

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #25D – Jampa Thinlay
May 16, 2012

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #25D
2. Interviewee: Jampa Thinlay
3. Age: 84
4. Date of Birth: 1929
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Tawu Nyamtso
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
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 14 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Pema Tashi
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Jampa Thinlay was born into a farming family in Tawu in Kham Province. He became a monk at the age of 10 in order to serve his paternal uncle, who lived in a local monastery. He recalls with gratitude that his uncle taught him to read and recite prayers. When he was older he moved to Gaden Jangtse Monastery to take his final vows, but was unable to stay long due to the Chinese invasion.

Jampa Thinlay feels that there was only misery once the Chinese appeared in Tibet. He describes how the Chinese deceived the Tibetan people with *dhayen* ‘Chinese silver coins’ and subsequently confiscated everything that the Tibetans owned. He talks about the destruction of holy statues and how they were transported to China and melted down.

Jampa Thinlay recounts how he and his fellow monks joined the *Chushi Gangdrug* Defend Tibet Volunteer Force. He wanted to volunteer to escort the Dalai Lama out of Tibet, but his horse was not good enough for the journey. Jampa Thinlay details the numerous confrontations the guerrillas engaged with the Chinese army and the limitations they faced while fighting the enemy. He briefly explains the guerrillas’ efforts in Mustang, Nepal and the support they received from the United States. The men fighting at the Nepalese border were advised by the Dalai Lama to surrender arms to the Nepali army and Jampa Thinlay recalls being very angry at that time. He talks about his life after Mustang and how he came to live in Dharamsala, India.

Topics Discussed:

Kham, monastic life, first appearance of Chinese, Norbulingka, Chushi Gangdrug guerrillas, Dalai Lama’s escape, guerrillas in Mustang, life as a refugee in India.

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Interview #25D

Interviewee: Jampa Thinlay

Age: 84, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: May 16, 2012

Question: *Gen-la* ‘respectful term for teacher,’ please tell us your name?

00:00:13

Interviewee #25D: Jampa Thinlay.

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?

#25D: Yes, of course.

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

#25D: Okay.

Q: During this interview if you want 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.

#25D: Okay.

Q: *Gen-la*, if this interview was shown in Tibet or China or around the world, would this be a problem for you?

00:02:04

#25D: There will be no problems for me. Why would there be? [I] am 84 years old and except for the thought of death, there is no hope of going to Tibet since the opponent is so bad. If the opponent were a good one, [they] would listen to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and give freedom to Tibet. [His Holiness] says that we would live under the Chinese but need complete freedom. However, [the Chinese] do not even heed that. It is really pathetic.

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

#25D: [Nods]

Q: *Gen-la*, I would like to begin by asking you a little bit about your childhood. Where were you born and who was in your family?

#25D: [I was born in] Tawu.

Q: Tawu. How many members were there in your family when you were a child?

#25D: [I] cannot recall, but there were many family members. I have forgotten.

Q: What kind of occupation did your parents have, your mother and your father?

#25D: [They] were farmers. [They] worked as farmers.

Q: Was the area—you were growing...

#25D: [Interrupts] There were [my] parents, two maternal uncles and a paternal uncle who was a monk and lived in the monastery. Later when I became a little older, I became a monk and lived with my paternal uncle.

Q: How old were you when you joined your uncle in the monastery?

00:04:50

#25D: [I] was around 10 when [I] became a monk.

Q: Yes?

#25D: Perhaps around 10, but [I] am not sure.

Q: Was that something you wanted to do or did your parents take you to the monastery?

#25D: I wished to become a monk and by living with [my] uncle, [I] could also serve him by way of fetching water, chopping wood and making tea. There were no gas connection facilities [in the kitchen] like here. I learned a little Tibetan and prayers, and the prayers that [I] am able to chant now are thanks to [my] uncle.

Q: Where did you go? Which monastery did you go to serve your uncle?

#25D: Tawu Nyamtso Gon. It was called Tawu Nyamtso Gon and there were 1,900 monks.

Q: Monks?

#25D: Yes.

Q: And so you were a servant for your uncle. Did he give you teachings or where did you learn the spiritual text from?

00:07:16

#25D: It was [my] uncle that taught me right from the alphabet. The little reading [I] know now and the prayers were all taught by paternal uncle.

Q: *Gen-la*, can you give us some idea of how a young boy is trained? What are some of the steps he goes through as he learns his prayers and his—the teachings of the Buddha?

#25D: I was taught to write the script but could not due to [my] poor intellect. [I] only know a little of the prayers, though initially one was taught to write the alphabet and all.

Q: Initially one was taught the alphabet and then?

#25D: Then one must learn to form and read words.

Q: And then the scriptures?

00:08:52

#25D: And then the scriptures. After one learned to read words, one read the scripture as it was always with you. There were copies of the texts and you read what you wanted and studied.

Q: When you were memorizing the words in the beginning, did you understand what they meant? Were you taught what they meant at that time? Were you taught that later?

#25D: [The prayers] were not explained unless you realized [the meaning] yourself. It was imperative that what was taught that day must be recited by memory the next day. Once you were able to recite it, a new portion was taught.

Q: When would you begin to get some understanding of what the words meant?

#25D: We cannot understand all the words. The *geshe* ‘monks with Buddhist philosophy degrees’ would understand everything. We would understand a few words—for instance, what does it mean by the word Buddha? What are sentient beings? We would understand such things but would not be able to explain the dharma in depth. One chants just like the *mani* ‘mantra of Avalokiteshvara’—*Om mani padme hum* ‘Hail the jewel in the lotus.’ We would not be able to explain the meaning of the words of *Om mani padme hum*. [Laughs]

Q: Are there any Buddha teachings that you find very important for you to practice or to keep in mind or that your heart likes to have an awareness about?

00:13:17

#25D: The most important thing for us is to be kind-hearted and to try not to cause harm to other people if you cannot help [them]. These are most important.

One should not imitate the Chinese in killing and severing people, putting them in prison and taking away possessions. They are the very devils. Their deeds are unlike anyone in the world.

Q: So what are your feelings towards the Chinese these days?

#25D: Sometimes when [I] ponder, [I] feel that they are our real enemies and are like the devils. Yet at times [I] feel that their leaders...that it was the handiwork of a few of their leaders, while the majority love the dharma. And there are many that like the Tibetans. It is the handiwork of a few leaders at the top who do not have brains and have greatly studied Communism. All the holy statues were taken to the *lukhang* ‘foundry’ and reshaped. Who does such things to idols in the world except them [the Chinese]? [Laughs] [I] swear.

Q: When is the first time, I guess I want to go back to your early life in the monastery—how many years was your life peaceful in the monastery? For how long?

#25D: It was a happy time until the arrival of the Chinese. We were happy and had plenty to eat and drink. There was not anyone happier than us. However, from the time the Chinese came there was misery and they made it worse and worse.

Initially they deceived [us] by lending money. It seems they used to say at the beginning, “Let’s give at first and it will be in our hands in the end.” Merchants were loaned boxes containing thousands of *dhayen* ‘Chinese silver coin.’ Subsequently, just as they had said everything was confiscated. In the end they took away even the grains. [They] carted away the statues in the monasteries to China.

00:16:58

Later there was a bit of religious freedom during which...Was it not the Ramoche Jowo ‘statue of Buddha Sakyamuni’ of Lhasa? Who was the lama? Ghogutsang? Was it Lama Ghogutsang? It was a lama that visited China during the period of religious freedom. [He] said that the upper and lower torso of the Ramoche Jowo were separated and found them at the *lukhang*.

Q: What’s a *lukhang*?

#25D: [A place] where things are melted, melted by machines.

Q: Melted by machines?

#25D: Yes.

Q: What does it mean by that?

#25D: All things are put inside a machine where they are melted and turned into nothing. Then they [the Chinese] manufactured what they wanted out of it. The Ramoche Jowo is an astounding statue that speaks. The lama recognized it and was able to escort it from China. [The Jowo statue] was broken in half and after finding the upper torso, [the lama] had to go in search of the lower part. [He] found both the parts and escorted it to Lhasa where it can be viewed to this day. That is one very precious thing. Besides that, [the Chinese] even wanted to escort [out] the Jowo Rinpoche ‘statue of Buddha Sakyamuni’ [brought to Tibet

during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo by his Chinese wife Kongjo] but thanks to the Gods, [they] were not able to do so.

Q: When is the first time you heard about the Chinese? Were you a little boy, a young man? When is the first time you knew that the Chinese were coming into Tibet?

00:20:18

#25D: When was it? [I] cannot recall much. [I] cannot recall how old [I] was.

Q: It was in the year '59 that we finally lost Tibet and escaped.

#25D: I was 30 years old when [I] escaped. [I] was exactly 30 when I arrived in India.

Q: And before that?

#25D: [I] came to the monastery before that. I think it was before my joining the monastery that the Chinese appeared. [I] lived in the monastery for three years and then returned to the village once. Yes, that is right. Then the Chinese arrived and I escaped.

Q: Which monastery?

#25D: Tiwu [Khangtsen—smaller community in a monastery in which monks of one geographical area live] in Jangtse *Datsang* ‘section in a great monastery’ of Gaden [Monastery].

Q: What happened to the monastery where you... What happened to you when the Chinese arrived?

#25D: Nothing happened when [the Chinese] first appeared, as they deceived everyone and it was peaceful. After they arrived in Lhasa and occupied it, they became worse and worse and destroyed everything.

00:22:55

Not only that, but [the Chinese] made great plans to kill His Holiness the Dalai Lama by saying that [he] should accept to be a guest, which the people stopped. There were Chinese spies and also a few spies among the aristocrats that received payments from the Chinese, though there was not anyone that did not like His Holiness and [the aristocrats] said, “His Holiness should not leave [to the invited place], as it is not good.”

For instance, His Holiness was [told by the aristocrats], “You should not stay...” but by then the *Chushi Gangdrug* [Defend Tibet Volunteer Force] had been formed. The *Chushi Gangdrug* had been formed and was attacking the Chinese guerrilla style. We were at Tsethang. There was a Chinese army camp at Tsethang that was within a dug out hole inside a mountain.

Q: Who was inside the belly of the mountain?

#25D: Chinese soldiers. His Holiness the Dalai Lama left suddenly and we were told, “A few of you that own good horses and guns should escort His Holiness.” I did not have a good horse though [I] owned a good gun. [My] horse could hardly move and so I could not join. Those with good horses and guns left as escorts. We were given the message, “If there is time, everyone [in the *Chushi Gangdrug*] will receive an audience [of His Holiness the Dalai Lama], but if there is a time constraint it will be difficult.” Where was time for an audience when His Holiness had to leave urgently! It was great that His Holiness left urgently, otherwise...a day or two after His Holiness the Dalai Lama left, the Chinese shelled Norbulingka, where there were monks and people, in order to kill His Holiness.

[The Chinese] had no knowledge that His Holiness had left. There was continuous firing and it was said that the artillery shells did not explode, thanks to the protective deities. There were numerous trees at Norbulingka that were hit by the shells. The trees fell and killed many of our people and monks. Later, after [our] territory was occupied, the Chinese overturned all the corpses that were in monks’ robes feeling certain that [they] had killed His Holiness the Dalai Lama. [They] searched but His Holiness, the Buddha who would know, had left.

This successful attempt has helped us immensely in fighting for Tibet’s independence. Had His Holiness not been able to flee, even if we had arrived in India, the Indians would hand us over to the Chinese at once. [They] would not keep us if the leader had not arrived. That’s the way of the world, should there be no leader.

Q: You wanted to join the *Chushi Gangdrug* if you had a horse and a good gun but you didn’t have a good horse, so you couldn’t travel with His Holiness out to India. Is that correct?

00:28:40

#25D: [I] was in the *Chushi Gangdrug* then.

Q: Had [you] joined it already?

#25D: [I] could escape.

Q: Had you already joined the *Chushi Gangdrug* at that time?

#25D: [I] had already joined. At the time we joined the *Chushi Gangdrug*, there were around 300 monks from Gaden. There was a *shelngo* ‘commander,’ who was a capable person that said, “Things are not good for us. Monks, who wish to join the *Chushi Gangdrug* should join us. Any number will be welcome.” So, around 300 volunteered together. We left directly to join the *Chushi Gangdrug*. When we went there, it was during the time the *Chushi Gangdrug* was fighting at Tsethang. We arrived when they were in the midst of a fight. However, we could not join the fight because besides the knives at our waist, we did not have guns.

Q: Were there no guns?

#25D: There were no guns at the beginning. Later [we] were given guns called Palmolive by the government.

Q: When did you...How did you...I want to back up a little in your history. You were in a monastery near your village, right?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: From the very beginning which monastery was he in?

Q: Which monastery were you in? What's the name where paternal uncle was living?

#25D: Nyamtso Gonpa.

Q: Nyamtso Gonpa.

#25D: Tawu Nyamtso Gon.

Q: Tawu Nyamtso Gonpa. So you went right from the village monastery, near your village to Gaden in Lhasa? How long...Why did you decide to go to Gaden?

#25D: [I] had to go to the great monastery to formally take my [gelong 'full ordination'] vows and become a monk. I was just a getsul 'novice monk' and not an ordained monk while in the village [monastery]. After three years at Gaden, [I] returned to the village. And then the Chinese arrived in the village and did not treat [us] well and [I] fled back to Gaden. Then while at Gaden [I] joined the *Chushi Gangdrug* when it was formed. It was like that.

Q: What year would that have been about?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Almost 1959, the second time. The first time was 1956.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Right. That would have been about...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: '55-'56

[Interviewer to interpreter]: 195...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: ...'55, maybe.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: 1955, maybe. "Three years before, I was in Gaden and the Chinese arrived" so that would have been 1957?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yeah.

Q: Maybe you were in Gaden in 1957. Did many of the monks from Gaden join the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

#25D: Three hundred left together [to join the *Chushi Gangdrug*]. There were numerous [monks] that [left] singly or in twos. There was another monastery called Gaden Chokhor, most of the monks of which joined the *Chushi Gangdrug*. [They] were forced to do so because the Chinese would not let you be; they would destroy [the monastery].

There was an armory of the Tibetan Government [at Gaden Chokhor Monastery]. It was not good [for the monastery] to hand over the armory, so they requested the *Chushi Gangdrug* to come and raid it. I do not know how many horsemen of the *Chushi Gangdrug* left to raid the armory but after raiding the armory, we received guns. That was how it happened.

00:34:34

After we lost our territory and arrived in India, again Andrug Gonpo Tashi [founder of the *Chushi Gangdrug*]...Initially we worked as coolies in Gangtok [Sikkim] for around a year and then were dispatched to Mustang [Nepal]. At Mustang help came from the United States. Planes came and flew over Tibetan territory. Some were given special training on how to signal to the planes by lighting a fire in a utensil using kerosene oil. [I] do not know how it was done but when the plane arrived, a fire was lit and the plane circled and when it flew away, the fire was put out. Again when the drone of a plane was heard, the fire had to be lit.

At the place where the fire was lit, the plane circled and dropped weapons. It circled three times, dropping supplies three times and left. Andrug Gonpo Tashi was an incredibly great man. Before the force was formed there, he had sent a few intelligent men from here to receive training in the United States. Our people did not know how to fight. While fighting the Chinese, [they] stood up and fired or some brandished their swords and rushed screaming. Later military tactics like crawling on the ground and rolling over were taught and [we] at last learned to fight like soldiers.

Q: What was it like to go from being a monk for 20 years to becoming a soldier?

00:37:55

#25D: One was desperate and helpless. Though there was no chance of conquering the Chinese, yet one did it. While [we] were at the border [Mustang], His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, "We will not be able to get back Tibet's independence. There is no use causing enmity to the Chinese. Withdraw the force." All the soldiers started to cry. "Surrender [your] guns to the Nepalese." Weeping, the soldiers were forced to hand over the guns, as it was the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then the Nepalese detained everyone in a prison atop a hill for around a month. [We] did not have anything to eat, though [we] did have a little money then. [We] purchased animals and killed them. Later we were released and the majority dispatched to join the Dehradun Army [Indian Army in Uttaranchal]. Some of us could not join and came to Dharamsala and then were sent to Pathlikul [Himachal Pradesh] to work for the PWD [Public Works Department].

While working for the PWD, Ama Lhacham Kusho [Dalai Lama's sister] brought [us] here [Dharamsala]. Then we were really happy with plenty to eat and a nice house to live in. Now [I] am at the Home for the Aged and need no longer work. [I] can lie down and eat! If you did not like to cook for yourself, you could go to the [common] kitchen to eat. If you did not want to eat the food from the kitchen, you can cook as you wished. The food in the kitchen depended upon the cook. If the cook was a good one, he prepared good food. A bad one cooked beans, potatoes, rice and lentils. We old people do not like rice and lentils. It's said that beans are powerful and good, but we are not cows and oxen, but old people that do not need strength. [We] do not like to eat that and have home-cooked food.

Q: His Holiness' sister, did she know you personally or was she bringing many people here?

00:42:27

#25D: There were many coolies. All those that could not join the army were there.

Q: Were many brought here?

#25D: Yes. At that time the large playground [of the Tibetan Children's Village] was a hillock. We tore down the hill and made the playground.

Ama-la [His Holiness' sister] said after the completion of the playground, "I do not have tasks for you all the time. Settlements are being established, so [you] must go there. If [you] do not go to the Settlements, I do not have jobs to give you." All those that were weak-minded left for the Settlements, but those wayward ones—I was quite wayward—around 20-30 of us wayward ones stayed back. We felt, "If one has had the opportunity to take human birth, one will surely find the opportunity to eat *tsampa* 'flour made from roasted barley.' We have not gone to the Settlements during our younger years, so now in our old age; [we] cannot go to the Settlements. [We] will not go to the Settlements." Quoting "If one has had the opportunity to take human birth, one will surely find the opportunity to eat *tsampa*" [we] stayed back.

Then some of us were employed as cooks and some given other jobs. Later, from a cook I became a watchman and from being a watchman, [I] moved to the Home for the Aged. It is [my] happiest time now. [My] quarter consists of a bedroom, kitchen, water, everything is available indoors; [I] need not go outside [to fetch water]. Toilet, bathroom, every facility is available inside.

Q: When I think back on your story, I wonder if you ever wondered what it would have been like if you had been in the party that escorted the Dalai Lama. Do you wish you had a horse, so you could have been in that party?

00:46:36

#25D: Yes, but there is nothing to think of it.

Q: When you were in the *Chushi Gangdrug*, were you ever in a battle? Did you have to fight to defend yourself under any circumstances?

#25D: Yes, [I] did fight the Chinese. We lost many men right in Tsethang as well as killed many Chinese. There were groups [of Chinese soldiers hiding] in houses. There were two houses...I've forgotten the names of the owners of the houses, which the Chinese had taken over. There were Chinese staying [in them]. The houses...

Q: It wasn't at Yarlung?

#25D: What?

Q: Wasn't it at Yarlung?

#25D: No, it was right in Tsethang.

Q: Tsethang.

#25D: It was right in Tsethang. [We] managed to destroy all those [Chinese soldiers] that were staying in the houses. [We] set the houses on fire and evicted the Chinese. There were others that stayed within bunkers in the hill that [we] were unable to destroy. When we lost territory, they were the main group that attacked us. [They] did not know that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had escaped. His Holiness had not worn the monk's robes [during the escape journey], but was dressed in civilian clothes with a cap and a scarf over the mouth. I did not get the opportunity to see [His Holiness] but those that were in the escort team told me. Some had taken photographs and [I] saw one.

Q: Was it at Tsethang that you fought the Chinese?

#25D: Yes, at Tsethang.

Q: [You] just mentioned a house, what was it?

#25D: What?

Q: You mentioned setting a house on fire?

#25D: A Chinese house. The Chinese had occupied houses of wealthy families and their soldiers were living in them. There were two huge houses.

Q: Two houses.

00:49:00

#25D: Yes. [I] cannot recall the names of the houses. We were able to get those. [We] could not get those that were in the belly of the mountain. After Tibet was lost and while we were at Mustang, the Americans dropped numerous guns. There were bombs, hand grenades and machine guns. [We] were able to cause great damage to the Chinese then.

There was a Chinese army camp at Dagyawu or Dakanzam provisions for which were transported from a great distance. Sometimes we ambushed the provisions and we could

eat them. We did not have anything to eat then and initially killed animals for food. The hides were dried in the sun and packed. Later when there was nothing to eat, we soaked the dried pelt in water, shaved the hair with a knife, cut up the hide and boiled them. [We] faced desperate times such that [we] were reduced to eating leather. The leather became jelly like and was tasty. If one had to eat boiled leather now, [laughs] one would not want to eat it.

Q: What did you feel when His Holiness said, ‘We cannot achieve democracy through violence’? What was your reaction to that and when he said to put down your guns?

#25D: There was nothing but agitation in [my] mind. We have struggled so hard and sacrificed lives but it has been in vain. However, we must obey the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I was howling. I had a machine gun then which could hold 25 bullets. It was from the United States. Nepalese troops had arrived to take the guns. They were standing there. Our *gen-la* was there. I was short-tempered and aggressive. *Gen-la* came to me first. Howling, I threw [the gun] and the [Nepali] soldiers jumped away in fright. All the guns were surrendered. There were some smart ones that hid [their guns] underground and did not surrender. I was stupid. Had [I] hidden [the gun], it might come in use at times. [I] did not think of hiding and surrendered it.

Q: What do you think of the young people who are immolating themselves now in Tibet?

00:55:29

#25D: Poor things, [they] are desperate. [They] have become so desperate as to commit suicide due to the continuous suffering inflicted by them [the Chinese]. Otherwise, why would [they] die? Nobody who is happy will commit suicide. It is because they [the Chinese] are so bad. Perhaps the Chinese might have killed their parents and relatives, and also due to desperation and the hope that it would help the Tibetan community, which is why they commit suicide. However, killing yourself is wrong. Rather than committing suicide, killing a Chinese leader, one of those bad high officials, would mean killing an enemy. It is useless to kill the soldiers; if possible high officials like Hu Jintao and Deng Xiaoping should be slain. Mao Zedong is dead. There were some changes in China after the death of Mao Zedong.

Q: How do you think Tibet should get its freedom?

#25D: It is very difficult to gain freedom for Tibet, as the opponent is so bad. If the opponent undergoes a change and becomes good, it is possible to get freedom. It is imperative for them [the Chinese] to have a change of heart. The world is doing nothing but just watching. If it wants to, the world can help. The world can say, “They [the Tibetans] should be given independence. You must withdraw. It is not right if you do not.” If [the world] said that, they would be forced to withdraw.

00:58:30

They [the Chinese] say that Tibet is part of them but it is 100 percent that Tibet was not under their control. The way of dressing, food habits, language, everything is different. China and Tibet are separate. There’s a Tibetan proverb, “Chinese are happy in China

and Tibetans in their country.” The Chinese will be happy in China. There are many that die due to cold after coming to Tibet.

Q: Were there any typical techniques that the Tibetan soldiers used, the *Chushi Gangdrug*, as they were approaching the Chinese soldiers? If they didn’t have guns, what were they using?

#25D: There was nothing but swords that were wielded. We had the protective amulets. They [the Chinese] might shoot but the protective amulets saved [our] bodies. If the shots were close, [the bullets] touched the body but did not penetrate the flesh. The clothes would have holes and it used to be said that there were 15-20 bullets fallen into pouches during a fight. Some men were arrogant and ran brandishing their swords with not a care about dying.

01:01:00

When we ran like that, there was Gya ‘Chinese’ Lobsang Tashi, who was a high Chinese leader, one of the highest leaders. [I] do not know what his name was in Chinese, but it was Andrug Gonpo Tashi that gave him the name Lobsang Tashi. Andrug Gonpo Tashi trusted him. He was also... The reason he rebelled was that once he had been home to China. The same bad treatment that was being meted out in Tibet was done in China. All his family members were killed and [he] could not meet [his] parents. He then came back and lost faith in the Chinese, even though he was a leader.

When we fought, he would say, “...” [Not discernible. Waves right hand to indicate “not like that”]. He then went like this [makes motion of crawling on ground]. We would consider moving like that as not having courage and say, “He’s scared. He has no courage.” The way the Tibetans thought was stupid. That is the stupidity of someone who has never fought in a war. If it was a one to one confrontation, one could have run screaming [pretends to wield sword] but there were hundreds and thousands. Hundreds of thousands were approaching. We were 100 or 200, or at the most 1,000 or 2,000. There were 15 groups in the entire *Chushi Gangdrug*, so were there 1,900 or 1,500?

Q: 1,900.

#25D: [Laughs] How can this [number of men] challenge the Chinese? When you look back now, it was really stupid. There were many hundreds of thousands of Chinese. Even if one man challenged 20,000 or 30,000 [Chinese soldiers], there was no way to overcome [them].

Q: Do you think if the *Chushi Gangdrug* had continued to fight, what would have happened if His Holiness had said, “Oh, no. Keep fighting.” What do you think would have happened in Tibet?

01:05:42

#25D: If the fight had continued, it would have [mitigated] the rage in the hearts but there was no chance of any happiness. For instance, when [we] were there, we were reduced to eating boiled leather. It would be like that. Except for suffering, there would be no happiness. [We] would not be able to return to Tibet and fighting all the time would mean

losing a few of our men everyday, thereby reducing the number of men. Whereas in the case of the Chinese, if there were a hundred and they were all killed today, tomorrow 400-500 would arrive. If the 400-500 were killed, more would arrive. And there was no end to their weapons while our stock could get finished easily. Later when the United States extended help, our stock was not so bad. [We] had 100-200 bullets. Earlier a hundred bullets meant so much but once that was fired, you drew the sword at your waist, [Laughs]

Q: So rather than diminish the population all the way, you believe it was better to stop endangering Tibetan lives and pull back?

#25D: Yes, because of that we are able to live now. Fighting there would have, in no way helped gain Tibet's independence. There was no way [we] could have conquered [the Chinese] due to the difference in size of population and might of the country. When [I] look back, the Chenrezig 'Avalokitesvara [His Holiness the Dalai Lama]' advising [us] and our following it and surrendering our weapons was the right thing.

01:09:30

We did not know how to think correctly then. When His Holiness advised [us] to withdraw, [we felt], "[We] have struggled so much and the struggle has been in vain. Our struggle has been useless." There was anger in the heart. When I ponder now, those were the thoughts of a stupid person. [We] would not be able to conquer them by fighting while our numbers would diminish.

It was good that His Holiness gave the advice and our heeding it has brought happiness for everyone, though those that were killed are gone. There are a few that live in our camp at the Tibetan Children's Village while the majority has left for the Settlements. Those living in the Settlements are happy as well as those around here. Some have taken wives and have children. The population has increased. [Smiles]

Q: What do you think is important that the next generation of Tibetans, wherever they are, that they save about Tibet? What do you think should be, continued to be preserved about the country of Tibet?

#25D: The most important thing to do is to study well. If [the younger generation] do not study well, [they] will be stupid like us. If [they] study well, [they] will be in a position to think on various issues. The most important is education. [They] must study hard, be kind-hearted and obey the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It will be useless for us to think evil of others.

Q: Why is not harming anyone an important teaching?

01:12:59

#25D: Being kind-hearted is most important. If you are evil to others, the bad effect will befall you. If you have malicious thoughts about others, bad things will naturally come to you. Gradually the Chinese bluff will be revealed, as they are so evil-minded. It is possible that things can get overturned.

Q: When you say that whatever harm is done to you will come back to others...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Whatever harm you do...

Q: ...will come back to you. Is that what you would call karma?

#25D: Right.

Q: *Gen-la*, thank you so much for this interview and for your time and for your wisdom and for your prayers. It looks like you are still praying for the world and all the sentient beings.

#25D: [Speaks before interpretation] [I] have not yet recited today's prayer commitments.

Q: *Gen-la*, thank you so much for this interview and for your time and for your wisdom and for your prayers; it looks like you are still praying for the world.

#25D: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW