

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #22U – Thupten Lodup
April 1, 2017

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #22U
2. Interviewee: Thupten Lodup
3. Age: 82
4. Date of Birth: 1935
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Naro
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: April 1, 2017
10. Place of Interview: Gepheling Old People's Home, Rajpur, Uttarakhand, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 11 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Tenzin Choenyi
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Thupten Lodup was born in 1935 into a middle class family in Naro, Kham Province. His family had a small plot of farmland and grazed animals, most of which belonged to the local monastery. A tax payment in butter was made to the monastery once each year and the family could keep the rest of the dairy products or trade them for grains. After the Chinese invasion, the taxpayers were also required to transport goods for the Tibetan army. When the soldiers mistreated the taxpayers, some of the sought support from the Chinese army.

Thupten Lodup desired from a young age to become a monk and learn to read and write. Soon after joining a local monastery, he was encouraged to join one of the great monasteries in Lhasa. Travelling there around the age of 11, he joined Drepung Monastery, where he was supported by a sponsor who provided him with food. Thupten Lodup is grateful that he memorized many scriptures, studied many Buddhist texts and learned meditation practices.

Thupten Lodup recalls the story of an apparition called Bhungo Sukthil 'Donkey Hooves,' who haunted the monks at the winter assembly. He also explains the annual tradition of *shing-long*, during which the monks gathered firewood. After the Chinese occupied Lhasa, he escaped to India and was able to continue his Buddhist education and practice in Buxar.

Topics Discussed:

Kham, childhood memories, taxes, monastic life, Buddhist beliefs, first appearance of Chinese.

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Interview #22U

Interviewee: Thupten Lodup

Age: 82, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: April 1, 2017

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:11

Interviewee #22U: Thupten Lodup.

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?

#22U: Yes.

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

#22U: Okay.

Q: During this interview if you wish to take a break or stop at any time, please let me know.

#22U: Okay.

Q: If you do not wish to answer a question or talk about something, let me know.

#22U: Okay.

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

#22U: None at all.

Q: We're honored to record your story and appreciate your participation in this project.

#22U: Okay.

Q: *Pa-la* 'respectful term for father,' please tell me where you were born?

00:02:12

#22U: My hometown is the place called Naro in Kham.

Q: How old are you now? What year were you born?

#22U: My birth sign is the rat, and [I] am 82 years old.

Q: What did your family do in the village of Naro?

#22U: When I was little there was a family that was related to us where [I] went to learn to read and write. At that time [I] was a little child.

Q: Did your parents want you to study? Was that typical for parents in your village?

#22U: [My parents] did not very much want to send [me] to study, but I was going there.

Q: Why didn't your parents like it? What did they want you to do instead?

#22U: [My parents] wanted [me] to stay at home, and did not like [my] becoming a monk very much.

Q: How old were you when you thought you wanted to become a monk?

00:04:30

#22U: I wanted to become a monk at the age of 7 or 8. By becoming a monk you did not face many problems and you were happy and free. That was the reason. Otherwise, [I] did not know much about the dharma.

Q: Why didn't it have many problems? What was different? If you were not a monk what kinds of problems would you have?

#22U: We were taxpayers to the Tibetan Government then and were given a lot of work and faced many difficulties. By becoming a monk, one did not have that problem.

Q: So if your family were taxpayers, what kind of livelihood did they have? What did they do to earn a living?

#22U: By grazing animals like *dri* 'female yaks', yaks and sheep and there was also a small area of farmland. That was the kind of work.

Q: Did those animals belong to them or were they taking care of them for somebody else?

00:06:45

#22U: The majority of the animals belonged to the Chanak Monastery. We owned a small number. There were nearly a hundred animals including *dri*, yaks, goats and sheep, but there were no horses.

Q: Was the job of your family to take care of these herds, were they able to keep some of the products like the milk and to make cheese and things like that or did they give it all to the monastery?

#22U: The butter had to be given [to Chanak Monastery] annually whereas one could consume the milk, curd, buttermilk and cheese.

Q: How much butter annually?

00:08:33

#22U: At least 100 kilograms of butter would have to be given annually.

Q: Was that burdensome or was that easy to do?

#22U: There were big churners—one, two or three in standing position. The churners were partly under the ground and partly above. Then one churned the milk like this [moves hands up and down] and continued to churn and make it warm until the butter is formed. Then it was rotated and the solid butter removed and placed in a basin. There were large basins called *marsong* and the butter was rinsed in water. The solid butter is then packed in wooden boxes.

Q: After the solid butter is removed it's packed in wooden boxes?

#22U: The butter is put inside wooden boxes.

Q: How often was it taken to the monastery?

00:10:37

#22U: They came there. According to the number of animals, one was required to give a certain number of kilograms. Then they were given directly.

Q: Did they come like once a week or once a month? How often?

#22U: Once in a year. There was no butter during wintertime due to the short supply of milk. During summertime there was plenty of milk, butter, cheese and a lot of buttermilk and milk for consumption. In case an animal died, one could consume the meat.

Q: If they came once a year, then the butter was stored all year long until they came in these wooden cases. Is that correct?

00:12:17

#22U: When they came, the butter was taken out of the wooden cases and made into chunks. We have the one called *gyama* 'weighing scale.' [The butter] was weighed and whatever the quantity one was obliged to give was handed over to them.

Q: Had this system been in place of payment of butter for a long time, for many generations in your family?

#22U: It was the system to give the butter to them. The amount of butter was based on how much per *dri*, how much for 10 *dri* and how much for 50 *dri*. Then the amount of butter was also based on *yerma* and *duma*. *Yerma* means [a *dri*] that has given birth the year

before and *duma* means having given birth during the year. They do a calculation based on these. I have seen such as a child.

Q: *Pa-la*, did people in the village who had to earn their living this way, did they feel it was a fair way because they got use of many animals for their sustenance? Did they feel it was a fair exchange or did they feel taken advantage of?

00:14:57

#22U: I see it as fair. The reason being that whatever the number of calves born in a year was recorded and the number of dead was recorded and that was taken into consideration. So I see this practice as being very fair. You could consume and utilize the curd and milk and the grazing area for the animals was your hometown. If one provided good grass and water, the result was good.

Q: Was this the monastery that you wanted to join?

#22U: The monastery I joined was called Chanakgon.

Q: Was it the same monastery?

#22U: Yes. Yesterday [during the pre-interview] I spoke about Chanakgon. Should [I] explain again?

Q: Yes, please tell me. What is the story of Chanakgon?

00:16:32

#22U: The story of Chanakgon is about a great lama called Gyathong Chokye. When the lama was looking for a site to construct a monastery...The lama was walking around and was exhausted and fell asleep for a while. After waking up [he] left the rosary behind, forgot the rosary at that place—forgot the rosary at that place. Then a crow-like bird called *chuga*, which has a red beak, picked up the rosary and left it at the place where the monastery stands at present. “Oh, I can build the monastery here.” The monastery was built and was called Chanakgon that means “guided-by-a-bird” monastery.

Q: Do you know when, like what year that happened? When it was, like was it in your lifetime, your parents’ lifetime or before?

00:18:42

#22U: It was before.

Q: Before what?

#22U: It was much before my parents’ time.

Q: How many monks were in that monastery?

#22U: There were around a hundred.

Q: In your own family, besides your mother and father, were there any children in your family?

#22U: I had a sibling who is older than me called Gonpo. Then there were three sisters.

Q: What were they doing? Were they staying at home or what?

#22U: It was five including me. When I was living there, they were at home. Later some of them died. By now maybe all of them are dead.

Q: In your family...in the village, were you considered like kind of an average income or were you considered among the lower income people? What was your status?

00:20:37

#22U: [We] were among the middle class. Earlier, our family called Nagpon used to be leaders. Later [we] were among the middle class.

Q: Did your father have any special role in the village?

#22U: I do not know anything about my father's father to be frank.

Q: Your father?

#22U: My father was there and was called Tamdin.

Q: Did [he] have any responsibility in the village?

#22U: No, no. Long ago the family was so, but that was not the case when I was there.

Q: Did your family...were they able to make their own clothing and have their own food or did they have to purchase anything from outside?

00:22:22

#22U: Butter and animals were exchanged for grains. One had to go to Lhozong and what is it called...Jamdha to buy grains. That was about it. We called the grain as barley. [We] had to buy barley and wheat from other regions. We had a small area for cultivation.

Q: Were the two places you named, were they nearby or some distance?

#22U: [These places] were at a distance. We were taxpayers and at times had to go to various districts like Lingchen Dzong and at times to Lhari Dzong and at times to Biri Dzong and at times to Chungpo Tingchen. As taxpayers one had to go everywhere, being taxpayers to the government one had to go on tax obligation.

Q: I'm not sure I understand. If you were taxpayers, was everybody in your village a taxpayer or were you a tax collector? I don't understand.

00:24:33

#22U: All were taxpayers.

Q: Those that paid taxes?

00:24:37

#22U: Barring a few leaders, the rest were taxpayers irrespective [of the families' economic status].

Q: And so the taxes that you paid, was that the butter that you gave to the monastery? Was that the form of taxes?

#22U: The tax obligation was going up there and go down there and at times giving butter. However, grain was not called for and there was no practice of paying in cash. That was about it.

Q: Sometimes go up and down in the amount of butter that you gave?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No, traveling up and down.

Q: Up and down for what? To pay the tax?

#22U: When the government army called Drapchi Regiment or Gyangtse Regiment went to stop the Chinese from invading, [we] had to take horses and such and transport their supplies up and down. There were no vehicles at that time.

Q: That was a way to pay taxes? You had to be a transporter of government...supplies for the government soldiers?

00:26:59

#22U: That was the tax. [The supplies] were mostly transported on yaks. Yaks are known as *khel* and we transported their supplies up and down.

Q: Who loaded the supplies on yaks and were the yaks yours or you just had to run the yak team to the border?

#22U: The owners of the yaks—take our family for instance—they [government] had a certain number whether it was five or 10 [yaks] or whatever that was required from the family, though I do not know if this was based on the number of animals or something else. [I] have seen this being done as a child. I was little then.

Q: And go and deliver supplies.

00:28:28

#22U: [Speaks before translation] Especially after the Chinese appeared we were required to go to Samdha Bonko, Samdhatsang. A large number of Chinese had come there and we were obliged to transport their supplies up and down. That was later.

Q: Chinese supplies?

#22U: Yes, after the Chinese had invaded. [The Chinese] invaded from our region. During the invasion our leaders and soldiers assaulted the humble people who became angry and went immediately to where the Chinese were and brought them along. I saw this as a child. Because of this the Chinese occupied Tibet quickly.

Q: So your people from your region went to the Chinese and asked for help?

00:30:05

#22U: Yes, [I] saw that being done.

Q: And the people...?

#22U: [Interrupts] Our leaders assaulted the people and broke the law. This angered the people who went to the Chinese. When the Chinese were brought along, they [the leaders] ran away. That was done due to which Tibet was lost quickly.

Q: Were you a little boy at that time? About how old were you?

#22U: I was very little, perhaps about the age of the cook's son there.

Q: About how old?

#22U: Perhaps [I] was around 10 years old.

Q: Did you see the Chinese coming in?

#22U: [I] did. I went to the place called Samdha Bonko and a large number of them had already arrived filling the entire area. The area was filled, but they did not beat or thrash. However, one had to transport [their] supplies up and down. It seems like [the Chinese] paid for yaks they purchased. It was said that they killed and ate the yaks. [The Chinese] also ate *tsampa* 'flour made from roasted barley,' which they called *chingo*.

Q: What's *tsampa* called?

00:32:15

#22U: *Chingo*. It was called *chingo tsampa*.

Q: So...

#22U: What they added in their *tsampa* was chili and salt. [The Chinese] gave [it] and we ate. There was salt and chili mixed in it.

Q: The people of the region, were these poor people of the region who were very upset with the Tibetan leaders, like were they the beggars and very poor or was it people like your own parents too? Were they angry at the leaders?

#22U: Leaders in the sense—there were various soldiers like the Drapchi soldiers and Gyangtse soldiers of the Tibetan Government. The soldiers beat [people] and demanded this and that which the people did not like. [The people] went to where there were many Chinese in the night and when the Chinese came along, [the soldiers] ran away. That was how Tibet was lost.

I was a little child then and saw this. Other than that, [I] could not do anything.

Q: Okay. Then let's go on to what happened because this is... You were quite little and maybe hard to understand all the complexities about this. But let's... When you were little you said in the beginning of the story you wanted to go learn how to read, go to your uncle's. Was this a relative of your dad or your mother?

00:34:45

#22U: My mother and his mother were related. [The family] was called Charowa. [I] used to go there and keep watch over the lambs and kids that could be attacked by *lak* 'eagle/vulture [?].' *Lak* were prevalent. I used to guard these and then was taught to read and write. [I] would go there for the purpose of being taught.

The distance was from here to Dehradun [India]. The distance was from here to Dehradun. One had to walk then.

Q: Why did you want to study?

#22U: [I] wanted to be able to read and write. From a young age I believed it was good to know how to read and write.

Q: There were no schools in your region?

00:36:11

#22U: There were no schools then, nothing at all and very few knew how to read and write. There were those among the monks that knew to read and write well and so [I] learned. After that [I] joined Chanakgon and stayed there. Then came a *geshe* 'monk with Buddhist philosophy degree' from Chamdo, who taught the great Lamrim 'stages of the path to enlightenment.' During the teaching [the lama] spoke about the importance of studying the scriptures, of joining the great monasteries, and how good it was to study the scriptures in Sera and Drepung [Monasteries] where one came to understand the meaning. [He] stressed the importance of going there during the great Lamrim.

So as a little child taking a small quantity of *tsampa* and butter...It takes a month and 15 days of walking from my hometown to Lhasa. I had relatives in Gaden [Monastery] with whom [I] traveled. I could not join Gaden because after a divination, [I] had to join Drepung [Monastery]. Then [I] lived in Drepung studying the scriptures.

Q: Did you have any family, any sponsors, anyone that you knew who could sponsor you at the monastery?

00:38:26

#22U: None at all. The reason I joined Drepung was because from the place called Phenpo a very holy lama arrived who was said to have come from Riwo Tsenga ‘Mt. Wutai’ in China. On being consulted for a divination, the lama said, “You should join Drepung.” Though my relative was in Gaden [I] had to join Drepung.

I joined Drepung and studied the scriptures. Though a child, I cooked my own food and lived by myself. However, I had a sponsor called Tsargo Simsha that provided me *tsampa*. When [I] went there [he] would give me *pa* ‘dough made from *tsampa* and tea’ and a meal of potatoes, and also a bag of *tsampa* to take back, and said, “Study the scriptures well and memorize the Ngonthokgyen ‘Abhisamaya Alankara, Ornament of Realization.’

In our region it was such that one had to memorize the scriptures, so that later one could recite without looking at the scriptures. That was the practice. It is not so with Sakya, Nyingma and Kagyu sects. You could read from the scriptures. In the Gelug sect you were not allowed to take scriptures for the prayer assembly and should chant out of memory. That is very good because on account of having memorized the scriptures, presently I can reflect and understand the words in the fundamental root texts.

Q: How old were you when you left... First of all, did you tell your parents you were leaving? Did you tell your parents you were leaving or did you run away from home?

00:41:18

#22U: I informed [my parents] about going away.

Q: How old were you?

#22U: [Speaks before translation] Mother told [me] not to go, but it was my destiny to join the monastery and [I] could not be stopped.

Q: How old were you when you went?

#22U: Perhaps around the age of 11, but [I] cannot recall.

Q: Did you make the journey from Kham, your hometown to Lhasa by yourself or did you go with a group of pilgrims?

#22U: I had two relatives called Pentse and Namlha, who were monks of Gaden Monastery. They had come to the hometown and were returning with things loaded on horses and mules. I came with them.

Q: They, the monks of Gaden had come there and were they your brothers?

#22U: No, [they] were my mother's relatives.

Q: That was very propitious, very good fortune.

00:43:18

#22U: Yes, so I made preparations and carried some *tsampa* and some butter and left.

Q: I could see. You seized the opportunity.

#22U: [Speaks before translation] Then [I] reached the great monastery. At the great monastery, I stayed alone and had a black bowl in which we poured kerosene...there was a small metal container with a cotton wick in which kerosene was poured. This was lit for there was no electricity. I studied the scriptures in this way and was very happy. I felt happy and contented.

Q: Remind me of your age again. It was what?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: 11

Q: You were 11 years old.

#22U: [Speaks before translation] Then in the wintertime there was the assembly of Jang Gunchoe 'winter dharma assembly at Jangphu Monastery' held at Chushul where many monks from Sera, Drepung, Gaden, Tsang and Ruthok areas gathered and held prayers that [I] have attended many times. There was something called Bhungo Sukthil 'Donkey Hooves' that [I] used to fear very much. It was a *geshe* that had turned bad. It had the head of a donkey with [donkey] ears yet it was a human. There was something like this.

Q: Where is it?

00:45:04

#22U: It was there at the Jang Gunchoe. There was the debating courtyard that used to be full of fur. After the prayer assembly and the end of the debate sessions at night, all the monks stood in line looking out for Bhungo Sukthil. After the recitation of the Dolma 'Praises to the 21 Taras' the monks got up to look out for Bhungo Sukthil.

The method of looking out for it was like this. One monk clapped [claps] and then another clapped. This must be done three times. If Bhungo Sukthil was present among them, there was the sound '*gop*,' the exact sound of a donkey's hooves. Bhungo Sukthil has taken away many monks. It was a *geshe* that had turned bad, turned into a ghost. However, if one puts a rosary over his neck, he became helpless. He looked for many friends.

Q: Do you have to wear a rosary on your neck?

#22U: Our rosary has to be put around his neck. Being a donkey, he was helpless once roped at the neck. Otherwise, he would do many things. Then he will grant any wish. A long time ago one called Kunkhyen 'Omniscient' Jamyang Sherpa debated with Bhungo

Sukthil at the Jang Gunchoe and took what is called the 18 Pledges found in the Tsema Namdel ‘Pramana—means of knowledge.’

Q: Did anybody see this being?

00:48:03

#22U: I have not seen Bhungo Sukthil. However, there were many that had seen Bhungo Sukthil. The reason being that Kunkhyen Jamyang Sherpa undertook the 18 different types of pledges. The 18 different types of pledges were admitted to Bhungo Sukthil. Bhungo Sukthil took part in the debate session and Jamyang Sherpa took the pledges—the one called Amdo Jamyang Sherpa.

Besides that there was a *geshe* who was accomplished in the pledges of Uma ‘Madhyamaka, the Middle Way Philosophy (clarifying the view of dependent origination and emptiness).’ He read the scriptures and worked hard at it under a lamp for there was no electricity. One day Bhungo Sukthil appeared. Bhungo Sukthil appeared and [the *geshe*] placed a rosary over it. Then [Bhungo Sukthil] said, “Do not be afraid of the debate. I will help. However, you should not raise your eyes. Then I will help you.”

This took place in the debating courtyard of Drepung Gomang. As [the *geshe*] sat for the debate session and took the pledges, [he] had a realization, “Why did he ask me not to look up?” Bhungo Sukthil had told him not to. “Why did he ask me not to look up?” He looked up out there. Bhungo Sukthil was sitting atop a building across the debating courtyard like this [looks fiercely] and was deeply engrossed in debating. The *geshe* passed away during the session in fear.

00:50:57

Then again during a Jang Gunchoe [Bhungo Sukthil] led away a monk one night. [He] was led away somewhere. When the brass gong is sounded, being a monk he has to attend the prayer assembly. The monk was taken towards the lake in Lhasa and [Bhungo Sukthil] told the monk, “Ride this horse.” [The monk] was told to ride the horse. It was a blue horse. As the gong sounded, one of his legs was in the water [gets up from seat]—in the water. Then he was set free. Later he died. Such used to be told.

So encountering him was very beneficial because you could attain the philosophy of the middle way of dependent origination. He had the power to grant such realization.

Q: What kind of wishes would you have had if you saw this being? What would be your wish?

00:52:45

#22U: It must have existed, but I was small and used to fear it and did not have any thoughts. What happened to me was that after the Jang Gunchoe, there was the *shing-long* ‘begging for wood’ trip, to find firewood.

Q: *Shing-long*?

#22U: It is called *shing-long*. A long time ago the great master Tsongkhapa ‘philosopher saint of Tibet (1357-1419), founder of the Gelug tradition’ had done so during the Jang Gunchoe. Then the *shing-long*...Jang Gunchoe took place for a period of a month and 15 days. For the duration of one month, the monks did not loosen the waistbands, but continued to study the scriptures day and night. Then it became relaxed during the 15 days and one embarked on *shing-long* trips.

To go on a *shing-long* trip, one woke up early in the morning at around 1 o’clock and reached the top of the hill exactly as the sun began to rise. The monks went there in a line chanting the *miktsima* prayers; one could not go in any haphazard manner. Upon reaching the top of the hill, one ate some *tsampa*, made an incense offering and chanted the Shar Gangrima ‘Snow-covered Mountain in the East’ prayer.

00:53:58

Shar gangri karpoe tsemona
Tin karmo namla nyegdawa
The thongway mola lama den
Din samshing samshing thaypakyay
Tin karmo dthingpe sharchokna
Dok gedhen nampar gyalwayling
Tsen zoepr kaway dinpoche
Pha Lobsang Dakpa yapsashuk
Lam rimpa nyikyil naljorsok
Choe sapla shintu gyayparsung
Bhod khawa chenkyi kaldenla
Gon khyoe ki katin samikyab

There was such a prayer called Shar Gangrima. Gedundupa was the disciple of Tsongkhapa. When Tsongkhapa passed away, he sat in grief and saw a huge snow covered mountain in the east and believing Tsongkhapa was sitting there, [he] prayed and authored Shar Gangrima.

Q: Did you go to beg for firewood or went in search of firewood?

#22U: One went in search of firewood. There was plenty of firewood to be found in the hills. The firewood was tied in bundles. After tying the bundles, the monks drank some tea if available and danced during the *shing-long* and had a good time.

00:56:19

I attended Jang Gunchoe for many years. After attending Jang Gunchoe...During the *shing-long*, besides firewood we were required to carry a fistful of grass. Taking the fistful of grass, one went down and reached an estate at around sunset where the family provided some tea and a bowl of *tsampa*. Then nearby one could see the vision of Jamphelyang ‘Manjushree.’ It was like our television. Why it seemed like a television was that if one prostrated, offered prayers and incense, it appeared there.

As I sat and prayed, [I] saw the image of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. On seeing His Holiness the Dalai Lama...What I thought was that His Holiness the Dalai Lama went to India and I could come along too and felt happy. Apart from that, [I] have received a great many Kalachakra empowerments from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and received many spiritual instructions on Gyaythongpa ‘Prajnaparamita in 8,000 Verses,’ Ngonthokgyen ‘Ornament of Realization’ and others. A dharma center from Russia had received the empowerment of Sangwa Dhuepa ‘Assembly of Secrets’ from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then His Holiness...

Q: So *pa-la*, how long did you stay in this monastery. You know, you went when you were 10 or 11, and then how long were you in the monastery?

00:59:07

#22U: [I] was around four or five years in Drepung.

Q: And then where did you go next?

#22U: Then in the year '59 the Chinese attacked Lhasa and our people rose up and then we left behind all our belongings [becomes emotional].

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Four to five that would have been very early.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Another five years?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: That would be '51.

Q: You were 11 years old when you left the hometown...

#22U: It was something like that.

Q: ...and stayed 4-5 in Lhasa, *pa-la*?

#22U: Yes.

Q: So, *pa-la*, 4-5 added to 11 is like 16.

#22U: Yes.

Q: Then it's not 1959, but around '51. Did you stay longer than that in Drepung?

#22U: [I] must have stayed longer in Drepung. The scriptures I studied were Khadhok Karmar ‘Lesser Collected Topics of Logic,’ Dhueda ‘Collected Topics, basic texts on the Buddhist study of logic,’ Dhuechen ‘Greater Collected Topics of Logic,’ Dhueding ‘Middle Collected Topics of Logic,’ Tharik ‘Signs and Reasoning,’ Lorik ‘Pramana, mental states and awareness,’ and then Thon Dhunchu Dhang Salam ‘Seventy Divisions of the Eight Realizations,’ Duptha ‘Philosophical Presentation,’ and completed the first year of Pharchin ‘Prajnaparamita, perfection of wisdom,’ which is the Ngonthokgyen. Then I gave

the pledge on Pharchin in Drepung in Tibet. And then [I] reached India and was 12 years in Buxar.

Q: Did Drepung Monastery and your studies there--was that what you hoped to do when you went and joined the monastery? Did it fulfill your wishes or your dreams to study?

01:01:52

#22U: Yes, yes, [I] got all the wishes fulfilled.

Q: Was the reason you left because of the Chinese invasion?

#22U: Yes, the Chinese initially invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to China to meet with Mao Zedong and then [His Holiness] returned. It snowed heavily in Lhasa at that time. We stood in procession and waited the whole day. Later His Holiness the Dalai Lama took his *geshe* examination in Drepung and we...His Holiness the Dalai Lama distributed offerings to us and after everything was over, the Chinese wanted to invite His Holiness to their military camp.

Then there was unrest and we could not remain in the monastery and crossed over a mountain pass at night into Phenpo. Then from Phenpo [we] went to Lhoka and to Tsethang. The Chinese were fighting at Tsethang, firing artilleries—artilleries that flashed red. Then [we] went towards Churu Khata in Nyen and then from Churu Khata crossed over the Mangola pass and reached Mon Tawang.

Q: Well, *pa-la*, it sounds like you fulfilled your childhood wish to learn, to study and to read and to study in a great monastery. So we're very happy to have heard not only your story, but that you made it safely out of the great monastery to continue your studies in India.

01:05:24

#22U: I have done the *tsoglang* 'lamas reciting religious discourse at special meeting' three times in the great assembly of Drepung. Among a large assembly of monks two monks must debate, one is the defendant and the other, the opponent. I studied three fundamental root texts. The first fundamental root text is Gedun Nyeshu 'Twenty Kinds of Practitioners,' the second fundamental root text is the Choekhor 'Dharma Wheel,' and the third fundamental root text is the Kap Shipay Ngorung, the Kap Shipay Ngonthokgyen called Ngorung.

Q: That's wonderful. That's a very good achievement.

#22U: That is what [I] did.

Q: Do you continue to read the dharma these days?

#22: Yes, because [I] have the basic knowledge. I understand everything by reading the scriptures. I have had more than 100 scripture teachers. It was not that there were more than 100 teachers while [I] was in Tibet, but in the place called Buxar [monks] of Sera, Drepung and Gaden [Monasteries] and the other sects lived together for 12 years. At that time we got a good opportunity to study in Varanasi [India]. [I] have studied under all the

geshe and lamas of Sera that were there and all those teachers from Drepung that were there as well as all the teachers belonging to Gaden that were there. If I read the scriptures now there is no problem in understanding. Where studying is concerned, one must do so in a gradual manner.

01:07:24

The main thing to achieve from studying the dharma is to attain freedom from the sufferings of cyclic existence to the level of omniscience. In order to attain freedom from the sufferings of cyclic existence to the level of omniscience, one has to follow the path well for it cannot be achieved easily. First is listening and then reflecting over the meaning, even if it is just one word, and then meditating after reflecting. There is *chaygom* ‘meditation through visualization.’ *Jugom* ‘formal meditation, single-pointedly focusing the mind on an object without examining the aspects of the object analytically’ is to focus on the meaning with *shinay kyi tsok* ‘conditions for calm abiding meditation.’ There is the *shinay kyi tsok*. Thus one must study and meditate.

Presently when reading the scriptures, I do not have to depend on anyone, but can understand it myself. That is the benefit. I hope that the future life will be good. In the dharma we believe in seeking a method to enter into the next life. That is it, and to do refuge practice and believe in the law of cause and effect to enter into the next life.

Q: That’s very nice. I’m very happy that you have achieved that.

#22U: Thank you. [Joins palms] I am very happy that you interviewed [me].

Q: Thank you. Why did you want to be interviewed?

01:09:26

#22U: When you explained about [the project] I was incredibly happy that you are supporting the cause of Tibet’s future. It is a great opportunity for me. I feel it is my good fortune and wish to extend my thanks. [Joins palms]

Q: Yes, okay.

#22U: In particular it is India and principally the United States that have helped those in need. Thank you.

I love watching news on television and listening to the Voice of America radio news and you benefit from it. You learn to think and also about how others lead their lives. This is incredibly beneficial.

Q: Thank you. Well, *pa-la*, if this interview... I want to ask again, if this interview was shown in Tibet or China, would this be a problem for you?

01:11:23

#22U: None at all, that is for certain. I am single. If [I] stand, it is an old man standing and if [I] fall, it is an old man that has fallen. [I] do not have any contact in the hometown.

Q: Well, thank you for sharing your story with us, *pa-la*.

#22U: [Joins palms] Thank you. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW