

# **Tibet Oral History Project**

Interview #25 – Tashi  
June 29, 2007

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# TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #25
2. Interviewee: Tashi
3. Age: 95
4. Date of Birth: 1912
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Dege
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: June 29, 2007
10. Place of Interview: Interviewee's residence, Old Camp No. 1, Lugsung Samdupling Settlement, Bylakuppe, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 2 hr 17 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Jeff Loda
15. Transcriber: Tenzin Yangchen



### **Biographical Information:**

Tashi's family, called Woma, lived in a three-story house on a large piece of land. They owned farmland and over 100 animals. Tashi gives an account of his boyhood as a nomad living in a large tent made of animal fur, which was moved three times each summer.

Tashi left his life as a nomad at age 21 in order to care for the horses and mules belonging to his uncle, a prominent lama, in Kongpo. Tashi gives an account of the deaths of both his first and second wives and, after marrying for the third time, settles as a farmer in Digung.

In 1959 the Chinese came to Digung on three separate occasions. Tashi was told that he owned too much land and must give away one-third of his property to families without any land. Soon after, fearing the return of the Chinese, about 30 families including Tashi's fled north, hoping to reach a Tibetan army camp. The Chinese captured some of the group and the rest fled, leaving behind their horses, yaks and belongings. Tashi refused to surrender and managed to retrieve 72 yaks and save a woman's life. Tashi and his family then made a slow escape south to India, having to carefully evade the Chinese army and claim they were going to visit relatives in order to disguise their true motive for travelling.

### **Topics Discussed:**

Childhood memories, nomadic life, religious festivals, first appearance of Chinese, life under Chinese rule, escape experiences.

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**Interview #25**

**Interviewee: Tashi**

**Age: 95, Sex: Male**

**Interviewer: Marcella Adamski**

**Interview Date: June 29, 2007**

Question: Tashi-*la*, can you please tell use where were you born?

**Interviewee #25: I was born in Dege. Dege Damagon.**

Q: And what did your family do for a living?

**#25: We had agricultural land that we cultivated and we were nomads with cattle. We were both farmers and nomads.**

Q: And how large was your family, how many children?

**#25: There were four sons and one daughter.**

Q: And where were you in the order?

**#25: I was the eldest.**

Q: Can you think back? You're 95 years old; can you think back to when you were 5 years old, what was it like growing up in your place?

**#25: At age five?**

Q: When you were about five years old?

**#25: At that time I was a typical nomad looking after the animals.**

Q: What are some of your happy memories of those days?

**#25: At that time I was a child and a nomad and looked after the animals. Those were very happy times as a child.**

Q: What made you happy?

**#25: My parents and relatives were there all together. I had an uncle who used to teach me prayers. It was so good.**

Q: Can you describe what the country looked like around you?

**#25: Dege Damagon had three divisions. The country side was very good with pine trees, forests and pasture lands higher up. There were also monasteries and caverns in the mountains. It was very good.**

Q: How many animals did your family own?

**#25: There were about 130 heads of yak and *dri* 'female yak.'**

Q: Did you ride horseback when you were taking care of them?

**#25: In our region, we needn't ride horses. We let the animals loose and there were five or six herders. Normally five or six families lived in groups. Unlike the other regions we did not need to ride horses.**

Q: And what was your family home like?

**#25: In Kham there were some houses which had two floors and ours had three floors. The family was called Woma and we had three floors. On the ground floor we tied the *dzo* 'animal bred from a yak and a cow,' *dzomo* 'female *dzo*' and the good breed horses. The middle floor was for the family, and the upper floor was for notable people.**

Q: By notable, do you mean guests?

**#25: Yes, guests.**

Q: Did you have guests very often?

**#25: Yes, we did. We had many guests coming to the home because my uncle was a leader of the community.**

Q: What kind of a leader was your uncle?

**#25: He was the administrator of the division. As head of the village he had to travel to Dege in order to pay the taxes.**

Q: So your uncle was the head of the village where you lived?

**#25: That's right.**

Q: About how many families lived in the village?

**#25: It was a big village with three divisions. There might have been over 300 families and the number of people in a family differed; while some had five or six members, some eight**

or nine and others four or five. There were big families and small families. Some were both nomads and farmers, while some who did only farming owned just three or four *dzo* and *dzomo* and two or three cows. There were many different kinds.

Q: Which category was your family in?

**#25: We had a big piece of land for farming and owned, as I said, over a hundred animals. Some girls and boys and servants of the family went to live as nomads, while others did the farming. There were 16 members in our family, including the servants.**

Q: Did you do the farming or did you do more of the herding?

**#25: I went with the animals.**

Q: How many days would you go away from home with the cattle?

**#25: From my home, if you walked, you'd reach the nomad area only after noon.**

Q: How long were you away from home when you lived as nomads?

**#25: The nomads lived there through out the seasons, whether it was summer or winter. They did not come down; they lived there throughout summer and winter. The animals could not be brought down to the plains.**

Q: For a whole year?

**#25: They lived there the whole year. Among the farmers, there was a type of nomad who reared about 20, 30 or 40 animals. These people brought the animals down into the plains during winter and reared them at home. The nomads with the larger herds—there were about 30 or 40 such families—we lived there in winter and summer and did not come down to the plains.**

Q: Do you remember when you first went up to take care of the cattle? How old were you?

**#25: After age 15 I went to the nomad camp.**

Q: And when you would go and spend the whole year, were you alone, or how many people would go with you? Where did you live?

**#25: There were many nomad families. Each group would have three families, who set up tents side by side.**

Q: About three families grazed their animals together on the hills?

**#25: There were different families. In our family, there were five or six members looking after the animals: three servants, me and another child. There were five of us.**

Q: Can you describe the tents, how big they were, what they were made of?

**#25: *Ba*. We put up *ba*.**

Q: They were called *ba*? What was the *ba* made of?

**#25: They were made of woven animal fur. The fur of *dri* and yak were woven together and it was made of that.**

Q: What were they like inside?

**#25: They were very large inside. There was space for the animals, the people to live in and a fireplace. The *ba* had an opening and it could be opened like this [gestures to indicate a door]. There was space for two *dzomo* to be tied up inside. There was space for the weaker calves to be tied inside. They were very large. They were so large that if you spoke at one end of the *ba*, people at the other end couldn't hear you.**

Q: If we look at this room, which is about 15 by 15 feet, would it be bigger than this room?

**#25: The *ba* were certainly more than 15 feet. It must be as big as this room and the other room joined together. It was tied by ropes and stretched on wooden poles.**

Q: Where did you get the wood for the poles?

**#25: The wood grew there.**

Q: Did you have wood in your region?

**#25: The whole region was a forest.**

Q: Very far from your home?

**#25: It was very far, but we had animals for transportation. You did not need a thick pole; you just needed poles about this size [shows with his hands]. For one side you needed about six or seven poles and for the other side another six or seven poles—two in the front and two at the back, in all you needed about 10 to 15 poles for the *ba*. When we moved, we packed and transported them on the animals. In summer we had to move three times. We couldn't stay at one place because there was no grass; the grass would have been eaten. We moved to where there was grass.**

Q: It was very convenient?

**#25: Yes, it was convenient. We put the load on the yaks. We put the load on two yaks. The *ba* could be untied and then packed and loaded on the yak. Then the poles were also loaded on the yak and then we moved.**

Q: It sounds like the wood was really bamboo?

**#25: No, they were not bamboo. It was the wood of the pine tree. There was no bamboo in our region.**

Q: You said you stayed there all year long. What happened in the winter time when the snow came?

**#25: When it snowed we moved lower down towards the valley—in the lower areas where there was no snow. We moved lower and lower when it snowed.**

Q: Do you have any memories of anything interesting that happened in those days of herding?

**#25: What do I remember of that time? I was young and happy; looking after the animals and singing songs.**

Q: Can you sing any songs?

**#25: I do not remember.**

Q: How long did you do this kind of work? How many years?

**#25: Until I was 20 I worked as a nomad. From age 21 I moved to the Utsang region of Tibet.**

Q: But before we leave the camp and the tents—while the animals were grazing, what did the people do?

**#25: The people utilized the products of the animals like butter, meat and cheese.**

Q: What did the people do?

**#25: There was no work. In the morning the dung had to be removed from the place where the animals were tethered. Then churn the milk, make butter, dry the cheese. There was work to do. We had to remove the dung and clean the animals' place. We had to clean out all the cow dung and then we had to milk the cattle, churn the milk and make butter and cheese. Once the work was over, we relaxed, played games—the young boys and girls hugged and wrestled, told stories and had fun. The nomads did not have any other work. There was no work for the nomads once the milking was done and the dung was cleared. Those who had to look after the animals went out to graze them. Those youngsters left behind at home, wrestled and played, one claiming to be stronger than the other. They played all the time as there was no work to do for the nomads.**

Q: How many girls and how many men would be there?

**#25: There were many boys and girls. Two would go to graze the animals and the rest, three or four or five stayed at home. There were many neighbors, about four to five tents close by and all got together to play and wrestle.**

Q: Were all the girls and guys between like 15 and 20?

**#25: Yes, that is right. They were 15 to 20 and some over 10 [years old]. Some were 15 to 20 and there were others who were a little over 10.**

Q: It sounds like this might have been a time people might pick out a partner to marry, is that possible?

**#25: Yes, that does happen. Definitely there were—there were many instances. There were many who met up during those times.**

Q: Did you marry anybody at that time?

**#25: No I didn't have anyone at that time. At the age of 21, as I told you I left the place to go with my uncle to the Utsang region of Tibet.**

Q: When you were making the butter and everything, was that for you to eat or were you going to trade that to other people?

**#25: That was for us to eat. There was no trading in our region. It was for our own use. Not even a kilo of butter or cheese was for sale. We had grains available in our region and, if required, butter and cheese were delivered to the farmers and the rest were for the nomads to use. So besides taking [dairy products] to the farmers, there never were any forms of trade in our region. It was for our own use.**

Q: When you turned 21 why did you move?

**#25: My uncle was the chief lama of the Ngabo family in Kongpo. I moved to go into service for him in Kongpo.**

Q: And what kind of service or duties did you perform for your uncle?

**#25: My uncle was a lama and he had to perform prayers for the monastery. He was the chief lama of the Ngabo family, which was one of the most prominent families, and Ngabo was the king of Kongpo.**

Q: He was the king of Kongpo?

**#25: Yes, he was the king of Kongpo. Kongpo Ngabotsang. You would have heard about Ngabo Ngawang Jigme. Yes, that was the family. He was their guru. He was living there performing prayers.**

Q: What work did you do?

**#25: My uncle had four or five horses and mules. I looked after them and remained with him for about three years.**

Q: What did you feel about that change from living with your family and herding to make such a move?

**#25: My uncle had an assistant monk with whom I had some disagreements. He thought he had more rights as a monk and I felt the same, being my uncle's [nephew]. So finally I left his service and met a woman.**

Q: Would you mind sharing with us what kind of disagreements?

**#25: He was very domineering and did not give me any authority. I, as the nephew, wouldn't take it, so that was the disagreement and nothing else. Then I left and met a woman. We had a child, but after we had the child she [the wife] died of fever in Kongpo.**

Q: Who was this woman and where did you meet her?

**#25: She was from Dege, Palyul.**

Q: And when you married her did you stay in Palyul?

**#25: We stayed in Kongpo. There was a place called Tselagong where we lived. My wife died of fever. She is no more. She couldn't take the heat of Kongpo. She died of fever. We had a son.**

Q: The place is in Kham?

**#25: No, it's in Kongpo.**

Q: How hot did it get?

**#25: It was very hot. Unlike Kham it was extremely hot. Kongpo is the hottest place in Tibet. The water of Kongpo is bad. Kongpo is covered with jungles, so the water that comes from there is bad.**

Q: What did you do? You lost your child, then you lost your wife, you were about 22 or 23 years old?

**#25: My child survived. In fact he joined the [*Chushi Gangdrug*] guerilla fighters later, and now he lives in another Tibetan settlement.**

Q: You had a child and your wife had died. What did you do next?

**#25: The mother died, but the child is here with me. I took my child with me everywhere and when we came to Digung, he joined the *Chushi Gangdrug*. He lives in Kollegal now.**

Q: What did you do? You had a child and your wife had died, what did you do next?

**#25: The child and I then came to Lhasa. At that time the *Phowa Chenmo* initiation was being given and I went to attend that—the Digung *Phowa Chenmo*.**

Q: You went to Digung?

**#25: I went to Digung.**

Q: Can you tell me about that ceremony? What was it like?

**#25: I went from Lhasa to Digung along with many people with the intention of receiving the *Phowa Chenmo*. There I met a very old monk who was from my village and lived at Digung.**

Q: Then what happened?

**#25: I joined the service of the lama. He was a recluse and very rich. We came from the same village and were distantly related. I didn't know, but he told me that he was like a distant uncle to me. He said, "Do not go anywhere. Stay here with me." He was a rich old monk and possessed five horses and mules. He said, "I have kept many horses and mules. You should serve me and not go anywhere." So I stayed there. I stayed there for one year with the old monk. The lama owned three groups of nomads, who were raising animals. That is the story. [Laughs]**

Q: So when you served this old lama, where did you live and was your child with you or with somebody else?

**#25: I had left my son at the monastery—the monastery at Digung. I left him as a monk at the Digung Monastery.**

Q: How old was your son at that point?

**#25: At that time, perhaps he was around 10 years old. He must have been either 10 or 9.**

Q: Can you continue your story and tell us what happened to you as you served the old lama?

**#25: I served the lama for one year. The lama had a friend who was given the responsibility of farming a large area of land owned by the monastery. So one day the lama told me that I should go to assist his friend during the harvesting of the barley crops, as his friend was facing a lot of difficulties. So I was sent there. I was there for about three weeks harvesting the barley. I was told that I would be given good wages and I agreed. All the harvesting was done and everything was in order when I went back to the lama. I told him**

that all the work was done and that I was back and he replied, "That is good. That is very good. However, this friend of mine is facing a lot of difficulties." The family had a girl. She was not very young and did not have a husband. I heard that her husband had passed away. "Could you stay with them? It would be of help to me, too. Please stay with this family," he said.

Q: With the friend's sister?

**#25: Yes, at the house of the friend of the old monk.**

Q: The girl was there?

**#25: The girl was there at home. She was not very young.**

Q: Was she a sister?

**#25: Yes, she was the sister of the friend, his younger sister. He [the lama] said, "You should stay there." I replied, "No, no. I cannot. Rinpoche, that is not possible. I wouldn't be able to live there." He said, "Don't say it like that. It would be of help to me, too. You can buy my horses and mules." The family was a tax payer of Digung. It was a rich family. "Don't say it like that. Stay with them. It would be of help to me. Stay with them," said the lama. So I stayed there. I lived there for many years. My wife later died.**

Q: Why didn't you want to do it originally?

**#25: They were a rich family and I thought I was not capable enough. But the lama was insistent. I had said I was not capable and might not be able to pay the taxes. They were large tax payers, but the family did not have many members. I said I was not capable, but the lama was insistent that I stay there and so I was kept there. Then I stayed.**

Q: So what you are saying is, if you are rich, you have to pay a lot of taxes and that means you have to do a lot of work. If you are poor you don't have to pay as much. And you don't have to work as hard.

**[Interpreter to interviewer]: That is right.**

Q: So what happened in the end? Did you stay with her?

**#25: Yes, I lived with her. We lived together for many years and then she passed away.**

Q: Did she die due to childbirth?

**#25: Not because of childbirth.**

Q: How many years were you together?

**#25: Eight, nine or 10 years. Perhaps we were together for about 10 years.**

Q: Do you know what caused her to pass away?

**#25: I wondered what it was; she was struck with an illness and died suddenly.**

Q: You lost two wives like that. What happens next?

**#25: I remained there at home. There was a sister, but she was away with her husband on the nomadic region. I lived in the home. Then the friend of my uncle—Tashi Choekyi's [current wife] family moved from Nangchen with about 30 to 40 animals—brought Tashi Choekyi and left her with me in Digung. That was the time the monk left Tashi Choekyi as a helper for me. We were tax payers and had to pay taxes. There was shortage of hands. They [Tashi Choekyi's family members] had moved from the north to live there. They had many daughters; there were five of them. They are still in Digung. She was the eldest and was given to me.**

Q: How old was he and how old was she at that time?

**#25: I was around 36.**

Q: And Tashi Choekyi?

**#25: There is a difference of nine years between us; nine or 10. She must have been in her 20s.**

Q: Where were you living now at this point?

**#25: We were living at Digung. We were tax payers at Digung.**

Q: How long did you stay there with your new wife?

**#25: We lived very long there. The...[not discernable] *Kachoe* 'teachings' went on for two years. We lived in Digung until 1959.**

Q: And how was your life? So that would have been what year? You were 36, now your 95. Please tell us what your life was like in Digung before you moved in 1959.

**#25: We were doing field work. We were farmers. We kept just a few heads of cattle. It was just farming.**

Q: Were you wealthy, low income? Was your wife wealthy? What was the situation?

**#25: You could say moderate. We had enough so as not to have to borrow from others, but not very extensive either.**

Q: Did you have children?

**#25: At that time we had two children. One passed away in Switzerland and the other is living abroad—two children.**

Q: When you think back to those years, are there any memories of events that stand out?

**#25: The experiences were like these and there was nothing exceptional that happened. At that time, after a few years the Chinese had occupied [Tibet]. We paid our taxes and life went on. Then the times changed drastically.**

Q: When did you first notice that the Chinese were in your country?

**#25: We heard that the Chinese had arrived in Tibet. The Chinese had arrived in Lhasa. The Chinese came once to Digung earlier. There were over a hundred Chinese and they stayed for two nights and three days. At that time they arrested two officials from the monastery.**

Q: That was after they had arrived in Lhasa?

**#25: Yes, after they had arrived in Lhasa.**

Q: What was the reaction of yourself, your wife and people around when that happened?

**#25: The public didn't react much because at that time the Chinese were being very good. In Digung most of the families were middle class and none with large holdings except for eight or nine tax payers. Most were very humble families.**

Q: Was that 1959 when that happened?

**#25: Yes, that was 1959. It was nearly 1959. That was the time the Chinese were nice to the Tibetans. Then the Chinese came a second time to Digung.**

Q: They came a second time?

**#25: This time they arrested a steward of the monastery.**

Q: Was it the second time when they arrested the two monks of the monastery?

**#25: That was the first time when they arrested the two monks. The second time they arrested the monastery's steward, a senior.**

Q: Do you know on what grounds they made these arrests?

**#25: The reason was that they should accompany them and then they would be given titles and much would be done for them.**

Q: They were arrested and taken away?

**#25: They were not taken forcefully. They were told that they would be given titles and taken away. They were told they should get an education.**

Q: That the monks would be given a title.

**[Interpreter to interviewer]: They would be educated and then offered a title.**

Q: What kind of title?

**#25: In the year 1959, the Business Manager of Digung...**

Q: What title did the Chinese say they would give?

**#25: They said they would give titles and do so many good things for them. They said such nice things and took them away. These were empty words. They were taken away for good.**

**There was this business manager of the Digungtsang, the most important person of the Digung Lama's residence. He was the leader and the business manager of the Digung residence. There was a rumor that he was a *U-yon* 'leader appointed by the Chinese' at Metagongkar and that he received every month a box of 1,000 silver coins. Such talk was being heard.**

**You know the Digung Kyabgon who lives in Rajpur? His father's father is the grandfather of the lama in Tibet called as the Sewang Chenmo. His parents are in Kalimpong. This grandfather sent a message to the Digung business manager stating: that they hire five vehicles; that all the assets of the Digung Kyabgon should be moved in the vehicles; that for the time being the Lama and all at Digung should move to Kalimpong; that they should hire the five vehicles and start moving now.**

**The business manager went to meet the Sewang Chenmo and replied, "We will not send our Lama to a foreign land. We will take our Lama to our place and will not send him." To this the Sewang Chenmo said, "Don't say this. If times become better, we can bring him back. He can come back. Whatever assets you have, you should bring them. I will hire the vehicles. The rates are increasing and it costs 55,000 *dhotse* 'currency unit' for each vehicle."**

Q: Who is the one asking them to move to Kalimpong?

**#25: He was the grandfather of the Digung Kyabgon who is here.**

Q: The father?

**#25: Not the father, the grandfather—the father's father. So he is the Lama's grandfather.**

Q: Was he living at Kalimpong then?

**#25: His parents were in Kalimpong and the grandfather was in Lhasa. The grandfather was the Sewang Chenmo, the Tsarongtsang, one of the most important persons of the Tibetan government, one of the *Kalon* 'ministers.'**

Q: And what was he worried about?

**#25: The grandfather said that the two Digung Kyabgons and their possession should be moved to Kalimpong for the time being.**

Q: Why did he say that?

**#25: He said that because the Chinese had come. He said there would be trouble and for the time being it would be better to move them to Kalimpong. There would be trouble from the Chinese. That's what he had said.**

Q: What were you personally feeling in your heart when this was happening?

**#25: My story has not yet begun. First let me finish this story and then I will tell you.**

Q: We have to finish this first?

**#25: Let me finish this. Then the business manager of the Digung Kyabgon went there and said, "We will not send him. We will take care of our Lama in our place." To this the grandfather said, "If you can protect the Lama, that is fine. Our main aim is that the Lama should come to no harm. It makes no difference to me. I am not the Lama's father or mother. I am just his grandfather. Do whatever you want and take the Lama wherever you want." When he said this, the business manager came back, assembled all the tax payers immediately and said, "The Tsarongtsang wants to take the Lama to a foreign land. You have to go there immediately because we cannot send the Lama." Then that whole night we walked to Digung Dzong, which is a whole day's journey. We went there to have a meeting. The Lama was not sent. And in the end, the business manager had to carry a load of manure on his back. He was killed.**

Q: By the Chinese?

**#25: Yes, he was killed by the Chinese.**

Q: What about the Lama?

**#25: The Lama was able to escape here. The Dikung Kyabgon is the Lama.**

Q: The Lama was able to escape, but not the business manager?

**#25: The Lama was able to escape. The Lama came here and I saw him. At that time he did not have the monastery at Rajpur [India]. He was living here at the Ayang *Gonpa* 'Monastery.' I asked how [he escaped] and he told me, "I met a driver and I told him that I had a friend in Tsang Dhingri whom I wanted to meet and asked him to take me to Tsang Dhingri." He agreed and the Lama came to Tsang Dhingri in his vehicle.**

Q: Was the Lama a small child then?

**#25: Yes, he was a small child monk.**

Q: He is the present Lama?

**#25: Yes, the present Lama. That's how he escaped. When they reached Tsang Dhingri, the driver said, "You get down here and meet your friend. I have to go to deliver the goods at the snowcapped mountain to the Chinese and when I return I will take you back with me." He said yes. Tsang Dhingri was at the base of a mountain pass on the way to Nepal. He immediately crossed over the pass. He told me he was alone.**

**When he reached the top of the pass, he met an old man and a child carrying loads, who said that they were going trading. So he went with them. The Lama told me, "The old man's load was heavy and I was a young man. I offered to carry the load for him, but the old man was very suspicious and did not accept the offer. I was being kind and thought the old man must be tired and I should carry it for him, but the old man suspected that I would grab his load as I was young."**

Q: Was the Digung Kyabgon with you?

**#25: He was not with me. He escaped alone. We were separate. We were already in India at that time. Everything was over and I was in the settlement.**

Q: Did you go back again?

**#25: I did not go back. That is what he told me. He came here and told me. That is the story. Now we will come to my story.**

**The Chinese came twice to Digung. Then they came for the third time. There were four high Lamas in Digung: Chonglochen, Solhazong, Nupatsong and Chuju Labdang. There were four high Lamas and two *Dishang*, the Digung Kuchampa. Then we heard that the Chinese had arrived at Medogonda. There was a Lama called Nupa Rinpoche, a very good Lama—we were very close—and he said, "Digung Tashi, come here. The Chinese have arrived and everybody will be arrested. They are arresting all the high tax payers and the senior Lamas. We have to escape; there is nothing else. Let's escape towards the north where there is an army camp. We have to escape there." The decision to escape was made then.**

After the decision was made, the Chinese arrived. The Chinese didn't do anything this time, but captured the head of the Gado Khangsar, a prominent family, and took him away. When he was being taken away, close to his house there was a river, and I was staying in a tent across it. It was around 9 o'clock at night when my dog—a big one—started barking. I went out to have a look and there were nine horsemen. There were nine horses and nine Chinese riders. They at once entered my tent. We were four family members inside.

They at once entered and one sat near the door of the tent and another there [gestures] with their guns in their laps and said, "You are not permitted to move outside this door." I replied, "Okay, I will not venture out." Then another Chinese said, "From tomorrow you have to come [with us]. We heard there are rebels over on that side and we have to go look for them. You have to come with your horse." I told them I did not have a horse—though I had a horse, it was sent far away to graze. He said, "You can bring your neighbor's horse." There was an interpreter. I said "My neighbor is poor and they do not own a horse," because I thought it would make it difficult for me to escape. He said, "You have to come with me tomorrow even if you don't have a horse. We have to look for the rebels and you are to show us the way." I replied, "Okay."

The next day dawned and the whole area was filled with Chinese troops; there were 100 or 200 of them. I was given a load to carry and they took me with them. I had to accompany them; I couldn't do otherwise. A little further away, there was a water body where the rivers called Powa Chu and Thewa Chu joined. You couldn't cross where the rivers joined; you had to cross where the rivers separated. On the other side were all meadows.

Then we walked and walked up. Far away we could see three or four large camps of travelers with innumerable horses, mules and animals. They [the Chinese] took me with them and we crossed the river. The Chinese then surrounded the travelers' camps—later I learned they were the Yabtsang family. I was left unguarded and I fled from there through the waters and up and back home! They were all so preoccupied with the large number of people and horses and mules that I was able to escape. I could escape back. [Laughs]

Q: How did you escape? What happens next?

**#25:** I escaped from the Chinese and came back home. It must have been one month later—around the time the crops were flowering when five or six Chinese came. I had a large area of land. There were other poor families who did not have any land. I was a tax payer and had a large area of land. They told me, "You alone cannot own such a large area of land. You have to divide it into three parts, keep two parts for yourself and give away one part to someone else. You cannot have such a large area. They will do the work, but you have to provide them food. They will work in the field and you have to give them food." There was nothing to do but say yes. My field was divided. There were crops standing high [shows with his hand] and they were given away.

Q: Among who were they divided?

**#25: There were poor families who did not own land. There were many such families in Digung, so they were given the land. "You have to give to them. You cannot own such a large area of land yourself." When they said this to me I replied yes. There was no way but to give the land to them.**

Q: How long did that go on?

**#25: After that I might have been there for around a month. Then we learned that the Chinese had arrived at Metagongkar. The Lamas and others said, "Now we must escape, else everyone will be arrested. Things will not be good and we must escape towards the north. There are soldiers in the north and we should flee there. There is nothing left now." Then one night everyone fled; there were about 30 families, both farmers and nomads. All of us fled driving our animals towards the north.**

Q: What year was that?

**#25: That was in 1959. That was the summer of 1959. The fighting in Lhasa was over and His Holiness the Dalai Lama had already escaped to India.**

Q: You escaped north. Was that away from India?

**#25: We went northwards. That was not towards India, but we went northwards because we learned there were soldiers there. In fact it was toward Kham.**

Q: Towards Kham?

**#25: It was away towards Kham. [Laughs] It was the work of those of us who knew nothing.**

Q: He is laughing because?

**[Interpreter to interviewer]: He said it's not towards India but north, towards Kham.**

Q: Was that a good strategy do you think?

**#25: We escaped towards Kham because it was well known that there was a large army in the north. We thought we could join the army and fight. We made plans to fight which was so stupid. [Laughs] We were totally incapable, but all of us went towards the north. There was a large lake in the north and around it were many people in tents. We thought that was the army camp and went towards it. About 30 families, the four Lamas with retinues and others spent the night on this side of the mountain pass, which was not a very high pass. The next day 13 of them, the four Lamas and their retinues rode on horseback saying, "You come later with the loads. We will go ahead and make camp ready." They rode away at dawn. That night the Chinese attacked the camp [of those who went ahead]. Some were killed, some fled and some were arrested. Then the Chinese hid in the tents.**

Q: Those 13 people went ahead and where were you all?

**#25: We were on the other side of the pass. We were yet to climb over the pass as we had animals to drive and things to be loaded. We were supposed to move slowly. They rode on ahead saying that they would set up camp for us. The 13 people told us to come later and left. That night the Chinese reached the camp and killed and arrested some, while others fled. The Chinese then hid in the tents and when they arrived, they were all captured by the Chinese.**

Q: They were killed?

**#25: They were captured, not killed.**

Q: Those 13 people?

**#25: The 13 people were captured there. We went very slowly because the Lamas were young men. We had 10-15 animals with loads. Five were in front and I was behind them and we started crossing the mountain pass. The Lamas and their retinues had already crossed the pass. When we got over the pass, we saw a lake. As we walked down the pass, we could see that the whole area was a large pastureland where nomads lived. It was a vast pastureland—everywhere you looked was pastures and nothing else but pastures.**

**Everyone was holding on to their horses and looking down below at the lake. The yaks with their loads were walking down. Someone said, "Look, there is something there. There is something shining by the lake. What could it be? What could it be that is shining there?" Everyone stood there looking at it. I too stood there looking. Some animals had crossed while the majority of them had still not crossed over from the other side.**

**A little later the Chinese started firing. Then we all ran helter-skelter and all our animals were lost, while some led their horses. That was it. All the animals were gone. We came across a crevice in a mountain. About thirty men and women had reached here. The rest were not there, they had run helter-skelter. Those who were following us had retraced their steps. They had gone back. Then it was around three o'clock in the afternoon. The 30 men and women remained there and some had horses.**

**I was the oldest among the group and at around 3 o'clock I told them, "Shall we go to look for our yaks and see if the Chinese have driven them away?" There were three young monks who said, "Yes, we must go and look." I asked someone to accompany me and the three young monks said they would come with me. So the four of us went towards where we had been walking down the mountain pass. There some of the yaks had dropped their loads and some still stood with the loads. They were still there and had not been taken or driven away. We didn't have guns, but I had a knife of this size [shows size with hands]. Other than that we didn't have anything. I told my companions, "Shall we go and try to drive as many yaks as possible. Let's go down there. There's no one to be seen. There are no Chinese to be seen. Let's go and drive as many yaks as possible." They replied, "No, no, we dare not go there. The Chinese will kill us. No, no, we dare not go."**

Two of the monks ran away. Now there was one monk left and myself. We went straight to where some yaks stood. I said, "Let's go lower and bring up the yaks, as many as possible." "No, we cannot do that. We dare not go," he said and he also ran away. So I was alone, I couldn't help it. I looked around and there were neither Chinese nor anyone. I ran down lower—I had nothing except the knife with me—and started herding and driving the yaks. Some whose loads were sagging, I cut off the ropes and at last managed to bring back 72 yaks! I was able to bring the 72 yaks to the place where I told you all the people were.

Q: At the crevice?

**#25:** Yes, I drove the yaks close to the crevice. Then it was evening, darkness was almost falling. I started calling out loudly where people could hear, but there was no one. Everything was silent. I looked around and saw that everyone had fled. There was not a soul left! I thought they may have gone lower down and started driving the animals down. I saw that the Chinese had reached a mountain slope. They said "halo, halo" and flung fireballs. The whole place became white when the fireballs were flung.

Q: Were those canon balls?

**#25:** No, they were not cannon balls. They flung fireballs, which were very bright. There were no gunshots. They had something to fling and there was a flash of light and the place became white. Here you have the firecrackers—it was something like that. I ran and unloaded the yaks one by one until I unloaded about 10 or so. Then I ran away. I ran towards lower ground as the Chinese had reached there. I looked around. It was almost a desert and gusty winds blew. I looked carefully and could see a dark shape walking. I wondered who it was. I went closer and saw that it was a woman. She was a member of the Nupatsang Rinpoche's family. "Where are you going?" I said. "I am looking for Rinpoche," she said. "Where can you find Rinpoche now? He must have been captured by the Chinese. You won't find him," I said.

We went away. I had unloaded about 10 yaks and the Chinese had already arrived there. We couldn't go there. Though it was summer, the gusty winds of the north made it very cold. We found a sort of groove in the ground. Though she had fur skin on and I too had fur skin, it was not enough against the wind. The wind was so strong that she lay in the groove and I lay on her pressing her down. We spend the night like this one on top of the other. She was shivering with cold. I pressed her down and then dawn arrived.

I went to where the eight or nine loads were lying. All the animals were driven away, there was none left. The Chinese had driven them away. I looked up at the mountains and there were masses of people fleeing. People from Kham were escaping. It was filled with people. After some time I lost her. I couldn't see her anywhere; I didn't know where she'd gone. Tashi Choekyi and our sons were there in a niche with two horses. I went looking for her and saw her footsteps leading down the slope. I went that way and met a man who was wearing a fur coat.

I asked him where he was going and he said, "Last night the Chinese destroyed our camp and I can't find my family. They are all lost. I am going in search for them, hoping to see them." I told him what had happened to us and asked him if he'd seen or heard any nomad moving around in the night. He replied, "Early this morning before dawn I saw two fierce dogs barking and someone driving away with around 30 or 40 animals. Do you see that camp with the smoke? They are the ones. If those were your animals, they are taken there." I said okay and he continued on his journey saying that his family was destroyed and he was going to search for his family members.

I walked on and chanced upon a tea churner about this size [gestures the height and circumference]. I looked at it and saw that it contained curds, so I had my fill of curds. [Laughs] I put the churner back and continued on my way. I could see a man come running towards me from the high pass on the mountain. I wondered who he was. He was Gyaltzen Norbu, a monk servant from the Lama's residence. He had with him a gun. I asked him if he had seen any of our people. He said, "No, no, there is no one to be seen." I told him, "I am very tired and can walk no more. That family up there from where the smoke is rising, they have our animals. If you could, please go there. I will stay here in this corner. Do not take your gun, leave it here. I will keep it for you and rest awhile here. If those are our animals, bring back eight yaks. I have things which have to be loaded. I have the things hidden there and we can load them." He agreed and left, leaving his gun with me.

I was very tired and fell back in a crevice of the mountain. At around dusk he arrived and said, "Yes, those were our animals. I have the yaks to carry the loads." There were eight yaks and we loaded the things on them. That night we couldn't reach the place and spent the night in a crevice. The next morning we started our journey to the family. It was when the sun was warm that we unloaded the animals, had some milk and curds. We feared that the Chinese would arrive there. We were several people then. There were five or six of us. We had to hide among the rocks. We were five or six men. We immediately ran and hid among the rocks after eating our fill.

Within one hour a *gyako* [100] of Chinese arrived. They came to the home of the family where my wife Tashi Choekyi and our two children had gone. The Chinese came there and stayed the day, killing a yak and a *dri*. The Chinese killed two animals.

Q: At that time had you reached the place where your wife was, where your wife and the family was making fire? You had already reached there?

**#25: I had reached the north.**

Q: You reached the place where Tashi Choekyi and the family and all other people were staying? You had reached here?

**#25: Yes, I had reached where my wife and children were. I was hiding among the trees. There were trees everywhere and I was hiding there.**

Q: Then the Chinese arrived?

**#25: Yes, the Chinese arrived. A *gyako* of Chinese arrived, killing two animals.**

Q: How much is a “gyako”? A hundred?

**#25: One hundred.**

Q: What animals did they kill?

**#25: They killed one *dri* and one yak.**

Q: The Chinese killed them?

**#25: Yes, the Chinese killed them and spent the night there. The next morning we looked down where we could see them. Some of them were sitting by a fire wearing loose coats. Some were walking lower down the slopes leading their horses. Some were near the fire or loitering around. Then they left. And when they left we came out. We went there and had food—drinking milk and curds. After eating we went back to our hiding place. For about two nights they didn't come. Then another hundred Chinese arrived and they killed one yak. [Laughs] The story is unending. We were hiding among the trees.**

Q: What happens now?

**#25: The next morning when we looked out to see the nomad camp where we were staying, the camp was not there! The camp was driven away; they were not to be seen. There was not a soul to be seen. I had two colleagues with me who were monks. I said to them, "Our people are not to be seen. They seem to have been driven away." We didn't know what to do. It had snowed a little bit. I looked up the mountain and saw two people come running down. I told the monks, "Look at those people. Are they our people or are they Chinese? Look, they are coming." They said, "It looks like they are our people." One was the mother of one of the monks and the other was Tashi Choekyi. I had decided never to surrender and had made preparations by stocking *tsampa* ‘roasted barley flour.’ They had brought along with them a yak which had its nose pierced.**

**I asked them what had happened. They said that last night they had all moved to the other side of the mountain pass. If you walked an hour from there, there was the main Chinese army camp. They said, "Shall we surrender?" But I replied, "No, we will not surrender. Where are the children?" She said the children were there. The Chinese were coming; there were five or six horsemen. I told her to go quickly and bring back the children. I said she must bring both children back and we would not surrender. She immediately left and managed to bring back both children. We got back the children and all the others had surrendered.**

**There was one monk who didn't have anyone and he asked if he could join my group. I said, "Yes, if I am able to escape, you will too and if I am caught, you too will not succeed.**

**It is up to you. If you want to join us, I have no objection. You can come with me. However, you have to consider—everybody's surrendering to the Chinese. It is up to you." He said he was not going to surrender and that he wanted to come with me, come what may. I said fine. That whole day we hid there and when night fell, we took the direction towards Kongpo—I had been to Kongpo. Keeping to the direction of Kongpo, we walked the whole night. We traveled three nights, hiding during the day and walking the whole night.**

Q: Tashi Choekyi and the group were hiding in another place?

**#25: Yes, they were at another place and then we met up again. I was with them.**

Q: Later you met up again. With you were two monks?

**#25: One of the monks was taken by his aunt. They surrendered and the aunt did not send him.**

Q: There was only one monk left. When two people came, one was your wife and the other was the mother of the monk. Where did they say they left your children?

**#25: What?**

Q: Where did they say they had left your children?

**#25: That evening they had gone over the mountain pass towards the other side. It was towards where the Chinese army camp was. They were driven in the evening and when they reached this place, night fell.**

Q: Were they driven by the Chinese?

**#25: Yes, they were driven by the Chinese. When they were driven, night fell and they couldn't go further. So they spend the night at the pass. Tashi Choekyi and the mother of the monk had come to fetch us.**

Q: The place where they were and the place where you were hiding, were they close?

**#25: It was over the mountain pass. It was not very far. Those were grassy passes, the passes of the north, so it wasn't very high.**

Q: How old were the children?

**#25: The younger one was 5 and the older one was 9.**

Q: Boy and a girl?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Two boys.

**#25: I was able to get both my children back.**

Q: What was the emotional state of your wife and the children?

**#25: Then we escaped, continuing in the direction of Kongpo. It was just the monk, my wife, children and I—the five of us. We walked three whole nights—fleeing in the dark. Finally, just before we reached Kongpo, we saw a family. It was a big nomad family. I didn't know where we were going and I said I needed to ask them. So I left them there and went to meet the nomad.**

The nomad was an old man with long white hair wearing a fur *chupa* 'traditional coat' and he asked me, "Where are you from?" I replied I'd come from the north. "What is the reason?" he asked me. I told him I was going to Kongpo. "Why are you going to Kongpo?" he said. I replied, "I have a relative there whom I'm visiting. I've been quite a long while in the north. The Chinese have come to the north and I'm facing food shortage. I am going to Kongpo." "Fine" he said.

I had on a fine new fur *chupa* and though he had a fur *chupa*, it was old. He asked me if I would sell him my fur *chupa*. I said that if we could settle on the right price, I could sell it. "Could you remove it?" he asked me. So I agreed and removed it. He asked me how much it was. I said, "Give me three *gyama* [measurement similar to kilograms] of butter and one *bo* [container used for measurement] of cheese." He agreed and I sold him the fur coat.

He pondered for a while and said, "Do you have to fear the Chinese?" To this I replied, "Because I had to fear the Chinese, I sold you this fur *chupa* for just three *gyama* of butter which originally had cost me a horse. If I didn't have to fear the Chinese why would I sell it to you? I fear the Chinese which is why I am here with you. Can you show me where Kongpo Gyamda is?" He said Kongpo Gyamda was a very long distant away.

He then said he had advice for me, "I know a place where I could keep you and you would not see any Chinese for a year. You will have no expenses. I will keep you." He was a rich man and said he would keep all of us where we would see no Chinese for one year and would pay for our keep. I said, "You have been extremely kind, you couldn't be kinder. You are very good. However, you will keep me for one year where there are no Chinese, but in the end I would be under them. That is not right for me. I am trying to get away from the Chinese and I hope to go to Pema Koe."

He said, "That is impossible. Gyamda and Songtsen *Gonpa* 'Monastery' areas are filled with Chinese. There is no way for you to escape. It is better for you to stay here." I said, "I have been to upper Kongpo earlier. So I will go there. Which is the way to Shonang? Which is the route there? I want to go there." He thought for a while, shook my hand and said, "You are a real man. If you go to upper Kongpo, you can go where there are no Chinese. I will vouch for that. If you go down lower from here, there is a nunnery. You can ask there and they will tell you. Over the mountain, there are three nomad families who do not like the Chinese. You can meet them and they will guide you. They do not like the

Chinese, those three families." "Thank you. You have been of great help," saying this I walked away towards the nomad camp.

A young man came out and asked me where I was going. I told him everything and he said, "Go back immediately. The Chinese are cutting grass there, right by the road. There is no way to go. The Chinese will harm not only you, but us, too. Go back and stay there—hide there. The Chinese would most probably finish cutting tonight and they might go back. Once they are gone, you can continue. You shouldn't go now or it will be disastrous. Many monks of the Dowo *Gonpa* escaped into the jungles and they are looking for them." I said okay and I sat among some bushes and he gave me some tea.

In the evening I slowly emerged and went to look around and saw that the Chinese were going away. I immediately went back and told the young man the Chinese were gone and he should show me the route. He said, "You go this way and you will reach a small river. You pass it and you will come across a bridge. Cross the bridge and go over the mountain pass. Do not go the other way because that route leads towards the Chinese. You will be caught. Go over the mountain pass on the other side." I said okay and then the next morning five of us led our yak and started out.

We reached the bridge and the river was huge and roaring. From this point I was familiar as I had traversed this path earlier to and from Kongpo. I went towards the bridge, leaving them there. I checked to see if there was anyone watching the bridge, but there was no one. The bridge was empty. I thought it was fine that there were no Chinese. We crossed the bridge and walked down. The water was roaring, I was walking ahead with the animal and the others were following me. I heard a sound and looked carefully—it was the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the Tibetan month and the moonlight was bright—and saw seven horses with saddles tethered there.

Q: Near the bridge?

#25: The Chinese were lying in wait for travelers, not for me, but for any travelers.

Q: Was it near the bridge?

#25: Yes, a little further away from the bridge. I had been on this route earlier when I had to go to pay taxes at Gyamda. Then we retraced our steps on the bridge and waited. It must have been around 12 o'clock and I suppose they were asleep. They didn't know because they were sleeping. The horses were making sounds eating hay. We climbed up the pass and got to the other side. They didn't know anything and we escaped.

The next day we came to the place called Shonang and saw some Chinese cutting grass. Day break came and no one said anything. We walked by the wayside and some of them were standing, while some were near a fire. We walked up the slope and reached the camp of a nomad I knew. He was there and I asked him to give me butter and cheese and told him that I was escaping. He gave me cheese and butter. We drank tea and buttermilk.

Then we crossed another pass and reached the place called Changdung, which was in Kongpo. It was late in the evening and by the side of a field we prepared some tea.

I was wondering what to do now. We were close to the Tsangpo River. It was the huge Yechap Tsangpo River. We could not cross over to the other side except in boats. Now we were stuck there. I said I would go and find out about this place. The region was a forest full of pine trees. I walked further and saw some houses. There was a woman carrying a basket. I went to meet her. I asked her and she said that this was the place called Changdung. I asked her if we could get a boat to go across. She replied that we could get a boat. I asked her if I could get a boatman and she replied, "Yes, you can find a boatman. My husband is the *U-yon* [leader by the Chinese]. He will send one for you. He is coming here now and you can ask the *U-yon*." I said okay.

Then he came and I asked him for a boat to go across. He asked me where I was going and I replied that I was going to see my relatives in lower Kongpo. He said, "Sure, I will send you a boat. I have an empty house and you can move in there. I have to go to give a message to the tribesmen living there. I can send you a boat." I was very satisfied and moved into his empty house and asked him to send me a boat. He kept on saying he would but he didn't. Five days passed. The office of the Temay Tenkha was quite a long way away. There were no Chinese at Changdung.

One day he [the *U-yon*] said, "You should settle in this place. There are twelve families living here. If you stay, it would become thirteen families. There is the huge Changdung estate which will be divided. There are horses of the nomads which will be divided. There are *dri* and yaks of the nomads which will be divided. The *dzomo* will be divided. You will receive your share. You should live here; your going away would be no good." I replied that I couldn't live there because I had to go to meet my relatives in lower Kongpo.

I requested that he send me a boat. Then he said, "I cannot send you a boat. I cannot send you a boat without asking the leader." He said that he couldn't send me a boat without asking his leader the Temay Tenkha. I told him, "If that was the case, you should have told me right at the start. Why didn't you tell me? Why did you hold me here for so many days? My food is almost running out." He said, "I will send someone with you and you can go and speak to Temay Tenkha." He sent an old man with me. I took my older son Tsephel with me and we went to see Temay Tenkha. The distance was about from here to Bylakuppe [about 2 miles].

That day there was a meeting with the Chinese and the place was swarming with *U-yon*. I went there and a woman came out. "Where are you from?" she asked. I told her that I had come from Changdung and that the *U-yon* there said he couldn't send me a boat to go across to meet my relatives in lower Kongpo without asking the leader, so I was there. I told her that he had stopped me for so many days and that my food was running out. I said that I wanted to meet the leader. She was the leader's wife and she said, "Your food has run out? You can go and beg from the villagers and then come back. I will have tea for you and then you can stay wherever you want."

I went to a rich man's home where a mule was tethered and I asked him to give me some *tsampa*. He gave me a huge plateful of *tsampa*, a similar amount of wheat flour and a can full of *chang* 'home-brewed beer.' I had a *sangkhuk* [a bag with two sections normally used to carry incense offerings] and I put the *tsampa* on one side and the wheat flour in the other. I drank some *chang* and rested there. I had stock of *tsampa* but since the lady had said I should beg, I did so. Then I went back and she asked me how much I received. I showed her the bag and she asked if I had gone to all the houses. I said I had, but some of the families were away on work. She gave me some black tea and told me to go where I had to. I told her that I had to meet the leader and asked for her help. She agreed.

Then I saw a man in blue pants with crew cut hair, who said, "Where are you from?" I replied, "I have come from Tibet where everything is so plentiful. I am going to lower Kongpo to meet my relatives. When I asked the *U-yon* to send me a boat he said that he couldn't do so without asking the leader. So I have come to see you." He replied, "Okay. Who in lower Kongpo are you meeting?" I said it was *Ada* [a term generally used to address all older men]. "What is the name of this *Ada*?" he asked. I replied, "It has been so long and I don't know if he is still alive, but his name is *Ada Jamphel*." He asked someone to call the *U-yon* and said, "Whenever he wishes to go, you should let him. You cannot stop him. Send him a boat. You cannot stop him."

I at once stood up and said, "Thank you. Everywhere the liberation process is taking place and I might be stopped on the way. So please give me a permit" He said, "This Temay Tenkha office is not a small one. This is a big office and my name is Liu Rinchen. If anyone stops you, just mention the office of Liu Rinchen and that is your permit. You don't need a permit. That is your permit. Don't lie, be straight forward and there will be no one to stop you. If you lie, you will not be able to go another step." Then we reached Nayul in the boat.

Q: You met the Kongpo Temay Tenkha, what did you say he looked like?

**#25: He was a handsome young man.**

Q: With crew cut hair?

**#25: Yes, crew cut hair and wearing a pair of blue pants and a shirt. Now I am almost at the end of the story. We are almost nearing India. [Laughs] It is unending.**

Q: Then you were able to go across the Tsangpo River in the boat?

**#25: Then we were in Nayul, and from there to Manikhong, a tribal area.**

Q: Nayul is in Tibet?

**#25: Nayul is in Tibet, in Kongpo. From there, over the mountain pass was Manikhong, the area of the tribesmen.**

Q: When you reached Manikhong, it was the land of the tribesmen?

**#25: Yes that is right—the tribal land. When you went from Nayul and just before you reached Manikhong, there are Indian soldiers stationed on the mountain pass there. At that time we were few in number and had just arrived and the Indian troops helped us carry our loads and held the children's hands. They were very good and helped us.**

Q: This was at Manikhong?

**#25: Yes, that was near Manikhong. From Manikhong we reached the place called Lho A-long. We stayed there for about five days and then we were taken by airplane to Monpatti near Assam.**

Q: To Assam?

**#25: We reached Assam.**

Q: You were taken in airplanes?

**#25: Yes, in an airplane. After we reached Monpatti in Assam, we traveled by boat to a place near Missamari.**

Q: You stayed 5 days in Lho A-long and reached Assam by flight?

**#25: Yes, we reached Dibrugarh.**

Q: Dibrugarh is in Assam.

**#25: Yes, in Assam. From Dibrugarh we traveled by boat to Missamari. [Laughs] Yes, we reached Missamari in a boat. That is the end. [Laughs] Then we stayed three to four months in Missamari.**

Q: What a wonderful exciting journey, and scary. And what great courage you showed.

**#25: [Laughs] That is the end.**

Q: When you think of the next generation of Tibetans children, the new children being born in Tibet and around Bylakuppe, what kind of things do you want them to remember about Tibet?

**#25: That is difficult for them to remember. The younger children should be taught.**

Q: The older generation should teach the younger generation?

**#25: Yes, they should be taught that this is the history of Tibet. They should be told how the people led their lives by farming and leading a nomadic lifestyle. Except for Lhasa, which is a city, in the rest of Tibet people engaged only in farming and rearing animals.**

Q: And that's exactly what you did today.

**#25: Yes, that is right.**

Q: What advice do you have for the children of Tibet?

**#25: The children should remember the teachings of the Lord Buddha and should try to practice kindness and compassion.**

Q: That sounds like a good ending.

**#25: Thank you very much.**

END OF INTERVIEW