

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #12D – Kunchok Tsewang
May 16, 2012

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #12D
2. Interviewee: Kunchok Tsewang
3. Age: 78
4. Date of Birth: 1935
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Tsari
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1960
9. Date of Interview: May 16, 2012
10. Place of Interview: Hotel Tibet, Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 03 min
12. Interviewer: Rebecca Novick
13. Interpreter: Thupten Kelsang Dakpa
14. Videographer: Ronny Novick
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Kunchok Tsewang is from Tsari, which he describes as a pilgrimage site. He hails from a nomadic background and started herding animals at the age of 5 or 6. He enjoyed riding horses and shares his experience about the various types of horses and types of saddles. He also liked playing with knives and slingshots with other boys in the forest.

Kunchok Tsewang explains that Tsari was a region where cultivation was forbidden because of the many holy mountains called *lari* and lakes known as *lamtso* that were dedicated to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and other high lamas. He also talks about *tsikor*, *bakor* and *rongkor*, the three types of circumambulations performed during special times of the year at a sacred mountain called the *nayri* 'pilgrim mountain.' He speaks about the *migoe* 'ape/gorilla/yeti' whose huge and wet footprints he saw in the forests of his region.

Kunchok Tsewang notes that the Chinese first appeared when he was around 15 or 16 years. He describes the suffering Tibetan people endured such as *thamzing* 'struggle session,' imprisonment and torture under the Chinese. Kunchok Tsewang and his father fled to India after learning that the Chinese were going to subject his father to *thamzing*. They witnessed the death of many other refugees who could not survive the harsh climate in India.

Topics Discussed:

Childhood memories, nomadic life, pilgrimage, life under Chinese rule, *thamzing*, escape experiences, life as a refugee in India.

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Interview #12D

Interviewee: Kunchok Tsewang

Age: 78, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Rebecca Novick

Interview Date: May 16, 2012

Question: Could you please tell us your name, *pa-la* ‘respectful term for father’?

00:00:14

Interviewee #12D: Kunchok Tsewang.

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked us to record your experiences, so that we can share your story with the Chinese, Tibetans and the rest of the world.

#12D: Hmm...

Q: Your personal memories are going to help us to document the true history, culture and beliefs of the Tibetan people. Do you give permission for the Tibet Oral History Project to use your interview?

#12D: Yes.

Q: Thank you. During the interview if you want to take a break, just let us know.

#12D: [To interpreter] Please speak a little louder. I cannot hear very well. Please speak louder.

Q: If you need to go to the toilet or drink water, [we] can stop.

#12D: Okay.

Q: If there’s a question you don’t want to answer, just let us know.

#12D: Okay.

Q: We have to ask you, if this interview was shown in Tibet or China or anywhere else in the world, would it create a problem for you?

00:02:04

#12D: I have no problems talking about what the Chinese did.

Q: Can you first start by just describing some of your earliest memories with your family?

#12D: Being nomads, when I was small, around the age of 5 or 6 I herded animals. My experiences were with animals, goats and sheep, and horses and mules. Then there were yaks that the nomads owned that were used in transportation since there were no motor vehicles then. There were vehicles only in Lhasa and nowhere else. There were no vehicles in the villages. [I] have experiences with animals.

Q: How old were you when you first started to ride a horse?

#12D: Yes?

Q: How old were you when you first started to ride a horse?

#12D: [I] rode a horse at age 12 or 13.

Q: Did you enjoy riding horses? Was that fun?

00:04:15

#12D: It was a bit scary the first time. Then after riding for a day, two days and three days, one lost fear and horse riding became enjoyable.

Q: Did you fall off the first time?

#12D: [I] have never fallen off a horse. Initially one must ride slowly. The second [day] one can ride faster and then gradually if one felt that there was no fear of falling, one can ride faster.

Q: Do you use any kind of saddle or ride bareback?

#12D: There was a soft saddle on the horse.

Q: What was it made of? Leather?

#12D: Unlike the [saddle] on the yaks to transport things, the saddle for people was a soft one. There were stirrups for the feet—round metal loops for the feet.

Q: What was the saddle made of? Was it made of leather?

00:05:41

#12D: No, it was made of *nambu* ‘machine-made woolen cloth.’

Q: What’s *nambu*?

#12D: *Nambu* is the material we use to make *chupa* ‘traditional dress’ in Tibet.

Q: Did you name your horses?

#12D: Horses were given names. Horses had different types of [coat] hair. Names were given based on the hair [color].

Q: Can you remember any of the names?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Can you remember some of the names of the horses?

#12D: The horses could follow names when one spoke to them like humans.

Q: Can you remember some of the names, as an example?

00:06:41

#12D: If the horse was *sakpa* ‘reddish-colored with dark mane and tail,’ it was called Kalsang Sakpa or Tashi Sakpa. Horses were named according to the hair [coat] color.

Q: By hair do you mean the mane?

#12D: The hair [color] had different names. Some were white and some were black. And some were red. There were two types of red. Some horses were blue.

Q: Were there blue horses?

#12D: There were blue ones.

Q: What kind of blue? Light blue?

#12D: [Looks around] The blue...[looks around]

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Like a pale blue?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: I’m assuming it must be dark.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: You think it was dark blue?

#12D: The blue was a mixture of white and black.

Q: A mixture of white and black?

#12D: The blue is called grey here.

Q: Did you have a favorite horse?

#12D: I was a child then. My father had a special *shonta* ‘riding horse’ that he rode. Wealthy people had special horses for riding called *shonta*.

Q: Can you try and describe like a typical day, like from when you get up in the morning and what you have for breakfast and then the kind of work you did? If you could just give us a typical day in that time of your life.

#12D: Those who owned animals must work with animals. Those that did not own animals performed fieldwork.

Q: What did you do from the time you got up in the morning?

00:09:39

#12D: [I] was quite young then. I herded animals since the age of 5 or 6. [I] herded animals until the age of 26. [I] chanted prayers as [I] herded animals.

Q: What time did [you] leave?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Around what time in the morning?

#12D: One got up at around 4 o'clock. One must get up early and leave with the animals.

Q: And then?

#12D: And then milking must be done.

Q: When did you milk? Around what time?

#12D: The calves were tethered at night. One milked early in the morning and then let the calves lose. Then one must [decide] upon the direction where the animals would graze that day. If [the animals] had grazed in the east that day, [they] must be taken to the west the next day. Grasslands must be used in rotation.

Q: And then?

00:11:08

#12D: And then [the animals] were gathered in the evening.

Q: What time in the evening?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Around what time in the evening?

#12D: If it was summertime like now, [they] were gathered around 5 o'clock.

Q: And during the wintertime? Was it done earlier?

#12D: The animals were [gathered] later during winter. After grazing during the day, [they] must be taken to the water in the evening. [They] must drink water. The animals were put inside around dusk after drinking water.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: You do not have to wait when I write. [You] can continue speaking because I write fast.

#12D: The animals were put inside around dusk and the calves tethered. If there were goats and sheep, they were put in a separate enclosure. Many [people] owned animals and goats and sheep.

Q: And then?

#12D: Some [people] milked goats while others did not. Sheep were sheared twice a year, once in springtime and again in autumn. And the yaks...Our region is a pilgrim site, the place called Tsari. Being a pilgrim site, cultivation was not allowed. There were *lari* ‘hill on which one’s soul rests after death’ and *lamtso* ‘lake where gods and serpent deities live’ [dedicated to] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and many other lamas.

So one was not allowed to dig the ground. One must go outside to the farmers to seek grains. During such [visits], one drove yaks and bought grains by selling butter and cheese. One sold butter and cheese and bought grains. Then one made *tsampa* ‘flour made from roasted barley’ and loaded them on the yaks. It was done like that. Those [people] that owned yaks brought [*tsampa*] on yaks while those that did not own yaks drove horses and mules.

Q: *Pa-la*, please don’t wait for him [interpreter] to write, he’s a very fast writer and he’ll keep up with you. So don’t worry about giving him time. And why were you not allowed to farm?

#12D: In Tibet?

Q: Why were you not allowed to farm in Ngari?

#12D: I am not from Ngari.

Q: Nari?

#12D: Tsari.

Q: Thari?

#12D: Tsari.

Q: Why were you not allowed to farm in Tsari?

00:16:51

#12D: There were *lari* and *lamtso* [dedicated to] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama and all lamas in Tsari. That is why one was not allowed to dig the ground. Except for nomads [to graze animals], cultivation was not allowed.

Q: Was it a very holy place?

#12D: Yes, it was a very holy place.

Q: Thari and...

#12D: Tsari. It is called Tsari.

Q: Besides Tsari?

#12D: It is called the pilgrim site of Tsari. It was a *nayri* ‘mountain in the god realms.’ It was the [site for] *lari* and *lamtso* of all the lamas.

Q: Do you know why it was considered to be sacred grounds?

#12D: It was sacred because there were *lari* and *lamtso* for every lama. Because of the presence of sacred mountains, one could not dig the ground. There were *lamtso* of every lama. How many *lamtso* and mountains were there? There were two mountains of the Panchen Rinpoche and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. They were called Dhakpa Chenrezig and Shasa Khando. These two were the most sacred mountains.

Q: Dhakpa Chenrezig and ...?

#12D: Shasa Khando. These two mountains were the most sacred. One hundred eighty big mountains surrounded these two mountains. [They] were encircled by 180 big mountains. The *lamtso* [dedicated to] the Panchen Lama and His Holiness the Dalai Lama are called Phara Yumtso and Mebar Lamtso, where a fire burned in the lake. And then *ngati ngathong* ‘55000’ lakes...

Q: Was there a fire burning in the lake?

00:19:38

#12D: Yes, a fire burning in the lake.

Q: What is the name of the lake?

#12D: Mebar Lamtso.

Q: Mebar Lamtso?

#12D: Mebar Lamtso. Another lake was called Phara Yumtso.

Q: Yumtso?

#12D: Right. How many small lakes were there? The lakes that can be seen by the eyes above the ground numbered 55,000.

Q: 5,000?

#12D: Yes. Therefore, there were *lari* and *lamtso* of every lama present. That is what is known by *lari* and *lamtso*.

Q: Did you also have the feeling that it was a very special place?

00:21:22

#12D: We went to circumambulate [the sacred mountain] four or five times a year. *Tsikor* and *bakor* were [the types of circumambulations]. There was a pathway for *tsikor* [moves right hand around top part of cone shape formed by left hand]. Then there was a pathway for *bakor* [moves right hand around middle part of cone shape formed by left hand] and then there was the *rongkor*, which was a pathway to circumambulate at the base of the mountain. This could be done only once in 12 years, the one called *rongkor*.

The *tsikor* could be circumambulated any number of times between the 15th day of the 4th lunar month to the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. One could circumambulate the *bakor* only once a year. I used to circumambulate at least three or four times in a year.

Q: How much distance was that...?

#12D: [Interrupts] The *tsikor* circumambulation took five, six or seven days.

Q: Around seven days?

#12D: Yes.

Q: Seven days and how many nights?

#12D: Unlike here, we did not walk in the night. By nightfall one went to sleep until dawn the next morning. One could only begin by daylight.

Q: How many kilometers would the distance of the *tsikor* be?

#12D: Yes?

Q: How many kilometers would that be?

00:23:21

#12D: One cannot measure it in kilometers. The mountain of Tsari is the highest in the eastern direction.

Q: Did many people do that?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Did many people do the *tsikor*?

#12D: There was no end to people at the *tsikor* during summertime. The Tibetan Government set up reception centers [for pilgrims] to halt at night and make camp. People of my village attended at the reception centers and the government paid their salary.

Q: You mentioned that you always say prayers on the way to taking the animals to pasture. What kind of prayers would you say?

#12D: While herding animals, those [people] that knew *dolma* ‘prayers to the 21 Tara’ recited *dolma* and those that did not [know the *dolma* prayers] chanted *mani* ‘mantra of Avalokiteshvara’ or *benza guru* ‘mantra *om ah hung vajra guru Padma siddhi hung.*’ One chanted whatever prayers one knew while herding animals.

Q: Were there stories about that place associated with like holy beings? Were there different stories associated with that place?

00:25:24

#12D: Stories or expositions of the pilgrim sites were there. However, [I] do not know the entire expositions. If somebody like you can write about the pilgrim sites and if someone like me was with you, I could say what was sacred about in each mountain. It has been 4-5 years since my leg broke and [I] cannot go [to Tsari]. [I] hoped to go and the time was right but my leg broke and I could not.

Q: To Tibet?

#12D: Yes.

Q: Do you remember any stories at all from your childhood, maybe some ghost stories or something?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Do you remember any stories?

#12D: Stories?

Q: Yes.

#12D: No special stories...

Q: Ghost stories?

#12D: No. Our region was very sacred and there were no ghosts or any such things to be seen.

Q: Did you ever hear about or did you ever see this animal called the yeti?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Have you ever seen a *migoe* 'ape/gorilla/yeti'?

#12D: Migoe?

Q: Have [you] heard about the *migoe*?

00:27:43

#12D: Our region was covered in forests and there were *migoe* present. However, I have seen only footprints but not an actual *migoe*.

Q: What did you see?

#12D: [I] have not seen an actual *migoe* but footprints. When I went to the pilgrim sites, [I] have seen wet footprints but did not see an actual one.

Q: Can you describe the footprints? How big they were...

#12D: The size and length of the feet were this much [forms a gap of a foot and half with hands]. The footprints were wet. [Its] feet had been in water and then walked on land. One could see wet footprints. When we arrived, [it] had entered the forest. [I] did not see it.

Q: Were the feet humanlike?

#12D: The shape of the feet were similar to humans but were large.

Q: What kind of stories were there about the yeti? What did people think about it?

#12D: We had never seen a *migoe* and believed it must be terrifying to see one, such that if a child saw one, it may lose its soul. It was like that but [I] have never seen it.

Q: What did other people say?

00:29:40

#12D: Everybody used to instill great fear saying that should children venture into the forests, they would meet the *migoe*. They instilled fear, but [I] never saw one. And there was no child in my village that claimed that there were *migoe* and that they had seen one. However, there were older people who said that they had seen *migoe*.

Q: How did those that had seen describe them?

#12D: Yes?

Q: The older people had seen *migoe*...

#12D: The older ones had seen varying sizes of *migoe*.

Q: Can you recount some of the happiest memories you have from your childhood that really stand out, very happy memories?

#12D: The happiest times as a child were when one could ride horses and move about, and then playing as a child. Every boy irrespective of size carried a knife, big or small and ventured into the forests. That was a lot of fun. It was enjoyable during childhood. Children loved to ride horses.

Q: What kind of games did you used to play in the forest?

00:32:32

#12D: [We] used to test the sharpness of the knives by cutting trees. Someone held [a piece of] wood like this [pretends to hold with both hands] and someone cut it. [We] tested the sharpness of the knives by doing this.

Q: Were you good at the slingshot? Were you good with that?

#12D: I was a nomad and accustomed to using the slingshot all the time with the animals.

Q: Were you good at it?

#12D: Yes.

Q: Was your aim good?

#12D: [I] was excellent at using the slingshot.

Q: So how far could you hit something accurately?

#12D: The distance could be from here to Delek Hospital.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: I don't know. Is it far?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Delek...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Delek Hospital.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Delek Hospital from here?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: From here.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: That's very far. That's very good.

Q: Can you describe what happened a little later when you were a bit older? How did your life change?

#12D: Yes?

Q: How was your life when you became older?

#12D: When [I] became older, until I was about 12 or 13 years old Tibet was independent. Then when [I] turned 15 or 16, [I heard] that numerous people that did not have anything to eat but horse meat, human meat, monkey meat and various kinds of insects were arriving in Amdo.

Q: Did they arrive there?

00:34:59

#12D: Yes. When the Chinese first appeared I was around 15 or 16 years old. Then the Chinese gradually advanced inwards. When the Chinese appeared the elders exclaimed, "The Chinese are not good. It is better to wage a war. It is better to wage a war." However, there were no good preparations for a war.

Q: What kind of stories were you hearing from people coming from the east?

#12D: Those people that came from the east were the Chinese. Initially as a child [I] heard that [they ate] horse meat, human meat, dog meat...

Q: Did [they] eat human flesh?

#12D: Yes, [they] ate human flesh.

Q: ...[not discernible] or Amdo?

#12D: From the depths of Amdo. [The Chinese] advanced from the depths of Amdo, from the direction of Sining. [We] heard that numerous people that ate such meats were arriving. Then they gradually advanced inwards and the talk grew louder. When [they] arrived near Lhasa, it was said that Tibetan population and arms could not overcome [them]. So there was no war. And after they [the Chinese] arrived in Lhasa, in Kham...

Q: Did they rebel?

00:37:40

#12D: [The Chinese] captured all the influential people. The influential people were captured and some of them were buried alive, while some were clothed in cotton wear, doused with kerosene oil and set on fire. So able-bodied men and horses rebelled against the Chinese and that was how the *Chushi Gangdrug* [Defend Tibet Volunteer Force] came into being.

Q: And what happened next?

#12D: Then [the Chinese] advanced into Tibet and arrested all the influential people that had been leaders and heads, even those that had been *gyapon* ‘leaders of one hundred’ and put them in jail. While some were killed, some were subjected to something called *thamzing* ‘struggle session’ where people were forced to beat [them]. People were forced to assault [them] and some of [them] were rendered half dead or dead. They [the Chinese] imprisoned some of them and some of the—during the day the Chinese went to isolated places and dug pits and around 2 or 3 o’clock in the night, they entered family homes, took away men and put them in the pits and covered them. Some were put in jail. Some were taken to isolated areas and shot dead. Being shot dead was quick but to be buried alive was an agonizing death.

Q: These are things you heard and not things you saw?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Have you seen these things?

00:41:39

#12D: I have seen people and *Chushi Gangdrug* troops that arrived from Kham. They told us everything that had happened.

Q: Let’s stay with what you actually saw now. So what happened to you and your family? What did you experience?

#12D: The Chinese arrived in our region in ’59. [They] took away people that had been leaders in our region and monks to prison. I escaped in the year ’60 because my father was to be subjected to *thamzing* the next or the following day along with five or six people of our region. So my parents and a few relatives, we were four or five family members that fled in the night as father was to be subjected to *thamzing*. It was in the year ’60.

Q: And then?

#12D: All those people in our region that had already been arrested were subjected to *thamzing* in the presence of the public. The influential people had already been subjected to it. Later [the Chinese] were to arrest around six people along with my father.

Q: Had your father been arrested?

00:44:04

#12D: My father was yet to be arrested. It was said that [he] was to be arrested the next or the following day. [The Chinese] were going to arrest and force the poor class people who were trained to subject them to *thamzing*. [The poor people] were made to lie and speak of things [the influential had never done]. It was the Chinese custom to be mendacious, to lie and to deceive people. They told the bad people that they would receive this and that, and

that they would benefit. All the bad people were made leaders and forced to subject the earlier [leaders] to *thamzing*. [They] did such things.

Q: Who were the bad people?

#12D: The bad people were made to live in the houses of the richer people and all the provisions were given to them. The Chinese advised [the bad people] to do whatever bad things they wanted with the rich people who were the owners of the houses.

Q: What were the bad people like?

#12D: The worst people like *uyon, turing* [Chinese appointed leaders] were living in the houses [of the rich]. The worst people were appointed as leaders. The earlier leaders and the wealthy families—though [they] were not leaders, they were the rich families—all of these were brought down. And [the Chinese] advised the bad people, “Whatever food is there, it is for you. They [leaders and wealthy families] must be ousted.”

Q: Did you see your father being *thamzined*?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: They ran away, right?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Right but he seems to know a lot about it for someone who ran away. Where did he hear about all this?

Q: Was your father subjected to *thamzing*?

00:47:16

#12D: [He] was not subjected to *thamzing*. When the time for it arrived, [we] ran away. We fled in the night.

Q: Did you witness any of the *thamzings* or not?

#12D: [Speaks before question is interpreted] Once one was caught by the Chinese, there was no chance of escape.

Q: Have you witnessed a *thamzing*?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Have you witnessed a *thamzing*?

#12D: I have seen a *thamzing*. Other people were made to do it.

Q: Have you witnessed a *thamzing*?

#12D: [I] have witnessed it.

Q: So you saw your father being *thamzinged*?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No, not his father.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Who did he see? Other people? Earlier on? I see.

Q: So can you describe what that was like to see that?

#12D: They [the Chinese] had given food and everything that belonged to the rich people who had been arrested to the worst of people. The worst ones did the *thamzing* and the public were called to gather. The people were made to watch and told that everyone [of the influential and wealthy] must be subjected to *thamzing*. We, the better [middle-class] people just watched and did not take part in the *thamzing*. It was the worst of people that did the *thamzing*. [The victims'] hands were tied at the back and were made to kneel. As they knelt with their hands bound, [they] were hit by people on this side and on that side. The person fell to this side and that side. Then [he] was helped up and made to kneel. It happened like this. A majority of the people in Tibet was killed in this way. [They] perished under *thamzing*.

Q: And why was your father singled out for this treatment?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Why was your father going to be arrested for *thamzing*?

00:50:14

#12D: It was at the end of the year '59. It was at the end of '59 and around the beginning of '60. During this period all the people were arrested and subjected to *thamzing*. It happened then.

Q: Was your father some sort of a leader?

#12D: My father had been a *genpo* earlier. Here we would call [him] *gyapon* 'leader of one hundred.' [His responsibilities] were calling the people for meetings during the visits of officials, calling people for meetings or giving messages when higher authorities arrived. Here the *gyapon* calls [the people] and it was similar to that. [He] had shouldered that [duty].

Q: Can you please tell us about your father's escape?

#12D: [We] had relatives who were among the bad [people] that had received promotions. It was said that father had been listed among the ones to be arrested and subjected to *thamzing*. [A relative] secretly came and told [us] because should people come to know of it, he would land in prison himself. Some [people] secretly informed and we fled in the night. We came through forests and climbed over a mountain pass. [We] knew the region and came through forests and reached the tribal region of India. There were Indian soldiers at the tribal region. [We] came and surrendered to the Indian troops.

00:52:34

[We] surrendered to the Indian soldiers. The name of the place was Thakching, a tribal region. There were Indian soldiers. [We] surrendered to the Indian soldiers. The Indian soldiers dispatched us towards Assam. Due to the bad road, [we] walked for around 20 days.

Q: Around 20 days?

#12D: Yes.

Q: Did it take 20 days from the tribal region of Thakching to Assam?

#12D: It took around 20 days from Thakching to reach Assam.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit more about that journey?

#12D: [We] came on foot from Thakching for around 20 days. After 20 days we reached Daporijo in Assam.

Q: Before you reached Assam...

#12D: We arrived at Daporijo before reaching Assam where there was an airport. We stayed at the airport for around 5-6 days. [Indian authorities] provided food rations and left [us] for 5-6 days. Then [we] were sent by plane.

Q: Were your family alone?

#12D: Yes?

Q: How many people were there?

#12D: We were around 46 people. Then we arrived at Mairabari in Assam.

Q: Yes?

#12D: Assam Mairabari.

Q: Mairabari?

00:55:58

#12D: Yes. There was an airport at Mairabari where the plane landed. Dibrugarh [?] was located around 10 kilometers away from there. [We] were a week in Dibrugarh. Once again [we] received food rations. Then [we] left by a vehicle. At Tsamchodong [we] were sent by ship. The journey by ship might have taken around five hours and then [we] were taken to Missamari [Assam].

[We] stayed for around four months in Missamari. It was so hot that we could not endure it. Numerous Tibetans died there at Missamari. Many people of my village had arrived there ahead of us and many arrived after us. Around 40 people died within the four months. We were five members in the family and fled from the Missamari camp in the night.

Q: Fled from Missamari?

#12D: Yes, [we] fled and got on a train at Rangapara.

Q: Rangapa?

#12D: There was a railway station called Rangapara. [We] traveled in the train and reached Siliguri [West Bengal]. From Siliguri [we] went to Darjeeling [West Bengal] where [we] lived for around two years working as coolies. After working as coolies for around two years, [we] went to Bodh Gaya [Bihar] and other places on pilgrimage. Then [we] came to Dharamsala [Himachal Pradesh] and have been living here for many years. [I] have been living in Dharamsala since 1965.

Q: What was it like to fly in a plane for the first time?

00:59:59

#12D: When [I] flew by plane the first time, [I] felt fear and when the Indian planes' wheel rotated, the [sound] almost made one deaf.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: It was a propeller plane, was it?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yeah.

#12D: It was a plane that transported food supplies.

Q: Which ocean was it?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Must be the Bay of Bengal.

#12D: The ocean was Assam...

Q: Was it a real ocean?

#12D: Yes?

Q: It was an ocean?

#12D: It was a tributary of the ocean [Brahmaputra River?]. [We] journeyed around five hours by ship.

Q: Thank you very much. Is there anything else that you want to tell us that you haven't told us?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Do you have any special experience?

#12D: Unless [you] ask me I cannot tell you at once.

Q: Well, thank you so much for sharing your story with us today. Thank you so much and we have to ask you one more time, *pa-la*, is it okay if we show this...if this interview was shown in Tibet or China or anywhere else, would it be okay for you?

#12D: Yes?

Q: Will there be any problem?

#12D: There will be no problem.

Q: Thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW