could come to Tibet.” [I] admitted to everything.

After [our] confession Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen, Serpon Tsenam, Rading Dungyik Topgyal and Teacher Chonphel were dispatched to Shigatse. Amdo Lowang and Sangay were executed in Shigatse. From the 21 men, the rest were sentenced depending upon the gravity of the crime; some were jailed and interrogated for a month and released; some were released after three months; some were questioned for four months and released; some were released after six months and some after a year of interrogation. I was in prison for two years and six months.

The reason for my imprisonment was that there was a war in 1965-67 in Zongla. Dromo attacked Zongla. During this war, Serpon Tsenam and Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen had said... We used to work as coolies transporting provisions and ammunitions for the army at night. There were numerous people, horses and mules from various regions. Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen and the others told me, “Your time has come. Whatever work you are able to

carry out, it is possible. There are telephone cables in the air and underground. Cutting such a cable during the war might prevent the Chinese from communicating, thereby allowing the Indians to attack with force and becoming the victor.” Therefore, I cut 10 *dhompa* of telephone cable. Ten *dhompa* means 10 *kungri*.

Q: Meter?

#21D: About 10 meters. Meter, 10 meters. *Dhompa* is this [stretches out left hand].

Q: A *dhompa* is about two meters. A *dhompa* is about one and half to two meters and 10 of those.

00:04:37

#21D: [I] cut about 10 of that and was discovered. I was subjected to an immense amount of *thamzing*. I was in prison for two years and six months. Covered with a blanket, I just sat thinking. [I] was infested by lice. If I could catch some sleep one night, [I] could not the next night. [I] was infested with lice and as I sat in my bed and scratched myself, [I] picked up two or three lice. I bit them with my teeth. Again [I] would find lice and bite them.

There was a *turing* of Thue called Tsering Norbu that came there and I said, “Please change my blanket or give me something for the lice.” Tsering Norbu brought lice poison. [I] spread the blanket on the ground and with two soldiers guarding me, applied the poison over it. There were countless white, round lice sticking to one another. [My] nails had grown this long [indicates less than an inch on left digits] and [my] skin was very pale. The skin was very pale and walking a short distance left [me] gasping.

So for two years and six months [I] was in prison. After serving two years and six months, [I] was released under the supervision of the people. [My] rights were confiscated. [I] had no rights to voice my opinion. [I] only had the right to work.

00:06:32

I stayed at home for three months after [my] release. [I] was given work at the People’s Commune. One must work for the People’s Commune. If my wife was there at work, we could talk to each other and eat together. When my wife was not there, [I] was a white crow. Everybody would be chatting while I sat thinking and making drawings on the ground. It was extremely claustrophobic. After staying home for three months, [I] was told that the reactionary thinking was still present within [me]. [I] had to visit the police station once every week to confess my crimes. There was a book by Mao Zedong.

Q: Which was the prison [you] were in?

#21D: Yes?

Q: Was it in Phari? The prison?

#21D: The prison? Initially I was jailed in Phari and then in Shigatse.

Q: How long were you in Phari?

#21D: Yes?

Q: How long were you in Phari?

#21D: Around nine months in Phari.

Q: And then [you] were transferred.

#21D: And then [I] was moved.

Q: Why were [you] moved?

#21D: Yes?

Q: Why were [you] moved?

00:07:42

#21D: So as to bring about a change in [my] way of thinking.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: I think not having the authority to express an opinion is not quite the right way, I mean. This is being given a “hat.” ‘*Wangcha toparay*’ he said. ‘*Wangcha toparay*’ means you have no rights at all. You are under the supervision of the people. You are even lower than a class enemy. After being released from prison, he was given that status. It’s not fully released. It’s released under the supervision of the people. You’ve no rights to movement, to speak, to do anything.

This is very interesting, the story about 1965 of what happened in Dromo. I just want to go back and ask him about that.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Okay.

Q: He said that in 1965 it started with all these movement of troops and then we have this in 1967. What happened during this period, between these two dates?

#21D: There was a war between India and China, during which period we cut the telephone cables. During the war, in order to transport supplies and ammunition to the army, numerous people were collected from Dromo, Phari, likewise Gyangtse, Palnam and Khangmar counties. They were to transport supplies and bullets to the soldiers in the mountains. Even now [the ammunition] can be seen. The journey was undertaken during nighttime and not in the daytime. The men went like this [keeps fingers in line] during the night. Soldiers were stationed at different points along the way. When we took rests, [we] saw innumerable bullets dumped there. There were artillery shells that looked like the wings of pigeons that were dumped among the rocks. It was nighttime and the empty boxes were left on the ground or on houses. The Tibetans did such things in protest against the Chinese then.

00:14:26

For instance, were Tibet to gain independence and if we went through Dromo—Dromo is close; Dromo lies next to Sikkim—and looked among the rocks of Nathula and Zogla, the bullets might be still there but for some rust. Such was the dislike for China, hope for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet and that India would counter a great attack. However, India did not battle fiercely. There was not a strong attack and it was left at that.

While I was in for two years and six months, we had a small book of Mao Zedong. We were to read it and change our mindset. One must make amends for the mistakes committed earlier, change the mind, love Communism and Mao Zedong and follow Communism and Mao Zedong. To declare this undertaking to Mao Zedong, we had to report to the local office once every week.

After release [from prison], if one were to go from here to Gangchen Kyishong [distance of 2 kilometers], one must get permission. To go to Gangchen Kyishong, details like where [I] was going, who [I] was meeting, what the person's name was and where he lived were to be provided. I must inform [the local office] that I was going to meet this person and that I would return the following day if unable to do so that day. Such was the suffocating situation that after three months, I escaped.

00:17:09

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Sorry. Tibetans carrying ammunition in support of the Chinese soldiers had dumped them as an act of resistance, an act of revolt in order to sabotage the war effort. They're walking in a line up and down hills carrying the stuff in order to feed the ammunition to the frontlines, the Chinese soldiers who were fighting upon the pass. Rather than deliver the stuff, they are dumping it in ravines and in holes in the ground in order to sabotage the military effort.

Q: He actually didn't answer the question. Did it go on for the whole period 1965-1967? Does he actually remember the year?

#21D: There was a war in '65 at Zogla and at Zelela in '67. Zelela.

Q: Where's Zelela?

#21D: It is very close.

Q: To Dromo?

#21D: To Dromo.

Q: From Sikkim?

#21D: Yes. This is Zogla [indicates middle finger of left hand] where a war took place in the year '65 and here at Zelala [points to index finger] in the year '67.

Q: Was there no war in '66?

00:19:13

#21D: There was not any war after that.

Q: Was there fighting throughout the two years or...?

#21D: No, no. There was sporadic fighting. At times there was firing from both sides and at times none. There was not firing throughout the entire period.

There was a colleague of mine called Nyima Tsering. [He] was called Khimtsang Nyima Tsering. We were together in prison. He went to answer nature's call. It was snowing hard. We had to give up our shoelaces, shoes and waistbands [to the jailor]. [We] had to walk holding up the pants. In those days we did not have pants like these [touches waist]; they were the Tibetan type [loose fitting]. It was snowing. He jumped from above and fled. [He] was barefoot in the snow and also had to hold up [the pants].

There was a mountain pass in Phari called Timola [points to middle finger of left hand] and here [points to ring finger] a monastery called Richung Putho, where the soldiers lived. [Nyima Tsering] ran away. [The prison officials] had telephoned soldiers at Richung Putho who sent out dogs. They sent out two or three dogs. He tried to flee but there were no rocks, just snow and the dogs barked at [him]. When [he] sat still the dogs were calm but when [he] started to walk, the dogs bit [him]. Later he was captured by the troops.

00:21:21

He was suspended with his hands tied [indicates hands tied behind back] outside our prison. He screamed [in pain], "Aro, aro!" When [he] was not released after screaming in pain, [he] cried, "[I] need to pass motion!" When [he] said that, he was taken down to relieve himself. Whether he had relieved himself or not, [he] was then called back and suspended. Then [Nyima Tsering's] legs became swollen. The legs were swollen and covered with sores but no treatment was given.

There was a person called Lobsang with us. There were three people in one room. Lobsang urinated in a container—[we] had to urinate inside the room—and washed his [Nyima Tsering's] wounds. The urine brought down the heat of the wounds. [We] poured my urine, his and Lobsang's [on the sores]. Finally after seven, eight or nine days the legs were like this [gestures off camera] and the pants soiled with excrement that stuck to him. Later Lobsang carried [him] on [his] back to the hospital. When the pants were cut away in the hospital, the entire [legs] were covered in sores and bloated. Nyima Tsering faced such suffering.

00:25:41

After treatment Nyima Tsering was dispatched to Shigatse. [He] was sent to Shigatse prison. [I] do not know if [he] died in prison or what happened. I was released at the end of 1973. And escaped in '74 through Bhutan because at that time I wanted to flee, come what may. The Chinese used to broadcast, "There are no Tibetans in India because [they] are dying. Having been accustomed to the salt of Tibet, eating Indian salt caused diarrhea and

[they] died. Not many [Tibetans] are alive. The rich families and the aristocrats are living in good houses while most of the poor people who went to India are dead.”

I felt, “It matters not if I die from diarrhea caused by eating the salt. It is worthless staying back.” So I fled to exile through Bhutan. I forsook [my] wife and child. I have a child that was born while I was in prison. Upon my release, the child was big enough to hold on like this [indicates holding onto chair]. It could make some sound. Presently the father cannot recognize the child and the child cannot recognize the father.

00:27:25

Having witnessed such oppressions by the Chinese, I never thought about making money, doing business or carrying out any such activities. [I] thought, “Earlier we had this much and even if we have a lot of money here, there will be no enlightenment.” The most important thing is independence, independence. [I] arrived here in 1974 and have no anxiety over my livelihood. I continued to take part in whatever the movements to this day for the cause of the country’s independence.

At present I have a wife in India [who I met] perhaps it was in 1988. Rinpoche ‘reincarnate lama’ [son] is 31 years old now, so how many years has it been? Rinpoche is 31 years old now.

Q: 1980. 1981.

#21D: Yes, I met a new wife then. Presently we have five children.

Q: I want to go back...

#21D: [Nods]

Q: ...to 1962 when this organization was set up. Did he say it was set up in 1962, the Dheydhon Tsokpa?

#21D: Yes.

Q: He said at that time these organizations were set up all over Tibet? How does he know that?

#21D: Because in the year 1970—remember 21 of us were captured? I told you earlier that 21 were captured—at that time in 1970 people from different regions were captured throughout Tibet. When I was imprisoned, my family members told me, “During the time of your arrest, groups of people in 10, 20, 7, 8 or 9 were arrested throughout. It is said that there is an association called the Dheydhon Tsokpa in Tibet.” I did not tell my wife that there was a Dheydhon Tsokpa. “They [the Chinese] said that there was a Dheydhon Tsokpa in Tibet and people from various regions of Tibet have been arrested.”

Q: Did the local officials say that?

#21: Yes.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: But he hadn't been arrested yet in 1970.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: It was 1970.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: He was arrested in the early part of 1971, the end of the 12th Tibetan month, which would've been about January or early February 1971.

Q: Did you mention that you were arrested at the end of 1970?

#21D: [It was] the 12th Tibetan lunar month of '70. It was the year-end. The New Year was about to begin. The 26th day of the 12th Tibetan lunar month; just four days short of the New Year.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: So that's probably February 1971. So this hadn't happened before that?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: You mean the arrests?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Yeah.

Q: You mentioned that you and the others were arrested towards the end of 1970, which corresponds to January or February 1971 of the Indian calendar. Were there any arrests prior to that of the members of Dheydhon Tsokpa?

00:33:20

#21D: The arrests were took place...The Chinese gathered [people] for meetings. During the meeting one would immediately become aware if arrests were going to take place or not. When people were gathered for the meetings, there would be lectures about the reactionaries, the Dalai clique, and those accomplices in evil that should be destroyed. That is the indication that there would be arrests. Immediately one wondered who would be seized. When the meeting got over, "You come here, you come here, you come here" and [they] would be led away by the soldiers. That was it.

"[You] must work in the fields. Crops must be cultivated. [You] must study." If such statements were mentioned there would be no arrests. If such speeches were made during a meeting, there would be no arrests. "Reactionaries are not subdued. The reactionaries have still not come to an end. They are still among the people." When such statements were made, there was bound to be arrests irrespective of the number whether one, two, three or four. There used to be arrests earlier. From the time the movement came into being, there were arrests, imprisonments and *thamzing* continuously.

00:35:30

Rading Dungyik was subjected to *thamzing* such that nobody fared worse than him in Phari. During the *thamzing*, [his] scalp was wrenched off the head. The scalp with the hair was peeled off. Such cruelties were affected on the Rading Dungyik. *Thamzing* did take

place in Phari but none where the scalp was wrenched off except for Rading Dunglek. [He] was called Rading Dunglek Topgyal.

Q: When was the *thamzing* on Rading Dunglek?

#21D: It was in the year 1970.

Q: So I'd like to know why these people, the main members of the Dheydhon Tsokpa whose names he gave us like Rading, Gapshi and so on, the ones who were sent to Shigatse after they were arrested... Why they were not imprisoned after the first *thamzing* during Mangtso Choegyur in 1959, 1960?

#21D: During that time they were apprehended and given [indoctrination] lessons. They were interrogated and [they] made confessions. [They] were locked up for one, two or three months but not confined in actual jails. [They] were released from there. The actual arrests took place in the year 1970 and [they] were sent to the Shigatse prison.

In the year 1970 Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen and his wife were apprehended; Rading Dunglek Topgyal and his wife were apprehended; likewise Serpon Tsenam and his wife were arrested. Couples were seized at the same time. And then another couple that was captured was...[they] have come to exile now and live in the south...he was a nomad...what's his name? Norsang! The nomad, Norsang, and his wife were captured. Couples were captured together. The wives were interrogated for two or three months and released while the men were detained.

Q: Just to be clear, after Mangtso Choegyur in 1959 when the first *thamzings* took place in Phari, nobody was arrested, sorry, imprisoned or executed or anything like that?

00:39:40

#21D: During the [Mangtso] Choegyur, Sokhang Dunglek Tshedor-la was captured and sent to Shigatse. [He] was subjected to *thamzing* and sent to Shigatse never to be released. And then...Apo...what is the name of Dolma Tsering's father?...Apo Lo Tsering. [He] was called Apo Lo Tseten and was from Kham. [He] was captured, imprisoned and never let out. [He] was seized in the year '59. And then...Dhiwo Jola...[He] used to be known as Dhiwo Jola but [I] do not know the name. He was arrested in the year '59 and never released. [He] was not released when I left. Then...[I] cannot remember. A group [of people] were arrested at that time and never released.

Yes, there was a gentleman of the Tsarong [family] who was also apprehended in the year '59 and never released. And then there was a [family] called Gapshi Tsonkhang whose member was never let out of prison after being captured in the year '59. Numerous people were arrested in the year '59. One group was released after four, five or six months in '59 but these people were never released until the time I left for exile.

Q: So does he know what happened to them? Where were they sent?

#21D: They were [sent] to Shigatse. Most of them were sent to Shigatse. Lo Tseten was dispatched to a prison in Kham while the others were in Shigatse prison. [I] heard some were jailed in the Drapchi in Lhasa. I can only remember this much.

Q: How did they come to set up this organization in 1962, like why then and what did they...?

00:43:33

#21D: When [the organization] was set up, not everybody was invited. People who had connections like Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen, Serpon Tsenam, Rading Dungyik Topgyal and Gen Chonphel set it up along with people they knew. Rading Dungyik Topgyal brought a person he knew and admitted him as a member of the association. And then someone Serpon Tsenam knew was admitted. I joined through Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen. I, in turn brought other people and they, on their part brought others. So that is how it came about.

Q: Were there the four of them initially?

#21D: There were four of them.

Q: Initially there were Gapshi...

#21D: The four of them were the ones that led.

Initially when a member was admitted, we did not inform him that we were the Dheydhon Tsokpa. We told him the matter—I told you earlier—“His Holiness the Dalai Lama has secured a chair [recognition] in the world while China has not. Therefore, the countries of the world are supporting His Holiness. Since there is support, there will be a day when we will be able to escort His Holiness to Tibet.”

“Presently India and China are not cordial towards each other. Therefore, in the event that such a situation arises, we have to think and find ways and do what we can to escort His Holiness to Tibet. This association is formed for that purpose. Would you like to join it or not? In my opinion, I think it would be good for you to join it.” “I will join it,” could be the answer. Then one must take an oath, “From this day onwards, [I] will not even reveal this to my wife. I will never reveal [to anyone] that I have joined this association.”

The main objective [of the association] was to escort His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Q: This was something to do with the 1962 war. They were aware of that?

#21D: The 1962 war was fought in Mon Tawang. Two or three Sikhs were captured in Mon Tawang and brought to Lhasa. [They] were not brought to our region. The Chinese brought [them] to the Bakor in Lhasa and said, “Look at the condition of the Hindu reactionaries who are fighting against us Communists.” [The Sikhs] were bearded with turbans and had a huge amount of hair [indicates on face]. “Can they fight a war? Fight against Communist China?” [The Chinese] announced such things. There was a Chinese song during the Mon Tawang war. The song goes like this:

*Mijon jondhok chaykhen, Hindu lokchoe shokha
Thongnay thopshuk maypa, Hindu sempa kyowala
Ringo yala zikthang, chingdol magmi khangsha
Chingdol magmi thopshuk, nyitsen maypa yori*

*Chingdol magmi topshuk, nyitsen maypa yori
Risham mala thaythang, nyetson miming khangsha*

We were the miming “people” transporting supplies.

*Nyetson miming topshuk, Yarlung Tsangpo gyesung
Thongnay topshuk maypa, Hindu sempa kyowala*

*Diehard Hindu group, the incompetent forging to be skillful
Powerless and pathetic, you broken hearted Hindu
Look up the mountaintops where Liberation soldiers fill
The might of the Liberation soldiers is present day and night.*

*The might of the Liberation soldiers is present day and night
Look down the mountain base that is filled with the laboring people
The might of the laboring people stretching beyond Yarlung River
Powerless and pathetic, you broken hearted Hindu.*

This song was taught and sung in Tibet.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Did you get it?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No.

Interviewer: Could you repeat it slowly?

00:49:55-00:51:55

[Interviewee repeats the words of the song]

Q: Would *gen-la* ‘respectful term for teacher’ mind singing us this song?

#21D: The people in Tibet have written a song called *tinyik* ‘message’ about the difficulties in Tibet. The song goes like this:

00:52:20

*Shoktse chenkyi tungtung la
Dhinay Gyakar pharla gyoktsam phurnang
Dhinay Gyakar pharla yigishik namroknang
Ngatso shilue miming namkyi Yeshe Norbu dhue thaktu den
Ngatso shilue miming namkyi dhue thaktu Yeshe Norbu semnang den
Gyalwa Yeshe Norbu la
Shuksa Gyakar chokla ma la ray*

*Lhasa Norbulingla nyurdhu chipgyur nang
Bodkyi semchen thamchay khowey dham la lhung sha
Bodkyi semchen thamchay khowey dham la lhung sha*

*Oh, long-necked crane with outstretched wings!
Fly speedily from here to the land of India
Bring with you please, our letter to India
We in the homeland miss the Dalai Lama day and night.
We in the homeland cherish the Dalai Lama in our hearts forever
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Your home is not in India
To Norbulingka in Lhasa, please come swiftly
All the sentient beings of Tibet have fallen into the slush of samsara
All the sentient beings of Tibet have fallen into the slush of samsara.*

00:53:40

What is it called...

Q: *Dachang mikiyi nang...*

00:53:45

#21D:

*Dachung mikiyi nangnay
Chimay yaykor gyap
Dachung mikiyi nangnay
Chimay yaykor gyap
Dachung mikiyi nangnay
Chimay yaykor gyap
Gyakar nangdhu yopay
Bhodrig pundha namtso
Ngatso Bhodrig miming
Dhunyi nyongwa yin
Ngatso dhunyi nangnay
Thonpay thapshi nangroknang
Ngatso dhunyi nangnay
Thonpay thapshi nangroknang*

*Within the black and white of the eye
Tears move steadily from the right
Within the black and white of the eye
Tears move steadily from the right
Within the black and white of the eye
Tears move steadily from the right
To Tibetans living in India
All our Tibetan brothers and sisters
We the Tibetan people*

*Aren't we suffering enough?
Yes, we are suffering
Save us from this suffering
Yes, we are suffering
Please try to set us free!*

*Ngatsoe rewa tsangma
Khyerang namla choyoe
Ngatsoe rewa tsangma
Khyerang namla choyoe
Nyelwa dhinay thoena
Gyalchoe lakyang lhalapay
Chima telwu yongwa
Ngatsoe monlam dhepchok*

*All our hopes with you rest
All our hopes with you rest
If we are saved from this hell
It will be more meritorious
Than practicing the dharma
Compensate, we will in the next life
Thus we shall sincerely pray!*

My voice is not good.

Q: It's very good.

00:56:21

Q: So they were aware of what was happening in 1962 while the war was going on and those four leaders that he mentioned who started the organization, does he think that they were in touch with other people like in Gyangtse or Shigatse or further away?

#21D: They had great connections since they hailed from rich families. They were from rich families as well as at one point of time served as political leaders for the Chinese. [They] were [people] that the Chinese trusted among the prominent people of the region and were awarded the rank of a political leader. [They] received a monthly salary.

Q: In 1962 they started this organization and apparently they managed to carry on for quite a few years. How did that happen, how was it that they weren't arrested for eight years?

#21D: The reason why nothing happened for eight years was that the Welfare Association was not able to do much. Likewise, these matters were not well known. The reason being--I told you that we used to meet secretly at the home of Serpon Tsenam—it did not become known to all then. The mistake occurred when we planned to hold meetings at Dalung, the home of Apo Lowang and killed Dolma Chonzom by poisoning her on account of which we were discovered.

In general, the main reason for holding meetings during the eight years pertained to what the Chinese were doing at that time. When we heard of it...For instance if I heard it, [I] informed [the leaders of the association] about what the Chinese were doing; there was not anything else.

Q: Serpon Tsenam was already a person under suspicion. He must've been warned. How was he able to hold meetings in his house for eight years, for so many years?

01:00:56

#21D: There was never any suspicion at that time. The doubt in his mind was, "It is not good to hold so many meetings at my home because I belong to the *ngatsab* class category. If many different people gather at the home of an *ngatsab*, this may harm the association if the Chinese becomes aware. Hence, it is not correct to hold meetings at my house. [We] must meet at some other place."

[Interviewer to interpreter]: So he suggested to hold it elsewhere. *Ngatsab*. He belongs to the *ngatsab* class category, which is the next stage below *ngadak* 'leader'; something like a deputy of the *ngadak*.

Q: So [he] was an *ngatsab*.

#21D: Yes? Yes, *ngatsab*. All three of them were *ngatsab*: Serpon Tsenam, Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen and Rading Dungyik Topgyal. They were *ngatsab*.

Q: What did you all actually do apart from cutting a few telephone lines during the war on the Sikkim border? Did you actually accomplish anything else?

#21D: [I] did not do anything else besides that.

Apart from that, [we] expressed what [we] had observed during the meetings. There was not anything else besides that. The major part [of information] came during 1965 with the movements of the Chinese troops day and night. [We] reported what [we] saw whether the vehicles were carrying horses, troops, artillery or boxes of bullets. [We] informed about the number of vehicles that passed carrying bullets or soldiers. Not just me but all our members reported about what they had seen. [We] reported to them [the leaders].

Q: After Mangtso Choegyur up until the time of your arrest, you were a member of the *nyamlay* or the Mimang Kongri or whatever it was called and sometimes you're doing *shinglay*, farm work, and sometimes you're cutting wood for the army, was it like that?

01:04:47

#21D: I told you that I worked at the Dromo Customs Office during the Mangtso Choegyur but other than that it was farm work, cultivating crops, cutting wood, constructing roads; [I] did such kinds of work. Making roads; [I] went to construct roads.

Q: And that was the same for everyone in the collective? They would just tell you from time to time what work to do?

#21D: They would say but during the collective there was not any other work but tilling the fields and beating the bigger chunks of earth, likewise plowing with horses or *dzo*. The stronger men plowed with horses while men like us would be made to plow with *dzo*. It was mainly working in the fields. During winter [we] went to the nomadic sites to bring manure in horse carts early in the morning. Men would be assigned, turn-by-turn whether it was four or five men. [They] took *tsampa* and black tea and went [to work]. [They] ate the barely-enough-to-satiate quantity of *tsampa* and drank the black tea.

After returning from work, in the evening at...One returned from work around 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening and with hardly enough time to sip some black tea or *thukpa* 'noodle soup' that may be available at home, there would be a whistle blown and one must attend the meeting. Most of the time, one must study the book by Mao Zedong with reformed thoughts for the country, the Revolution, to admire Mao Zedong, to admire the Communist Party, to obey what [authorities] of Communist China said. That was the education. That was taught and [we] listened.

01:08:07

At times, since we were young, we had to perform dances during festivals. [We] would practice dancing for five, six or seven days and performed on the day of the festival. One must praise the Communist Party.

Whatever the suggestions one made, one must say how bad the old society of Tibet was, how good the Communist Party was, the happiness people enjoyed after the liberation brought about by the coming of Communists; one must keep saying such things; always voicing that [they] were good and never bad.

Q: Was that the same for the nomads? Was there any difference between the *shingpa* 'farmer' and the *dokpa* 'nomad'?

#21D: [The Chinese] also formed communes for the nomads. All the animals belonging to the nomads were collected together and [people] worked collectively. The government collected the butter, cheese, yak hair, wool and everything. The Chinese Government collected them.

Q: And the political meetings and everything was the same; same system?

#21D: It was exactly the same, exactly the same. They too had to study the book by Mao Zedong during the meetings and must praise the Communist Party and say how good the Communist Party was. Some nomads that lived near the border would be singing praises that day but would flee that very night driving the yaks and *dri* into Bhutan. Those that did not live near the border had to sing praises and remain.

Q: It was not so uncommon for people to escape in this area?

#21D: Yes?

Q: Were there many that fled?

01:11:36

#21D: There were many that fled. We were on the border. [Shows an upright left palm] If our town was located here [points to base of upright palm] and if one climbed up the pass, it would not take an hour if one walked briskly to reach the Bhutanese border [points to tip of fingers of upright palm].

Q: One hour?

#21D: It did not take an hour if one walked fast and did not have anything to carry. If one walked slowly, perhaps it took more than an hour. It was very close. The pathway was close. However, there were many Chinese circling the mountain then, riding on horses. The guards rode horses and went to patrol the border areas of Bhutan numerous times. Armed with guns five, six, seven or eight troops rode horses to patrol the mountains numerous times. Should one encounter one of these, [he] would be arrested. [He] would be arrested and brought back. If one avoided encountering them and traveled in the night without any light but groped your way through, you succeeded. There were many that left and many that stayed back.

There was one group of people that had suffered a little during the old society, like receiving no wages for working except food and clothing, they liked the Communist Government. The reason being was that [they] were given houses that belonged to wealthy families; were given cows that belonged to the wealthy families; were given articles that belonged to the wealthy families, as well as clothes and [they] stayed back saying that the Communist Government was benevolent.

Take for instance, earlier my family possessed land, agricultural tools like *dzo* and all. When these were confiscated, I did not like the government. They have nothing to give me and I did not like the government. Therefore, [one thought that] it was useless to stay back and escaped fearing the Chinese.

Q: In which class were you categorized?

#21D: Yes?

Q: In which class were you categorized?

01:14:38

#21D: My classification? I was categorized in the middle class farmers.

We were enduring great difficulties when we left Phari. One problem was that we were given a huge amount of political [indoctrination] lessons; political suppression, likewise another problem was trying to survive on half a *gyama* of grain and besides, we were worked almost to death from 5 or 6 in the morning until around 7 in the evening in the fields. [I] lived under such difficult circumstances.

After we left things had improved around 1986. People living there fared better with the availability of more grains and freedom of movement. The worst time was when we were there amid hard work, survival challenges, tough political lessons, tough political suppression because if one faltered a tiny bit, he would be called a counter revolutionary to the Communist Party and Mao Zedong. One would be called a running dog of the Dalai clique. I was given the “hat” of the running dog of the Dalai clique.

Q: Later?

#21D: The “hat” has not been removed because I escaped. [The Chinese] called me a running dog of the Dalai clique. I had cut cables and uttered various things. [Laughs]

Q: But at first, sorry, just to clarify this...At first, I mean at the time of Mangtso Choegyur, he had become an activist, he was a *hurtsonchen*, his class status hadn't prevented him from being accepted, as being on the side of the party he was conducting *thamzings* and doing that. When did that change? When did he become more suspected by the authorities?

01:18:37

#21D: The time [the Chinese authorities] began to suspect me was, as I told you earlier when I did not have food to eat in 1962, I approached the *chue* but the *chue* did not take note and [I] went to the *shang*, which did not take note, and then the Grain Office that did not take note, and then I said that they were showing *buram* to the eye and feeding *laja* to the mouth. From then onwards they started to dislike me.

Q: I'm sorry he did tell us that earlier. But in terms of livelihood for most people, like even people who were doing relatively well who'd been given housing to live in—earlier you were saying that people had starved to death and there was not enough to eat. Was this for everyone or was this just for people who were class enemies?

#21D: It happened to most people. Rich farmers have died, *ngatsab* have died and poor people have also died, because it was similar for everyone with not more than half a *gyama* of grains. It was half a *gyama* even for the wealthy. The huge stock of food in the homes of the wealthy and *ngatsab* earlier had been confiscated. They were confiscated and distributed among the people. Whether it was purchasing from the government or whatever, the quota of half a *gyama* ration was equal among all. It was half a *gyama* for the *ngatsab*, half a *gyama* for the wealthy and half a *gyama* for the poor. A strong laboring man received half a *gyama* but children did not receive even half a *gyama*. This [system] was initiated equally in the whole of Tibet.

Furthermore, I regularly had connections with *ngatsab* like Serpon Tsesam, Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen and Rading Dungleik Topgyal. I had contacts with them regularly, which was a reason for the Chinese dislike towards me. For instance, I kept contact with the family members of Tinlay Wangchen, the family members of Rading Dungleik Topgyal and the family members of Serpon Tsenam. Later I did not even join the mutual aid but lived alone. When I sowed my field, the family members of Gapshi Tinlay Wangchen helped me and I helped them when they sowed their field.

Q: Okay, so I guess, last question. How did he manage to escape?

01:22:58

#21D: There is something called the *bhalusolu*. It is used to make fire. Saying that [I] was going to gather it, [I] carried a basket [indicates on the back]—there was no food—and a rope. Saying that [I] was going to search for *bhalusolu*, [I] climbed up the mountain on the Bhutanese border. [The Chinese] were not aware that I was fleeing. The reason being that I did not escape in the night, but pretending to be going in search of wood, I carried a basket and left at around 6 o'clock in the morning. Then [I] went over the Bhutanese border and reached Bhutan.

Q: Is *bhalusolu* a wood?

#21D: [It] is wood, firewood. [I] left saying that [I] was going to search for firewood.

The most important thing in my mind is—I am quite old but physically healthy and thanks to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the exile government, and countries and people that support the exile government—[I] have no worry about going hungry. I have no anxiety over keeping my body warm. However, [I] might die agonizing over what will happen to [our] race and country [cries] and those that are living in Tibet. [I] have absolutely no worry over dying of hunger and thirst.

Foreign countries are extending help, but their help is only verbal since it is difficult for anybody to give up their country and work for the actual happiness of the Tibetans. If I were to die, [I] wonder what will happen to [my] children. It is fine when His Holiness the Dalai Lama is living [cries] but I fear what will happen if His Holiness is no more.

Q: You said that later when you came to India and met His Holiness and you told him that you had participated in a *thamzing*, struggle session, what did His Holiness say to you about that and did he give you any advice?

01:27:13

#21D: I received a private audience of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. During this private audience, His Holiness asked [me] about every situation in Tibet.

The Security Department knew that I had arrived from Tibet and called me about seeking an audience of His Holiness. I was in Dharamsala then. I went there at 9 o'clock in the morning and saw a bodyguard at the gate of the Tsuglakhang [main temple in Dharamsala]. [He] was a plump rotund Tibetan. [I] was told that he had trained like this [moves fists karate style] in Japan. [He] was a plump man and asked me, “What is your name?” “My name is Pasang Tsewang,” [I] replied. “Which settlement are you from?” “[I] am from Hunsur Settlement,” [I] replied. “Which is your native region?” “[My] native region is Phari,” [I] said. He led me to the Palace.

At that time [the Private Secretary] was not Kungo Tara-*la* but Kugno Gyalthar-*la*. The one called Kungo Gyalthar-*la* asked [me] to wait for a while. I had just arrived then and waited holding a *khata* ‘ceremonial scarf.’ “Sit over there,” which was a reception area

near the Palace. Ornaments that Tibetan women wore were sewn and hung there and [I] looked at those. A little while later His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived. His Holiness sat there [points at a distance]. There was a carpet on this side [points to floor on left] and a carpet on that side [points to floor on right].

01:29:18

I prostrated to His Holiness. Then I sat here [points to where interviewee is seated] while His Holiness was seated there [points further away]. His Holiness said, “Come closer.” I did this [moves a little closer]. “Come closer” and I moved. “Come closer” and moving closer and closer, I had reached there [where His Holiness was seated]. “Where do you come from? What’s the situation in Tibet?” [His Holiness] asked in detail and about what [I] had done since the age of 7 and what [I] had done before coming to exile.

And then I related about [my] working for the Chinese and participating in the *thamzing*. His Holiness asked, “Is the person who was subjected to *thamzing* in India?” “[He] is in India,” [I] replied. “Did [he] not retaliate?” “[He] did not retaliate,” [I] replied. “Why did you do the *thamzing*? [His Holiness] asked. “People voiced their sufferings and [I] was moved by it, as being tax payers we have experienced the wrath and assaults of the leaders earlier. Hence, recalling such memories, I felt anger and did the *thamzing*,” [I] answered. “Do the people who have arrived in India not tell you anything?” “Nobody said anything,” [I] replied.

After everything was over, His Holiness said, “Do not lose enthusiasm. You have witnessed misery in Tibet. You have experienced it. You are aware of it. Even in India you must not lose enthusiasm. Whatever thoughts you have in your mind, express it if it is positive. There is no punishment for a speaker and the listener will take it as advice. However, do not be angry thinking that your advice is not implemented. Therefore, do not lose enthusiasm.”

01:31:21

There were a lot of problems in the Tibetan society then. There was the problem regarding the ‘Group of 13 Societies’ that [I] had heard about. [I] conveyed to His Holiness, “If everyone had thoughts like you and if all the Tibetan people had stood in unity, by this time we would have achieved independence. When I arrived here, [I] heard a lot of things. [I] heard a lot of things about [Tibetan people] not heeding the words of His Holiness. This is something utterly disappointing.” Then I started to cry. “Do not be disappointed. Do not cry. There are very few who do not heed the advice or have faith in His Holiness. Therefore, do not be disappointed. These matters are blown out of proportion because people do not know the whole issue. You need not worry at all. Strive well and do not lose enthusiasm.”

After receiving this advice, I did not care about my livelihood but took part in every movement whether it was hunger strike or peace walk or meeting or whatever. [I] participated in everything until now.

01:35:15

Then His Holiness told [me], “Go to the Tsuglakhang. Go to the Tsuglakhang on your way back and pray well. There is a Buddha image and also Guru Rinpoche and Chenrezig. Pray well. Eat well. Do you have any problems presently? Should you face great problems, come and tell [me] at once. Express it and we will solve it.” [His Holiness] gave this advice repeatedly.

I went out after His Holiness gave this advice. After I had gone out of the door, His Holiness got up and called out [after me], “Hey, hey.” I went back and His Holiness spoke near the door, “Go to the Tsuglakhang and pray well. There are images of the Buddha, Chenrezig and Guru Rinpoche. Pray well. Strive well. Take care of [your] health. Should you have problems, come and tell [me] at once. Do you have any problems now?” “I do not have any problems,” [I] replied. There were no photographers around. His Holiness was standing like this [stands up] and I hugged [him] here [indicates legs]. I wished there was someone to take a photograph. I hugged [him]. It is my destiny as well as His Holiness’ great consideration for me that I have been blessed with a lama who can be termed my wealth.

[Shows a photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with a lama]

Q: *Gen-la*, who is that?

#21D: Yes?

Q: Who is that?

#21D: Zigyab Rinpoche. Zigyab Rinpoche.

Q: Zigyab Rinpoche.

#21D: Tiwu Zigyab Rinpoche. [Shows another picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Zigyab Rinpoche]

Q: Is [he] *gen-la*’s son?

#21D: Yes. [Shows more pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Zigyab Rinpoche]. This was in 2005 [holds up a photograph]. This was taken in Varanasi in 2009 [holds up another photograph]. This was in 2010 [holds up a third picture]. This was in 2011 [holds up another photograph].

He is a gift from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to me. It came about this way. The lama [previous incarnation of Zigyab Rinpoche] had an attendant who was old and hard of hearing. After the previous Zigyab Rinpoche had passed away, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was asked, “Will there be a reincarnation of the Zigyab Rinpoche?” “There will be a reincarnation and I will deliver him to you shortly,” said His Holiness. He [the attendant] was old and greatly worried that a reincarnation had not been found after three or four years. Once again he asked His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “Will there be a reincarnation of

my lama or not? If there will be a reincarnation, please help me find [him] and if there will be no reincarnation, please say so. I shall then be satisfied.”

01:39:42

His Holiness said, “There will be a reincarnation and he has already arrived. The reincarnation has arrived but is physically weak. His parents are poor. Let the child stay with the parents until he is a bit older.” He [the attendant] said, “Please deliver [him] to me immediately.” [He] was taken away [from us] at the age of 2.

Now [Zigyab Rinpoche] has passed his *geshe* ‘Buddhist philosophy’ degree. Lama [Zigyab Rinpoche] is very good in [his] studies, is good in the scriptures. [He] is humble.

Q: Which monastery is he from?

#21D: The monastery is Ganzi Gonpa in Kham. [He] is the main lama of the monastery and also a lama of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. At the age of 7, [he] studied scriptures at Gaden Monastery in Mundgod [south India]. [He] studied in Gaden. [He] finished his studies a few years back and did his *geshe* degree as advised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Following the *geshe* degree, [he] is teaching at the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery [Bylakuppe, south India] presently. [He] is a *peti* teacher; teaching the scriptures.

Q: *Peti* teacher?

#21D: Yes, a *peti* teacher. In the morning at 9 o’clock [he] teaches the older monks at Tashi Lhunpo and at 12 the intermediate and the younger children at 3 o’clock. [He] teaches the scriptures. [He] is humble. I am humble and my child is humble.

Q: Thank you for talking to us today.

01:42:52

#21D: [Joins palms]

Q: *Gen-la*, we have to ask you once again. If this interview was shown in Tibet, China or anywhere else in the world, would it pose a problem for you?

#21D: I will have no problems. Basically I have a child in Tibet but my story is what actually occurred and the truth. I have not spoken badly of China nor have I lied to speak badly of China. It is a real story and I have spoken the truth. I have no problem wherever you show it.

Q: Can we use your real name?

#21D: You can. Phari Shusur Pasang Tsewang.

Q: Thank you.

#21D: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW