

# **Tibet Oral History Project**

Interview #12 – Yeshi Lhadon  
June 29, 2007

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# TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #12
2. Interviewee: Yeshi Lhadon
3. Age: 86
4. Date of Birth: 1921
5. Sex: Female
6. Birthplace: Doktsa
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: June 29, 2007
10. Place of Interview: Interviewee's Residence, Old Camp No. 1, Lugsung Samdupling Settlement, Bylakuppe, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 7 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Jeff Loda
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

### **Biographical Information:**

Yeshi Lhadon believes her village, Doktsa, was the happiest place—with high mountains, temples on the mountains and villages down below. There were no schools or hospitals, but the villagers were completely self-reliant. She was about 14 years old when both her parents died and she became responsible for raising her two younger sisters. She was never able to enjoy her childhood days like a normal child.

When the Chinese arrived in her village, they gave the villagers tools and told them they must work harder to cultivate the land. Yeshi Lhadon and her husband left their village to go to Lhasa because rumors were spreading that the Chinese would mistreat everyone and take away the children. They worked as laborers for the Chinese doing bridge construction near the city. Then they moved to Phari near the Indian border and stayed there for 5 years while contemplating escape to India, which they finally attempted in 1959 when Yeshi Lhadon was 37 years old.

### **Topics Discussed:**

Childhood memories, farm life, nomadic life, first appearance of Chinese, forced labor, Chinese oppression, trade, escape experiences, Dalai Lama.

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**Interview #12**

**Interviewee: Yeshi Lhadon**

**Age: 86, Sex: Female**

**Interviewer: Marcella Adamski**

**Interview Date: June 29, 2007**

Question: Can you please tell us your full name?

**Interviewee #12: My name is Yeshi Lhadon.**

Q: Yeshi Lhadon, do you give your permission for the Tibet Oral History Project to use this interview?

**#12: Yes, you can use it. Thank you.**

Q: Today we want to talk a little bit about where you were born and a little bit about your childhood and maybe what happened when you had to leave Tibet and how you came to be here.

**#12: [Nods]**

Q: So maybe you could begin by telling me where you were born.

**#12: The name of my birthplace is Doktsa.**

Q: Was it a small town or a village? What was it?

**#12: It was medium-sized. In the early days there were about 80 families, but I've heard it's grown to around 150 families now.**

Q: Can you describe the town? What did it look like?

**#12: It was the happiest place. We called it Lushulgong.**

Q: What made it so happy?

**#12: High on the mountains was the temples and villages were down below.**

Q: What were the names of some of the temples?

**#12: They were small temples and did not have names. Our monastery was called Zizi Gonpa.**

Q: How many people were in your family?

**#12: Both my parents have been dead since I was young. We were five sisters.**

Q: Who took care of the family?

**#12: After my parents died, it was my oldest sister who took care of the family.**

Q: Who took care of your family when your parents died?

**#12: It was my oldest sister, who took care of the family, then there was another sister younger than her and I was the one next to her.**

Q: May I ask, how did your parents die?

**#12: My mother died of excessive bleeding after childbirth. My father died from swelling of the legs from *bongdong*. I was about 14 years old when my parents died. My father was 52 when he died and my mother died at the age of 54. My mother died later.**

Q: Was she having her last baby at 54?

**#12: After giving birth, she had excessive bleeding and she died from it. We did not have hospitals then.**

Q: Was it typical for women to have babies that late?

**#12: She gave birth at a late age. The youngest daughter Lhazom is still living in Tibet. She was four years old when our mother died. When I was 13, my father was alive. When I turned 14, my mother died. When I was 13, my father was alive.**

Q: What was that like for you to lose both parents?

**#12: When my parents died, my younger sister was already given away in marriage. I was the one next to her and it was I who took charge. It was my eldest sister and I.**

Q: The younger one was already given away in marriage?

**#12: It was Chonzom, the second sister. It was Chonzom who was given away in marriage.**

Q: And how old was your oldest sister at that time?

**#12: My oldest sister might have been 27 or 28. I do not remember much. Perhaps she was around 27.**

Q: And she hadn't married yet?

**#12: My oldest sister was not married at that time. We had to stay in the village as well as at the nomadic camp, where we had many animals. It was up where it snowed. My sister stayed with the animals and I was in the village.**

Q: And who was at home with you?

**#12: Besides the three of us [the three older sisters], there were two more: one was Yangtso's mother and the other is still living there. The youngest child was four years old, when our mother died.**

Q: And the other?

**#12: There was a difference of about 3 to 4 years between all the children. I do not remember much.**

Q: So the youngest was about 4 and the other?

**[Interpreter to interviewer] Maybe 9 or 10.**

Q: So you were the mother? You were a mother of two children when you were only 14 years old.

**#12: I was bringing up the two younger ones.**

Q: Caring for them like a mother?

**#12: I was like their mother. The other sister was living in the hills tending the animals. We had a lot of animals, horses, sheep, yaks and *dri* [female yak]. We had many animals.**

Q: Do you have any idea what the total number of animals was?

**#12: If you included the goats and sheep, there might have been a total of about 200.**

Q: Does that mean that your family was rather well off?

**#12: Yes, we were among the well off. But our agriculture land was not extensive. Some owned large areas of land; some had small tracts of land while others had medium-sized fields.**

Q: When parents die and children are left, does the village do anything to try and help them with adult supervision?

**#12: Yes, we had help because of the many relatives. We had relatives on my father's side and from my mother's side and they helped.**

Q: How long did you continue to be the mother of these two young children?

**#12: I lived at home until I was 28, like a mother.**

Q: Since you had to have so much responsibility early, did you have opportunities to play and enjoy yourself as well?

**#12: No, I did not. I never got the opportunity. Our village was not a poor village, though some people did not have much, you'd never find a beggar.**

Q: How did you spend your days? From the time you were like 14 to 28. What would be a typical way?

**#12: As soon as we got up in the morning, we had to go in search of firewood. We had to go around 4 a.m. and were back home before 6 o'clock. Then I would heat up some *thukpa* 'noodle soup' and feed the children.**

Q: And then what did you do?

**#12: We had sheep and we had to make clothes from sheep's wool. We had to spin the wool.**

Q: And did you make the clothes to sell or for the family to wear?

**#12: It was for our own use and not for others. It was done manually [shows motion with hands]. We did not have any kind of machinery. We did not even know how to make a matchstick. There were no schools, but we were totally self-reliant.**

Q: Was there a monastery nearby?

**#12: There was our monastery, which was at a distance of ... if you went in the morning you could come back by evening. We had to go walking.**

Q: A day's walk. Did you go to the monastery very often?

**#12: We would go there to watch shows and sometimes to receive initiations.**

Q: So if you had to describe yourself as a young girl. How would you describe yourself? What kind of a young girl were you?

**#12: In my young days I did not ever have time for styles and nice clothes. I was working hard trying to fend for my sisters**

Q: That must have been difficult.

**#12: At the age of 6, my father would send me out to look after the pigs. We had about 20 to 30 pigs. All the children would tend pigs at the marshy areas.**

Q: And how did you take care of the pigs?

**#12: The pigs would eat grass and wallow in the mud. We had to prevent the pigs from entering the farm lands. All the areas around were farm lands.**

Q: Was that fun or difficult work?

**#12: That was fun because there were many children involved.**

Q: Did you ever play in the mud with the pigs?

**#12: Yes, we used to play. We would throw water and mud on each other.**

Q: What were the pigs used for in the family?

**#12: The pigs would be taken to Ba for sale. We had one person who used to go to sell the pigs. So we sold our pigs to him. When the pigs became big, we sold them to him.**

Q: And who did you sell them to?

**#12: There was one person in our village that used to go to sell the pigs.**

Q: Did Tibetans eat pork?

**#12: We ate pork. We killed one pig during *Losar* ‘Tibetan New Year’. We ate only one pig, the rest were sold.**

Q: And what were some of the favorite foods you remember from your childhood?

**#12: The tastiest foods were *momo* ‘dumplings’ and *gyathuk* ‘noodles.’ We didn’t know to cook any other dishes.**

Q: And can you describe your house? What did the inside of your house look like?

**#12: My house was large with wooden pillars. The larger houses would have around 80 pillars.**

Q: Did your house have 80 pillars?

**#12: No, ours did not have 80 pillars. It was made of 30 pillars. On the ground floor, we kept the cows, pigs and horses. The family lived on the middle floor. On the uppermost floor, we stored the harvest. It was three-storied.**

Q: What were the walls made of?

**#12: There were wide flat wooden boards placed so [gestures] and we brought soil on our back, poured it between the boards and pounded. They were very good and lasted for years and years**

Q: They were made of soil.

**#12: Yes, pounded soil and when that was done, the boards were lifted up a little bit and the same procedure followed. The boards were supported by poles on the sides and tied with ropes.**

Q: What kind of a mother were you? A young mother, were you very strict or funny? What kind of mother?

**#12: I was very loving to them.**

Q: Can you tell me about them? What were they like?

**#12: From the two, the one younger to me is now dead. The youngest is still living in Tibet.**

Q: Where does she live?

**[Interpreter to interviewer] In Doktsa in Bathang.**

Q: And did you grieve a long time for your parents who died so suddenly?

**#12: Yes I grieved a lot, so much that I wanted to die. I wanted to hang myself. I wanted to hang myself, but I thought of my two younger sisters. [Cries] I wanted to die but I couldn't, thinking of my two younger sisters.**

Q: Was it because your life was so hard or because you were so lonely for your parents?

**#12: The hardest part was bringing up the two children. We had servants and at least two people had to go to the nomad camp. The servants were from our village.**

Q: Did you ever stop feeling sad about the loss of your parents? Did your heart ever lighten a little?

**#12: No, I still haven't forgotten my parents. I remember them.**

Q: You never got over it. It's very hard to lose a parent when you're a young child.

**#12: Yes, I was young and never got to enjoy my life. We had to look after the animals, work in the fields and cook at home. There was no time to enjoy but we were never hungry. We had plenty to eat.**

Q: Your soul was hungry for your parents.

**#12: Yes, we had enough to eat and we made our own clothes.**

Q: Do you remember your mother and father?

**#12: Yes, I remember. My mother was called Tse Lhamo. My father was Gyaltsen. I remember them. I still dream of them.**

Q: What do you dream?

**#12: I dream that I meet them.**

Q: And what happens?

**#12: It's a dream, what can I say.**

Q: I think this dream makes you happy.

**#12: After I dream, the next day I feel sad.**

Q: In the dream only you are happy. So, a hard life without parents, very hard life. So you said you were home until you were 28, then what happens after that?

**#12: I worked hard until I was 28 and the family progressed from good to better. I was a very hard worker.**

Q: They became very successful? What happened to your younger sisters?

**#12: One was given away in marriage and one was living at home then.**

Q: Did you ever leave your family home?

**#12: I was 28 when I left home. Then I used to go to tend the animals. When I was about 26 the Chinese came to our village. The Chinese had come, but at that time they did not ill treat us. They told us, "You have to work hard. Make the pastures into agricultural lands." They gave us farm implements. Everybody said, "They are bad people. Each and every one of us must escape. We must flee to India or somewhere very far away. We must save our money and flee. We shouldn't stay but leave our village and flee." By then my oldest sister was married and they were living in our house.**

Q: So you were alone?

**#12: My oldest sister was married and had two children by the time I turned 28.**

Q: Why do you think the Chinese came to give you tools?

**#12: They provided us with tools to say that we had to work hard. They said that we had not worked hard and that we had been enjoying ourselves. They told us to work hard and develop more agricultural lands.**

Q: What did you think of the criticism that you were not hard workers?

**#12: They said, "You have not worked hard. You have enjoyed yourselves. You have kept servants." We had to keep servants because we couldn't handle the large amount of work ourselves.**

Q: So what they told you was inaccurate about yourself.

**#12: "You have enjoyed yourselves. You have not worked hard. The poor are very poor and the rich are very rich. What is the reason?" they asked.**

Q: How did it make you feel when they said this?

**#12: To the poor they gave clothes, for those who had shabby clothes. They gave the farm implements to the rich families telling them to work.**

Q: Could you work any harder than you were already working?

**#12: They told us to work still harder. We said we couldn't work any harder than we were. We didn't have enough water if we cultivated more areas. We had been cultivating an area that the water could feed. Then they said that we had to channel water from the lake that was at a distance; that we had to open up the lake and channel the water and that we had to till more land.**

Q: And what happened?

**#12: When I was 28, I was with my husband on the nomadic camp tending the many animals. Along with a few others, five or six of us escaped to Lhasa.**

Q: When did you get married to your husband?

**#12: We married when I was 27 years old. I was 28 when we escaped.**

Q: Where did you meet him?

**#12: At that time, there were other family members to do the work at home. There were servants and the children were older. There were many family members, so I came away.**

Q: Did you move into your husband's home?

**#12: We did not stay there. We escaped to Lhasa. We walked for three months to reach Lhasa.**

Q: And what happened that made you decide to escape?

**#12: The reason for our escape was that everybody was saying that we should escape. So a group of five or six of us fled together. Some said that we should go to India.**

Q: But why?

**#12: Because people said that the Chinese would ill treat us. They said that all the younger children would be taken away as soldiers for their army, that the older ones would be forced to work, that there was no use remaining there and that all must try to escape.**

Q: And you were with your husband whom you were with for one year. Did you meet him, was he from the village?

**#12: I met him when we were living at the nomadic camp. We had many animals.**

Q: Why did you decide to marry him?

**#12: There was no marriage and no celebrations. When we arrived in Lhasa we had a child.**

Q: When you left and took three months, were you going to Lhasa?

**[Interpreter to interviewer] Yes.**

Q: It was three months to get to Lhasa.

**#12: When we arrived in Lhasa, the Chinese were building a bridge. They were building a bridge between Lhasa and Gaden Monastery. We met a man from our village who was a group leader there. He asked us if we wanted to work and we became laborers for the Chinese.**

Q: I would like to go back and ask how and tell me about your journey. From your village Doktsa to Lhasa, who went with you?

**#12: There were many traveling companions on the way. There were eight or nine and some went to Kalimpong and some became servants in Lhasa. We had a child and couldn't work as servants. We joined the labor force.**

Q: You said you walked for three months. What did you bring with you? Did you bring animals? Or did you carry everything?

**#12: We walked for about three months. We brought some money with us, with which we bought *tsampa* ‘flour made from roasted barley,’ from villagers on the way. We carried the *tsampa* on our back and ate it on the way.**

Q: And was the journey over mountains or rivers? What was it like?

**#12: There were mountains, rivers, passes and valleys; everything was there. And there were rocks.**

Q: Were you ever scared?

**#12: We met other people who were also escaping.**

Q: From where were they coming?

**#12: They were coming from the same place we had come. Some of them said they had met Chinese on the way, but they were allowed to go because the Chinese must have thought that eventually these would all become his people.**

Q: Were you ever in danger of being caught by the Chinese?

**#12: There was fear. I used to be extremely scared even when I dreamed about them.**

Q: What were you scared would happen?

**#12: Because they were killing, taking people away, causing a lot of suffering and beating. I remember these things. These were committed in other places and we heard about it. That was why we fled.**

Q: Where were the atrocities taking place that you heard about?

**#12: In places like Sadham and Gyaltham. These things were heard in our village.**

Q: And what kind of things was happening to people?

**#12: The Chinese accused the rich families of not working hard and keeping servants. They were subjected to *thamzing* ‘struggle sessions’ and they were beaten.**

Q: Would you have been considered one of the rich people?

**#12: Yes, my family suffered a lot later. The house was given to the poor people and my family was driven out. Then when we reached Lhasa, the Chinese had arrived in Lhasa.**

Q: What did it look like?

**#12: Lhasa is great. It is the capital of Tibet. The palace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is high up there and below that were the villages. On its [the palace] surrounding sides were the farmers. I was very happy being in Lhasa.**

Q: Was this your first time in Lhasa?

**#12: Yes. We worked for one year and seven months as laborers for the Chinese.**

Q: What were the conditions for laborers in Lhasa?

**#12: While working as laborers we had to stay in tents; there were no [houses]. We brought a small tent with us when we fled from our village. We put that up. We stayed as laborers because having a child meant we couldn't live as servants. The Chinese paid us good wages. We were living in Lhasa.**

Q: Who paid the wages?

**#12: The Chinese paid the wages.**

Q: Why were the Chinese building a bridge?

**#12: When you come from Kham to Lhasa, there is a large river. In the olden days, they used a boat. There was no way their [the Chinese] vehicles could cross in a boat, so they were building the bridge.**

Q: Were there soldiers all over Lhasa, this is 1959 you are talking about now, what year are we talking about?

**#12: I don't remember.**

Q: Was the Dalai Lama still there?

**#12: I was 37 when we came to India. Around which year was that?**

[Interviewer and Interpreter calculates the year, based on interviewee's year of birth and comes to the conclusion as 1951]

Q: It was 1951. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was living in Lhasa at that time?

**#12: Yes, he was living in Lhasa.**

Q: Was there any sense of danger that the Chinese were going to destroy Tibet? Or occupy it?

**#12: We had to do strenuous work. If you didn't work hard, they would immediately cut your wages.**

Q: Was there a fear that Tibet would be occupied?

**#12: No, there wasn't. They were just beginning to build the bridge in Lhasa. The bridge construction work went on day and night. There was no electricity and the pillars had to be pulled and then huge iron blocks hit on them. They had to be pulled by ropes.**

Q: Why did you choose to go to Lhasa instead of leaving Tibet?

**#12: We thought we would escape to India from Lhasa. That was the way.**

Q: Oh, it's a stop.

**#12: If we didn't work, we had nothing to eat as everything we had got over.**

Q: Were there many other people there from your part of the country?

**#12: Oh yes, it was filled with people coming to sell things.**

Q: Were there people from your region?

**#12: Yes, there were people from our region. People from our region kept coming.**

Q: Did your sisters stay?

**#12: My sisters stayed back. The youngest sister was sent to the nomad camp in my place. The second youngest sister was given away in marriage. The youngest was able to work. She was 18 years old then.**

Q: Did you see the Dalai Lama when you were there?

**#12: It was not easy to see the Dalai Lama. At that time His Holiness had gone to China. We would not be allowed to see him.**

Q: And why had he gone to China?

**#12: At that time he had gone to China.**

Q: Why did he go to China?

**#12: That was the time when he talked with Mao Zedong.**

Q: What do you think about what happened then?

**#12: I thought we should gradually escape to India. All the monks of Sera, Drepung and Gaden Monasteries were escaping. The monks became scattered as they escaped and the**

**Chinese arrested some of them, some surrendered and some had their hands tied behind their back.**

Q: And was India the only choice you had to go to?

**#12: We felt that we should flee to a place where things were plenty.**

Q: So after you finished working a year and a half, did you have enough money then to leave?

**#12: They gave us good wages. Then they said, "All the men must go to the north to build an airport. The women must stay and work on the road construction in Lhasa. If you wish to go back to your regions, we will send you there and you needn't pay the vehicle fare. If you choose none of these, you are free to leave from this day."**

Q: The bridge construction was over?

**#12: The Bridge was completed and we were engaged in building roads behind the Potala Palace.**

Q: Is that what prompted you to want to leave?

**#12: My husband and I said that we did not want to be separated. So we requested permission to leave. They didn't pay us one month's wages.**

Q: And did you tell them you wanted to leave and go to India?

**#12: The Chinese gave us leave. They had said they would give us leave if we did not want to go to construct the airport. Then we came to Phari Thangka. That was at the border near India.**

Q: What happened in Phari?

**#12: When we left Lhasa, we bought a bag of *tsampa*. So one of us carried the bag of *tsampa* and the other our child and we set off. It took us 13 days to travel between Lhasa and Phari.**

Q: How old was the child?

**#12: We stayed in Phari for a while. We had some money with us and my husband went to Kalimpong to purchase some goods. We carried the goods on our backs and sold them to the nomads.**

Q: What kind of things?

**#12: The goods were sugar, tea leaves, wheat flour, and ribbons for the hair and ornaments for the hands and so on.**

Q: You had to have money before you could keep going to India?

**#12: We planned to go to India, but stayed a while in Phari. Food was plenty in Phari. We had some money. My husband did some trading and I engaged myself in spinning and weaving and looking after our child. When we first arrived, it was not possible to find a house and we slept in a stable. Much later we met people we knew.**

Q: Was it hard?

**#12: It was not hard in Phari because we did not have to fear [the Chinese]. You could even cut wood from the forest and sell it and buy *tsampa*. My whole life has been hard work.**

Q: And then how did you leave Phari? Why did you decide to do that?

**#12: When we came to Phari, the Chinese had begun mistreating—all the parents of the rich families were imprisoned in the house.**

Q: And what year would this be about?

**#12: We spent about five years in Phari. We had a son in Phari; one more child was born.**

Q: So it was about 1956. Did you have a boy or a girl?

**#12: That was Dorji and after him, one more son was born. That boy died and you [to the interpreter] were born.**

[Interpreter to interviewee] I was not born in Phari.

**#12: You were not born in Phari, you were born in India. I am talking about the sequence of birth.**

Q: The first child was a girl?

**#12: The first child was a girl and she died in Phari.**

Q: What happened?

**#12: In that year in Phari, there was an epidemic of *sipi* and 80 children died.**

Q: *Sipi* is...?

**#12: Boils erupt on the body in this illness. If the boils cannot emerge from the skin and remains within the body and they die, it is impossible to cure it. I grieved a lot as she was my first born.**

Q: And then you left Phari in 1956, yes?

**#12: I told you I was 28 when I left my village. Then years were spent working for the Chinese and living in Phari and when we came to India I was 37.**

[Muffled conversation between interviewer and interpreter, trying to estimate the year.]

Q: When you left Phari, was the Dali Lama still in Lhasa?

**#12: His Holiness came to Phari. His Holiness, on his way back from China came to Phari. He could reach there only around evening and we had spent the whole day standing in line to receive him.**

Q: And when you left Tibet, was His Holiness still in Tibet or had he fled?

**#12: His Holiness had already left for India. When we came to India, His Holiness had already left for India. Upon hearing that His Holiness had left, the public, monks and everyone started leaving. When His Holiness came to Phari, he gave us a lot of advice.**

Q: Was the journey a short one or a long one?

**#12: You mean His Holiness the Dalai Lama?**

Q: No, when you escaped from Phari to India.

**#12: When we left Phari, all the parents of the rich families were arrested and interrogated. They [the Chinese] used to label us as *lok-choe* ‘rebels’—those from our region [Kham]. Our people had fought against them and they labeled us as *lok-choe*. They were crueler towards people like us. We also spoke in a different dialect.**

Q: If you didn’t speak could they still recognize that you were Khampas?

**#12: Then they wouldn't know, but we can't go about our life without talking, whether it is trading or earning a livelihood.**

Q: So how long did it take you to reach India?

**#12: Several times we almost escaped. Our landlords, in whose house we lived were a rich family. The mother was arrested by the Chinese while the father had gone to Kalimpong.**

Q: And did you go to Kalimpong?

**#12: There was also another person from our village there.**

Q: Then?

**#12: We thought many times about escaping along with him. They [husband and the person from same village] went to look for ways to escape, in the eastern direction and western direction while I held the child. They couldn't find the way. One early morning before twilight, a basket on his [husband] back and the child within it and in the guise of looking for cow dung, they escaped. I followed them later. My son was three years old then.**

Q: How did you know how to follow him?

**#12: My husband took the child and went ahead. We arranged that they would wait for me at the hill near Bhutan where they would camp. There were three companions.**

Q: How did it feel to be leaving Tibet?

**#12: Then we had to live hand to mouth. We were like beggars, at times serving others.**

Q: Did you hope you'd have a better life in India?

**#12: Yes, since everyone was escaping towards India.**

Q: This must have been such a hard period in your life from when you escaped from your village because you had so much land and good food and you were well off and to be starving like beggars, it must have been such a contrast.

**#12: Yes, we became like that. Our life became like that. However these days I'm happy.**

Q: What did it leave you feeling about the Chinese?

**#12: I feel the Chinese are my enemies.**

Q: What do you think the Tibetans should do about China?

**#12: With the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and support from outside, please get Tibet's independence. If we do not get our independence, our religion will be lost because generations change. As generations change, slowly our religion will be lost. People like us have religion. We have received many teachings from lamas. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has visited this settlement about 15 times.**

Q: What advice would you give to the children from Tibet?

**#12: My advice would be to get back Tibet's independence and not to forget our religion and to be grateful to those who support us. That is if the children would listen.**

Q: Would you like to say something?

**#12: Yes, I would tell them not to forget our religion.**

Q: What do you think are the most important parts of your religion that you think people should hold in their heart?

**#12: The most important thing to remember is His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We are indebted to him. He has looked after us like we were children.**

Q: He was a good parent.

**#12: He is like a parent. We are grateful to you. The United States has been very kind and provided us with food supplies when we first reached India. I would like to say that we are very grateful.**

Q: How do you think we can keep the Tibetan religion alive, the Buddhist religion alive for the next generation?

**#12: It is very difficult to tell the younger generation. When I cannot tell my children, what can I do? If I cannot advise my children, how can I advise others' children? I do not have an education. [Laughs]**

Q: Can you tell us who those in the picture are?

**#12: This is me. This is this daughter [points to interpreter]. This is my younger daughter who lives in the United States. This is her again [to the translator]. That's my son in Switzerland, who met this girl, his wife. This is my grandson. That's my husband. That's somebody who used to work for us. She looked after the children.**

**[The picture frame is turned towards the camera.]**

Q: Can you point to yourself in the picture?

**[Interviewee continues to point to photographs.]**

END OF INTERVIEW