

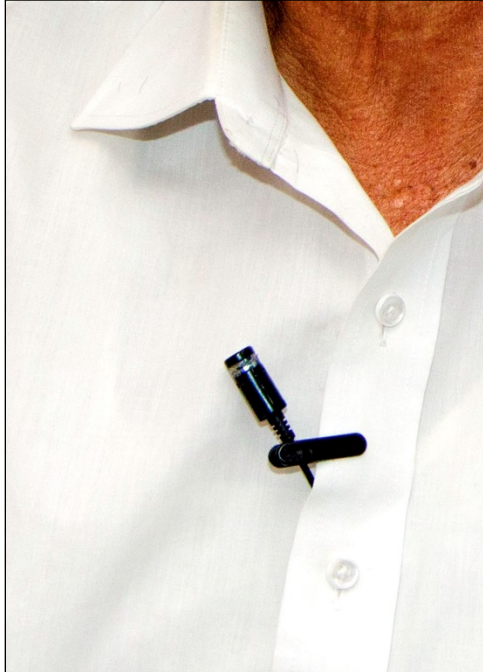
Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #19D – Sonam (alias)
May 15, 2012

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[Anonymity Requested]

TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #19D
2. Interviewee: Sonam (alias)
3. Age: 67
4. Date of Birth: 1945
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace:
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 2011
9. Date of Interview: May 15, 2012
10. Place of Interview: Hotel Tibet, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 12 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Pema Tashi
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Sonam was born into a middle class family—his father was a trader and his mother was a farmer. It was a “happy life” with freedom to go to the monasteries, and they had good food and clothing. When the Chinese invaded his village at age 13, Sonam’s father escaped to the mountains when people were ordered to surrender their weapons. He recalls how his father was shot in the legs by the Chinese and died from starvation in Dhartsedo prison.

The Chinese gave Sonam’s mother the symbolic “hat,” the symbol of a counter revolutionary because of the financial status of the family and his father’s escape. Sonam describes the Chinese’ oppressive rule and the meetings that were held three times a week to torture and insult the accused villagers like his mother. His family lived in fear and Sonam did hard labor, cutting wood, digging earth and building houses.

Sonam also experienced commune life started under Mao Zedong during which everybody had to work together and people had no freedom, even to visit neighboring villages without seeking permission from Chinese officials. He also speaks about his life after the commune system was dissolved and a small amount of religious freedom was restored. Sonam finally left Tibet in 2011 with his wife in order to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Topics Discussed:

Kham, childhood memories, invasion by Chinese army, life under Chinese rule, thamzing, oppression under Chinese.

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Interview #19D

Interviewee: Sonam [alias]

Age: 67, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: May 15, 2012

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:11

Interviewee #19D: Sonam.

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

#19D: Yes, you can.

Q: Thank you for offering to share your story with us.

#19D: [Nods]

Q: During this interview if you wish to take a break or stop at any time, please let me know. If you do not wish to answer a question or talk about something, let me know.

#19D: Okay.

Q: If this interview was shown in Tibet or China, would this be a problem for you?

00:01:57

#19D: There will be no problem.

Q: We are very honored to record your story and appreciate your participation in this project.

#19D: I also feel very happy. It is good to get this opportunity. In '57 my father could not remain in the village because of the Chinese. [He] left Kham in '57 and reached Lhasa in '58. The Chinese attacked Norbulingka in '59 and as His Holiness the Dalai Lama prepared to leave Norbulingka, my father was there. Then when my father arrived in Shigatse, the Chinese shot him and broke both his legs. After breaking his legs, he was put on a horse and taken towards Tsongon. Do you know Tsongon? It is in Amdo. From there, there was a water route to China. There were no drivable roads then. He was taken to China through the water route to Chengdu. There [he] was imprisoned in the Dho Ngachoe

Monastery where he died of starvation. He could not move the lower part of his body. One of the co-prisoners was Ama Adhe [Interview #61D].

Q: This is such an important story that I'm going to back up and begin at the beginning, so we don't leave anything out.

#19D: [Nods]

Q: What I would like to do because I said this is such an important story is to begin to hear a little bit about your childhood and background and I wanted to start by asking some questions.

#19D: Okay.

Q: What was your father's work and your mother's work in Tibet?

00:06:08

#19D: Father did not have much work except trading. Mother was a farmer. Basically we were a farming family. [We] also owned animals like cows but after the Chinese arrived, everything was confiscated, monasteries were shut and the society segregated. Mother was given the "hat." We were little children then. Father dare not remain and fled.

Q: How many animals did your family own and what kind?

#19D: There were around 30 animals.

Q: By animals, were they *dri*, yaks...?

#19D: There were *dri* 'female yak,' yaks, *dzomo* 'female animal bred from a yak and a cow' and *dzo* 'male animal bred between yak and cow.'

Q: How many were there?

#19D: Around 30.

Q: And was that considered a wealthy family or moderate or poor family?

00:08:19

#19D: If this were the wealthy, we were this. [Gestures off camera but interpreter interprets as "second"]

Q: Middle class. In your community...well, first of all in your family, how many people were in your family? Your mother, your father and you, were there other children?

#19D: There were father, mother, maternal uncle...

Q: In the family?

#19D: Yes, maternal uncle and two maternal aunts. The maternal aunts are living there [in Tibet].

Q: And children?

#19D: There was a younger daughter but she died.

Q: And no other brothers or sisters?

00:09:24

#19D: No.

Q: You were the only child?

#19D: There were children born from the same father outside, but I was the only one in our home.

Q: Before things changed in a difficult way, what was your life like as a child? What are your memories of your childhood?

#19D: It was a happy life. One had the freedom to go to the monastery if one wished and those from the monastery could visit the village if they so wished. There was good food, good food and good clothes. There were no problems whatsoever. Later, father fled from the Chinese when I was 13 years old. My mother was given the “hat” and labeled a counter revolutionary. She did not have any rights—the right to speak—and had to report to the Chinese once every week with the details of her activities throughout the days of the week.

Q: Where did father go?

00:11:00

#19D: Father fled to Lhasa when he no longer dared to stay in Kham.

Q: What circumstances arose that made your father have to leave? What happened that caused your father to leave?

#19D: All the people in the village were ordered to give up their guns and to surrender.

Q: Who said that?

#19D: The Chinese. The highest class was...[not discernible].

Q: Yes?

#19D: The Chinese called people belonging to the highest class to attend a meeting. All those who attended the meeting were taken to Ganzi and imprisoned. Father fled because he could not give up his guns.

Q: Did your father go?

#19D: Yes, father went.

Q: To Ganzi?

#19D: No, [he] ran away to the hills.

Q: What happened to him after he ran away into the hills?

00:13:38

#19D: When he reached Shigatse, the Chinese shot him in the legs. He and a companion both suffered broken legs. Two men had their legs broken. Both the men were taken to Amdo and then to China through a water route. They were sent back to Dhartsedo and died in a prison of starvation, having nothing to eat.

Ama Adhe who is living here [in Dharamsala] now was with him in the prison at Dhartsedo. If you were to interview Ama Adhe, she knows every detail about prison life. Many people had passed away due to starvation.

My mother was given the “hat” and told, “You are a counter revolutionary who does not like the Chinese. Even if you die, your mind will not. You belong to the old society.” The Chinese gave an example. “There is a worm underground. This worm worries that the soil will deplete, and the ant frets that the sky will fall. The mind lives even when the person is dead. Though the enemies of the Chinese are destroyed...you people will raise religion. Religion is deception.” The Chinese droned everyday that religion was bad. I’m not lying but speaking the truth.

Q: What did you say about the worm underground?

#19D: You have worms underground. “The worm fears that soil will deplete similar to what is in your mind. The worm thinks that the soil will deplete though it will not. A little insect worries that the sky will fall. These are impossibilities. A river flows downstream but you think it will flow upstream. You think like that. Water cannot flow upstream. You believe that the sands on the bank of the river will turn into barley.”

Q: The sands into...?

#19D: “...that the sands on the riverbank will turn into barley from which one makes *tsampa* ‘flour made from roasted barley.’ The mind will not die even when the body is dead,” that was what they said.

Q: Did they say that the worm that lives underground feeds on soil?

[Interpreter is confused by the Tibetan word ‘*zay*’ meaning both ‘food’ and ‘deplete.’]

00:17:30

#19D: ...that the soil will be depleted.

Q: Oh, they worry that the soil will get depleted!

#19D: Yes, though there is no end to soil, yet they worry. “Though we, the Communist Chinese will not come to an end, yet some of you evil minds think that way,” they droned on.

00:18:47-00:19:13

[Interviewer to interpreter]: I need to clarify something. When we left his father off, the Chinese attacked, they took many men prisoners and his father fled into the mountain and then he was shot in the leg. Is that much later in Lhasa or...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Shigatse.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: In Shigatse?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Near Lhasa.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: So it was much later.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Much later, yes.

Q: So let us go back to when his father first fled, right? He fled into the hills. What happened to his father when the first time he fled? What happened to him next?

#19D: Then the Chinese started the commune.

Q: Father fled to the hills and then what happened to him?

00:20:00

#19D: Then for a year or two...he had taken his gun and if not today, [he] would certainly encounter the Chinese the next day. [He] faced many confrontations with the Chinese.

Q: [Your] father got shot in the legs in Shigatse...

#19D: Right but before he reached Shigatse, he faced 13 encounters with the Chinese.

Q: You mean your father fought...

#19D: Yes, that's right. [I] heard there'd been 13 encounters.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: And that was like the first time his father left home? That was the first time father left home?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Hmm...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: He had 13 encounters.

Q: And then what happened?

00:21:04

#19D: My mother had a brother who is my maternal uncle. He was a lama. In '54 the Chinese took him to the place called Beri in Ganzi. Then the Chinese sent him home because he was ill and could not attend meetings. He did not get better after returning and uncle stayed indoors chanting the mantras and never ventured out. Then two Chinese arrived at the home and said, "You've been sitting too much. There is no illness in your body but [your condition] is because of sitting too much. Get up." Saying this the Chinese held his hands one on either side and made him stand up. They led him up and down, up and down and at one point maternal uncle felt dizzy. Then they said, "It is not only your legs but you are ill," saying so they sat him on the seat. The Chinese then left him; otherwise they ordered that he not stay indoors even when he was suffering illness. There were numerous difficulties, numerous difficulties, numerous extreme difficulties.

Q: Could we please go back and explain to me what the Chinese did to your mother when your father escaped into the hills. You said she was made to wear the "hat" of rebel? Explain that?

#19D: ...that [she] was a counter revolutionary who had countered the Chinese. "Your [society] does not have class segregation" [the Chinese said.]

Q: Was there a hat that was worn?

#19D: The Chinese call it "wearing the hat." At times they said, "You will be imposed with two hats. If you conduct yourself well, that is good. Otherwise you will be imposed a second hat on top of the existing one. If you further fail to behave, you will be sent to jail."

Q: Was there a hat that was worn?

00:24:56

#19D: No, there was not. It was a label for the person to indicate that he was a counter revolutionary.

Q: That was the first hat. What was the second hat?

#19D: The second hat was for erring in speech or actions or your attitude towards the Chinese. "Your husband has gone to the hills. You stay home but your husband has gone to the hills to oppose the Chinese," [the Chinese said.]

Q: How were people treated who had that label?

#19D: Three meetings used to be held every *shinchay*.

Q: What's *shinchay*? Is it week?

#19D: Right, there are seven days in a week. From the seven days, three days were for...there were two people in our village, who were targeted. Numerous people sat surrounding the two who were forced to kneel in the center with their hands raised in the air and told, “These two evil people have such minds. Even when they are dead, their minds will not be. These two evil people wish for the old society to come back. They wish for the dharma and the monasteries to flourish.” [They] faced physical struggles three times a week.

Q: Were they mistreated in any way or were they just made to kneel?

00:27:58

#19D: Numerous people surrounded them while they were in the center. [They] knelt on the ground with hands in the air. The person’s name was written on a piece of paper. The name was written in red and hung over the neck. [The sign] with the person’s name was worn upside down and not in the right way. It was upside down.

Q: Do you remember what the paper said?

#19D: [I] do remember. The person’s name was written in red and not in black. [The Chinese] wrote in red.

Q: What was written there?

#19D: The person’s name was written but upside down. The upside down name was hung over the neck. [He] was forced to kneel on the ground with his hands in the air.

Q: And the reason your mother was treated that way was because her husband had gone into the mountains to escape?

00:29:46

#19D: Yes, that was it and also because our family was considered a little richer and its members good people. With huge gatherings, the Chinese could have problems. There would be 20-30 “evil” people in a *kongre* [community?]. All the “evil” ones were brought to a huge meeting and forced to kneel at the edge of an incline, with their hands in the air as I told you and the name paper hung over the neck. All of them had their hands in the air and knelt at the edge of the ground and then as the Chinese kicked at them, they fell down. If they failed to climb up quickly, they would get beaten down there.

Q: Were they thrown down a precipice?

#19D: They knelt at the edge of the ground.

Q: Were they kneeling close to a precipice?

#19D: Yes, they were on an edge at a height and thrown down. Once they were down, if they failed to climb up within a few minutes, they would get beaten down there. This happened numerous times, not just once or twice.

Q: These other rebels, were they considered rebels because they were wealthy?

00:32:41

#19D: Yes, that is right. All of them did not like the Chinese. My mother, my friend's father, relatives and all who were given the "hat" were there while we were forced to watch them during the meeting.

Q: When you were 13, your father left for Lhasa—was that the time that he fled from the village? Was that when he was on his way to Lhasa or was that a second time?

#19D: He could come [home] only once.

Q: When you were 13, father fled to the mountains. Did he flee for good to Shigatse?

#19D: [He] came home once because [he] was close to home then. [He] did not have anything to eat and came home to get food.

Q: Did [he] come?

#19D: [He] came once.

Q: And then?

00:34:10

#19D: And then he left for good to Lhasa. The Chinese numbers kept increasing. If there were 10 Chinese today, tomorrow there were 20. If there were 20 tomorrow, the following day there were 40. Many arrived and so [he] fled from Kham.

Q: So when you were 13, your father left for good then?

#19D: Yes, right. In '56 he was [hiding] close by, but left for Lhasa in '57 when [he] could no longer stay there. The Chinese first arrived in my region in '56.

Q: When your father was hiding in the mountains, did people in the village secretly, did the women or the men secretly try to bring food to the people hiding in the mountains?

#19D: They were able to do so two or three times in the absence of the Chinese. It could be done only two or three times as by then large numbers of Chinese arrived.

Q: And what happened to you and your mother? Father was up in the mountains and then he had to flee in '57, so what happened to you and your mother and sister?

00:36:38

#19D: [We] lived in fear of the Chinese, in fear of the Chinese.

Q: What was happening in your village that made you feel so afraid?

#19D: In '57 there was this thing called *Saphayinlu* [Democratization of Revolution Process?] when all the monasteries were closed and the monasteries' articles taken by the Chinese. All things belonging to the villagers and monasteries were taken away. Everything went into Chinese hands and [we] did not get anything back. Following that was the great Cultural Revolution during which the Chinese took away Tibet's culture, religion, religious statues and everything. Once again the Chinese took away all things. [We] lost the things twice. [I] think it was '63 or '64 that the Cultural Revolution took place.

Q: What was life like in your house where you lived?

#19D: One was banned from making a fire in the house. One had to go to the commune to eat and not do so privately. One could not make a fire at home.

Q: The people left in the village, about how many people were in your village? How large was the community?

#19D: What?

Q: How big was your village? How many people were there?

00:39:27

#19D: There were around 15 families in my village. Not many were there. There were many houses in the region, perhaps around 500 people.

Q: Five hundred in the region and in the village?

#19D: There were around 200 people in the village.

Q: Were the people... Were there women and children only or did they include men as well? Were there men left or had all the men gone into the mountains or been arrested?

#19D: The majority [of the men] had fled. Most of the men that were somewhat rich or good had taken flight while the poor and those that could not flee were left behind.

Q: Women and children...?

#19D: Yes, all the women and children.

Q: Were they left behind?

00:40:45

#19D: [They] were left behind. Some of the families fled together. One lives in Sera [Monastery in south India] even now called Yanglay. The husband is dead but the wife survived.

Q: Did they escape together to the mountain?

#19D: Yes, [they] fled together. When she ran, the Chinese started firing and she thought of dropping the child she was carrying to the ground. “Shall [I] drop this child to the ground? If this child cries, the Chinese will catch us. [I] should drop this child to the ground.” She said that she thought of throwing away the child. [She] lives in the south in Camp Number 2.

Q: You were now about 13 years old and your father was gone. Did you feel any special responsibility for your mother and your sister as the only man in the family?

#19D: Yes?

Q: You had to shoulder responsibility at the age of 13. Did you feel that way?

#19D: [We] did not get anything.

Q: [Your] mother was there and [you] had to take care of her...

#19D: There was no one who took care [of us]. One could not speak to the Chinese and we had no authority. [We] could not appeal to anyone. [We] suffered a lot. [We] came home and cried, except for that, we were powerless. One dare not speak to anyone.

Q: Did you and your mother and sister come inside the house and cry very often?

00:43:55

#19D: My maternal uncle, brother of my mother was there, who was a lama. We were four or five members in the family and the Chinese gave us a *dzomo* that we could milk. My mother’s mother, my grandmother, was present and she suffered from a liver illness that prevented her from eating. So a little of the milk from the *dzomo* was fed to her. [We] also made butter from the milk. The other members of the family did not consume it. [We] stocked this butter and had four or five pieces of this size [gestures off camera].

The four or five pieces were stacked one on top of the other, which the Chinese sighted. “You are an influential person. You have oppressed the people and collected so much butter. This has been taken from the people.” Actually we had churned the butter from the milk of the only animal we owned because my grandmother was ill and could not eat. A little butter used to be added to the milk [for grandmother]. The Chinese confiscated this; the *dzomo* as well as the butter were confiscated.

Q: What was your family’s reaction? What was your reaction to that treatment?

#19D: [Speaks before question is interpreted] The Chinese took the butter. The Chinese took the *dzomo*. [We] were left with nothing.

Q: What was your reaction when the Chinese did that?

#19D: There was nothing to do but cry. We could not speak up because the Chinese were powerful. We were powerless.

Q: Tell me what happens to you. You're 12, 13, 14. Continue the story of your life. What happens to you next when you are 16, 17, 18?

00:47:40

#19D: I worked at cutting wood. There are forests in Tibet where [I] cut wood. [I] did a lot of hard work and that is how [my] life passed. [I] did hard labor, cutting wood, digging earth, building houses.

The commune system was started during the period of Mao Zedong. Once the commune began, everybody had to work together. Everybody must move together. Except in groups, people were forbidden to move alone.

Q: And then what happened?

#19D: Take this place for instance, this is Dharamsala and there is Norbulingka [in India] down below. If you wished to go to Norbulingka from Dharamsala, [you must provide information about] the person you were meeting in Norbulingka, where you were going, who the person you were meeting was and the reason. One must approach the Chinese leader of the commune and say, "I am going to meet this person. This is the reason. Please grant me leave today." Without a letter from him, one could not go.

Q: So you did not feel very free at all?

#19D: No, one was without any freedom, not even to visit neighboring villages. "Oh, I wish to go there." You cannot go just like that. "I am going to meet this man. This is my reason." One could not go without informing the Chinese.

Q: Now during these years, did you know where your father was?

00:50:32

#19D: [I] cannot remember that.

Q: Okay because your father gets shot at Norbulingka...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Shigatse.

Q: I mean in Shigatse. Is that many years later?

#19D: [Father] left Kham in '57. [He] stayed the year '58 in Lhasa. A year later, the Chinese attacked Lhasa in '59. After arriving in Shigatse from Norbulingka, [he] was shot.

Q: Then what happens to you when you were in your 20's? Now you're between 20 and 30, what's going on in your life?

#19D: [I] was engrossed in [my] work like all other Tibetans. One was neither a prisoner nor did one have the freedom to visit neighboring villages. It was similar to being a prisoner. That was the only right.

Q: Until when did this last? About how old were you?

00:52:30

#19D: Mother was imposed with the “hat” starting from the year ’58. This continued until the death of Mao Zedong, after which the class segregation was dissolved. Until the death of Mao Zedong, mother’s “hat” was never removed.

Q: And what year was that?

#19D: Which year would it be?

Q: When Mao Zedong died, was it in 197...

#19D: ...’78 or ’79?

Q: ’78 or ’79?

#19D: Perhaps.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Between ’75 and ’78.

Q: Okay. Did your life change after that for your mother and for you?

#19D: Yes, then there was some change. The door to religious freedom opened a little bit.

Q: Did you ever get married or have a family of your own?

#19D: [Speaks before question is interpreted] It was said that there was freedom to practice religion like chanting mantra, lighting butter lamps and gathering of monks. However, the freedom pertained to practicing dharma personally. It was restricted freedom because one could not go out and do it openly.

The religious freedom allowed monks to live in the monastery and practice but [they] could not go out. If one had to make a *tsatsa*, a clay statue like this one [points off camera], one could not do so without getting permission from the Chinese.

Q: Statue? *Tsatsa*?

00:55:40

#19D: Yes, *tsatsa*. One had to seek Chinese permission to make a *tsatsa* like this.

Q: Were there monks?

#19D: There were monks but they did not have freedom.

Q: Could they live in the monastery?

#19D: [They] could live in the monastery but did not have freedom outside of it.

Q: What kind of work were you doing at that time? Are we talking about when you are 20, 30 and 40 years old? I need to get some sense of the period?

#19D: I must be around 45 years old [when Mao Zedong died], is that it? Perhaps [I] was around 36 or 32, 33. [I] cannot remember much.

Q: What happens next in your life? Any milestones or big changes?

00:57:24

#19D: And then the commune was dissolved. The commune ended and lands were given to individuals, as were animals. The work became a little relaxed.

Q: The commune closed, people were given personal freedom and things became a little better. What happened in your life next?

#19D: And then...what should I say?

[Discontinuity in video]

Q: Was there anything in particular that brought you here for a visit to this city?

#19D: When I lived there under Chinese rule, there was no freedom of speech, no freedom to work as one wished; there was no freedom at all. [I] wished to come here to the Lama [His Holiness the Dalai Lama] and so [I] came here.

Q: I'm not sure where your wife is at this point?

00:59:02

#19D: [She] is here [in Dharamsala].

Q: Is it your hope to stay here if you can?

#19D: We will not go back until the time His Holiness the Dalai Lama does not return to Tibet.

Q: Would it be difficult to give us your thoughts and reactions to the young people who immolated themselves in Tibet? Could you tell us what you think about that?

#19D: [They] are very beneficial. [They are] extremely helpful for the cause of Tibet.

Q: And when you came here, you wanted to see your lama. Does your lama live in this area?

#19D: [My] lama, His Holiness the Dalai Lama lives here.

Q: Ahh...His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

#19D: Under the Chinese, one cannot take the name of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, one cannot put up His Holiness' portrait, one cannot utter "His Holiness the Dalai Lama." However, once you are here, you can pray to His Holiness, see His Holiness and seek an audience.

Q: What are your wishes and your hopes for Tibet?

01:01:40

#19D: One great hope is that His Holiness the Dalai Lama be able to go to Tibet, the second is that the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama be returned into the hands of Tibet and that all political prisoners be released. [Cries]

Q: If you could, I hope this question is possible, but if you could say something to the Chinese people, what would you tell them?

#19D: [I] do not have anything bad to say to the Chinese people. It is the Chinese leaders. When we lived in Tibet, Chinese troops arrived. There was a young Tibetan boy who spoke Chinese and befriended Chinese soldiers. He asked them, "Do you feel happy to come to Tibet when there is no work here? You have enough to eat and wear. Here you have nothing but to sit idle." The Chinese soldier replied, "Chinese soldiers do not feel happy to come to Tibet." When asked why [they] did not feel happy, he replied, "[We] have to beat Tibetans. [We] have to kill Tibetans. We do not feel happy doing that to the Tibetans."

Q: The soldiers said that they were not happy in Tibet?

#19D: Yes. The Chinese soldiers said, "We are not happy to come to Tibet. We feel sad and wish to go back home."

Q: What would you hope for would happen to Tibet in time?

01:04:42

#19D: My great hope is that Tibet could go the Middle Way and that whatever His Holiness the Dalai Lama wishes come true.

Q: For people who don't understand, could you just describe what is your understanding of the Middle Way? What does that mean?

#19D: [That would mean] Tibet having freedom, Tibet no longer fearing the Chinese, the Panchen Lama returning to Tibet, releasing political prisoners, all Tibetans enjoying freedom, Tibetans being the rightful owner of Tibet...Then our wishes for Tibet are fulfilled.

Q: Do you have any words of advice for the next generation of Tibetans?

#19D: They must be sent to school by the education department.

Q: For education...

#19D: They must get scientific knowledge. [I] have such hopes that boys can become monks and girls are sent to school.

Q: In conclusion, I wanted to ask how has it been for you to do this interview today?

01:07:31

#19D: It has been good. [I] feel happy as I have been able to talk about my sufferings.

Q: We have been very honored to hear your story and we will do our best to make sure that many, many people hear your story and the stories of all the Tibetan people that we interview.

#19D: And [I hope] that Tibetans will have freedom and not have to live under Chinese rule. [For a Tibetan] there is no road to walk, no land to live on, no right at all, no right to speak, no right to work, no right to walk on roads; there are such great difficulties.

There are many Tibetans who want to come here and see His Holiness the Dalai Lama and receive his teachings. However, only a few can manage, as there is no passage because of the Chinese. In 2011, some people left Tibet but when they reached Nepal, they fell into the hands of Nepalese police. There were 23 people in the custody of Nepalese police who were released with the help of Students for Free Tibet. The Nepalese almost handed them over to the Chinese, but later they did not fall into Chinese hands. [They] had to spend 10 days in a Nepalese prison.

There are conduit people to help travelers between Lhasa and Nepal and they charge 19,000 Chinese currency.

Q: We want to thank you for this interview. [To someone off camera] Oh, you want to ask some questions? We have one more question. Why don't you just say what the question is?

Q: How were you able to...I'm curious how you were able to come here. How were you able to come to Dharamsala from Tibet?

#19D: From Tibet?

Q: Yes. How were you able to come to Dharamsala?

01:11:33

#19D: Until Dam [Tibet-Nepal border], [I] used the Freedom Booklet. No, not the Freedom Booklet, but what is it called...it is not the Freedom Booklet...it is called the *thungshi*.

Q: Is it a document?

#19D: Yes, [we] possessed documents to travel up to Dam. There were two trader women from Lhasa at Dam in whose goods truck we got on and could cross the bridge.

Q: Well, we are very happy that you came and shared your story with us.

#19D: Thank you. Thank you.

Q: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW