

Tibet Oral History Project

**Interview #13C, Part 1 – Jangchup Palmo, Naljorma
July 7, 2013**

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TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #13C, Part 1
2. Interviewee: Jangchup Palmo, Naljorma
3. Age: 70
4. Date of Birth: 1943
5. Sex: Female
6. Birthplace: Namru
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet:
9. Date of Interview: July 7, 2013
10. Place of Interview: Private residence, Cottage Grove, Oregon, USA
11. Length of Interview: 2 hr 48 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Anonymous
14. Videographer: Jeddadiah Emanuel
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Naljorma Jangchup Palmo was born in Jang Namru to a wealthy and influential family. Her father was the leader of the village. She remembers fondly visiting their monastery every winter which was six days away on horseback. During the summer, her family hosted the monks in their home and there was a horse race every year. At the age of 13 Naljorma Jangchup Palmo's family sponsored a special series of Buddhist teachings and required her to listen to them daily for three months. She explains about her unique nature and interest in Buddhism from a very young age.

Naljorma Jangchup Palmo describes visiting Lhasa at the age of 14 and her first experience with the Chinese. She notes their initial attempt to win over aristocrats and other influential Tibetans with *dhayen* 'Chinese silver coins,' but later came a change in attitude as the Chinese began arresting and subjecting the leaders and the influential people to *thamzing* 'struggle sessions.'

After receiving the news that the Chinese had occupied Lhasa, her father led the entire village in a vain attempt to flee. Her father was killed by the Chinese and Naljorma Jangchup Palmo was shot several times by the Chinese and detained. She describes another foiled escape that resulted in the death of more family members and finally her successful third attempt. She then practiced the Buddhist dharma at Mt. Kailash for several years and learned to forgive the Chinese.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, childhood memories, Buddhist beliefs, invasion by Chinese army, brutality/torture, escape experiences.

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Interviewee: Jangchup Palmo, Naljorma

Age: 70, Sex: Female

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: July 7, 2013

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:17

Interviewee #13C: JangchupPalmo.

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked us to record your experiences, so that we may 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?

#13C: Of course, you have. Of course, whatever my experiences I will relate honestly. There are many stories in my life. Perhaps there are some that may be beneficial. Of course, [you] have permission. I tell [my experiences] to whomever asks me.

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

#13C: [Nods]

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

#13C: Thank you.

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

00:03:30

#13C: I have no problems at all. I have no problems at all [because] the turmoil with China did not happen to me alone but to the whole of Tibet in the year '59. Therefore, I have no issues but I do not know if it will cause any problems to the children if they go to Tibet. I have no problems at all.

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

#13C: Thank you and I am happy to be interviewed. Interview me with joy for I am not sad but happy.

Q: I think I could not do otherwise, could not do otherwise. So Palmo-*la*, can you please tell me how old you are and where were you born?

#13C: Now?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: How old you are and when you were born?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: And where were you born?

Q: How old and where were you born?

#13C: I see. I am 70 years old this year and was born in Tibet.

Q: Can you tell us what village or city?

00:06:15

#13C: I was born in the place called Namru, the one called Jang ‘North’ Namru. It is located to the north of Lhasa. Lhasa is where the Potala Palace is, His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s residence. By *jang*, we mean the north of Lhasa.

There is a lake called Namtso in Jang Namru. There are a certain number of years when a circumambulation of the lake is performed. A pilgrimage is done once in a 12-year cycle. Just like we have conferences, all the deities gather once in 12 years at the Namtso. The Year of the Sheep, the Year of the Horse... There are 12 birth signs. [The deities] left for the snow covered mountains in the Year of the Horse to gather there. [The gathering took place] in Tsari in the Year of the Monkey. So it was the Year of the Sheep that I [was born] during the time that people took a pilgrimage to Namtso.

Q: Palmo-*la*, what is your family’s background? What did your parents do for a livelihood?

#13C: Those of us in Namru were nomads. Due to the extreme cold, cultivation was not possible. The nomads [reared] sheep and yaks and used their wool. They grazed in the region and [the nomads] used the butter and cheese. That was our livelihood. There were innumerable sheep and then cattle, horses and goats. Such were there.

Horses were used for travelling.

00:09:52

The nomad’s livelihood depended upon the animals. It was extremely cold in winter but there were rarely any houses. Except for one or two wealthy families, it was impossible because of the lack of wood. Wood is necessary for the construction of houses and so it was very difficult.

Q: How frequently did the family move from one location to another?

#13C: I am sorry it is me alone who knows [the background] and can say whatever I wish but I speak the truth. My father and mother hailed from influential families and were

like...you know, like that. Therefore, we went to only one place. [We] were given the rights to two places; given rights to two huge places. We stayed in one and moved to the other when grass depleted and animals became weak during autumn. [We] did not need to migrate.

[To interpreter] What would you call the head of a region if you take California for instance or Oregon? Like a governor or someone. Since we were like that, we stayed in our place and had to work for the people.

My home and my mother's home were exactly similar. Both my mother's family and father's family were similar. We owned a house and so did my mother's family. So ours was like that kind of a family.

It was a wealthy family.

Q: Can you tell me something about your mother and something about your father?

00:13:19

#13C: My mother's ancestors were the Lhaponthatsang. Lhaptsang was my mother's family. I mentioned earlier that it was a wealthy family. That was my mother's family. My father's family was called Jongna Dharabtsang. It was also the leader of a region and [my father] was the son of this family. They got married to each other. The son and daughter of two ruling class families married each other.

Q: That means your parents were both from wealthy families...

#13C: [They] were the son and daughter [of wealthy families]. The son and daughter [married]. My father's ancestors came from Kham. [They] were from Kham and arrived in Namru where [they] became leaders. It was a very good family and upright leaders, not bad leaders. [Father] was an honest and very good leader.

Q: And [your] mother's side?

00:14:37

#13C: Mother's side [of the family] was still better. What should [I] say? It was exemplary, the Lhaponthatsang.

Q: Mother's from Lhaponthatsang and father?

#13C: [Father's] the son of Jongna Dharabtsang. [He is] the son of Dharab Tadho.

Q: Palmo-*la*, can you please tell us something about yourself as a little girl? What were you like as a little girl and what did you like to do?

00:15:54

#13C: Oh, thank you. I like this question very much. I can recall the times when [I] was little. You might also do that, right? One recalls the nice times. I was born in Namtso in the

Year of the Sheep that coincided with the pilgrimage. Namtso was a little distance away from where we lived as we did not live right in Namtso. When I was born in Namtso—our names are usually given by lamas—traditionally the parents did not name [a child]. Close to the lake was a Kagyu Monastery where lived Choktrul Rinpoche, a great meditator regarded as a true manifestation of Yeshe Tsogyal ‘spiritual consort of Guru Padmasambhava.’ [My] parents requested her for a name.

She said, “Jangchup Palmo.” [My] parents asked, “What does Jangchup mean.” “Oh, that is good. *Jang* means purified of all the faults and *chup* means one who is endowed with all the positive qualities and Palmo is the name of Goddess Tara.” Hence, [my] parents considered me as something unique. [They] thought greatly [of me].

As a child whenever I went to anybody’s home—we normally made water offerings like this here [points to shrine]—I had a desire to do that, burn incense and light butter lamps. I loved to do such things as far as I can remember. Not just in our house but I used to go to the relatives’ homes and asked to be allowed to do such things. I had such desires.

Q: How many children were in her family?

00:21:16

#13C: There were five.

Q: Where was Palmo-*la* in that order?

#13C: I was the youngest but one.

Q: Youngest...?

#13C: There was one younger to me. I am the fourth.

Q: Can you tell us more about your childhood?

#13C: Yes, yes. Of course, that is good. One of my paternal uncles and grandfather...we have a monastery called Nalanda. Nalanda is located in the north in Phenpo near Lhasa. It is a Sakya monastery known as Phenpo Nalanda. In this monastery...this monastery is in the north and except for the great distance, Nalanda is our monastery. It is far away. It is six days ride by horse. It took six whole days of riding to reach this monastery from our [village].

There were many lamas in this monastery like Zimo Rinpoche and Chogyay Rinpoche. The *chanzo* ‘business manager’ of two of these lamas were my paternal uncle and my grandfather. [They] were the two *chanzo* of the Zimo *ladang* ‘grand lama’s residence.’

00:22:46

There was another *ladang* called Chogyay *ladang*. The monastery had three *ladang*. The *chanzo* and staff of the Chogyay *ladang* whose picture is here [turns back to point to shrine] were my maternal uncle and his side [of the family], my mother’s real sibling, my

maternal uncle's [side of the family]. This monastery was not a *jankhang* but a *dukhang* [?]. This monastery happened to be a Tibetan monastery. It was warm region where fruits and grains grew, the place where the monastery was located. During winter all of us went where it was warm, to Nalanda, to Phenpo Nalanda. The *ladang* made the preparations; we did not have to cook. The *ladang* made the preparations. We stayed there and had a party.

Q: During winter?

#13C: [We] spent three months there during wintertime and saw the holy Jowo images...

Q: Every year?

00:23:54

#13C: [We] visited every year during wintertime. During summer they came to the north. The lamas were ceremoniously escorted like we do here to the north. My family played host. This was a very enjoyable period. When [we] went there, [we] receiving teachings from the lamas and partied. When they came to the north, being nomads, we had great love for horses. We would have a horse race between our horses and the horses that belonged to the *ladang*. Though in actuality we were all relatives but the horse race took place between the north and Tibet [Lhasa]. Horses raced to see which came first and it was very enjoyable.

Q: The *chanzo* was your...

#13C: ...paternal uncle.

Q: Father's side?

#13C: Father's real brother.

Q: Zimo Rinpoche's...

#13C: ...*chanzo*.

Q: Zimo Rinpoche's *chanzo* and...

#13C: There were two *chanzo*, one was grandfather and the other father's sibling—my grandfather and paternal uncle. The [*chanzo*] of the Chogyay *ladang* was my maternal uncle.

Q: Was [your maternal uncle] a *chanzo* of the Chogyay Ladang?

00:25:12

#13C: [He] was a *chanzo*.

00:26:42

Tents would be put up.

00:26:51

It was very enjoyable.

00:26:57

There would be horse racing and playing with fire.

Q: It sounds wonderful.

00:27:17

#13C: There would be singing.

Q: It sounded like very happy times. Were you considered by your parents or other people as different than other children or were you very much like all the other girls your age?

#13C: Our parents loved the children a lot. There was no difference in their consideration. Since there were no schools in Jang, the parents taught us. All of us children were taught equally. Generally everyone was equal but I was different because I would cry when people fell sick or faced problems. [I] was sympathetic and would cry instantly while the others did not cry. “How strange she is! Why are you the only one who is sad?” I was a little different and it came naturally to me.

Q: *Palmo-la*, did you have any wishes about what you wanted to do when you became older?

#13C: [I] did not have any aspirations as such. However, when I was 13 years old my parents received the Sakya Lamday ‘Path and its Fruit’ [The profound system of contemplative and meditative practice of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism], the Lamday teachings for which we were the sponsors. The Lamday teachings took three months. I was a child of 13 years.

The sessions were from 8 in the morning until noon, an hour’s break for lunch and then until 5 in the evening. I sat between my parents and when I fidgeted as I was a small child [my] parents said, “You must not fidget. Listen to everything. The lama is giving teachings and you must hear it, listen to it.” So I listened but could not understand the teachings. However, I found it melodious and sat in the same place for three months and received the teachings. All the children were there but I sat among the sponsors in the front row right next to the lama.

Q: Was the teaching given over a 3-month period?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Over a 3-month period.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: And she sat entranced. Entranced, moved, deeply touched by the teaching. And very still.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes, very much still.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Is that right?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Right.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: For three months.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Three months, yeah.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: How old?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Thirteen years of age.

#13C: I will delve deeper into my story.

Q: It sounded like it filled you with happiness and delight.

#13C: It did.

Q: Please, tell me more.

00:35:41

#13C: The Buddha's teachings...Actually, from morning until night the sound of the dharma were unending in our family, be it chanting the mantras or inviting lamas home. So when the [Lamday] teachings were going on, [I] felt [I] was seeing the Buddha. I felt happy believing that the lama was the Buddha. When the session resumed after lunch, other children were annoyed because [they] wished to go out to play. As for me, instead of playing [I] felt happy that [I] would be seeing the Buddha. I would be the first to sit, before the parents.

My mother's older brother, my maternal uncle was a *tsetsam* at Nalanda. [He] was the lone *tsetsam* in Nalanda. *Tsetsam* means one who is [committed] not to venture out of a room throughout one's life; one practiced in that room the whole life.

Q: Your...

#13C: He was my maternal uncle and was called Tsamkhang 'Retreat Center' Tsewa Lama.

We could see [him] and maternal used to say, "Receive the teachings carefully." [He] used to give treats like candies, which we used to like then. [He] gave to all the children, some which I used to take.

Q: Going to visit maternal uncle?

00:39:09

#13C: Maternal uncle gave treats when [we] visited. My maternal uncle was a meditator and this will come in my story later.

Q: I would like to ask something that many people might not understand but in [your] family, Palmo-*la* was saying how there was a practice of the dharma just permeated the whole life. Can we please have some understanding of how that was manifest or expressed? Was it at meals and walking around? Where was it so pervasive?

#13C: There would be activities like children playing. For instance, while playing I would bring a rock and pretend it was a lama who was teaching and a few rocks in rows that were the people. Even while playing [I] would be doing that. [I] do not know why [I] felt like that; making offerings to the lamas and doing things that were not taught. They were spiritual activities like if an insect was being killed, “Oh, do not kill. *Om mani padme hum* ‘Hail the jewel in the lotus.’” I would help [the insect] immediately, which we all do. Whatever [I] did, it was...

Q: The question is this. That is your actual experience...

#13C: That is my experience.

Q: What was the spiritual atmosphere like in general?

00:42:09

#13C: Is it about Tibetans in general?

Q: Not Tibetans in general but your family.

#13C: Our family was like that because the parents were pious. The dharma encompasses peace. The Buddha dharma encompasses peace though every religion does too. This peace is passed from the parents to the children and to their children due to which, naturally our family were gentle, of high standard and pure in thoughts.

Normally there are not any nomads that do not consume meat. Nomads must eat meat. However, our mother’s family did not consume meat. Although hailing from a high leadership family, [they] did not consume [meat].

00:45:40

At the age of 13 I undertook a *nyungnay* ‘intensive practice of silent meditation.’ Normally nomads do not own houses. I am not lying but we owned a house. We owned a house, which had a prayer room in which monks sent by Nalanda [Monastery] were staying. A *nyungnay* was organized. *Nyungnay* are organized in pairs of two and four. A *nyungnay* is one when we invoke Chenrezig ‘Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the patron saint of Tibet’ and eat only on alternate days. Meat is never consumed. The meal eaten on alternate days consisted only of lunch. So I undertook a *nyungnay* as a child aged 13.

Then at the age of 14 when we went to Lhasa, the Chinese...the Chinese had already come. One could see that [they] had arrived. “The Chinese are coming. Their number is increasing. A huge number has arrived,” one heard a lot of such talks in Lhasa. Then as we advanced on our journey...[To interpreter] Please translate about the *nyungnay* first.

00:47:06

Q: Was it at age 13?

#13C: Yes, at the age of 13.

Q: For four days, right?

#13C: Yes.

00:47:43

One is not allowed to talk, never at all. One must observe complete silence.

While observing silence, some of the children lost the vow of silence. There was a girl, a colleague of mine who uttered, “*Dhukar*.” Oh, she has not been able to practice well. This shows that the practice is difficult. She uttered the word and it was done. Later the *nyungnay* got over and then I was 14 years old when I left for Lhasa. My parents and us went to Lhasa and many Chinese were coming. During the journey, [we] saw a great number of Chinese marching. The Chinese carried packs and were on foot driving along laden mules. [They] were travelling with a few mules and huge horses that were laden.

00:49:01

It took a month between our village and Lhasa if one drove yaks. It took 30 days. One travelled only a short while in the mornings. Riding horses took only six days. Our journey lasted a month. The Chinese along the way were weak and [their] hands frozen and covered with cracks. They looked weak and perhaps came from a warm climate. [They] could not endure the cold and were nearly dead and shivering as [they] walked. We were together while making camp and remarked, “Poor things. They should be fed hot noodle soup.” We fed [the Chinese] hot noodle soup. My parents did that when we set up tent during the journey. We could not understand [their] language. All these [points to lips] were cracked and the Chinese looked weak. I was 14 years old.

00:51:39

Nobody knew where they came from. [We] wondered where [they] were going.

Q: That would have been 1957.

#13C: Yes, I was 14 years of age. [I] went back at age 15. Lhasa was teeming with Chinese but there was no problem. [The Chinese] gave a lot of *dhayen* ‘Chinese silver coin.’ *Dhayen* was paid for every little work done. Lhasa was a happy place with money being paid.

Q: Were the Chinese paying [the Tibetans]?

#13C: The Chinese were paying [the Tibetans].

Q: Was it '57?

#13C: It was very pleasant then. For instance in Lhasa, if this was the Potala Palace [moves right hand], those aristocrats that lived near the Potala [moves left hand] earlier, all of them sold their homes for *dhayen*, boxes of *dhayen*. The Chinese had occupied all around. [The aristocrats] did not realize the Chinese strategy and thought, “We have received a good price.” The money was in the form of *dhayen*, Chinese currency. It was said that many aristocrats sold [their homes] to the Chinese. I did not witness it because I was a child but heard it. I was 14 then and at the age of 15...at 14 [people in Lhasa] were living happily. There was no problem and then we returned to the north.

00:53:57

When we reached the north I was 15. It was the following year. There were no telephones between our village and Nalanda where my paternal uncle lived. A *bangchen* ‘messenger’ must be sent. A *bangchen* was a man who arrived bearing a letter. Such a *bangchen* was sent to us. My paternal uncle and others were in Lhasa, in Nalanda. “Now [the situation] is not good. It is very strange with the Chinese. Come here as soon as possible. There is nothing but for us to flee.”

Q: To come to Lhasa?

#13C: “Come to Lhasa.” A message arrived with a man. We could not leave because the nomads had to go to the north to gather salt. It was the time to gather salt and all the yaks had been driven there. There was no [transport]. Father brought along three helpers and along with me, the four or five of us left directly for Lhasa.

Q: And then?

00:56:33

#13C: Then when we left to leave for Lhasa, “Alas, Lhasa has been...Kham and Dhomay ‘Amdo’ are lost. The Chinese have captured [them]. Now [they] are nearing Lhasa. It is time to flee. Except for running away, there is no hope of fighting back.” ...[not discernible] were there. We were told to take flight and approached Zimo Rinpoche.

We received an empowerment that night. “We may not meet again as there is no knowing whether we will die or be killed in the attacks.” An empowerment was given and paternal uncle and others said, “When the yaks return from the north, you should take flight this way and we will come through that way and [go] to India.” My father had been to Kalimpong. It was said that [we] must go where His Holiness the Dalai Lama had gone.

Q: How did they get the message, by phone? Was this from relatives living in Lhasa?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No phone. It was a messenger.

Q: Who sent the message?

#13C: It was my paternal uncle who was a *chanzo* to my father.

Q: Who sent the message?

00:58:48

#13C: The *chanzo* paternal uncle sent it. *Chanzo* was in Lhasa and sent the messenger for that purpose. We would not know what was happening in Lhasa. We would not get to hear of it.

Q: This had to be right around 1959?

#13C: It was right in 1959. I was 15 years old then.

Q: And when [you] made that journey to Lhasa that would take a month by yak; was that journey made by yak the first time [you] went to Lhasa?

#13C: There was no problem then. The Chinese were yet to come. Actually those [travelling with us] were soldiers but we did not know.

Q: Could you please tell us what was the feeling in the family when they heard Lhasa had been attacked and that His Holiness the Dalai Lama had escaped? What was the feeling in the hearts of your parents and your family?

01:00:49

#13C: When we were leaving Lhasa—there were thousands of monks in the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Gaden—all were fleeing. We encountered them along the way. The valleys were red with the monks of Sera, Drepung and Gaden because [they] were dressed in red. [They] were fleeing. Some did not have footwear and some did not have waistbands. We were returning on horses like visitors. Then the Chinese bombarded Lhasa and Sera, Drepung and Gaden [Monasteries]. [They] fired cannons and guns. We encountered all escapees of Sera, Drepung and Gaden during the journey when we were returning to Jang.

Q: Right. Your parents...?

#13C: Parents were with me.

Q: What were your parents'...?

#13C: The feeling...one could obviously see the attack.

Q: What was the feeling when you saw it? Whether it was sad or good...?

01:02:02

#13C: Nothing like that was mentioned but that [we] must flee. Father said that [the Chinese] were Communists. If it was not a Communist country...countries of the world do such things to each other. However, this was Communism and particularly adverse to religion while the Tibetans were followers of the Buddha dharma. So it was totally the opposite.

Q: Right.

#13C: There was no way one could remain due to the totally contrary ways.

Q: And then?

01:04:39

#13C: And then we reached Jang. Nearing Jang where earlier there was nothing the Chinese had constructed an airport on the route that we were on. Just before the airport lay a mountain pass, on one side of which was the airport and the Chinese, while we were fleeing from Lhasa on the other side. As we looked from the pass, Chinese planes were landing at the airport. We were like travellers then. How can we get through [to Jang]?

I was a child and 15 years old then. I volunteered, "I shall go. None of you should. I will go down alone and talk to some people." I was resourceful. "Right, if the men are seen the Chinese might attack. I will bring the local people. I will go down and bring the local people." We believed we would only succeed if we were with the local people and pretended to be locals. I do not know why but I thought of that. I told my father and [he] agreed.

Then I went down and came across some families that had surrendered to the Chinese. I approached them and said, "Some traveler are left atop the mountain. Please could you go and help bring them down and pretend [they] are your people? We are returning to Jang." "Yes, of course," [they] said and sent a number of women and children. Then we came down with father and the others who were on the mountain. The Chinese believed we were locals and could not identify us. Once we were out from there, it was the region of Jang and there were no Chinese present. The Chinese had come but there were no soldiers.

01:06:53

Then we advanced and reached home. It was not right to save only our family. A leader must take care of the whole tribe. Take Oregon for instance, if something happened it is not proper for the Governor to flee and abandon the people. So we took a long while before everyone could leave. It was the 30th day of the 4th Tibetan lunar month that [we] left. The Chinese had arrived and all of us fled.

Q: The Chinese had arrived.

#13C: The Chinese had arrived but now it was Chinese soldiers.

Q: Chinese soldiers.

#13C: Yes, soldiers.

Q: Were those that had appeared earlier not soldiers?

#13C: The Chinese that were there earlier manned shops, paid *dhayen* and were like gentle people. There were no problems.

Q: Okay.

#13C: Now the soldiers arrived and it was said that Lhasa was lost.

Q: Okay.

#13C: After the loss of Lhasa there was nothing left as we had lost our capital.

Q: Right.

01:07:56

#13C: Then our late father took charge and the whole tribe fled.

Q: Was this journey when [you] were leaving the monastery of Nalanda?

#13C: That part of my story took place during the journey. The soldiers arrived all at once. All those travelers that appeared weak the previous year were in actuality soldiers. Then within a year or two, the army attacked. Lhasa was bombarded while we were there. Lhasa was bombarded but the shells did not destroy. His Holiness had already left.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: What did you say happened during the journey? [I] cannot recall clearly as [you] said a lot.

#13C: Near Dham is the Nyenchen Thanglha [Mountain range] in the direction of Namtso. There is an airport in the plains of the Nyenchen Thanglha. When we arrived at the mountain pass, on one side of it was Nalanda, Tibet, which is in the direction of Lhasa and the other side, was Jang, towards Namru. There was a mountain [in the center] on which we had arrived. Going down would mean encountering the Chinese.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: That's right but [you] said earlier that before [you] reached Jang you went down to meet a family...

#13C: I took the family to that mountain pass. The Chinese were there and...

[Interpreter to interviewee]: If [you] were already in India there would be no problems from the Chinese.

#13C: Not His Holiness.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: You said that side...

#13C: No, that is not India. It is not even remotely so.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: I see.

#13C: We were travelling between Lhasa and Jang. I was 17 when [I] came to India and Nepal.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: Okay.

01:10:05

#13C: At the age of 15 I took them down [the mountain pass] and then we arrived in Jang. [We] fled after reaching Jang. Everyone, all the population fled. Some fled leaving their tents standing and dogs chained, some...Anyway, everyone fled. When we neared Namtso, all the people of Namtso jumped into the lake. As soon as the Chinese attacked, they jumped into the water. There were many of them.

Q: They jumped into the lake and...?

#13C: They jumped into the lake in groups and died in the water.

Q: Committed suicide?

#13C: Committed suicide. Then we advanced. The Americans distributed arms at Namru. Then the Americans...

[Interpreter to interviewee]: It's getting lengthy.

#13C: And then we returned...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: We need to translate.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: [The interviewer] says that [I] have to translate. However, in order to translate the story isn't a gist but lengthy.

Interviewee: That is right, it is lengthy.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: When it becomes lengthy...if we can get to the core...

#13C: Now [we] will come to the core.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: When we get to the core, then I can...

01:11:39

#13C: The Americans donated all the guns. Then all the male members became soldiers while the women and girls journeyed along and then the Chinese attacked. One night there was a great fire [but] I am not able to recall correctly.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: Everything's being taped.

#13C: That is it. There was a lot of fire and [people] wondered what the fire was. [I] did a divination since I used to do at that time. From the divination it was deduced that they were the Chinese and we needed to flee in the night. But they would not.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: You need to translate.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes, Yes, I think I have asked her to essentialize it.

Q: Have some water, Palmo-*la*.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: I've not much to translate because it's more of mediocre details.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: I would like to hear that. See what you can remember.

01:13:18

#13C: Namtso.

Q: Is that Namtso where the suicides occurred?

#13C: Yes, suicides took place. [They] jumped in groups. When shells were fired in the sky and vehicles drove beneath, guns fired and horses galloped, [they] jumped into the lake.

Q: And then?

#13C: "Chinese soldiers have come," a voice shouted along the route. It was morning and the time was around...we had been traveling for around a month. On one side [moves left hand] was a huge river and on this side [moves right hand] a big mountain and a narrow path in between. While moving on this path someone shouted, "Chinese soldiers have come." Everyone got their guns ready and fought. It could have been around 10 or 11 o'clock. Oh my God, innumerable gunshots were fired. It was not *tat, tat* but *tatatatat...*

Q: Was it 10 o'clock at night?

#13C: No, 10 in the morning.

Q: From 10?

01:15:26

#13C: From 10. [They] fought and fought, oh my God. Dogs were killed, men were killed, horses were killed, and everything in sight got killed. It had been a month since we had fled from our village.

Q: Where were you fleeing to from the village?

#13C: Towards the snowy mountains of Thoe with the intention to flee to India.

Q: Was it Mount Kailash?

#13C: It was not Mount Kailash. At that time we were going towards...[not discernible].

Q: And then?

01:17:03

#13C: Then perhaps it was around 5 or 6 o'clock when dusk was falling that my father passed away. The Chinese killed [him].

Q: Six in the evening?

#13C: Yes, around 6 o'clock. And then the family was destroyed.

Q: Where are we located?

#13C: This place was near the Yungdup Tsangpo. It is a river.

Q: Was he with the family?

#13C: The family was with [him] then. [My] foot...[moves to show foot]

[Interviewer to interpreter]: That is where she was shot?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: How many times were you shot?

#13C: What?

Q: 6?

01:18:04

#13C: I was shot here [points to underside of right foot] and [the bullet] exited here [points near toes]. Then shot here [points around ankle of right foot] once, twice, three times and exited here [points to scar in front of right foot]. Then shot here [points to calf of right leg], here, here [points to calf of left leg], here [points to left arm] and here [laughs] and was entirely spotted!

Q: How many times?

#13C: Six. Is it six? Six times and one on each hand, so that is eight. It is six times on the legs. This is one here [counts], one shot exited here. See [showing right foot] one shot struck here and exited here. A small shot here...one, two, three, all three exited here. How many is it?

Q: Three here and [I] think it's six.

#13C: It is six on the legs.

Q: Is it six?

#13C: It is six on the legs.

Q: Six times like all in the legs?

01:19:12

#13C: It is in the legs and on the arms...

Q: Six on the legs and on the arms?

[Interpreter to interviewee]: One on each arm, right?

#13C: That is right. One was here [points to right arm] but it did not create a scar and the other pierced here [points to left arm].

Q: What about your mother?

#13C: Mother had passed away when [I] was small. There was mother's sister.

Q: She passed away?

#13C: [She had] passed away. There were my three brothers and a sister. The sister had been given away in marriage and was also there. So there were the five children and the parents. [We] were together and then some were killed and the others destroyed and there was none left. There was no family left.

Q: Did the Chinese kill your real mother?

01:20:23

#13C: No, [she] passed away.

Q: Was there someone who was like a mother?

#13C: Yes, there was a mother who was with [us].

Q: Was she killed?

#13C: She passed away.

Q: Did the Chinese kill her?

#13C: It can be said that the Chinese killed [her].

Q: Was the family on horseback or were they walking and were they with other people?

#13C: On horseback, initially we were all on horseback. We were all on horseback and the Chinese soldiers stopped us like this [moves right hand in front]. There is the river here [points to left] and the mountain here [points to right] and [the Chinese] arrived here [indicates front]. We had to push through the soldiers on horseback.

Q: When [you] did that?

#13C: When [we] rushed through horseback, they fired from here and here. [We] fled right through gunfire.

Q: On horseback?

#13C: On horseback.

Q: How did you know your father was killed?

01:22:13

#13C: We were together with father. Father was fighting [makes sign of shooting].

Q: He was shooting.

#13C: Yeah.

Q: Did father have a gun?

#13C: I said earlier that the Americans provided guns.

The name [of the gun] was English-made short barrel [rifle]. They were given to us...

Q: From the sky?

#13C: Yeah. The U.S. gave a huge number.

Q: What do you think of that?

#13C: It was good on their part. [They] helped out of kindness, as that was the only thing to do. At that point of time this [makes sign of shooting] was the only thing to do because surrendering would mean hunger, starvation and death in prison. Using a gun was better than that and the American help was good.

Q: When you were shot, were you afraid you might die? Were you able to walk? Tell us what happened to you?

01:24:13

#13C: No, no, there was none [no fear] at all. At the initial stage when father was fighting I was afraid of what would happen to him. But then the continuous firing caused no fear. The sound of gunfire didn't go *tat, tat* but *tatatatat...* like rainfall. There was no feeling whatsoever. As [I] looked on, first the horses were killed. First [the Chinese] killed the horses. After killing the horses, the people were harmed. And then the dogs and then every person present.

[End of DVD Part 1]

[Start of DVD Part 2]

Q: Palmo-*la*, you've told us how your father was killed, many people were shot at and you yourself was shot at. What happened to you next after you were wounded so many times?

00:00:51

#13C: Just after being shot, due to the loss of a huge amount of blood one would lose consciousness. Normally the lamas would teach that everything is impermanent and I suddenly realized that was the truth.

Q: And then what happened next?

#13C: After that...at the age of 16 [I] could not walk and the Chinese held me. The Chinese were very good and treated the wounds and gave food. [They] treated the wounds and were very good. However, I did not feel any happiness in my heart. [I] wished to escape and never felt, "They are treating me well, I should remain here."

Q: Was this camp run by whom?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Chinese Government.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: The Chinese Government was running the camp and it seemed odd that they were trying to fix her and heal her after they had wounded her.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes and killed her...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: And killed her family. And so she had the idea of "I think I should flee."

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes, "I should flee." It just didn't make sense. Logically it didn't make sense. What's the point?

Q: So what did you do?

00:04:39

#13C: Then [I] fled when the legs healed a bit. I was 16 years old and the legs healed enough for [me] to use a cane.

Q: A year...?

#13C: It was a year before the legs healed.

Q: Before we hear about that [escape] can we please have some understanding about what were the conditions in the camp? Where was the camp? About how many people were there and how were you treated in the camp?

#13C: There were several Tibetans. I was with a wife of a relative of mine. We were staying together. They took us back to the village. Back to the village and the launch of Reformation...

Q: What was it like?

#13C: We arrived back in the village and found that some of the relatives had survived. We sort of surrendered to the Chinese. By the age of 16 [my] legs were better and we fled again]. There were a few cousins and we fled together.

Q: What were the conditions like?

00:06:46

#13C: The situation had changed, changed completely. It was not what it was normally.

Q: Did [the Chinese] cause suffering?

#13C: Suffering in the sense, [the Chinese] had confiscated and divided one's possessions. The influential people had been taken to prison in China. The servants were made to subject the influential people to *thamzing* 'struggle sessions' and monasteries were demolished. [The situation] was completely different, completely changed. There was the feeling of suffering for everyone while others felt okay after surrendering. I could not witness everything, as I was a child.

Q: Was this camp like being just built at that time or had it been there?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Something along the line where it was not that they had particularly designed a building or premises. It was not in that nature. Those individuals who they saw as a potential threat were taken to a restricted area but in her case and others who are just sort of monitored. So there were guards and they were kept in the tent and they were looked upon, right? So it was like an in-house...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Internment.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Internment, right? In-house...?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: House arrest.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Something along that line.

Q: Were you allowed to practice any spiritual practices during that time?

00:11:00

#13C: Of course not. I was sick at that time. [I] do not know about the others, but our belongings and animals that fell into their [the Chinese] hands during the attack were initially returned [to us] and then divided and distributed among the people. Reformation

was carried out. They said that the three *ngadak* ‘persons holding leadership positions:’ the leaders, the wealthy and the lamas would be punished. We were categorized among them to suffer punishment. Punishments were meted out but it is too much to recount everything. Every person [you] interview will relate the same story, as that was common.

During the first escape two of my siblings had survived the Chinese assault and I met [them]. When my legs became better, the three of us and a few other people—altogether we were 12—fled once again. Again the Chinese attacked [us] along the way. [They] fired during the nighttime.

Q: Were [you] captured during the attack?

#13C: The soldiers attacked during the journey. It was not just us; there were many people from Kham who had taken flight.

Q: What happened?

00:13:51

#13C: Then everyone got scattered. There were informers watching out for Chinese who conveyed that there was none that night. The message was, “There are no Chinese. There are no soldiers. It is safe to escape.” There were thousands of people fleeing together. I did a divination, which prophesied, “The Chinese are going to come tonight.”

Q: What happened after the attack?

#13C: It was at that time. I did the divination then.

Q: After the attack...

#13C: We had fled after the attack and were captured, remained a year at home and fled [again] after a year.

Q: Right.

#13C: The attack took place at night during the escape journey. My divination predicted that. Religion is strange. I told my siblings and cousins, “It is better for us to flee for the Chinese are bound to come tonight.”

Q: On the second escape?

00:14:57

#13C: On the second escape.

Q: There was a first escape attempt, then an attack and then?

#13C: This was during the second escape. I was 16 years old then, right?

Q: Right.

#13C: [I] was there with a broken leg at 15. So I told [them] that but everyone stayed put. And then the Chinese attacked in the night. There were red lights flashing and then the attack. It was dark and nothing could be known about how many were killed. I was the only survivor.

Q: How was the divination done?

#13C: I told the travellers, “Tonight the Chinese are going to come.”

Q: Right, right.

00:15:48

#13C: I told them, “Let’s run away.”

Q: Did they run away?

#13C: No. “It might be okay,” they hoped. My prediction was correct.

Q: And then?

#13C: Then [we] were attacked at night.

Q: And then?

#13C: I was the only survivor. The family was no more.

Q: And then?

#13C: The next day I was captured because I could not run due to my legs. [Laughs]

Around 30 people that were sick like me or old and weak had been captured.

They [the Chinese] took all the captured to a place where there was a nice lake and a beautiful mountain. We were provided some *tsampa* ‘flour made from roasted barley’ and held there. They said that [we] could not leave.

00:19:32

The *tsampa* was made from wood. It was not authentic *tsampa*.

Q: And then?

#13C: Then I thought I should run away. My relative’s wife who also had a broken leg was there. [She] said she could not walk. [I] told her I was going to flee. [She] said, “It is better for you to flee.” “I am going to escape. I will never stay here under the Chinese because [they] are the real enemies of the dharma, real Communists. I know it. We do not have

any...[not discernible]. I am not going to remain but flee.” There was an old lady. I was 16 years old then. I was 16 and the old lady was in the 40’s.

Q: Was the old lady your relative’s...?

#13C: Not that one. She was a relative’s paternal aunt. The old lady’s husband had been killed by the Chinese. She did not have children and was alone. She wanted to escape and so we fled together. Then we fled...

Q: In the evening?

#13C: [We] fled one night very silently. Chinese soldiers carrying lanterns were on rounds in the camp. With a prayer and the thought of come what may, we fled silently and succeeded.

Q: Was it one or two people [on flight]?

00:21:39

#13C: Two people.

Q: How far was it [to the Chinese guards]? Feet?

#13C: I do not know how many feet away. There were two men walking here and there.

Q: And then?

#13C: Then we fled and walked the whole night and reached a mountain where we hid the entire day.

Q: And then [you] reached behind a mountain.

#13C: [We] stayed behind the mountain the entire day. [We] had be seen during the day, so [we] hid there a day or two. It was snowing on the mountains and since there was no water, we ate the snow.

Q: Was there snow on the mountain?

00:24:38

#13C: There was snow.

Q: How deep?

#13C: It was not deep. It was not that deep but there was snow.

Q: How deep was it if [you] put [your] feet in?

#13C: Maybe this high. [Gestures off camera. Interpreter interprets as “about a foot.”] It was shallow, which we crossed and then there were no Chinese and we had escaped].

Q: And then?

#13C: And then we had escaped. We did not have anything to eat.

I did a divination to predict a good place to go. I continued to do [divinations] as [we] proceeded.

Then we walked and walked and one night the prediction of the divination was very good. [However, we] fell inside a water body. When a thin layer of ice is formed on water and you stepped on it—it was dark—you went *splash* into the water. The water came up to here [indicates below knee level]. We struggled out. A thin layer of ice had formed in the wintertime and then *splash* you fell into the water. [We] could not go any further. My prediction was a good one.

Q: Was it night or morning time?

00:26:44

#13C: It was in the dead of night. We were walking always at night. [We] came across dry and beautiful places after consulting the divination. But that night it was different. We were in water.

Q: [You] were traveling only at night?

#13C: [We] walked always at night and hid during the day.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: They walked into a lake!

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Walked into a lake, icy lake.

Q: And then?

#13C: Then [we] got out. [I] said, “The prediction has been very good, so let’s stay here.” Though I was younger in age I was doing everything. She always told me to decide. There was a little dry place on which we slept that night.

Q: On the banks of the water?

#13C: On the banks of the water. It was close to where the water was. [We] got out onto dry ground and slept there.

Q: It must have been very ice cold?

00:29:00

#13C: Ice had formed on [us]. Everything was ice. We both lay close to each other for warmth and [the ice] melted. When we lay against each other a little warmth crept in. Otherwise, [we] were covered in ice from falling into the water.

When dawn began, [we] could hear animal sounds of yaks and sheep. [We] looked, “Ah, there is a tent there. There is a family!” We were already noticed and so thought, “Let’s approach them.” [We] went and told a girl, “We are fleeing.”

Q: And then?

#13C: A girl arrived and I told her, “We have done nothing bad to the Chinese. Yet they did like this to us. So, we are fleeing.” The divination prediction was good. The girl shed tears and said, “Come, come to my home. You are almost frozen.” There was ice [on us]. [She] immediately took [us] in saying, “Father and older brother are not here. The Chinese have taken [them] to a meeting.” They had surrendered to the Chinese.

Q: Were you served food?

#13C: Oh, the family treated [us] so well. The whole night [she] made *tsampa* because we had nothing to eat. We needed boots to walk. [She] helped with everything that was needed for the journey. Roasting wheat was difficult and [she] did it the whole night. I still pray for her.

00:32:17

Besides that [she] provided utensils. Earlier we didn’t have anything, nothing at all; [we were] just drinking water and eating a little *tsampa* to avoid starvation. [She] provided utensils, cups, containers to eat and drink from, and packs to carry things.

In addition, 8-9 sheep to...[I] think it was 10 sheep to carry loads.

It took some time in the night to get these ready and then she said she would guide [us]. [She] said, “You must cross that mountain pass. Once over that pass, it is totally barren. There are no inhabitants. Would these supplies be enough for you?” There was a lot; *tsampa*, butter and cheese loaded on 10 sheep. We did not have to carry anything. [I] realized that was the prediction of my divination that led to the water. Otherwise, we would not have met her in the night.

I developed faith in the Gods that whatever I did or did not do, I was not left alone and felt satisfaction.

Q: I wanted to say that you came from a family that was very well off and I wondered if the kind of hardship you were experiencing was most unusual because you were not working and minding yak and sheep when you were a little girl. So this was quite a contrast. Was it not, Palmo-la?

00:35:01

#13C: [I] never felt like that. The reason I did not was that I was determined to escape to India as a refugee. I must succeed and perform prayers for the parents. One must offer prayers when parents pass away and there was no opportunity to perform prayers here. [I] wanted to perform prayers, study and practice the dharma. I never felt the hardship or anything because of the determination to succeed in the escape.

I had one thought and I am one who pursues determinedly until I succeed in it.

Q: So what happens next?

#13C: [We] journey directly and it took a year to reach Mount Kailash. [Makes sign of walking with fingers]

Interviewer to interpreter]: So all this was happening near Mount Kailash or the mountain that she was climbing was on the way to Mount Kailash?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: On the way to Mount Kailash. She wouldn't know that she was going towards Mount Kailash.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: She didn't know that?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: She didn't know that, but somehow her journey through divination that she was doing led her.

Interviewer to interpreter]: So she got to Mount Kailash?

00:37:33

#13C: When [we] reached Mount Kailash, the lady [companion] said, "I cannot go further. The snowy mountain is so cold. [I] cannot practice the dharma, too." She sort of wished to go back after [we] reached Mount Kailash. I told her to do whatever she wished. She met a few relatives and then returned. Returned in the sense she went to another place. [She] said, "I cannot stay at Mount Kailash." Then I was alone.

I was 17 years old. You know Yeshe Wangmo; I have a picture here. She is a cousin of my relative and we met during the escape journey. Both of us stayed at Mount Kailash.

Q: Which relative did you meet?

#13C: Yeshe Wangmo [who lives] in Ladakh [India] whose picture is here. She is in Ladakh.

Q: Who is she?

#13C: She is my relative.

Q: How is she related?

#13C: Our mothers...

Q: [You] met the relative at Mount Kailash?

#13C: Yes, met at Mount Kailash. When [we] met at Mount Kailash...now we were at Mount Kailash.

Q: Did it take a year?

#13C: The journey took a year. The lady [companion] met some of her relatives and said, "I cannot stay at Mount Kailash." [I] said, "I will practice and dedicate [my] whole life here." The lady left with relatives saying [she] could not stay at Mount Kailash. My distant cousin stayed back and we made full-length prostrations [around] Mount Kailash. The full-length prostrations [around] Mount Kailash took 17 days. When [we] reached the Dolma pass, the cold was so intense that [we] were shivering—many have frozen and we felt so too. She was crying, "We are feeling so cold." Poor thing, she was crying.

Q: How long did it take?

00:43:34

#13C: It took 17 days, 17 days [continuing to prostrate] until late at night...I wonder what the time was?

Q: Describe what that is for people who may not know that kind of prostrations?

#13C: I have a picture of Mount Kailash at home. If someone could get it from there, [I] can show how it is done.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: So basically it's the full length, yeah, the entire length of one's body, stretching. So basically the pilgrim or the practitioner bends down and kneels and prostrates full length, makes a mark with his finger, you see wherever that may be and rises to his knees, yeah, if you do the half length but if you do the full length, then you get up, yeah, and you pray, whatever it is. Here in this case for all sentient beings. And then you crawl forward on hands and knees to the mark made by your fingers again before...[not discernible]. That makes sense?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Yes, yes, of course.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: And then you repeat it, you see, until you complete the one and then, of course, like I said it's uneven terrain, you know and ice and very, very harsh climate, yeah?

Q: How long did it take?

#13C: Seventeen days. [We] prostrated until half the night and the entire day.

Q: Until what time at night?

#13C: [We] prostrated until 10, 11 or 12 at night.

Q: And then?

00:45:46

#13C: [We] carried the provisions [indicates carrying on back], left them at a distance, came back and continued prostrating.

Q: And then?

#13C: Then I met the lama. I felt agonized by the thought that the Chinese had caused us suffering and killed without any reason yet [I] continued to practice. Then I saw masters like Zogchen Pema Chonphel and Zogchen Pema Rinzin and many others.

They said...The rinpoche ‘respected lama’ said, “If you feel like this, it is worthless continuing your practice. You must understand that there is only love and compassion and no difference between enemy and friend in the dharma.” [I] told Rinpoche, “I pledge to continue to practice until my death.”

00:50:32

Then [*rinpoche*] said, “Your entire life...” [I] said, “I pledge to practice my whole life and [surrender] the vicious cycle of existence.” I lived in a cave, eating *tsampa* and drinking water and sleeping there too while at Mount Kailash. “Rinpoche, I pledge to spend my whole life in this way practicing the dharma, which will benefit the many that died and have been killed,” [I] said.

Q: And then?

#13C: Then *rinpoche* asked, “How do you perceive the Chinese?”

Q: Where did this teacher come from and who was he?

#13C: [He] was from Kham. [He] had come from Kham and lived only for a short while at Mount Kailash and fled.

Q: What’s a short while?

#13C: [He] reached Mount Kailash along the way like we did and then fled. One was not allowed to remain there later.

Q: And where did you meet him?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Met him in Mount Kailash.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Actually there?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: Was he circumambulating or living...?

#13C: [Speaks before translation] The lama arrived there. The lama reached there. The lama reached there during [his] escape journey.

[I] met [the lama] and when he asked I replied, “I perceive the Chinese as enemies.” That is the truth. “[I] consider [the Chinese] as enemies; [I] believe [they] are the enemies.” “You are practicing to attain enlightenment in this life but if you perceive the Chinese as enemies, you will never attain it. This will never conform with the Buddha dharma.”

Q: And then?

00:54:53

#13C: “Presently you are doing a great deal.”

Q: And then?

#13C: “It is necessary to have love and compassion.”

“If you practice this, the enemy will not be the enemy but like your relatives, siblings and parents. If you can love [the Chinese] without any degree of difference, if you can do that, learn to feel no difference. You must learn this if you wish to attain enlightenment.”

I had to put in tremendous effort to learn. I exercised again and again, really hard. [I] exercised again and again even while eating and finally with the lama’s blessing and doing pilgrimage and prostrations around the mountain, meditating and putting in every effort that I could, concentrating single-mindedly on this, [I] could not do it for almost two years. It improved a bit, then a little more but the thought kept returning. I kept practicing while at Mount Kailash.

Q: And then?

00:59:05

#13C: At that time I was doing the preliminary practice of 100,000...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Of course, there were many other practices along with that, you know the thing called, which I was sharing with you earlier, the preliminary practice where you do 100,000 of each exercises, right? The physical prostrations, you have the recitation of the mantras 16 million times and so on. There are many, many other exercises but the central theme of that was, you know, develop compassion, you see.

#13C: After that [I] did the full body length prostrations three times [around] Mount Kailash.

Q: Was she alone doing that or with other people?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Alone.

Q: It seems like your ability to receive the teachings of this master was helped by your childhood where you felt an attraction to the dharma and had parents that supported it that made you open to accept this very demanding teaching of this teacher from Kham.

#13C: [Raises thumb of left hand] That is right. That is true. This is very important. It is very important for the parents to teach the dharma at home.

Q: And the name of this teacher and what happened to him? Do you have any idea?

01:01:29

#13C: [The lama] went to India. He must have been quite old because I was 15, 16,17 then and [he] was 50-60.

I had two teachers Zogchen Pema Chopel and Pema Rinzin. I continued to practice. For around 2-3 years I performed the *chod* ‘spiritual practice of “cutting through the ego”’ hoping that this would help. *Chod*...[not discernible].

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Then after that she did another then years of this particular practice called *chod*, which is designed to uproot the tendency to grasp at the false self, ...[not discernible], the self that doesn’t exist, intrinsically, right? Which is eradicated by the wisdom insight that dawns from understanding the nature of the mind and nature reality, which is empty of having an existence. So this particular practice is a very powerful method or means to do and it employs using many instruments like human thighbones as a trumpet and skulls and few others as a way to see the emptiness of the “I”, right? Because you say where is “I”? If it is in the bone, if it is in the body, where is “I”? You can’t locate them, right?

Then you finally come to an understanding that actually “I” doesn’t exist. It’s simply a misperception. So you are grasping at something that doesn’t exist, right? This practice is designed to do that and so you actually go to... [not discernible] that confronts you, you know, that kind of a fearful situation so that you really look for the “I” right? Because you want to protect yourself, you want to secure yourself from the danger. So then this practice takes you to places like cemetery, right? And not like here in the West, very beautiful, clean, flowery, you see? Better than the houses of the Indians, you know the refugees, right? [Laughs]. So in her case the Tibetan cemeteries where you have the bones and you have the left overs and some of them...

#13C: Hairs.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Hairs and you know. So this practice involves visiting the cemeteries, especially at night times, just to make sure. [Laughs] Then she did that for two years.

Q: Also at Mount Kailash.

#13C: [I] lived at Mount Kailash for many years, practicing dharma and there was no place to sleep except in the caves.

[To interpreter]: I have the picture at home. If it could be shown...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Could we look later? Tell her we'll be happy to...

#13C: [Nods]

Q: Palmo-*la*, after spending seven years on Mount Kailash in caves, can you help us understand what kind of understandings did you achieve from that experience?

01:06:01

#13C: If one practices diligently, it certainly is possible to achieve enlightenment and help sentient beings.

Q: How would you advise people to train their minds who live everyday lives?

#13C: I will speak from my experience. Whether it is beneficial for the world or not, anybody can be the judge. According to my experience every one of us, any sentient being, do not desire any kind of suffering, whoever you look upon.

Q: And then?

#13C: When nobody wants it, I have come to understand the cause, why some have less suffering and why [some have] more happiness. I have gained some experience in that.

Q: Where the suffering...

#13C: ...is less. Why has suffering ensued and why happiness ensues? I have analyzed why it is happened and understood it.

Q: And then?

01:09:10

#13C: Therefore, what one has to do is...The reason for everyone to attain happiness is... It is not worthwhile for me to speak in great detail about the dharma and the practice because one will not understand.

Therefore, what I understand is of great benefit is the importance of peace. Through practicing peace one realizes that the problems I suffer are also felt by the other person. That is the way to exercise peace according to my practice. Whatever difficulties I face like illness and pain, [I realize that] the happiness I feel is likewise felt by the other, the suffering I undergo is likewise suffered by the other. Whatever I feel, the other has the same feeling.

If one understands that perfectly, the feeling of wanting to harm another person, of being spiteful and other things will disappear automatically. “Alas, I do not like it when this is happening to me. He will not like it as well. One should not do it. One should not do it.”

Q: The root of suffering...

#13C: ...is in your heart. The root of the suffering springs from your heart. That root of suffering springs from your heart. The root of suffering that you have is shared by everybody else. The reason why it comes about is the ego “I”. One cannot remove the “I” immediately. It is difficult. However, one can develop it to be on par in your mind, like the effort to bring happiness to others, to be of help to others. And in the case of nations, [the effort] to bring progress for the country, to be of help to the country, and likewise, bringing about friendly relations between countries. If one country is at peace, its neighbor will be at peace.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: So [I] have to say that the essence is compassion and kindness.

01:14:13

#13C: Right. That is the essence. If one practices that, first you will enjoy physical and mental happiness. Then the family members, the children and spouse will be happy as well. And then the neighbors will be happy. And then being loyal and thoughtful to the country. If one is loyal to one’s country and if there is happiness in your country, you will automatically be happy.

One must be on friendly terms with neighboring countries. This is my opinion. Countries that share a border must be cordial. If the two countries treat each other with compassion and love, they will enjoy great happiness. When the two countries are happy, the population finds happiness.

01:16:18

Should that be exercised, you would enjoy great happiness. There would be great peace. There is an immense measure of peace in my heart because whoever it may be [I] pray, “May good things happen [to him/her].” [I] treat everyone with love. When people appreciate it, there is joy all around. That is the result of practicing the dharma. However, you may not be able to practice love and compassion as the dharma teaches all at once but [you] must know what is peace.

Q: And then?

#13C: Therefore, in my opinion and if I were to relate keeping in view my practice, these days my activities involve bringing benefit and happiness to other people. Of course, I do my dharma practice that has brought me positive results. However, since [I] live in constant touch with human beings, these days I strive to bring happiness and peace to the people, and try to elevate their suffering and multiply their joy and do whatever I can to help them. That is my work.

So that is what I teach people in ordinary words: to love your parents and relatives. To speak in terms of the dharma teachings, you must undergo practice for years and years, which is difficult. So for the easiest way in ordinary terms to find happiness, there is not anything better than this. It would be good to accomplish this.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: And that you have your prayers, right?

#13C: And then my prayers, the prayers, “May it help everyone.” And that is what I do too. It has been eight years since the World Peace event started in the United States of America.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: So that’s what I have been doing since coming to the West. This came out, the vision and the principle and value for His Holiness, which is to promote the idea of compassion, non-violence and ultimately world peace. So she’s been carrying out this annual event where we meet, you know, this is...

#13C: ...for peace in the world.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: ...seven days, one week long for world peace and not only that, now recently coming of His Holiness’ visit, you know was also in support for what she has started, you know, which is to establish a Peace Center here in our community and so it’s towards that.

Q: Wonderful!

#13C: The World Peace event is eight years since we started in our nation, the United States of America. We hold this event every year. The World Peace prayer was...[not discernible]. Then we formed it in Switzerland. It has been four years since it was formed in Switzerland. I do not have money, none at all. [I] have none. However, it could be started with help from people.

Q: I think we need to thank you for this wonderful interview and we will share your wisdom with the world and we will tell the world about your Peace Center. Thank you so much.

#13C: That is very good. Everyone, whether Buddhists or not, visits the Peace Center. Everyone comes here. [I] will try to bring about more progress based on that [secular nature].

END OF INTERVIEW