

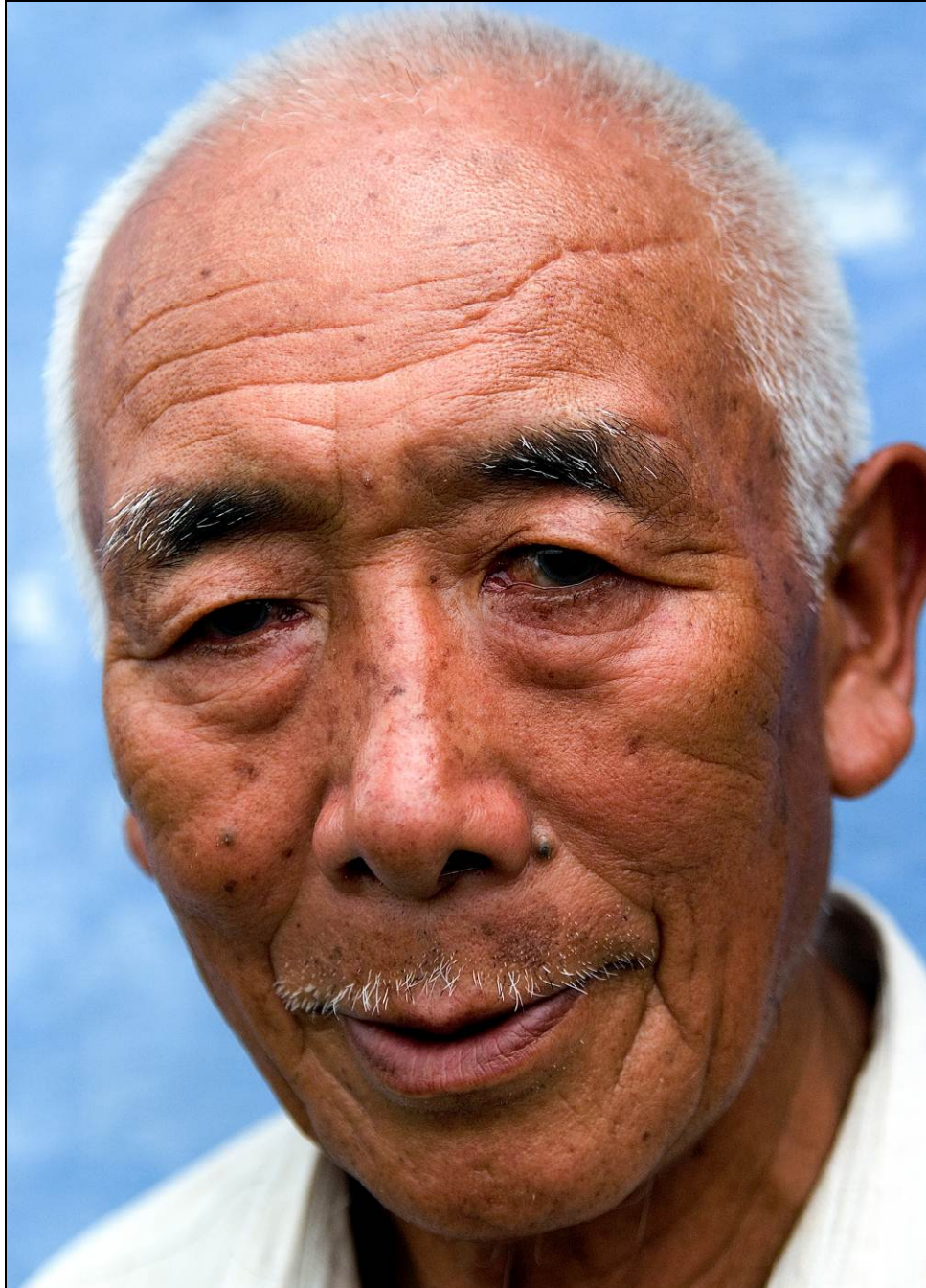
Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #13 – Ngawang Lobsang
July 2, 2007

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TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #13
2. Interviewee: Ngawang Lobsang
3. Age: 77
4. Date of Birth: 1930
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Gatho
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: July 2, 2007
10. Place of Interview: Interviewee's residence, Old Camp No. 1, Bylakuppe, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 6 hr 20 min
12. Interviewer: Martin Newman
13. Interpreter: Lhakpa Tsering
14. Videographer: Tsewang Dorjee
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Ngawang Lobsang led a multi-faceted career—as a monk, a trader and, later, as a guerrilla fighter. He joined a monastery at age 7 or 8 and as a young adult left the monastery seeking revenge for his father's death. Then he became trader, transporting food, cooking utensils and clothing on yaks, which he traded for butter and cheese with nomads in Bhutan.

Ngawang Lobsang became a member of the *Chushi Gangdrug* Resistance Force around age 20. In spite of their limited man power and weapons, the *Chushi Gangdrug* fought the Chinese successfully over 20 times. Ngawang Lobsang provides detailed accounts of some of these encounters and pays tribute to *Chushi Gangdrug*'s leader, Andrug Gonpo Tashi. He believes he and his companions escaped death as a result of the protective amulets they wore and their modus operandi of fighting during the day and changing camp locations at night.

After fleeing to India, Ngawang Lobsang soon traveled to Mustang in Nepal, where other soldiers had regrouped to form a fighting unit. After training for two or three years, lack of food and weapons eventually forced many guerrillas to return to India. Before coming to Bylakuppe, India, where he started a family, Ngawang Lobsang served in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

Topics Discussed:

Monastic life, trade, invasion by Chinese army, Dalai Lama, thamzing, Chushi Gangdrug guerrillas, CIA training, escape experiences, life as a refugee in India.

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Interviewee: Ngawang Lobsang

Age: 77, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Martin Newman

Interview Date: July 2, 2007

Question: Hello.

Interviewee #13: *Tashi Delek* ‘Greetings.’

Q: Please tell us your name.

#13: Ngawang Lobsang.

Q: Do you give your permission for the Tibet Oral History Project to use this interview?

#13: Yes, that is fine.

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

#13: Okay.

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama requested that we record your experiences so that we can share your memories with Tibetans for generations to come.

#13: Okay.

Q: And also inform the world community and the next generation of Chinese about the true history, culture and beliefs of the Tibetan people.

#13: Okay, and thank you.

Q: During the interview, if you wish to take a break or stop the interview at anytime, please let us know.

#13: Okay.

Q: If you do not wish to answer a question or discuss some issue, please tell us.

#13: Okay.

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

#13: There would be no problems.

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

#13: Okay.

Q: To begin, I'd love to learn something about your life before the Chinese invasion and your childhood. Can you tell me where you were born?

#13: I was born in the region of Markham.

Q: Markham is in Kham?

#13: It is in Kham. Markham is the name of my region. The name of my region is Markham.

Q: What was the name of the town you were born?

#13: The place I was born is Gatho in Markham. That was in the town of Markham, Gatho.

Q: Was that a small or a large town?

#13: There might have been about 500 families those days.

Q: What did your parents do for a living?

#13: My father was a worker in the administration of our region. He was one of the members of the district administration. The person who does that kind of work was called a *khangyo*. My father worked in the District Administration.

Q: What did he do?

#13: He had the responsibility of arresting culprits who were accused in quarrels, robberies and murders among the people who fell under the administration of the district.

Q: What about your mother?

#13: My mother died when I was a child.

Q: How old were you?

#13: It was when I could just about think of her. I was small.

Q: How old were you, about two or three?

#13: Perhaps I was two or three when she passed away.

Q: Did you go to school or what did you do as a child?

#13: There were no schools in the region. We lived that way. Unless you became a monk, there was no one who taught.

Q: Did you go to the monastery or did you help your parents? What did you do?

#13: When I became a little older, I lived in the monastery.

Q: As a monk?

#13: Yes, as a monk.

Q: At what age?

#13: I might have been seven when I became a monk. Perhaps I was 7 or 8 when I became a monk.

Q: What kind of house did you live in?

#13: The monastery had dormitories and I used to live there.

Q: Before the monastery, did you live in your family home?

#13: I had an uncle in the monastery and I stayed with him.

Q: Before you left for the monastery, what was the house you lived in—a cement house or a tent?

#13: It was a cement house.

Q: What did it look like?

#13: In Tibet we had to pound the walls. It was like cement. It was a house not a tent.

Q: Was it a large house or a small house?

#13: The house had about four rooms.

Q: And you had brothers and sisters?

#13: I had a brother and a sister.

Q: Younger to you?

#13: They were younger than me.

Q: Were you happy when you were sent to the monastery? Is that something you wanted to do?

#13: I had a wish to join the monastery.

Q: Were you happy?

#13: I was extremely happy.

Q: What was your daily life like in the monastery?

#13: In the monastery we had to get up at around five in the morning to attend prayer assembly.

Q: Then?

#13: During the day we had to study the scriptures.

Q: Then?

#13: Later we had to take a test. We had to take a test of what we had memorized.

Q: Did you enjoy doing this?

#13: We had to take a recitation test once a month. You would be given a prize if you passed the test. If you failed, you would be beaten.

Q: They beat you?

#13: If you didn't know, they would beat you a little.

Q: With their hands or how did they beat you?

#13: They would strike you on the head with the rosary. They hit with the rosary or slapped you on the cheek. They didn't hit us more than that.

Q: Were you a good student? Did you get slapped a lot?

#13: I received a slap or two when I couldn't pass the recitation test.

Q: Can you remember those scriptures today?

#13: Yes, I still remember. I do not forget it. I still know it now.

Q: What has learning those scriptures meant for you, for your life? How has it been of service to you?

#13: I used to think that if I can't pass the recitation test, I would be beaten. I was a small child then.

Q: But today looking back what do you think those scriptures mean to you now?

#13: I think it was extremely good. These days I am able to say my prayers as I know them. When the Lamas teach, it is easier for me to follow the scriptures. I know the prayers and I am very grateful for what I have learnt earlier.

Q: Did you play games in the monastery with the other monks?

#13: With the other monks?

Q: Did you play?

#13: Yes, we used to play, though we were not allowed to. During holidays we used to stroll up on the hills. There were beautiful hills—hills with meadows and forests. We used to stroll watching the animals and different kinds of birds. Then at around three in the afternoon we had to be back in the monastery for our studies. We went to the hills.

Q: What wild animals did you see?

#13: We could find things to eat in the hills. There was a type of animal called Blue Sheep. They were in large numbers there. They moved in groups of 60 to 70.

Q: Any other?

#13: Then there were the lynx and leopards. We would see these animals in the forests. There was a bird called *cha-ka* 'white bird,' which laid eggs in the forest. We would go in search of its eggs.

Q: That sounds like it was a lot of fun.

#13: The leaves of the trees would fall on the ground. Beneath the huge pine trees where rain did not fall, the white birds made their nests and laid eggs. The bird would cover all the eggs except one with leaves. Then when it flew away in search of food, one egg was exposed. If you looked under that egg, there would be 15 or 16 eggs. We would take these.

Q: And what did you do with the eggs?

#13: We used to eat the eggs. [Laughs]

Q: Right there or did you bring them home or bring them to the monastery?

#13: We smuggled them into the monastery, boiled and ate them. We also took utensils to the forest, made a fire and ate them there. We would take an empty utensil and there was plenty of wood in the forest. We would make a fire and eat the eggs and return.

Q: [Laughs] Very good. You boiled the eggs, you eat them in the forest and then you returned to the monastery. They didn't serve eggs in the monastery, I guess.

#13: We would have to bring boiled eggs from our home.

Q: You had to bring from your home?

#13: From home, or our relatives would bring eggs for us. We would eat eggs and bread.

Q: You ate eggs and bread together?

#13: We ate eggs and bread, also *pa* 'dough made from roasted barley flour' and eggs.

Q: How many monks were in your monastery?

#13: There were a little over one hundred monks—around 130 or 140.

Q: Was your lama a person that you admired?

#13: The lama of our monastery was Wooser Lama. At present he lives in Sera Monastery. He was held in great esteem by us. The whole region held him in great esteem.

Q: He is in Sera, you mean Sera here in Bylakuppe?

#13: He is at Sera here.

Q: How many years did you spent in that monastery?

#13: I must have stayed about five years as a monk. After five years I did not remain a monk because my father and another person fell into dispute. My father had left for the place called Ba. At that time I was in the monastery. I couldn't go with my father.

Q: What kind of problems was your father having with people?

#13: The dispute was that my father was a worker at the district administration and the other person claimed that he was earlier the worker there.

Q: On account of work?

#13: Yes, on account of work. The opponent was a rich man. So he paid a lot of money to the administrator and my father lost the case.

Q: I understand. So he had to move?

#13: What?

Q: So your father had to go to another place?

#13: He went to another place with the intention of revenge. But while I was there, he didn't do anything. My father went to the place called Ba and lived there. I was living in Markham in the monastery.

Q: Where did you go after five years in the monastery?

#13: I will tell you. My father's opponent was planning to go to Lhasa. He had bought a hundred *dzo* 'animal bred from a yak and a cow' from our region to be sold in Lhasa. He went all the way to Lhasa with the hundred *dzo*.

Q: Was that person your father?

#13: That was my father's opponent, the person to whom he lost the case. The winner of the case bought 100 *dzo* and went to Lhasa for trade. They were for ploughing.

Q: I don't understand. Your father lost the case.

#13: My father lost the case.

Q: Your father lost the case and then what happened?

#13: The opponent won the case. He had bought 100 *dzo* and was going to Lhasa for trade.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: It was three months since he left for Lhasa from our region. Then a thought crept into my mind.

Q: I see. So what's a hundred *dzo*? What's *dzo*?

#13: A *dzo* is a big animal. It was used for ploughing the fields.

Q: Your father took a hundred *dzo*...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Not father; father's opponent, the one who won the case.

Q: Yes? Okay, I am so confused. So?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: His father's opponent who won the case.

Q: Went to Lhasa?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes to Lhasa.

Q: What did that have to do with your father?

#13: My father and I were far apart. He had gone to Ba and I was in my region. My father had left after losing the case. This man had bought 100 *dzo* and was going to Lhasa to trade. When he was leaving the next day for Lhasa, as a farewell, people offered him tea and ceremonial scarves. However, that day I took the case to the administrator of our region and said, "Please do not send him to Lhasa. If you let him go to Lhasa, I cannot find my father anywhere, so he is the murderer." He had readied the 100 *dzo* and his servants to go to Lhasa.

Q: You didn't see your father at that time?

#13: I said, "My father has been killed by him. I want compensation for my father's death."

Q: He hadn't yet left for Lhasa?

#13: He was on the verge of leaving for Lhasa when I stopped him. The day before he could leave for Lhasa, I approached the Administrator and stopped him.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: After I complained, the Administrator stopped him. He was told that he couldn't leave for Lhasa until the case was solved.

Q: I see. Okay, now I understand.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Even me.

Q: Continue.

#13: My point to the Administrator was, either my father should be brought where I could see him and if not, he had been murdered by the man and I asked for compensation for my father's death. I told him that if he didn't compensate me I would not allow him to leave for Lhasa. I requested the Administrator not to allow him to leave until the case was solved.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: He had prepared to leave for Lhasa with all the *dzo* and I stopped him for about a week. Then he was desperate. In Tibet we had the coral and *dzi* [special beads made of agate] necklaces. He had given his wife's necklace to the Administrator to let him go secretly. For me he had left a sum of 1,000 Tibetan money with the District Administrator. When he received the coral necklace, the Administrator secretly let him go.

Q: Who gave the 1,000?

#13: He had left this with the District Administrator.

Q: You were given that?

#13: He had left it with the District Administrator to be given to me.

Q: So you are telling me that this man bribed the officials so he could get away before your father was found. Is that right?

#13: He gave the bribe in order that he could get away.

Q: What happened to your father? Did you find your father? What happened?

#13: I didn't find him. My father was there in Ba. He was not dead. He was living there. I just accused the opponent of killing my father as my father was not to be seen.

Q: You wanted to make trouble for him?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes, stop him as well as trouble him because he had taken his father's post.

Q: You wanted to give him a hard time?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: Because you were angry with him.

#13: Yes, I was angry with him. He was the reason my father had to leave.

Q: Did you catch up with your father in Ba?

#13: I did not meet him. Now, after giving the necklace, the District Administrator let the man escape in the night. In the morning I went to the District Administrator and I saw the money piled on his desk. I didn't know that he had escaped in the night. I went to see the District Administrator in the morning. And he said to me, "Ngawang Lobsang, do not trouble him too much. It is not worth stopping him when he has already purchased 100 *dzo* and his servants are all ready. He has left 1,000 notes, which you can take with you now. I

have not yet given my verdict on the case. I will not decide yet. After he returns from Lhasa, you can once again sue him." He had already left, so there was nothing for me to do.

Q: And what did you do next?

#13: I took the money. He had already escaped in the night and there was nothing I could do. The Administrator said that he had not decided on the case and that we would resume it when he returned. He was gone and there was nothing to do.

Q: And then where did you go?

#13: And then it was about three months since he left for Lhasa. After about three months I had an idea. I thought whatever happens I should take the case to Lhasa. I thought I should sue him in Lhasa and if not I should kill him. I thought I should either sue him or kill him. So I left the monastery and escaped. [Laughs]

Q: Then what did you do?

#13: Then I escaped from the monastery. I escaped from the monastery to Lhasa.

Q: You went to Lhasa to find him?

#13: Yes, I thought I would either file a case against him or kill him.

Q: I think no one should ever get you angry.

[Hearty laughter from everyone.]

Q: So you went to Lhasa to find this man with the idea that either the authorities were going to give you justice or you were going to kill him?

#13: Yes.

Q: So what happened?

#13: It was three months since he had left for Lhasa. Then I left for Lhasa and when I reached Lhasa, he had already sold all his *dzo* and had gone back to our region through the northern route. I didn't meet him in Lhasa. When I reached there he had already left because there was a gap of three months. When I went to Lhasa—though my Lama Uncle's home had plenty of meat, butter and *tsampa* 'flour made from roasted barley'—except for the cash, I did not take even *tsampa* for the evening meal. I was too young to realize it and took only the money. Just before I left home, I had a full meal. However I did not take either meat or butter or *tsampa* and left with only the money.

Q: You escaped from your home?

#13: Yes, I stealthily escaped from home.

Q: Then did you reach Lhasa?

#13: I hadn't brought anything with me to eat. So the next day I had to buy *tsampa* and other things to eat. I was alone when I escaped to Lhasa from my monastery on the 30th day of the 2nd Tibetan month.

Q: How many days did it take?

#13: It took me about one month and twelve days.

Q: By foot?

#13: I walked as there were no drivable roads then. There were snow capped mountains and waters to be crossed. There were two famous mountain passes to be crossed called Sha Gangla and Nup Gangla and many smaller passes.

Q: You must have been very strong.

#13: At that time I wanted to catch up with him fast. I could not find any traveling companions. I asked my way and walked alone.

Q: Then?

#13: When I reached Lhasa and asked, he had already gone back. He was gone and now I had no one there. So there was one person called Nyadham Dapon, an officer in the Tibetan Army who used to come to our region. His leader was a disciple of my Lama Uncle and they had a very good relationship. So I searched for him and went to his house. I used to know him from my village. He was an Army officer.

Q: You knew the Army officer?

#13: Yes, I knew him from my village. We had a good connection.

Q: So you stayed at the home of the Tibetan Government Army officer?

#13: They were very happy to see me because they knew my Lama's Uncle from my village. The wife of the officer told me, "You should live in my house in Lhasa. But if you want to go back to your village, you should. If you do not wish to go back to your village, you are not to go anywhere else. You should stay in our house."

Q: Then what did you do?

#13: I stayed in their house. They had an altar in the prayer room which they said I had to keep clean. That was the job they gave me.

Q: That was your job, to take care of the altar?

#13: Yes, I had to make the daily water offerings and keep the altar clean. And light the butter lamps.

Q: How long did you do this work?

#13: I stayed there for two years.

Q: Two years in Lhasa looking after the altar?

#13: I did the work of maintaining the altar for the two years.

Q: What else did you do while you were in Lhasa?

#13: They were extremely good to me.

[Question is repeated.]

#13: I did not do any other work.

Q: How old were you at that time?

#13: I must have been around 18 or 19.

Q: So after two years there, what happened next?

#13: I had an uncle in Domo. I went to see this uncle in Domo. He had been there for a very long time.

Q: I just want to go back one second. When you were chasing this man and you thought you might have to kill him, how do you think you would have killed him?

#13: I would have to stab him with a knife because we didn't have guns.

Q: You would stab him with a knife? And you carried a knife with you?

#13: I had a knife.

Q: Was it a particular kind of knife? Did it have a name?

#13: I had brought it with me from my village.

Q: Did it have a name?

#13: What?

Q: It didn't have a name?

#13: No, there was no name.

Q: So then you left Lhasa to go to Domo to visit your uncle and what happened there? What did you do there?

#13: I met my uncle. He had a wife, a son and a daughter.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: After a month with my uncle, on the way back to Lhasa, I stayed with a family in Phari Thangka.

Q: Was your uncle happy to see you when you went there?

#13: Yes, he was very happy as he was my relative. He asked me to stay back in Domo but I didn't.

Q: But you wanted to return to Lhasa?

#13: Yes, I wanted to go back to Lhasa.

Q: Maybe it was the women in the house you were living in?

#13: I did not have a wife.

Q: There were women in the house where you stayed, taking care of the altar.

#13: Yes, there were daughters of the family.

Q: You wanted to go to Lhasa because of the girls?

#13: I wanted to go to Lhasa.

Q: You wanted to go because the girls were there?

#13: I did not think like that.

[Hearty laughter from everyone.]

#13: They were a very highly respected family. I was a humble man. They were very kind to me.

Q: Of course. I am playing a little bit.

#13: Yes, that is right.

Q: Why did you want to go back to Lhasa? What was drawing you there?

#13: I thought I would stay with my employer in Lhasa. There was no other work. After leaving Domo, at Phari Thangka I stayed with a family for one night. I was to leave the next day. I wanted a traveling companion and was looking for one and spent a night with the family. Where I stayed the night, the family had a daughter.

Q: He had one girl, a young girl? And?

#13: The mother of the girl told me that I should live with their daughter as her husband. The girl also seemed to like me. I also sort of liked the girl. So I agreed to stay with them. [Laughs.]

Q: See I knew that was going to happen! I just guessed the wrong house!

[More laughter.]

#13: Yes, it was Phari.

Q: So you stayed at Phari? Did you get married?

#13: The family in Phari used to go to Bhutan for trade. From Phari, if you crossed over the mountain pass, the other side was Bhutan. They had a shop in Bhutan at the nomadic place. They owned 16 yaks for transportation. They loaded the yaks with the goods and went to Bhutan to trade.

Q: Did you get married?

#13: There was no marriage. I just stayed there.

Q: And you were helping them out? You stayed in Phari to help them out?

#13: The main person who did business was the father. The daughter used to accompany him. After I was at Phari Thangka for about 11 or 12 days, they said that I had to go for business, driving the yaks to the south. Then they took me to Bhutan with them.

Q: Did you go to Bhutan for trade?

#13: Yes, I went for trade. It took three days to reach where they had their shop. After three days we reached Bhutan.

Q: Did you trade there?

#13: I didn't know how to trade while they were very familiar. They did the trade and I stayed home or looked after the yaks on the hills. There were 16 yaks.

Q: While you were in Bhutan?

#13: Yes.

Q: Okay. Please continue.

#13: Round-shaped tea bricks, salt, *bitho* [a substance found at hot springs and used as baking powder], fish, brass utensils for boiling milk, shirts, boots, sugar and such different types of goods were taken for trade on the yaks. These were exchanged for cheese and butter with the nomads.

Q: They were exchanged?

#13: They were exchanged.

Q: I think you said you stayed 10 or 11 days in Bhutan and then you went back to Phari?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No. He stayed 10 or 11 days in Phari. Then he went to Bhutan and now we are in Bhutan.

Q: How long did you stay in Bhutan?

#13: In Bhutan?

Q: How long did you stay in Bhutan for the trade?

#13: We traded there every year. In summer the goods were traded for butter and cheese. The cheese and butter were loaded on the yaks and taken to Phari Thangka. The cheese and butter were sold at Phari Thangka.

Q: When you went on business to Bhutan, how long did you stay there?

#13: We had to stay there a whole *yartho*.

Q: What does *yartho* mean? How many days is that?

#13: About three months.

Q: It sounds like business was good.

#13: They had a fixed price on every article and it was very simple. We had to travel to the nomadic camps scattered all around to collect the cheese and butter. When we went for the

collection, if there were three or four nomads in a camp, we didn't carry our food but they provided food and drinks to us. We did the trading and wrote down the amount of cheese and butter. Just before autumn we went to collect the items.

Q: Yes, it sounds very interesting.

#13: We had to provide food to all who came to do business with us.

Q: You provided food for them, for the nomads?

#13: Yes, we had to provide food for them. The nomads had come from a far distance, so we had to provide them with food and tea.

Q: So then what happened? You spent three months in Bhutan and then you went to Phari.

#13: After three months, we had to stack the packs of cheese and butter on the 16 yaks and take it to be sold at Phari Thangka.

Q: Then what happened? You reached Phari?

#13: We reached Phari. When we went to collect the cheese and butter, we didn't carry our food but only sugar. If there were around four or five nomadic families, we had to take around three or four kilograms of sugar.

Q: Sugar?

#13: Yes, we had to take a few kilograms of sugar and some tea leaves. We needn't carry our food. When we reached their camp the nomads would shout, "The traders have arrived. Please come in."

Q: Then?

#13: When we entered their home, they would say, "Tradesmen, bring out the tea." That was the custom of the area. They would have boiling water and we would put the round-shaped tea brick into it. We had to add in the sugar. They would pour in the milk; they would make the tea with half water and an equal amount of milk. Every member of the family there drank this tea.

Q: Why are you laughing—about what? Why?

#13: They would pour in half water and half milk.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Because they were so happy to see him and they used to say that there were few businessmen in Phari. So they used to say, "Businessman has come, businessman has come."

Q: That was very nice. You felt very welcomed.

#13: They used to like us very much.

Q: Okay. Continue.

#13: Then the whole family including the father and children would gather around and drink the tea. They would serve everyone *de-ngo* 'dry-roasted rice' in *bang jung* 'a small container.' Then we would have to collect the butter and cheese from them. It took about two to three days. During that period they provided us with food.

Q: How many days did you stay?

#13: At some places three or four days and at other places two days. They served us the choicest food.

Q: It sounds wonderful.

#13: They were very nice. They would give us the cheese and butter and then we left.

Q: Very good. Very interesting. It sounds like a wonderful life.

#13: Yes.

Q: So how long did this kind of life continue for you? Did you ever marry the girl in Phari?

#13: We didn't get married but we lived together.

Q: How many years did you spend like this?

#13: I stayed about three years with the girl.

Q: What happened then that changed?

#13: How the change happened was like this. The battle was about to start in Lhasa. They were going to oppose the Chinese.

Q: You heard it?

#13: Yes. People everywhere around us said that we had to go fight the Chinese.

Q: All the people of Phari?

#13: Yes, all the people of Phari.

Q: Protest? In what way did you decide to protest?

#13: We went in order to fight the Chinese.

Q: Did you have weapons there?

[Tapes change. Discontinuity in interview.]

Q: ...you had a very good life as a merchant trading between Bhutan and Phari and staying with the nomads, and people looking forward to you coming and bringing them goods. When did things start to change for you?

#13: The change happened when I learned that an old man I knew from Markham, from my region, who was a *gempo* 'leader' in Phari Thangka, was engaged in collecting arms from India for the *Chushi Gangdrug* Resistance Force and sending rations to them.

Q: For the *Chushi Gangdrug* troops?

#13: Yes, to the place called Diguthang. He was a leader and he worked for the *Chushi Gangdrug*.

Q: The one who supplied the things? Let me see if I understand. There were old people in Phari who were selling guns?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Supplying guns and rations to the *Chushi Gangdrug*.

Q: And Russian ammunitions?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Ration means rice and food—eatables.

Q: Rations. I see. Okay, so they are supplying foods and arms to the *Chushi Gangdrug*.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: Before that, had you heard anything about or come into contact with any Chinese? What had you heard?

#13: The old man was doing it secretly.

Q: Had you heard about the Chinese before that?

#13: What Chinese?

Q: Had you heard about the Chinese?

#13: Yes, I heard about the Chinese. We'd heard that they were "liberating" Tibet and causing much suffering. We knew all of this.

Q: That they caused suffering in Lhasa and other places?

#13: Yes.

Q: What kind of problems were the Chinese creating?

#13: First a meeting was held to discuss the war. The meeting could not be held where the Chinese were, so how could the meeting be arranged? They said “Let's build a golden throne for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.” So, outwardly the throne was being built and, at the same time, meetings were held to plan going to war.

Q: What kind of rumors or what kind of information did you get about what was going on in Lhasa?

#13: We heard that the Chinese were subjecting the nobles to *thamzing* ‘struggle sessions’ and causing a lot of suffering to the aristocrats. All their wealth was seized by the poor. The nobles were forced to carry human excrement on their backs. The Chinese did such bad things.

Q: The Chinese put shit on the Tibetan people's backs?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: During the *thamzing* or for some other reason?

#13: During the *thamzing* they would be beaten.

Q: Then they were made to carry human excrement?

#13: After they were imprisoned, they were made to carry human excrement and put it in the vegetable gardens.

Q: So when you heard these things, what was going on in Lhasa but *thamzing* and carrying excrement and how the Tibetans were being treated cruelly by the Chinese? What did you think would happen?

#13: They did the same things not only to the aristocrats, but to all the private and upper-class families. When they did these things, I thought that the Chinese had every intention of destroying the whole of Tibet. So the people said they should plan to make war secretly. So first the golden throne for His Holiness the Dalai Lama would be constructed. For the construction of the throne some big Khampa [a person from Kham Province] businessmen donated a kilogram or two kilograms of gold, *dzi* and coral. All were businessmen who made the donations and the throne was constructed. While the golden throne was being built, they were getting ready for battle.

Q: I understand, but I want to know what he was thinking? What happened after hearing these things going on in Lhasa? What did he personally think?

#13: I thought we should fight them.

Q: You thought you would have to fight. So you started meeting in secret and making preparations to fight. What happened next?

#13: We had the meetings and then it was decided that we would fight. "Where to have the base camp?" was in everyone's thoughts. It was then built at the place called Diguthang.

Q: So you were planning a strategy for when the Chinese came, so that you would be ready for them?

#13: Everything was planned. So we called Khampas from everywhere to gather at this place. So people went there with their own horses and their own guns.

Q: There were Khampas in the area that had come from the East?

#13: They were all people from Kham. They were all Khampas.

Q: So then what happened?

#13: In Kham, there were many different Khampas. There were Amdo, Dege, Lithang, Chating and from many different parts and all people gathered at that place: Tsawarongpa, Gyalhangpa, Nyarong and Gyerong. The latter ones were on the border near China. Everybody gathered at Diguthang.

Q: Did the Chinese finally come?

#13: The Chinese did not dare come.

Q: So what did you do? Did you think maybe we should go after them?

#13: We had to go and fight them. We attacked them first.

Q: You went and attacked them? Can you tell me about that? How the first time you attacked the Chinese?

#13: At Diguthang, about 1,000 men had gathered there. Men from everywhere nearing more than 1,000 assembled at Diguthang. 700 of us cavalymen left the base camp at Diguthang. Andrug Gonpo Tashi, who was our highest Army Chief took 400 cavalymen with him and went towards Tsang to Shang Gaden Chokhor where the Tibetan government had an armory.

Q: From the Chinese?

#13: They went to Shang Gaden Chokhor, a monastery in Tsang. The Tibetan government had kept arms there.

Q: You went there to make sure you had plenty of arms?

#13: There were many arms kept there. There were artilleries, which you fired from the sky and English-made short-barreled rifles. There were thousands of them. We went to get these from there.

Q: Okay. Continue. Then you took the things and came back?

#13: First when we went there, we encountered the Chinese on the way. We had to cross the Tsang River which flowed from Lhasa, pass a valley and then we would reach Shang Gaden Chokhor. The River had to be crossed in boats. While we were on the way, we encountered the Chinese. Gya ‘Chinese’ Lobsang Tashi was among them. Gya Lobsang Tashi had surrendered to Andrug Gonpo Tashi and he was among them.

Q: He was with the Tibetan Army?

#13: He was with us.

Q: A Chinese surrendered to the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

#13: He was the artillery chief of the Chinese.

Q: He joined the Tibetan army?

#13: He surrendered and came with the Tibetans.

Q: Why did he have a Tibetan name?

#13: Andrug Gonpo Tashi gave him the Tibetan name, Lobsang Tashi.

[Everybody laughs.]

Q: So everybody could remember, I guess.

#13: The name was given by Andrug Gonpo Tashi.

Q: He then helped you get through past the Chinese troops with his information?

#13: He was also going along with us.

Q: Did he help you on the way?

#13: There was another Chinese we had captured. He had surrendered and was at the army camp. We captured him on the way.

Q: Okay. Continue. Where you on horses or you were walking? How were you going?

#13: We were on horses. We were the cavalry.

Q: How many of you were there?

#13: We were over 400. There were over 400 cavalrymen.

Q: And the horses were to go on the boats too?

#13: Yes, we put them on the boats. Some of them were pulled along in the river. They had to be pushed into the water from the boat and we would hold their bridle and the boat would pull them. Some of them wouldn't stay on the boat.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: After we crossed in the boat, we had to traverse the valley which was a jungle. We had with us the Chinese we had captured. He spoke very cleverly and we believed him. He was also on a horse and going with us. We had to traverse among the bushes and trees, as the area was a deep forest. At one point there was a stream rushing down from a hill in our path. It was a narrow path and we had to lead our horses. The water was just about so [gestures] and we had to lead our horse across, we couldn't ride them. Here we lost the Chinese, the one we had brought with us.

Q: The Chinese was showing you the way?

#13: No, the Chinese was not showing us the way. We had brought him along with us. We sort of believed him. The path was narrow and there were more than 400 cavalry and animals laden with food. In this melee, he managed to escape and to inform the Chinese. It was close to Chushul and he at once turned back to inform the Chinese about us.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Gya Lobsang Tashi had earlier told Andrug Gonpo Tashi to kill him because he would do no good. But Andrug Gonpo Tashi did not listen to him hoping that he might do some good. He did not kill him although Gya Lobsang Tashi had told him to do so.

Q: He was unable to kill him.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Andrug Gonpo Tashi did not want to kill him.

Q: He didn't want to kill him or he couldn't kill him?

#13: He didn't want to kill him.

Q: That was Lobsang Tashi he didn't want to kill?

#13: No, no.

Q: He had another one?

#13: Lobsang Tashi who had surrendered—he told the *Chushi Gangdrug* Army officer to kill the other Chinese.

Q: He was not a good guy.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: He was not a good person. But the *Chushi Gangdrug's* officer, he refused to kill him.

Q: Why?

#13: He thought that the Chinese man would remain surrendered.

Q: And that he was a good man?

#13: Yes, he thought he was a good man. But he turned back and went to inform the Chinese. As we had walked a little distance, we missed him and we were asking “Where is he?” and when we looked around, he was gone. He had at once ridden back to inform the Chinese office at Chushul.

Q: Riding on his horse?

#13: Yes, on his horse.

Q: Okay, now it's all coming together. I see. So there were two Chinese captives and the first Chinese captive said, “You should kill this man because he is a bad man” but the leader of the *Chushi Gangdrug* said “No, I don't want to kill him” and then that man escaped.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: Okay, now I got it. Please continue.

#13: So as we went ahead, he had gone to inform them. The Chinese then brought their soldiers in 200-300 vehicles and from the other side [gestures] came to block our path.

Q: So 200 to 300 Chinese army trucks, after they got the information that you were coming, they came and they tried to stop you?

#13: Yes, they came to block our way with soldiers in 200-300 vehicles. The valley was constricted and the Chinese troops had stationed themselves on the hills overlooking the valley for about a kilometer, with their guns ready to shoot.

Q: Then?

#13: There was a Tibetan nomad who said to Andrug Gonpo Tashi—we were camping at the foot of the valley for that night—the nomad said, “Please do not go in this valley. There are thousands of Chinese waiting on the way. They have been waiting two days for you. There are thousands of Chinese. If you take this route, there is no way you can escape. Please do not go.”

Q: Then?

#13: Then our Army Chief said, “There is no other way we can take. This is the only path we can take.” Then when day broke, they sounded the conch and said that everyone should assemble with Andrug Gonpo Tashi. He said, “The Chinese have readied to fight in this valley. We have to move ahead. Whatever happens we have to take this path.”

Q: The head of the *Chushi Gangdrug* said you must go into the ambush or you must go another way?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: The ambush—they had to go that way.

Q: After receiving that information, why did he say you must go where the Chinese were?

#13: He said, “Let's go and fight.”

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Because there was only one way.

Q: We are going to fight the army; we are not going to run?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

[Videographer to interviewer]: There was no alternative way to cross this.

Q: Okay. Then what happened? Did you go?

#13: In the morning, the conch sounded and asked all the men to saddle their horses. The horses were saddled and we were ready to march. The conch sounded for all the men to assemble. “The Chinese are ready and waiting up in the valley. It is compulsory for you all to go into it.”

Q: Who said that?

#13: Our Army Chief, Andrug Gonpo Tashi, said that.

Q: He said you were not going to fight?

#13: What?

Q: He said that you were not going to fight now?

#13: He said that we would be going to fight. He said that we had to go.

Q: Then?

#13: All the soldiers were distributed a few grains of wheat each, which had been blessed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Q: Precious pills? And the reason was to give them courage?

#13: No, it was to prevent the bullets from piercing us. Then everyone raised their hands and in unison said we would fight.

Q: Then?

#13: Then the command was given to “March” and everyone rushed ahead, whoever was ready first. Whichever person could saddle his horse first, rushed ahead into the valley. All the 700 cavalry moved.

Q: Then?

#13: There were some Chatingpas [people of Chating, a region in Kham] who had saddled their horses first and they sped away ahead.

Q: Chatingpa is the name of a place?

#13: What? Yes, the name of a place. Whichever horse could move fast sped ahead first. So the Chatingpas reached there first and the Chinese rained bullets on them. They rode right into it and slashed the Chinese wireless systems with their swords. They rushed straight ahead and passed the valley, those 12 Chatingpa men.

Q: Right into the Chinese?

#13: Right ahead and we were following them.

Q: So you were trying to ambush the Chinese before the Chinese ambushed you?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

[Videographer to interviewer]: The Chinese ambushed them but they decided to go through the ambush.

Q: Okay. So they went in and everybody started firing in the forest.

#13: It was not the army camp. It was in the valley.

[Interviewee's statement is missing.]

[Interpreter to interviewer]: That time the 12 men went inside the ambush and they were surrounding them. They had swords and guns.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Everybody was fighting. Some of our men hit the Chinese on their heads with stones. Guns were fired at them and they fired at us. It was just raging.

Q: Where were you when this was happening?

#13: I was right there. The fight was raging. I saw some of our men hit the Chinese on their heads with stones.

Q: You were there fighting?

#13: Yes, I was fighting along with all the soldiers. The Chinese were firing at us with their guns and machine guns.

Q: Did you have any weapons you were fighting with?

#13: I had a gun which was called *pa mendha*. It was a Chinese made gun. These were purchased.

Q: What does that name mean? *Pa mendha*?

#13: That was the name of the gun. [Laughs] We were fighting there and the Chinese—in Tibet we had these old ruined high walls and within that had installed machine guns and these could fire so much. The walls made of stones were quite high—houses used to be high—and around that was a stone fence. They were firing the machine guns at us and our men were climbing over the high walls and rushing towards the point of the machine guns. Around three or four men fell down when they were hit. Even though the bullets didn't enter their bodies, taking the hit made them fall. Some died from bullets while others fell when they took a hit.

Q: Please continue describing what happened.

#13: All our men jumped over the wall and then to the high wall, behind which were the machine guns. Some were killed by the bullets while attempting to cross the wall while others fell down, though the bullets did not enter their bodies. They would be firing 200-300 bullets. Everywhere men were fighting.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: As we were fighting, Gya Lobsang Tashi and a friend of a person called Khachi Chanzo, an official like Andrug Gonpo Tashi and I; we three came to be at the same spot. Gya Lobsang Tashi, a Lithangpa [a person from the Lithang area of Kham] friend of Khachi Chanzo and I happened to be at the same spot.

Q: Then?

#13: The hills on the sides were very high and we three were fighting them together. By then we had managed to chase the Chinese to quite a distance; almost half-way through the valley.

Q: The Chinese were running away?

#13: We killed some and the others fled.

Q: How did you kill them?

#13: We killed them by shooting. Then some were killed by stabbing and some by hitting with stones. They were killed in different ways.

Q: You were that close where you could use your knife on them?

#13: When we were close to them we stabbed them.

Q: Did you stab anyone?

#13: Wait and I will tell you. Where we were fighting, there was Gya Lobsang Tashi and the Lithangpa, who Lobsang Tashi knew. We were together and while we were fighting, on the opposite side was a steep rocky hill and there under a tree sat a Chinese Army officer. Most of the Chinese soldiers had been chased away. He was hiding there.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: We were fighting there and a Chinese officer who was sitting among the bushes fired on us.

Q: He was sitting on the tree?

#13: He was among the bushes. There was a rock and just above that were some bushes and he was in the bushes. He fired at the three of us and hit the Lithangpa. He was hit on the hip.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: The one who was hit said to us, "Don't go that way. Let's go towards the rock. I am hit. There is a Chinese there." When he said that we turned towards where the Chinese officer was and ran under the rocks below him.

Q: Did you kill anyone?

#13: The Chinese officer's bullet hit him on the leg when the three of us were together. He said that the Chinese was among the bushes and that we should run towards where the Chinese officer was and not to go the other way. We were facing the other side and the Chinese Officer was shooting at us from behind. When he said that Gya Lobsang Tashi and I rushed among the rocks below where the Chinese officer was. Now the Chinese Officer was up above and we were below him.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: The Chinese officer was above the rocks and we were below that. So Gya Lobsang Tashi and I pointed our guns above and fired. We did the same from the other direction. He was also firing down at us in different directions.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: After some time, a trickle of blood came down the rocks. It trickled down the stone from where the Chinese officer was.

Q: Then?

#13: Gya Lobsang Tashi told me to climb up. I lay my gun down and with a sword of this length [shows with his hands], slowly at first and then suddenly rushed upon him. As soon as I reached him, the Chinese Officer raised his pistol.

Q: A gun?

#13: He had a pistol in his hand and as he raised it, I struck my knife on his shoulder and he dropped his pistol. When I was there and had struck with the knife, Lobsang Tashi arrived. He came there fast. I again struck one more blow near the neck [gestures] and then he died.

Q: Then?

#13: The Chinese was armed with a pistol which I grabbed. Lobsang Tashi found the epaulet stars of the Chinese Officer in his pocket. He took them out and they were shining stars. He had not worn them but kept them in his pocket. Lobsang Tashi took these. So as he had taken these, he was famed for killing a Chinese Officer. [Laughs.]

Q: So Lobsang Tashi took out of his pocket the stars and he told the story that he was the one who killed him?

#13: When the first battle took place, it was I who killed a Chinese Officer.

Q: I understand.

#13: I am the person who killed a Chinese officer during the first battle. He [Lobsang Tashi] took the stars to Andrug Gonpo Tashi and he became famous. In actuality, I was the one who killed him. I struck him on the shoulders with my sword and I struck him on the neck.

Q: And that must have made you very angry.

#13: I was not angry. There was no one who gave him money for killing a Chinese officer. [Laughs.]

Q: He didn't get anything from it.

#13: Gya Lobsang Tashi told me that there would be bullets in the gun and that I should fire it in the air. I raised the pistol and fired in the air. There were just two bullets left. The Chinese officer had just two bullets left. We thought he might have bullets around his waist. He told me to pull [the body] by the legs and throw it down to check for bullets. So I pulled the legs and pushed it over the rock. I went down to check for bullets around the waist but there were none. Except for the two bullets in the gun, he had none left.

Q: You threw the corpse out and did you keep the gun?

#13: I kept the gun. I took the gun but there were no bullets. Except for the two bullets there were none left. I looked for bullets on his waist and there were none. I checked his pocket and found a half-eaten biscuit and a bandage, and a few notes of Chinese currency. I didn't take the money.

Q: So continue. What happened?

#13: The man who was hit on the hip, he had slowly crept towards where we were among the rocks. He was crying in pain. Our horses were tied below the place where he was hit by the bullet. Lobsang Tashi knew this man and helped him up. Lobsang Tashi then supported him and took this man down. As they were going down, from a hillock a gun was fired.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: When the gun was fired, it again hit the injured man.

Q: On whom?

#13: On the man who was already injured. He was hit a second time by a bullet. He was hit on his hip when he was being helped down. [Laughs.] Then Gya Lobsang Tashi threw him down and fled. Now I was there and I thought I would carry him—if I could carry him a little further away, there was a sort of crevice in the hill where no bullets could reach us. Poor thing, after being hit by the bullet, he even dropped the sword from his belt. He even threw his gun away.

Q: He left them behind.

#13: Then I just looked around and thought I would carry him down. Lobsang Tashi had run away. I sprinted towards where he was lying and before I could reach there, a bullet whizzed past my ear [shows by a gesture], struck some stones on the ground, and a blast of stone powder fell on my face. Then I retraced my steps back into the cave. [Laughs.]

Q: The wounded man was with you?

#13: The wounded man was lying there.

Q: Then you ran back?

#13: Yes, to the rock above which the Chinese Officer was earlier.

Q: You had to leave the man there?

#13: I left him where he was.

Q: Were you wounded in your face by the stones?

#13: Only the stone powder fell on my face and I was not injured. Then I thought I should find the one who was shooting and kill him. I went into the little hillock where the Chinese Officer was killed. There I saw a Chinese in a thick fur coat come walking on the top of the hillock.

Q: Then tell me.

#13: I thought, “I have to kill him.” I took aim and saw that he was walking and looking around. When a gun is fired, it sort of lifts up. Then I prayed that I should be able to kill him. I prayed to my deities and waited for him to emerge. I took careful aim around his navel area and fired. He was sort of tossed out into the air. [Laughs.] I waited for some time. Everything was motionless on the mountain pass.

Q: It was quiet?

#13: It was quiet. I then ran to the base of the hill and found that his [the injured Lithangpa] gun was thrown there and also his sword. I told the wounded man, "I came to help you earlier but I was almost hit by a bullet. Just crawl along a little way. It is quite close. Who is your family friend?" He said his friend was Khachi Chanzo.

Q: Then?

#13: He said that his friend was Khachi Chanzo. I told him, "I will tell Khachi Chanzo that you are lying here wounded. I will tell him to fetch you. I will take your gun and hand it over to your friend. I will tell him that you are injured and that you should be picked up."

Q: Then you went away?

#13: He was desperate and with great difficulty he crawled and reached down there. Then I went and told his group that he was injured and lying there and that I had brought his gun which he had thrown.

Q: He had come there moaning in pain?

#13: What?

Q: You had reached there earlier?

#13: What?

Q: He was moaning and had crawled there?

#13: He reached there later.

Q: You went together?

#13: What?

Q: Did you go back together to the Army camp?

#13: We were in separate groups. I only met him at the battlefield. I did not know him.

Q: You are right. You hadn't known him before but you met him during combat. And then you went and had people come back to bring him back?

#13: Yes. Then dusk set in. We had fought since morning and now it was getting dark.

Q: What happened next?

#13: I went and told the friends of the injured man about him. Now the time was around five or almost six o'clock.

Q: What happened?

#13: After it became dark, I saw that the injured man was being brought on horseback by his friends.

Q: So they went back and picked him up on a horse and they took him back to the camp?

#13: Yes, his friends had gone to pick him up with a horse and brought him back.

Q: And what happened?

#13: Then it had become dark. When it became dark, we withdrew from the fight. If we didn't withdraw, the way we fought was like this: we'd fight in the daytime and at night we changed our location for if we did not change our place, we would be surrounded by the Chinese. After fighting, we changed location. At night we withdrew and moved to another place.

Q: Then?

#13: After the battle ended, the huge Chinese machine guns were there and the Chinese men were killed. We couldn't carry these arms and so threw them into the water.

Q: At night?

#13: Yes, in the night when the battle ended. The weapons of the Chinese—we couldn't carry these. The guns were very big and could not be carried. Then the army withdrew. By that time it was dark. I had a friend who, when the battle first took place, went towards a hill.

Q: At night?

#13: No, in the morning when the battle first started. We had both tethered our horses at the same place near a tree.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: When I arrived there, he [the friend] had not yet reached his horse. It was nighttime and all the men were withdrawing, so I thought he might be on the hills and would return. All the soldiers left but I waited for him near our horses, hoping he would come back.

Q: And somehow you didn't meet up?

#13: All the soldiers had gone and it was pitch dark. It might be around nine o'clock and all the men had gone away. Still I waited. He didn't come and then I let loose his horse, rode my horse with his horse following me, and went to join the army camp.

Q: You followed your comrades.

#13: As I went along, there was a bridge and on the other side was a village. They had left him there, the injured man.

Q: Then?

#13: The main army group had left and I had to follow them. The way was deserted. Knowing that I would find nothing to eat, I requested a family to boil me some wheat flour to take with me.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: While the wheat flour was cooking, the father of the family paced up and down his house and asked me, "Please go." He again paced up and down and told me to leave. I replied, "I will go once the wheat flour is cooked. What do you mean by telling me to go?" He said, "The Chinese are coming from that side. I can see the beams of their flashlights." Then when I went upstairs to look, I could see the lights and that the Chinese were coming. Then I took the food and rode out on my horse.

There was no moonlight and it was pitch-dark. The main army had left and I had waited for my friend for an hour, so the army was far gone. It was completely dark and I just rode aimlessly. As I went further, I saw that the army had camped there as I could see the campfire burning. But the men were gone! Only the fires were burning; the people had left. The place was deserted.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: I went after the others. My friend hadn't come and I rode my horse and his horse followed me. Then I reached the place where the *Chushi Gangdrug* army had camped and cooked food but all the men were gone.

Q: So you came to a...you caught up with the group of people by a fire and you decided to sit there and wait?

#13: I sat there because of the fire but all of them had gone. It was so dark that I didn't know which way they had taken. I could not know where they had gone. I thought perhaps the horse could see the way in the dark, which the human could not see. The horses of the army would have left hoof prints and thinking that the horse might be able to follow it, I let it go wherever it took me. It was around two or three in the night and I gave free rein to the horse to take me anywhere. I thought to let it go anywhere and when dawn broke I would

reach somewhere. By about four in the morning, I was tired. I got down from the horse and tied it nearby and slept in a niche in a hill. I thought when day broke, I would be able to find my way by looking for the hoof prints.

Q: Then what happened when you rested?

#13: When daylight began, I saw that the horse had taken me the right way. As many horses had passed that path, the way had become like a motor road. The horse had certainly taken the right path.

Q: It was the right way.

#13: So when day broke I saw that that was the way the army went, by the hoof prints. So I followed this path. After crossing the meadows, I had to go down into a valley. It was a great distance. After going a long way, I came to a highway. I tied one horse and it was snowing. I hung my gun around my neck and using my *chupa* ‘traditional coat’ like a raincoat, I slowly descended, walking and leading my horse.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Then I reached the road. Near the road was a small hill and from behind the hill, a vehicle came.

Q: Then?

#13: The road was here, and I was right by the side, and the vehicle was coming from here [demonstrates]. I was so close that I could have touched the vehicle with my hands. In the vehicle were the driver and a Chinese official. He had a gun in his lap and he looked at me. They had stopped the vehicle.

Q: Then?

#13: I had my gun hanging around my neck. I had covered my head with the *chupa* because it was snowing. I too stared at him. They didn't talk to me and I didn't say anything to them. Then I thought, “I must let go of the horse, move back and shoot them or else they will not let me go.” I walked away a few steps, threw down the *chupa*, removed my gun, and thought I should shoot.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: When I came towards them, the Chinese opened the vehicle door and fired at me twice. But I was not hit. Then I bent down and was about to shoot my gun. The officer at once went into the vehicle, shut the door and took off. [Laughs.] It was a great fortune for me. I was dazed seeing them so close.

Q: Then?

#13: The Chinese entered the vehicle and sped off. So I didn't shoot at them as they had taken off. I walked down the highway, leading my horse. Then I could see the soldiers climbing up a hill on the other side. The last soldiers were sort of tapering off at that time.

Q: Chinese army? Which army?

#13: They were the Tibetan army, the *Chushi Gangdrug*.

Q: You saw the *Chushi Gangdrug* at a distance?

#13: The Chinese army was on this side [gestures].

Q: But this vehicle was in between both the armies that the Chinese officers were in?

#13: The majority of the soldiers were way down that side. The vehicle must have come from either Lhasa or somewhere and we bumped into each other on the road. The vehicle was going to the Chinese Army camp.

Q: I understand.

#13: Then I crossed the motor road and started descending a steep slope when I realized that I'd left my *chupa* where I had removed it. I tethered the horse and went back to get my *chupa*. [Laughs.] Then I went down carrying my *chupa*. At a place on the hill, I found some water in a crevice. I made *pak* [dough balls out of roasted barley flour] and fed the horses and myself. The army was over the mountain and I had to sprint across the hill. One couldn't go slowly because the Chinese army was on the other side. While I was eating the *pak*, an artillery shell was fired at me. It came down with a sound and fell into the water. The shell didn't burst. It was close to me.

Q: Shells came down and fell into the water.

#13: I fed a *pak* each to the horses, tightened their ropes, hung my gun on my neck and sped across the plain. When I reached the base of the mountain, I led the horses and walked. The Chinese didn't fire at me.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Then we went to Shang Gaden Chokhor.

Q: Where to?

#13: We went to Shang Gaden Chokhor. It was a monastery. At Shang Gaden Chokhor the Tibetan government had kept many arms which we brought with us. On the way back, we came to a place called Woyul Zongthang.

Q: At this time you were not alone? You were with the group?

#13: The whole army was there.

Q: So you had re-joined your group?

#13: What?

Q: You met up with the other soldiers. Earlier you were alone.

#13: When I crossed over the mountain pass, I found the army camping on the other side. It was at that time that I finally met up with the army unit.

Q: Then?

#13: I finally met them there. Then we went to Shang Gaden Chokhor. We went to Shang Gaden Chokhor at night and surrounded the monastery. The army surrounded it and asked them whether they were going to give us the weapons or not.

Q: Then?

#13: We caught the officers in charge of the monastery. We asked them, "Are you going to hand over the arms to us or not?"

Q: Why would the people in the monastery not give you the weapons since they were Tibetans too?

#13: The weapons belonged to the Tibetan government. The Tibetan government had kept it there for safe keeping at Gaden Chokhor.

Q: They belonged to the Tibetan government?

#13: The weapons were in safe keeping at the Shang Gaden Chokhor.

Q: Why were they not given to you by those people?

#13: What?

Q: Were you not army of the Tibetan government?

#13: We were different from the Tibetan Government Army. The Tibetan Army was there and we were the *Chushi Gangdrug*. We were separate.

Q: And the monks were guarding for the Tibetan government?

#13: We were volunteers who were fighting.

Q: Were those guarding the arms monks?

#13: What?

Q: Were those taking care of the weapons monks?

#13: Yes, they were monks. The weapons were in the care of the monastery.

Q: Then?

#13: Then they gave us all the weapons. Among the many weapons was artillery. We took them all out. We took the weapons and returned. Then at the place called Woyul Zongthang, we heard that a convoy of Chinese vehicles was on the way. We decided to ambush the vehicles. We knew the vehicles were coming, so for a distance about from here to Koppa [around 3 miles], men lay in wait at marked spots on the road, each spot having two men. For about 3-4 miles, soldiers lay in wait on the road.

[Disc 1 ends; Disc 2 begins]

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Then we were lying in wait in groups of two people. We were to allow all the vehicles to pass. We had decided not to fire until all the vehicles had entered the road. When those men at the first point of the road fired, the rest were to fire.

Q: Then?

#13: The vehicles arrived and 22 of them had rolled onto the road. They were full of soldiers. Twenty-two vehicles had entered the ambush area. We were there by the roadside and then we started firing.

Q: But I thought you had orders not to shoot them unless they shot at you?

#13: What?

Q: You were told not to fire at the Chinese army unless they fired first?

#13: No, not that. The vehicles had to first enter the ambush space.

Q: Okay, they entered the ambush space. But earlier you were given orders not to shoot at the Chinese army unless they fired first.

#13: The Chinese army didn't know [we were there] and were coming on the road. We were hiding there. Our soldiers were waiting to ambush them by the roadside at different

spots. Until the first people waiting at the beginning part of the road fired, we had to let all the vehicles pass by.

Q: So he fired?

[Interpreter to interviewer:] So he fired and then they fired.

Q: Okay.

#13: When the vehicles rolled by, we fired at them. We killed so many soldiers that blood flowed like water from the vehicles. Some of them jumped out from the vehicles but some could not. We killed the soldiers in 22 vehicles.

Q: You killed all of them in the 22 vehicle convoy?

#13: We killed all of them except one or two. A few jumped into the river. In the group there were two Chinese who were dressed in blue. They didn't have red but wore blue dress. We didn't kill them. We didn't kill these two because they were civilians. We captured them and kept them with us. After we had fired, there were still Chinese vehicles arriving, carrying horses and mules. When they heard the firing, they turned back.

Q: How many soldiers do you think you killed at that time?

#13: In a vehicle there were around 20 soldiers.

Q: In one vehicle?

#13: Yes, in one vehicle. There might have been 15 or 20 men in each.

Q: And 20 vehicles? So you are saying...

#13: Blood was flowing out of the vehicles like water.

Q: You killed them all?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Killed them all.

Q: Then?

#13: There were five or six Chinese girls who used to act and dance in Shigatse.

Q: At Shigatse?

#13: In the army vehicles. They were Chinese women.

Q: In the 22 vehicles?

#13: They were show girls who performed in Shigatse. There were 5 or 6 such girls.

Q: In the 22 vehicles?

#13: Yes, in the vehicles. They jumped out of the vehicles and sat in a group by the road side.

Q: Wow! What did you do with them?

#13: After all the vehicles had passed by and we had killed every [soldier], we went closer to the vehicles. We went to see what was there in the vehicles. There were so many things to be taken but we didn't need anything. The women sat huddled together by a vehicle. Then we killed them. They screamed, "Ama, Ama." We killed them all. They were sitting there holding each other.

Q: You fired at them?

#13: We killed them all. We had the two captured Chinese with us. So we took them along a little distance away to Andrug Gonpo Tashi.

Q: Why did you kill the women?

#13: Because they were Chinese. We wanted to kill any Chinese that we saw. Whether they were Chinese men or Chinese women, they were killed.

Q: Yes, but you left the other people who were not army. You let them live.

#13: They were not killed.

Q: Why were they not killed?

#13: They jumped out of the vehicle and we did not kill them. They were captured.

Q: Why were they not killed?

#13: Andrug Gonpo Tashi said that they should not be killed and to take them a little distance away. Andrug Gonpo Tashi then wrote a letter to the Chinese, stating, "You say that we are bandits. We are not bandits. All your things in the vehicles are left there. We have not taken any. We had to kill the soldiers. We have not touched your material goods. They are all left as they were and you can claim them." This letter was given to the two captive Chinese and they were sent to deliver the letter to the Chinese officials.

Q: But the girls were not the army.

#13: They were not the army but they were Chinese and shot by the many soldiers. They were performers.

Q: I don't understand why the two civilians who jumped into the river you did not kill, but the girls in the truck you did kill.

[Interpreter to interviewer:] They didn't kill the two civilians because the leader wanted to send a message to the Chinese.

Q: He wanted to send a message...to use them to send a message. Got it.

#13: Both of them were sent. And then we set off. We went to the place called Tsang Nyenmo. At Tsang Nyenmo, we camped right in the center of the area. The Chinese had arrived from two separate roads and surrounded the whole of Tsang Nyenmo with thousands of their troops. We reached there at around lunchtime. The Chinese had completely surrounded us in a wide circle, arriving there by two roads. There were many thousands of soldiers surrounding us.

Q: Really? Tsang Nyenmo was a town or a monastery?

#13: Tsang Nyenmo was a town, not a monastery.

Q: It's a village. Thousands of Chinese have surrounded you.

#13: We were camped there and they had surrounded us. We stayed put there. No shots were fired from either side.

Q: Then?

#13: When night fell, we divided the men to the paths in various directions. But we did not fire at each other in the night—only when day broke. They stayed surrounding us and we also spread out to confront them. Our men were divided, and wherever there were paths, they were there.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: We were divided and prepared to fight. Normally shots were not fired at night. When the first daylight appeared in the morning, the Chinese closed in. They were two abreast and surrounded the entire area. When we came closer, we started firing.

Q: In the morning the shooting started?

#13: Yes. We also had very good weapons and there was a massive battle. There were those who had waited in the night and the fight started in the morning. Even by 10 o'clock they were fighting without having sipped a drop of tea. Those who had not had tea and had

been fighting since morning, they were replaced by others. They went to have tea and eat food.

Q: Then?

#13: It must have been around 11 o'clock when we returned after having food. There were soldiers who were coming to the camp for food and others who were joining the battle after having food. We were asked to assemble by Andrug Gonpo Tashi. There were about 200-300 men coming for food. Andrug Gonpo Tashi told us, "We will never defeat the Chinese by firing. We cannot chase them away and neither can they us. We are just firing on each other and fighting."

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Andrug Gonpo Tashi said, "We have to fight with our swords. Stop shooting. We'll do the job with our swords."

Q: Were the bullets depleting?

#13: How?

Q: He said you should not fire but fight with swords.

#13: He said we should fight with our swords.

Q: Why? Were there no bullets?

#13: There were bullets, but when we fired the Chinese were not running away.

Q: You mean the Chinese were not running? So you thought that or Andrug Gonpo Tashi thought if we take out our swords we will scare the hell out of them and maybe they will run? Is that what you are saying?

#13: Yes, he said that we should fight with our swords because the Chinese were not running away when we fired from our guns. It was a no-win, no-loss situation. There were 200-300 men going back to fight. He distributed wheat grains blessed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to everyone and told us to eat them.

Q: Then?

#13: Then we hung our guns from our necks and marched towards the Chinese in a line.

Q: To fight?

#13: Yes. We marched right up to the Chinese in a line formation without firing.

Q: Carrying your guns?

#13: Without firing. When we neared the Chinese, there were already others who were fighting and someone shouted, "Everyone draw your swords! *Sho chi, sho nyi!*" and then we rushed right into the Chinese with our swords. We fought the Chinese with our swords.

Q: Did you have a sword? Were you one of those people with a sword?

#13: The Chinese who were firing the machine guns left them and fled.

Q: Did you have a sword or did you have a gun? You were one of those people with a sword who ran after the Chinese?

#13: We fought with our swords for about an hour and a half.

Q: You did?

#13: There were thousands of Chinese. Yes, I was there.

Q: What I don't understand is, if the Chinese had the machine gun, won't it be easy for them to go...when you came with the swords? Why did they run?

#13: They ran away because when we rushed with the swords, they thought they would be killed.

Q: Really? Wow!

#13: The Chinese were striking us with swords and we were doing the same. The fight lasted one and one half hours. After an hour and a half, some Chinese soldiers were upon the Tibetan soldiers and were pressing their necks. Tibetans carried a small knife in their waist with which these Tibetan soldiers stabbed their opponent from below and threw them over. These knives were very useful.

Q: The Tibetans stabbed with the small knives?

#13: Yes. Once you are below your opponent, you can't use the sword. That was the time the small knife was used. After an hour and half, there were so many dead Chinese that you hardly found space to walk.

Q: To walk where?

#13: There were so many bodies.

Q: We are still at this one battle. So you are one of those people with swords who attacked, the Chinese ran and then what happened? Did you chase after them? What happened?

#13: We chased them. When the Chinese ran, we struck them on their backs but it didn't wound them. It sort of made a sound. Still we chased them. Unless we stabbed them, striking with swords did not wound them.

Q: So you ran after them and stabbed them with the knives?

#13: Yes, unless we stabbed them, striking did not wound them.

Q: How many Chinese did you kill with your knife?

#13: I killed 3 or 4 fighting with my sword. While firing, we take a good aim. After the battle, there were many dead Chinese. Nobody knows who killed how many as many people were firing then.

Q: How about from your knife?

#13: I never came to be under a Chinese to use my small knife.

Q: You were never pressed down by a Chinese?

#13: My other colleagues did that.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Then we fought and fought, and when all the Chinese fled into the forests, we chased after them with our swords. There were some Chinese who couldn't flee and about 60 of them entered two Tibetan houses.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: The rest of the Chinese had fled. Those who couldn't flee were in the houses. Then we went to set the houses on fire.

Q: Did you light the fire?

#13: We brought straw and placed them near the door and lit the fire. From inside, the Chinese fired their guns and scattered the flames.

Q: By firing their guns?

#13: They scattered the flames with their guns.

Q: Then?

#13: Then we tried and tried and set the houses on fire. The houses belonged to Tibetans and there were the family members inside. They too were burned.

Q: When did you learn that? Afterwards?

#13: The Chinese were not letting them out.

Q: You knew that there were Tibetans inside?

#13: We knew that the families were there. We knew they were Tibetan houses. But what could we do? We set the houses on fire because there were 50-60 Chinese inside. If they came out, we would have shot them dead. The army surrounded and set the houses on fire.

Q: Did they come outside?

#13: No one came out. If they did, they would be shot dead.

Q: But nobody came out?

#13: Nobody came out. They were double-storied houses. If they came out, they would be shot dead. Everything burned down. The Tibetan family members inside, they also burned. All the Chinese were chased into the forests.

Q: Did you feel bad that a Tibetan family had to die in that house along with the Chinese?

#13: We felt sad, but what could we do—the Chinese would not allow them to come out. Of course, one would feel sad when a fellow Tibetan was killed. If we didn't set it on fire, there was the large number of Chinese inside.

Q: After the house was burnt, what happened?

#13: Then when dusk set in, we withdrew fighting and moved camp. If we didn't move, more Chinese would come and surround us. We moved in the night.

Q: Where did you reach?

#13: We crossed over a mountain pass and reached a place called Kagong.

Q: You stayed at Kagong?

#13: We camped at Kagong for the night. When we set off in the morning at around eight o'clock, a group of Chinese was coming. We encountered them right on the road.

Q: When you set off from Kagong? Where were you going?

#13: We had to go to another place from Kagong. We encountered the Chinese at Kagong.

Q: How many were you at this point?

#13: In Nyenmo, during the sword clash, the Chinese had only managed to kill and injure eight of our men.

Q: With machine guns, they could only kill eight Tibetan men?

#13: What?

Q: They killed only eight?

#13: Which one?

Q: You said eight men were dead at Nyenmo.

#13: They were dead.

Q: Only eight were killed?

#13: What?

Q: Only eight were killed? Only eight died?

#13: All the eight Chatingpas—when we went to Shang Gaden, we went to that area.

Q: No one else died?

#13: There were others who died. But the dead were not many. The eight Chatingpas were ready to give up their lives, and we heard they fought for two days.

Q: But many people died?

#13: You mean our people?

Q: Yes.

#13: Due to our protective amulets and the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama—the eight Chatingpas were dead—at the actual battle place only three or four died. When they were firing from the machine gun placed near the wall, two to three men died when scaling the wall. They were shot by the machine gun.

Q: How large was your force?

#13: We were about 400.

Q: You had reached Kagong and when you set out in the morning, you encountered the Chinese.

#13: While we set forth from Kagong, the Chinese were coming from the other direction and we encountered each other. We met at a deserted place. We fought and one of our men, a Lithangpa called Dhobdho, was killed. We lost one man.

Q: The Chinese didn't fire?

#13: Both sides fired on each other. The Chinese didn't oppose us much but went towards the hills and stayed there. They didn't fire.

Q: Then?

#13: Then we went to a place called Shugula. Near it were a mountain pass and a roadway. If one went from Shugula one would reach Jang Yangpachen, where there was a Chinese vehicle station. We thought we'd take the other route from Shugula towards Jang Namtsokha. When we reached there it became dark. So we set off in the night. Then a jeep came from Shigatse to Shugula. We encountered it on the road. We destroyed the jeep and killed the man. We learned that the man we killed was an officer.

Q: There was just one jeep alone or there was a number?

#13: There was just one lone officer in the jeep. We set fire to the jeep that night. The Chinese vehicle station was on the other side of the hill from Shugula. They [the Chinese] directed all their vehicle headlights towards us.

Q: So they used the headlights of the vehicles to see where you were?

#13: Yes, the Chinese did that but they didn't fire on us. We didn't fire on them either.

Q: They didn't see you?

#13: They saw us walking by, though it was night. But they didn't fire at us. Perhaps they thought we would come towards them because they focused the headlights of the vehicles on us.

Q: They were afraid that you might attack?

#13: Yes, because of fear.

Q: By this time I imagine they must have been scared out of their wits because they must have heard what you have done to all the other soldiers in the other battles before. So they must have been very scared of you at this time. Do you think so?

#13: Yes, they feared us. They didn't fire at us except for the headlights. Then we continued to go by the base of the mountains until we reached a valley where we camped. When day broke the next morning, we saw that the vehicle station was just a little distance away. They didn't fire on us. Then we went on up to Jang Namtsokha. Jang Namtsokha

was covered with snow and we had to walk on ice. The snow had cracked and if anyone fell into that [crevasse] he was sure to die.

Q: There were cracks that you could fall through. Did you see anyone fall through any of those cracks?

#13: I didn't see anyone fall through nor did anyone from our group fall. If one fell through, he was certain to die because the crevasse was this large [gestures]. It was several stories deep. It was ice where we walked. Then we reached Jang Namtsokha. Jang Namtso is a huge lake, a very famous lake. We camped there for the night. There were Tibetan nomads there.

Q: Did you stay with the nomads?

#13: We bought sheep from them, as we had no meat to eat. We paid 30 Tibetan currency units for each sheep. About a hundred sheep were killed for the army in the night. We gave back the skins.

Q: You must not have seen or eaten sheep for months now.

#13: The sheep were killed at night and then their intestines cleaned in the water in the night—there were water pools but no running water, and in the dark the intestines were not washed well—stuffed, boiled and eaten. Parts of the intestines would have been tasty but parts were not clean. They were bitter and we had to throw them away. [Laughs.]

Q: Had it been a long time since you had eaten any sheep meat? Was this the first real meat you had in a long time?

#13: It was many days later that we were eating meat.

Q: Was it around a month?

#13: Yes, it might have been a month.

Q: Then where did you go?

#13: I wonder what the name of the village was? It had a lot of rocky mountains. We were continuing northward. We had men in front and men following behind us. About 300 Chinese came chasing us.

Q: They were pursuing you?

#13: We had camped there, and we received information that they were coming behind us. We went to look and saw them coming. About 60 of us soldiers went up the grassy hill to wait for the Chinese.

Q: Sixty out of how many?

#13: There were about 400 of us. We waited for them at the pass and when they arrived, we fired. From their group only about 30 Chinese managed to return.

Q: Only 30 out of how many survived?

#13: They were about over 200. The 30 could survive because they had hidden themselves in the water pools on the pass. We couldn't get their leader.

Q: One Chinese officer got away but the others were killed?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

#13: At that time the main army unit was at the camp and happily preparing tea. The 60 were sent to fight.

Q: How many did you lose from your side?

#13: None among them died. No one died.

Q: Then the 60 men returned?

#13: Yes, they returned.

Q: Then where did you go?

#13: Then we set off to the place called Jang Mathi Lungpa. It was completely a desert. At Jang Mathi Lungpa we stayed with a nomad.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: After all the fighting, everybody was tired. We rested there for 11 or 12 days. There was no Chinese coming to this region. Everybody was so tired. Everyone was so tired. To eat *tsampa* the nomads had 200-300 bags of grains stacked in their houses. We purchased grains from them and ground it into flour—they had these instruments for self-grinding—and ate *tsampa*. They were owners of thousands of sheep. We bought sheep from them and for around 12 days, we relaxed. After the battles, the men and horses were tired. The horses had had no grains to eat. We gave them meat which they ate.

Q: Everyone was able to get fat?

#13: We remained relaxed as there were no Chinese who came to that part.

Q: Meanwhile did you have any idea what was going on anywhere else in the country?

#13: There was no way we could hear anything. We were fighting in deserted areas and we didn't hear any news. We never heard anything.

[Tape change. Discontinuity in interview.]

#13: So after 12 or 13 days staying at Jang Mathi Lungpa, we were confused as to where to go. We cannot go to Lhasa because the Chinese had surrounded and blocked the roads to Lhasa. There was a person among us who could make contact with Pawo Dungpa.

Q: And who was Pawo Dungpa?

#13: It was the protective deity of the land. It was the deity of the whole region.

Q: The God of your province. And there was a person among you who knew how to contact him.

#13: Yes, he could contact.

Q: How did he do that? How was he able to contact Pawo Dungpa?

#13: A *gyachen* was offered.

Q: What's a *gyachen*?

#13: How do I explain? It is an offering of *chang* 'home-brewed beer' or tea or milk. Then he would pray.

Q: So he had to make an offering. Okay. And so? What did the deity say?

#13: We asked, "Where do we go? We do not understand. Please tell us which way we have to go. Show us the way. Tell us where we have to go and fight. Which is a good place to fight?"

Q: Did he show you the way?

#13: He said, "Go towards Kham. Turn towards Gyasho Ponkha and go." There was a place called Gyasho Ponkha and we were to go towards that.

Q: Towards Kham? But how did you learn that? How was the message communicated from Pawo Dungpa?

#13: The spirit came within that person and he spoke.

Q: They spoke to him, to that person?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: The spirit itself entered that person's soul.

Q: And the spirit spoke through that person?

#13: Yes, the person spoke.

Q: The spirit took possession of that person and spoke and told you, “You must go in the direction of Kham?”

#13: Yes, that is right. We were told to go in the direction of Kham. We were told to face towards Gyasho Ponkha and to go in that direction. He also said that he would help us.

Q: Did you go?

#13: We believed it and decided to go in that direction. There were two *porok* ‘ravens.’

Q: The black birds?

#13: Yes, ravens, the black birds.

Q: We have them here.

#13: No, not the ones we have here. The ravens in Tibet were very large.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Right since the battles started, these two ravens were with us. If we camped at night, they camped with us. If we set off in the morning, they set off with us.

Q: That's very interesting. So they stayed with you all the way and went wherever you went.

#13: Yes, wherever we went in the desert regions, they came with us. If the Chinese had blocked the way, the two ravens would caw. If they cawed, it meant that the Chinese lay in wait.

Q: So they warned you?

#13: Yes, they did.

Q: Okay.

#13: It was very cold in the desert and both the crows had developed sores under their wings. When they perched they had to sit with their wings out like this [gestures]; they couldn't sit with their wings close to their bodies due to the sores. It was extremely cold and they had flown everyday.

Q: You could see the sores under their wings? But they still came with you?

#13: We could see the sores. We would feed them with meat pieces and bones. Whatever we ate, we threw some for them.

Q: Then?

#13: Even the two birds helped us.

Q: So what happened?

#13: We used to say that the ravens were manifestations of the deities.

Q: The reincarnation of Pawo Dungpa?

#13: Whatever it might be, we used to say that they were the manifestations of the deities. We did not know whether they were Pawo Dungpa's manifestations or not.

Q: You knew it was a god.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: We are now in Kham? The deity told you to go towards Kham?

#13: We were told to go facing in the direction of Kham. From Jang Mathi Lungpa, we came across to the place Gyasho Ponkha.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: The people of the region collected and provided us with meat, butter, *tsampa*, and grain for the horses.

Q: Where was Gyasho Ponkha?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Gyasho Ponkha was in Kham.

Q: In my mind I am thinking you are way out in the west, in western Tibet and Kham is very far away. Are you saying that you traveled all the way from west of Tibet to Kham?

#13: We went all the way from the north to Kham.

Q: How long did that take?

#13: When we fought, we stayed in one place for several days.

Q: How many days did it take you altogether?

#13: We did not reach the deepest part of Kham. There are many regions and you had to travel further from Gyasho Ponkha.

Q: And you traveled through Nangchen area? Je Khondo area? Is that the way you went?

#13: We reached Nangchen later. First from Gyasho Ponkha, we reached Mera Sathing.

Q: Where did you go from Mera Sathing?

#13: At Mera Sathing, there was a Chinese grain depot. We raided the grain depot. We took away the grain and exchanged it for meat and butter with the people. It was a lot of grain.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Then we went to the place called Chara Penpa.

Q: Then?

#13: At Chara Penpa, we made a camp and stayed there.

Q: How long did you stay?

#13: About a month.

Q: Then where did you go?

#13: From Chara Penpa we went to fight the Chinese at Pomey.

Q: Did you fight?

#13: Yes, we crossed a pass and fought fiercely. There were many Chinese living there. We battled and burned many Chinese houses. We fought for two days there. After two days we returned to Chara Penpa. It was the cavalry that went to fight.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: We lost one man there. Then we went to Shopadho.

[Discontinuity in interview.]

#13: From Chara Penpa, we went to Tsawa Pasho. There was a monastery called Pasho Gonpa.

Q: How long did you stay there?

#13: The Tibetan government had stored weapons there. The Tibetan government had kept many guns there. We came to know that the Tibetan government had kept weapons there. To take away the weapons, two hundred cavalymen were sent from Shopadho to Tsawa Pasho.

Q: What happened when you went there?

#13: The Tibetan government had kept guns there. So from Chara Penpa we traveled day and night to reach the monastery, without any sleep. We had to travel for about five days. We were 200 cavalymen. We went to the Tsawa Pasho Monastery at night. We encircled the hill and the boundary walls of the monastery.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: When day broke, our army leaders went to the gate and called those who were in charge of the Tsawa Pasho Monastery.

Q: Then?

#13: They said, “You have weapons of the Tibetan government. Give the weapons to the *Chushi Gangdrug*. If you do not hand over the weapons, we are going to fire.”

Q: Then?

#13: Those in charge of the monastery said, “Please do not fight with us. We will hand over the weapons.” Then they called all the men and we entered the monastery. They provided grain for the horses and food for the army: *tsampa*, butter and meat. They were very good to us.

Q: Did they see you as friends or enemies?

#13: They liked us from the depth of their hearts. They liked the *Ten Sung Makmi* [soldiers of the defenders of faith]. They served us food because they liked us. We had told them that if they did not hand over the weapons, we would fire on them. We tied up the head monks. If not they would face problems from the Chinese. So we tied them up as a ruse.

Q: You tied up the monks to scare them?

#13: What?

Q: You tied up the monks to scare them?

#13: If we didn't tie them up, later the Chinese would say that they gave us the weapons willingly. Then the monastery would face problems, which is why we tied them up.

Q: I see. So you made it look like you forced them to do it. So you tied up the monks, so the Chinese would think they had no choice.

#13: That is right. They would have to say that the weapons were seized and that they were tied up. Also that they were threatened to be shot and the monastery destroyed. They were to say to the Chinese that the weapons were taken from them forcibly.

Q: Actually that was not the truth. They were lying to the Chinese.

#13: They were lying to the Chinese that the weapons were seized.

Q: Did they understand why you were tying them up?

#13: There were about 500 monks and they all knew.

Q: Did the monks whom you were tying up know that you were tying them up as a ruse?

#13: Perhaps the majority of the monks did not know that we were tying them up as a ruse. It was our idea to tie them up.

Q: Then what happened after you tied them up? Did you take the things?

#13: Then they handed us all the guns. There were about 1,000 guns. We asked the people of the village to bring horses, loaded the guns on them and we set off for Shopadho with the weapons.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: Then we went back to Shopadho.

Q: Was Shopadho in Kham?

#13: Yes, it was in Kham. Sho Tsa Lha sum; yes, it is in Kham.

Q: Then where did you go?

#13: Then we went to Chunggo Tenshel.

Q: Then?

#13: At Chunggo Tenshel the Chinese were dropping bombs from the airplanes.

Q: Did they spot you and were dropping bombs?

#13: They were dropping bombs on the soldiers of the *Chushi Gangdrug* and the people. They also fired guns from the airplanes.

Q: Then?

#13: Then we reached Tsapongon, traveling up from Chunggo Tenshel. We passed through Sowa Tsendhengon and the place called Chamdha. Then we returned to Lho Zong.

Q: Where? At Tsangpo Tenshel?

#13: Yes. We returned to Shopadho. We had gone from Shopadho, then to all those places and back to Shopadho. Then from this region we traveled up.

Q: Where?

#13: We went towards the direction of Lhasa. When we reached there the war was going on in Lhasa.

Q: You reached Lhasa?

#13: We didn't reach Lhasa. The Chinese had fought in Lhasa and His Holiness the Dalai Lama had left for India. Lhasa had fallen and His Holiness had gone to India. We were still in Kham then.

Q: Did you hear this news?

#13: We never heard that there was a war in Lhasa and that His Holiness had left for India. We didn't hear about it in Kham.

Q: So you heard this now that His Holiness had escaped. I was wondering what the time [audio not discernable] you described was before the events in Lhasa with the Dalai Lama. I don't know how long, this was a year before or two years before the Dalai Lama escaped?

#13: Yes. That was around a year before His Holiness escaped.

Q: A year or two before the escape?

#13: We battled there for more than a year or two years. We were fighting there before His Holiness the Dalai Lama left for India.

Q: Then?

#13: While we were there—whether he was sent by the Tibetan government or not—an old man on a horse with a bell came to us. He might have been sent by the Tibetan government in Lhasa. He said, “Come back. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has left for India. Lhasa is lost.” He was sent to convey the message.

Q: Then you went to Lhasa?

#13: Then we returned in the direction of Lhasa. He told us to return and not to stay there as Lhasa was lost and His Holiness had left for India. A messenger was sent to us. So we returned.

Q: Then?

#13: Then we became very sad. We returned.

Q: To Lhasa?

#13: We came from Kham, facing in the direction of Lhasa. We destroyed a Chinese depot and seized pork and 200 or 300 Chinese pickles. Pork was distributed among the soldiers. We seized about 100 to 200 sacks of pork from the Chinese.

Q: You grabbed about 100 to 200 pork?

#13: Sacks. We had plenty of pork to eat. Lhasa was lost and there was another division of our army based at Lhoka. We wanted to take some pork for them to eat, so we asked the people to transport about 150 packs of pork on their animals. We drove these along.

Q: You sent it to the main army unit?

#13: We wanted to take it there and have a feast. Andrug Gonpo Tashi went ahead first. Then our cavalry men were 400 in number. Only 400 were left. Andrug Gonpo Tashi went forward with 200 cavalry men. He crossed Lhasa's Tsangpo River and went towards India.

Q: Did you go with him?

#13: That was Andrug Gonpo Tashi. About 200 of us were left behind.

Q: You were left behind in Kham?

#13: We had reached around Lharigo.

Q: Where?

#13: We had reached the vicinity of Jang Lharigo.

Q: Where is that?

#13: It was in the region of Kham. From Jang Lharigo, we came to Kongpo Jamdha. We were now on the main road where the Chinese vehicles were traveling.

Q: If you did not go with your leader, Andrug Gonpo, and you stayed behind, what did you think you'd be doing?

#13: It was like this in Nyenmo. I told you we fought there? When we returned we had to again pass through Nyenmo and their people said...

Q: I don't follow you. Please say it again.

#13: I told you that we had the sword fight in Nyenmo. The people of the village said that near the motor road, they picked up 700 Chinese corpses on their yaks.

Q: Who took them?

#13: The Chinese took them away—their soldiers' bodies. I forgot to mention that.

Q: Andrug Gonpo and 200 horsemen left for India. You and the 200 horsemen stayed back.

#13: We were left behind.

Q: Why were you left behind?

#13: That was because we had many sacks of pork.

Q: Too much and they had to move fast?

#13: There was a lot of pork and we were to take them to the main army unit. We thought we would have a party when we reached there with it.

Q: So you were going to carry supplies to the main Tibetan army camp while Andrug Gonpo was making his way to escape to India? You thought you would be fighting on? Is that correct?

#13: A part of our army was stationed on the other side of the river. We thought of delivering it to them. We thought it would be like a present for them. The pork was transported on animals belonging to the people. There were enough loads for 50 animals. We stayed three days in Kongpo Jamdha.

Q: Is that the place where the Tibetan army was?

#13: That was the place where the main Chinese motor road was. We could see the Chinese workers ploughing the fields with horses. From there we sent the people with the animal loads ahead while we stayed back. The loads were sent ahead. None of the soldiers accompanied the loads. They were sent ahead.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: The roads were very narrow. While we were there, about 100 vehicles had come from Lhasa, towards Kongpo Jamdha. When the vehicles came along and our pork loads were on the way, they had an encounter. The Chinese loaded all the pork in their vehicles. We had lost all the pork. Only civilians were there and they didn't resist.

Q: How many Chinese vehicles arrived?

#13: They said there were about 100.

Q: So the Chinese took the pork that was going to the Tibetan army?

#13: The civilians did not resist the Chinese when they took the pork. None of the soldiers accompanied them. We were all still there. When the soldiers arrived there, the Chinese had put the loads in the vehicles. The road was very narrow. The area was very constricted. We fired at the leading vehicles. Both sides fired on each other for one whole day. There was no way to pass through because the area was so closed in. So we took a detour and set off.

Q: You again fought there?

#13: We fought but the road was so narrow. It was impossible to chase them. That evening we took a detour and left for Lhoka. We were in the direction of the Indian border. We had crossed the Tsangpo River of Lhasa and come towards the Indian border.

Q: Wow! Wait a second because just a moment ago we were in Kham and now we are near the Indian border. You must have done some very heavy riding.

#13: When you crossed the Tsangpo it was not Indian but Tibetan Territory. If you went further, India was close.

Q: Where was it where you raided the depot?

#13: That was in Kham.

Q: The place where you got the pork?

#13: That was in Kham where we raided the Chinese depot.

Q: Then you reached Lhoka?

#13: Then the 200 horsemen reached Lhoka. When we reached Lhoka, all the soldiers of Lhoka had accompanied His Holiness the Dalai Lama and were gone. When we reached Lhoka all the soldiers were gone.

Q: And you too?

#13: From Lhoka we went in the direction of the Indian border. We had to cross a mountain pass called Mangola. Once you crossed over Mangola, you were in Indian Territory.

Q: What happened there?

#13: We reached a place called Mon Tawang.

Q: You were in Indian Territory?

#13: That was in India.

Q: You arrived in Tawang. It's been quite a journey. I feel like I have gone every step of the way with you. [Laughs.]

#13: After crossing the mountain pass, horses couldn't go further. It was rocky and horses cannot climb up the rocks. So the horses had to be left behind.

Q: You had to leave the horses behind?

#13: The horses might have died there. There was not much grass to eat. If you looked up, it was mountains and if you looked down, it was water. We had to leave the horses behind there.

Q: Did you swim across, walk across, how did you get across?

#13: We swam across. There were no boats. Then we had to walk across the cliffs.

Q: With your weapons?

#13: Yes, we swam with our weapons. When we reached Mon Tawang, all the weapons were collected by the Indians at the gate. We were not allowed to keep weapons. Among the weapons were Chinese made machine guns, pistols and rifles—all were handed over to the Indians. When we came, we had nothing except our knives. I was filled with sorrow.

Q: Why were you sad?

#13: Because all our weapons were taken away. There would be no more fighting and no weapons. I felt very sad. Then in Mon Tawang, the Indian airplanes came. They dropped rice and rations from the planes. They distributed a mug full of rice to us everyday.

Q: Did you want to go back and fight some more?

#13: I wish to fight. A soldier should be able to march, should be able to eat, should be able to run, and should be able to carry; now I can't. If I was younger, I would wish to fight now.

Q: How soon after ending up in Tawang did you end up in Bylakuppe?

#13: We stayed about a week in Tawang, then we were sent to Missamari in India.

Q: How long did it take you to get here?

#13: I didn't come to Bylakuppe from Missamari. From Missamari we were sent to Gangtok in Sikkim.

Q: Then?

#13: All the guerrillas were sent to Gangtok. There we were made to construct roads.

Q: The road crew.

#13: While working on the road construction, we received a pay of two rupees per day. We didn't need any money except food.

Q: You worked on the road crew, then how long was it before you got to Bylakuppe?

#13: It took a long time. We stayed as road crew for about a year in Gangtok. From there we were sent to Lho Chumi Gyatsa [Mustang in Nepal]. The war was going to resume and we were sent to Mustang.

Q: Then?

#13: We were told to report in Darjeeling. At Darjeeling we were each given 200 rupees and told to go to Mustang. We had to travel for many days. There were no highways then. At Mustang we made camp on a hill and stayed there.

Q: How long did you stay there?

#13: Our guns had been collected by the Indian government. We did not have guns. There were some who came from the Lho side, so only about 10 to 15 people had guns.

Q: And where is Lho Chumi Gyatsa?

#13: It is on the border between Nepal and Tibet.

Q: You were there because you thought you'd be going to fight the Chinese from there?

#13: The place belonged to Nepal.

Q: And you thought you'd be fighting the Chinese from there?

#13: We went there with the intention of fighting.

Q: Did you end up going to Mustang at all from there? Did you have any experience in Mustang?

#13: I haven't heard that name. [Interviewee used the Tibetan name for Mustang, Lho Chumi Gyatsa.]

Q: So what happened in Nepal?

#13: We stayed on a hill called Yarapong. While we were there, Nepal refused to sell us food rations.

Q: Why didn't they sell?

#13: I don't know the reason. There were two Nepalese ministers called Sarkhansopa and Melasopa. The one called Sarkhansopa was good to us, but Melasopa ordered the people not to sell us provisions.

Q: Then?

#13: Then it became difficult for us to procure provisions and we didn't have enough to eat. We used to secretly go to purchase from families around the area. Since we didn't have enough to eat, about 30 guerrillas went towards the direction of Tibet. They went to Tibet. They came back driving nomads and their animals. They were Tibetans; Tibetan nomads. Crossing over the border into Tibet, they came back driving all the people and their animals through the snow. There were Chinese sentries but they did not dare oppose the guerrillas. They had brought along entire families of nomads including their children.

Q: Which army did this?

#13: The *Chushi Gangdrug* guerrillas.

Q: *Chushi Gangdrug's* army took nomads and went to Tibet and brought back nomads into Nepal?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: For what purpose?

#13: They were sent to India, to Dharamsala to be taken care of.

[DVD 2 ends; DVD 3 begins]

Q: So you were part of an army that was reorganizing in Nepal and the purpose of which was to strike across the border, I am assuming in Tibet—is that correct?

#13: We were assembled with the intention to fight the Chinese.

Q: To fight against China and who was supporting your army? Where did the money come from to do this?

#13: I suppose the benefactor was Sey Gyalo Dhondup.

Q: Do you suppose or was it Sey Gyalo Dhondup?

#13: The main person who organized the unit might have been Sey Gyalo Dhondup. Sey Gyalo Dhondup, the brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Q: His Holiness' own brother who was in Nepal?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Not in Nepal—[the person] who organized the army. But he is not sure.

Q: You are not sure where the money came from. How many people were organized in Nepal or in that army? Do you have any idea how many soldiers there were?

#13: There might have been around 300 men; we who had gone there with enthusiasm.

Q: And did you have enough opportunity to...

#13: Later it increased to around 500. There was around that many.

Q: Did you go into China and do any raids on the Chinese army?

#13: To be able to go to war, our weapons had not yet arrived. They were training us and during the training we used sticks in place of guns.

Q: Did you ever get real guns?

#13: There were no real guns. We had surrendered our guns to the Indians. There were only about 15 or 16 guns. We were going to Tibet armed with the 15 or 16 guns.

Q: Did you go?

#13: No, I didn't go but others were sent to Tibet in groups of 20 to 50. They were sent to drive back the nomads and animals because we didn't have enough to eat. It was not easy going there. It was about five days' journey.

Q: How long did you spent in Nepal in this organized army unit?

#13: There was scarcity of food in Mustang. The Nepalese wouldn't sell us provisions and there was hardly anything to eat. At times we used our own money to buy something to eat. In this difficult situation I stayed about three years and then I returned.

Q: Where did you return?

#13: I returned to India.

Q: Two or three years? That's a long time.

#13: After we had left, I heard the United States dropped weapons from the sky. The weapons reached there but by then we had returned to India. The arms were dropped in Tibetan territory at night and they had to be brought to Nepal. Those were very good weapons and they had fought some wars.

Q: So you missed that! You would have wished to have done that!

#13: I was in India when they dropped the weapons.

Q: Are you sorry that you were in India at that time instead of fighting?

#13: I was terribly sorry. I thought if only they had dropped the weapons when we were there! Then we would not have returned [to India]. Now it's finished, I thought.

Q: I am sure you would.

#13: That made me very sorry. It was there in my mind that I should fight the Chinese and we just had sticks then. When they dropped the real guns, we had already left.

Q: You went back to India and then...I'm still wondering how you got to Bylakuppe?

#13: I hadn't reached Bylakuppe so quickly. After leaving Mustang, I joined the ITBP [Indo-Tibetan Border Police] force. [Laughs.] I hoped I would get a chance to fight and joined the Indian force.

Q: No getting to Bylakuppe before you...[Laughs.] Okay, how long were you in the Indian army?

#13: I was there for about five years.

Q: And then did you come to Bylakuppe? [Laughter.]

#13: I hadn't yet reached Bylakuppe then. I thought that if I joined the ITBP, the Indians would give me weapons to my heart's content to fight with, and that later I might get an opportunity to fight the Chinese. So I joined the ITBP force. [Laughs.]

Q: Where did you go next?

#13: After about five years, it was said that the ITBP force had to be merged with the 22 army [a unit of the Indian Army] in Dehradun.

Q: How many years were you there?

#13: Where?

Q: In the Indian Army, in the Unit 22?

#13: The Colonel said, "If there is anyone who wishes to join the Unit 22, he can go. Whatever rank you hold in the ITBP, you will hold the same there. I request all to join the Unit 22. If anyone does not wish to join the Unit 22, he will receive his discharge. We will issue certificates to that effect." I said I didn't want to join the Unit 22.

Q: You didn't go?

#13: No, I didn't go. I said that I didn't want to go to the Unit 22 and that I'd like to take discharge. They issued me the relevant documents.

Q: You retired from the ITBP? Okay.

#13: Then I said that I wanted to go to Bylakuppe.

[Hearty laughter from everyone.]

Q: Why here? Did they have an army here to join?

#13: They said they would give us land.

Q: Who said that?

#13: The Army authority said that if we went here they would give us land and a house.

Q: So you came here. Did you meet your wife here in Bylakuppe?

#13: The army authorities gave us a very good document. We could go anywhere. If we showed it to the police they let us through.

Q: Did you meet your wife in Bylakuppe?

#13: Yes, we met in Bylakuppe.

Q: Do you remember what year you came here?

#13: I have no idea when. I must have been here for at least 30 years.

Q: So you made a family here? You had children?

#13: Yes, I have children.

Q: I just think your story is an amazing story. What I want to ask you is this: first of all you started out being a monk, before you became a fighter. Right?

#13: You mean before I joined the army? I was not a monk. I had lost monkhood. I lost monkhood at Phari Thangka.

Q: First you were a monk and then you joined the army?

#13: I did not join the army as a monk. When I joined the army I was not a monk.

Q: You were a monk earlier?

#13: Yes, earlier I was a monk. I told you I sued the man and came.

Q: How do you reconcile the scriptures that you studied as a child and all that you learned about Buddhism—with even His Holiness' message of non-violence—with your life which is one with much fighting and much killing?

#13: I used to believe that it was not a sin to kill the Chinese. In fact we used to feel happy at killing Chinese during the war. They do not have any kindness, and they are liars.

Q: What do you think is most important that you preserve for future generation of Tibetans?

#13: His Holiness the Dalai Lama is negotiating for freedom with the Chinese through peaceful means. I think it would be good to organize an army at the border by seeking help from the USA or some other country. I think it would be good to prepare an army at one place.

Q: You would prefer that you'd bring an army and take back Tibet from the Chinese?

#13: Yes, to get back Tibet. We swore that we would take back Tibet. When we first went to join the army in Mustang, they said that once we were there we had to swear that we would be able to raise the flag atop the Potala Palace. We swore that we would risk our life to be able to raise the flag atop the Potala Palace. The Army authorities made us swear.

Since I had given my pledge, I thought that I would fight some day and that the place I should die should be in Tibet. But now there is nothing left to fight and die for. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is negotiating in peace. I think, somewhere at the border—the Unite 22 is in India. So it will not be able to fight at once. We have to organize an army. If we could continue to fight, we could cause a tremor in Tibet. Even though the Tibetans are

fewer in number, they could fight secretly, the guerrilla way. In this way we could cause a stir. That is what I think, besides that there is nothing else.

Q: I want to thank you very very much for this incredible story that you told of your experience. I feel honored to have been able to hear it from you.

#13: Thank you. For me I am very happy that I had the chance to talk about my life experiences and that it may help the Tibetans in the future. It makes me happy that I have been able to relate my story to him [gestures towards the interviewer].

Q: Future generations of Tibetans will be very grateful that they will be able to hear this story.

#13: Thank you that I have been able to relate all my experiences. Whether they are guerrillas or people of Kham, we always hope that the USA will come to our aid.

Q: I hope so too.

#13: I request that in the future if we need your help, please extend it. We would be dead, the elders who are now useless. I will continue to pray.

Q: Thank you. So Ngawang Losang, I wish to give you this [presents gift] in thanks for sharing your story with us, so that everyone will be able to know what your experience was in Tibet. Please accept this with our gratitude.

[Interpreter explains the release form and interviewee signs.]

END OF FIRST INTERVIEW

#13: I want to tell how we fought in Marshong.

Q: Yes, I want to hear that.

#13: First we arrived in Phoro Zongkar.

Q: Did you come from Phoro Zongkar to Marshong?

#13: I will relate step by step. You can translate that.

Q: Did you come from Phoro Zongkar to Marshong?

#13: Yes. Not just the routes, I must tell how we fought the wars. Before we reached Marshong, we fought many times.

Q: What had happened before you came here?

#13: Before we reached Marshong, we had fought many battles. I must tell you all that and the routes we took. It must be told step by step.

Q: Okay, let's get to Marshong. How did you fight in Marshong?

#13: Before we could reach Marshong, the Chinese had blocked our way. The Chinese, in anticipation of our coming had blocked the narrow path.

Q: How many of you were there?

#13: There were about 700 horsemen.

Q: The Chinese were obstructing your path?

#13: They were obstructing. The Chinese had blocked the path through a valley and we went right in the path, fighting them along the way. We killed all those who were blocking our path.

Q: You killed all the Chinese?

#13: There were not many; only about 30 or 40 who stood guard in the valley. They were looking out for us.

Q: There were 700 of you and 30 or 40 of them?

#13: Yes, we killed all those who stood blocking our way. We continued on our journey.

Q: And you ambushed them or you were waiting for them? And then what happened?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Actually the Chinese were waiting for them on the road. They killed them and they went to Marshong.

Q: They were waiting for you and they were surprised by how many there were of you?

#13: Yes. They were obstructing our way and we entered right in and our guerrillas killed them all.

Q: You killed them and you were on your way to Marshong?

#13: Yes, we were on our way to Marshong. They were blocking our way.

Q: They wanted to ambush you but you surprised them?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes.

Q: You killed them with rifles or with swords?

#13: We killed them with our guns. There was forest on all sides.

Q: Were there any prisoners taken?

#13: We didn't take any prisoners; all were killed.

Q: Continue.

#13: Then we proceeded and reached the top of the mountain pass to Marshong. When we reached there, a nomad was setting up his *ba*. You know the nomad's *ba*?

Q: Is *ba* a house?

#13: It's a tent. The nomad was setting up his tent. He said to Andrug Gonpo Tashi, "Do not go down into the valley. For five days the Chinese have been surrounding that area. The Chinese are making preparations to fight in the hills and there are about 7,000 to 8,000 of them. They used horses to drag all the artillery up and set them up in various places. It has been five days since they started the preparations." That was before our arrival. So they knew we would take that route.

Q: What do you mean the tent flew in the air?

#13: It didn't fly in the air. He was putting it up. It was the place for them to stay.

Q: Then did you go to Marshong?

#13: Andrug Gonpo Tashi said that we had to go down into the valley. We had to go down into the valley even if the Chinese had surrounded it.

Q: Why did he say that?

#13: The Chinese had obstructed our path.

Q: Why did he say that you had to go? To war?

#13: Of course, to fight. The Chinese had surrounded the whole area. He said we would go right in to fight.

Q: But even though he knew that you were outnumbered, he wanted to go?

#13: He knew and said that we would go. The nomad had told him that the Chinese had been preparing for five days before we came. The artillery was dragged up by horses and set up on the slopes.

Q: Then what happened? Did you go right in?

#13: We descended the mountain and about halfway down there was water and we camped there to make our morning tea. We hadn't yet had our breakfast.

Q: You had tea and breakfast and then what happened?

#13: After we had our tea, Andrug Gonpo Tashi called the group leaders. He said that he needed 100 men who would volunteer to go into the valley.

Q: Why only 100?

#13: He needed them to lead the way. The reason why he wanted 100 to go ahead was, the ground was very wide and then as you went lower, it sort of tapered into the valley and became quite narrow. If you went down this narrow valley, it was another four or five miles before you reached the highway. In the area from where we had camped to lower down in the valley, the Chinese lay in wait.

Q: Why did he say he wanted a hundred men?

#13: He wanted the hundred men to go ahead to the narrow valley...

Q: Did he want to send them to find a way?

#13: He sent them down. A hundred men were sent from the camp to the part where the path narrowed. The distance was about three miles. You know the distance they measure in India? It was about three miles until you reached the narrow path.

Q: You mean until they reached the Chinese camp?

#13: I mean that the ground was that big in area.

Q: Were you one of the volunteers?

#13: So there were the 100 horsemen who volunteered. Andrug Gonpo Tashi sent 50 horsemen from one side and 50 horsemen from the other side near the hill. And these men were to meet at the point where the path narrowed.

Q: Were you one of the horsemen?

#13: Yes, I was among the hundred. I was among those who went down from the left side. When the hundred horsemen rode down the slope, the Chinese did not fire at all.

Q: Did they see you?

#13: We rode down; the Chinese did not fire on us. They did not fire on the 100 horsemen who went ahead.

Q: Why didn't they shoot?

#13: When we reached the end of the valley, Andrug Gonpo Tashi and the rest of the guerrillas rode down the slope towards the valley. They were following us, the 700 horsemen, and mules carrying our supplies. There were about 30 mules. The whole valley was filled.

Q: You were going towards Marshong?

#13: Yes, we were going towards Marshong.

Q: Why do you think the Chinese did not shoot? Did you know they were there?

#13: We could not see the Chinese. They reached there five days before we arrived and they had hidden in fox holes.

Q: The Chinese were there? They didn't shoot?

#13: The Chinese were there but they didn't shoot, until the main group did not reach the end of the valley.

Q: The Chinese did not shoot?

#13: No, they did not shoot.

Q: Why do you think they did not shoot?

#13: They thought they would shoot when the whole army reached the middle of the ground.

Q: Andrug Gonpo said that? The Chinese did not fire? Why didn't they?

#13: That's not what I said. When they [the latter group led by Andrug Gonpo Tashi] first started, they had to reach the middle of the ground. They were climbing down the pass...

Q: When the hundred horsemen rode down, the Chinese saw them?

#13: The Chinese could see from the pass and had their guns ready to shoot.

Q: But they didn't shoot. Why didn't they shoot?

#13: They wanted the main army group to reach the middle of the ground. They thought they would shoot once the main army group was in the middle of the ground. They thought they would destroy the whole army.

Q: Did you know they were watching?

#13: We couldn't see the Chinese. They were in the fox holes.

Q: You didn't see the Chinese.

#13: We didn't see them.

Q: Do you think the Chinese saw you?

#13: We could be seen. They were watching us with their guns from the hills.

Q: But did you know they were watching?

#13: We knew the Chinese were there. I told you we met the nomad who told us. When Andrug Gonpo Tashi and the group had reached the center of the ground, the Chinese fired their artillery batteries. All around on the hills, they had artillery. Gya Lobsang Tashi said that he counted 1,800 artillery batteries that were fired on us.

Q: Did he say there were 1,800 artillery?

#13: He said that many were fired on us. The artillery was fired from different points and for us to be able to shoot at them, we couldn't see any Chinese. In Tibet we have high rocky mountains with pastures below. All around us were rocky mountains and they mostly fired on the rocky mountains. I don't know why.

Q: The Chinese?

#13: The shells were falling down.

Q: They didn't shoot on the men but fired on the rocky mountains?

#13: They were firing on the men too. I don't know why, but they were firing there. They were firing where there were no men, on the rocks.

Q: They were firing on the army as well as on the rocks?

#13: They were targeting the army but perhaps it was oversight that they fired that way. We believed that Tibet's protective deities created an illusion that the army was on the rocks to protect the army below from being hit. By the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama an illusion was created of the army being on the rocks. When the main army group came down, the shells were falling in a circle around them. The whole valley became black with the smoke and dust of the artillery shells. To shoot back at them, we couldn't see even one Chinese.

Finally one shell fell where Andrug Gonpo Tashi was. The shell hit a rock and the fragments hit Andrug Gonpo Tashi on his face and he was injured there. Innumerable shells were fired on us but none of us were hurt. That was amazing and it must have been the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Since Andrug Gonpo Tashi was injured, instead of going further down, we retraced our steps up to the base camp.

Q: But you said he was wounded by fragments in the face. Did he have any other wounds?

#13: He was injured in the face and as well as on his body. He was hit by fragments. The main army group retraced their steps and went up the slope, while we, the hundred men who had gone ahead were at the end of the valley. We were at the end of the valley.

Q: At Marshong?

#13: Yes, at Marshong.

Q: Were you in the middle?

#13: We were lower down. Then they started firing on us too.

Q: The Chinese? On 100 men?

#13: Yes, they were firing on us.

Q: So 100 men were down there and Andrug Gonpo Tashi and the rest went back?

#13: We were there at that time. The 100 volunteers were down there, at the end of the valley.

Q: You stayed while the others took Andrug Gonpo Tashi back?

#13: Yes, they went back. They were firing on us but we could not see any of the Chinese. They were in the fox holes. One of our men was killed here. From among the hundred, one was killed.

Q: One soldier? Only one soldier out of a hundred?

#13: Yes, one was killed.

Q: With all that firing going on?

#13: Yes, they were firing. The main army group had gone back up the hill and now we had to go back. There was no way to go forward. If we wanted to fire on the Chinese, we couldn't see them because they were in the fox holes. So we hung our guns on our necks—it was a distance of three miles—and made a dash for it. There was so much firing on us that we could see the turf under the horses' hooves being hit.

Q: Then you retreated?

#13: The Chinese were firing on us from different directions and the earth beneath the horses was hit. There were 50 horsemen going from that side [gestures] and we 50 horsemen were going from the other side. They were shooting heavily while we galloped but no man or horse was hit.

Q: Why were they not hit?

#13: Generally bullets did not hit us because we had very good protective amulets to wear. Weapons did not harm Gya Lobsang Tashi. Guns had no effect on his body. He had a very good amulet given him by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Andrug Gonpo Tashi. He was given one by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Q: That's what he said?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes. Guns had no effect on his body.

#13: Andrug Gonpo Tashi was injured and when we returned to the base camp, it was close to night.

Q: When you reached the main base camp?

#13: As we rode up the hill, it was close to night. As the volunteers dashed up the hill, there were 11 or 12 mules laden with our supplies which were left behind on the plains. One mule, laden with tents, had fallen down a fissure and lay there with his legs flaying in the air. After seeing the mule in the fissure, I carried on for some distance towards the base camp.

After covering some distance I thought, "This war is being fought by the persistence of men, horses and mules. The hard work is being done by man and beast. How can we not help this mule up when he is lying there upside down?" So I rode back and with my knife cut the ropes on his body. As it was released, it immediately jumped up and ran towards the base camp. I could help the mule. It was laden with tents and a pair of *thado*. I cut off the ropes and brought the *thado* with me.

Q: What's a *thado*?

#13: It's a bag to put supplies in.

Q: So you brought the grains that were in it?

#13: Yes, I did. When I returned and opened it, I found that it contained bowls of 12 to 13 men! [Laughs.]

Q: You were hoping for some food there?

#13: I left the tents there. After I released the mule, it fled empty.

Q: When you reached the base camp, what happened there?

#13: We reached the base camp after night had fallen. It might have been around seven o'clock.

Q: Then where did you go?

#13: From there we went to a place where we fought one battle, but I can't remember the name of the place.

Q: The place called Marshong is in Kham?

#13: Marshong is not in Kham. The one called Marshong was not in Kham. It is in the area of Tibet.

Q: What do you mean in Tibet? Kham is in Tibet.

#13: We considered Kham as separate and Tibet as separate. We called the Lhasans Tibetans and their region Tibet. Kham was called Dhokham.

Q: At that time you used to consider the regions of Kham and Tibet as separate?

#13: The name was different but the meaning is the same. The names of the regions were different: Khampas and Tibetans. Tibetans were not Khampas.

Q: So Marshong is near Markham? Is it the same place with two names?

#13: They are entirely different. Marshong is towards Lhasa. It is in the region of Kongpo.

Q: So from Marshong you went to Markham?

#13: Then we went to a place...I cannot remember the name of the place. We encountered the Chinese and fought a battle. I do not know the name of the place. There were not many Chinese. There might have been around 100 to 200 Chinese. They were coming from another place and we encountered them on the way. We met at the slopes of a grassy hill.

Q: Did you fight here?

#13: Then we fought. We might have killed around 50 to 60 of them. None of our men were injured.

Q: And you had no losses.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No losses. The Chinese had with them a Tibetan to show them the way.

Q: They had one Tibetan guide working for the Chinese?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes, one Tibetan guide.

#13: Then we went in the direction of Jang Mathi Lungpa. There we rested and treated the wounds of Andrug Gonpo Tashi. We had medicines with us. The reason we had the medicines was, there was a man among us who had gone to the USA to train in wireless messaging and he was sent back by the Americans.

Q: He was a Tibetan?

#13: Yes, he was a Tibetan.

Q: He was sent to train in the U.S. and returned?

#13: Yes. He brought back medicines with him; medicines from the U.S. Andrug Gonpo Tashi was treated and other guerrillas who were sick received medications from him.

Q: How severely wounded was Andrug Gonpo Tashi?

#13: He was wounded in many places but not very seriously. The fragments had wounded his head and shoulders [gestures to the left part of his head and shoulders]. The fragments had hit his head. When Tibet was lost and we came to India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government sent Andrug Gonpo Tashi to London, the capital of England, for medical treatment.

Q: Did he fight any more after that battle or did he continue to fight?

#13: After he was injured, he couldn't fight. He was taken to the base camp. The soldiers did the fighting in the war. He was the one who made the war plans.

Q: Why was he wounded? Was he not wearing an amulet? Didn't he have an amulet?

#13: He had an amulet.

Q: Then why was he injured?

#13: We believed that the amulets did not protect us from stones.

Q: How?

#13: He must have had an amulet.

Q: He had an amulet? If he had an amulet, how was he injured?

#13: I don't know. I wonder how it happened.

Q: How do you understand that Lobsang Tashi was saying, “Hey, look at me. No one can touch me because I have my amulet” but Andrug Gonpo Tashi, he has an amulet, and he was wounded?

#13: Even if he was hit, the bullet did not enter his flesh.

Q: If Andrug Gonpo Tashi had an amulet, why was he hit?

#13: I don't know how it happened.

Q: It is hard to understand these things.

#13: Even we have been hit by guns at times but none penetrated us. All the soldiers were hit by guns but by the amulets' protection, they didn't pierce us. There were many such cases in the army. Because there were such cases, whenever we fought a battle, however many battles we fought, we always won, we were never at a loss. We fought 22 times.

Q: But you lost the war.

#13: It was not us. There was the Tibetan Government's Army in Lhasa and they lost it. The Tibetans said that it was the real army of the Tibetan government which lost the war.

Q: *Chushi Gangdrug* didn't lose any battles?

#13: We didn't lose any battles. The one who lost Lhasa was the Tibetan Government's Army. The Tibetan Government's Army was the Tibetans [meaning the people of Central Tibet or U-Tsang], who couldn't fight well, and we lost the country.

Q: Do you miss anything about those times when you look back on them?

#13: I remember those times a lot. I can see my companions dying. When I think how hard the soldiers fought and how brave men died fighting, it brings tears to my eyes. There were some who spent almost a year in the desert without untying the waist bands of their clothes even at night.

Q: Did they spend a year without eating?

#13: Without untying their waist bands. In the daytime we would be fighting and when night fell, we had to shift locations to avoid being surrounded by the Chinese if we stayed at one place. So we had to keep moving at night.

Q: Were you there or your colleagues?

#13: We were all there.

Q: So you stayed a year without untying your waist band?

#13: We fought for more than a year.

Q: In the desert?

#13: Yes, in the desert.

Q: It was continual.

#13: We fought in the day and stood guard at night in the desert. It would snow on the way and we would be covered in ice and we slept on the ice on the mountain passes.

Q: It was tremendous physical hardship.

#13: We never ever thought that we would lose our land. We thought we would win. *Chushi Gangdrug* never thought that we would lose our land. We made a base camp at Chara Penpa. We also enlisted soldiers from among the villagers. There was a lama of the Penpa Monastery called Penpa Tulku who enlisted men from the village.

Q: Did you fight at Chara Penpa?

#13: We fought in Chara Penpa. When the fight took place at Chara Penpa, Andrug Gonpo Tashi and a group had gone to another place to fight. While we were away, the Penpa Tulku had collected an army of 8,000 or 9,000 men, consisting of villagers.

Q: The Tibetan people and the *Chushi Gangdrug* fought?

#13: No, the Tibetans and the Chinese fought.

Q: Penpa Tulku became the commander?

#13: Penpa Tulku was the commander. He was a lama. There were not many who owned guns. Perhaps half the people had guns and half did not have guns.

Q: They fought against the Chinese?

#13: Yes, they fought against the Chinese. There was a man who came from my village of Markham. He was the son of a leader called Rishupon.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: He was sent to the U.S. for training. After his training in the U.S.... When the battle in Chara Penpa was going on, they were surrounded by around 10,000 Chinese troops. The battle was raging and at night the U.S. dropped Rishupon in Chara Penpa.

Q: He was dropped into Chara Penpa? Where?

#13: He was dropped on the ground in Chara Penpa. He asked the Americans to provide weapons.

Q: Rishupon asked?

#13: Yes, Rishupon phoned the Americans to provide weapons. He requested weapons to be dropped in Chara Penpa. Then weapons were dropped in the night. They had filled the guns with Vaseline.

Q: What's Vaseline?

#13: It's something you applied on the face. The guns were stuffed with these. Each gun was tied with 50 bullets. Since the guns were filled with Vaseline, the guns could not be used.

Q: Vaseline is the type of grease?

#13: Yes, it was greasy. The guns were filled with Vaseline. They hadn't cleaned the guns. The battle was going on and the guns could not be fired. To wash off the Vaseline and clean the gun would take an entire day.

Q: Why was there Vaseline in the guns?

#13: That was to prevent the gun from rusting.

Q: So you have to clean them off before you use them?

#13: The battle was going on and who was there to clean off the Vaseline? There was no one. [Laughs.] The weapons were useless. In the heat of the battle, there was no time to clean the Vaseline off the guns. It would normally take a day to do this work. We lost him there. We lost the one who was dropped from the airplane.

Q: Who is the new *Chushi Gangdrug* leader after Andrug Gonpo Tashi? Penpa Tulku wasn't a *Chushi Gangdrug* guerrilla?

#13: No, he was not in the *Chushi Gangdrug*. His was the army of the region. Penpa Tulku was the lama of the region, a reincarnate lama.

Q: I want to come back to your feelings about looking back on the past. When you look back on these times, what do you think?

#13: After we lost our land, I felt that our fight had been in vain.

Q: Do you have any regrets? If you could do something different right now, what would you personally do differently?

#13: The Chinese judged [our strength as] ten of their men against one of us; ten Chinese against one of us. They readied their side in this way to fight us.

Q: Do you have any regrets?

#13: We must have killed around 10,000. We killed that many Chinese. On our side, they must have killed in total around 100 or 200 of our men.

Q: Over 10,000 Chinese had been killed?

#13: We killed over 10,000. Our men were brave and courageous. It would be highly difficult to find such men.

Q: All the men of *Chushi Gangdrug*?

#13: Yes. Wherever Andrug Gonpo Tashi ordered us to strike, we did it without any hesitation.

Q: What was there about Andrug Gonpo Tashi do you think that made him such a great leader? Why was he special?

#13: We all respected him a lot. He was the one who organized the army. Everyone valued him like their own life. I told you about the construction of the golden throne for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and carrying out plans for waging a battle? Andrug Gonpo Tashi was the person who carried out the plans in Lhasa.

Q: Before he became a *Chushi Gangdrug* soldier?

#13: He was the one who thought out the plan for waging a battle together with five, six, or seven Khampa leaders. Eight or nine men had a meeting and they readied the whole thing.

Q: Do you ever have any contact with other survivors of *Chushi Gangdrug* army? Do you ever speak to anybody? How many people do you think are still alive from that *Chushi Gangdrug* now?

#13: Now all are dead. Look at me. At that time I was a young man and now my hair is all white. There were older men and now all must be dead.

Q: Are they all dead? Don't you have contact with anyone?

#13: There is hardly any living now. I was the youngest and my hair is white.

Q: Everyone is dead now?

#13: Yes, all are dead. In this whole area, except for me...

Q: You don't have contact?

#13: I do not have any contact. We have all reached settlements [in India] and everything is over. We each have our own land and house and we are settled. There is a *Chushi Gangdrug* here. In India we have the *Chushi Gangdrug* office. It is in Delhi.

Q: What was before, maybe ten years ago? Did you have any contacts then?

#13: All those with whom I had contact are dead. There were some I had contact with.

Q: Were they there before ten years?

#13: Now?

Q: Before ten years?

#13: Before ten years, they were there. We used to be happy meeting each other because we had been colleagues in the Force.

Q: You loved each other and you would talk about these battles with them.

#13: Yes, we used to talk about how we fought. We would only talk about the battles.

Q: Remind me, how old were you when you were in *Chushi Gangdrug*?

#13: I must have been about 20 years old. But I am not exactly sure.

Q: And the others were much older than you?

#13: Yes, they were older. So how would they be living? They are no more.

Q: Do you have anything...

#13: In Delhi there is a *Chushi Gangdrug* office. In the office, there are two or three men who had been in the battles.

Q: From those days, did you bring anything back? Do you have any memento or something that you were able to take with you back that you still have today?

#13: You mean a gun?

Q: Yes, anything?

#13: The guns were taken away by the Indians at the border.

Q: The guns were taken away, but do you have any other mementos?

#13: You mean now?

Q: Yes, anything, like a sword, a scar?

#13: Yes, there were many [scars].

Q: Do you have anything here now? With you?

#13: What?

Q: Do you have with you now, any mementos, like a sword or a scar you got when you fought the many battles?

#13: Yes, I have. When I was fighting in Nyenmo, a Chinese chased me with a sword. We had a sword fight for an hour and a half. A friend of mine was shot near the shoulder.

Q: I mean yourself? Have you been hit? Do you remember?

#13: I was hit here [points near chest].

Q: Do you have a scar there?

#13: A light scar remains. I was hit over the clothes. I found the bullet lodged in my clothes.

Q: Were you hit by a sword or gun? A gun?

#13: Yes.

Q: What was the name of the place where you were hit by a bullet?

#13: I think it was at Dhonkha Sundha.

Q: There were no other things that you brought back? Objects or anything?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: When they reached the Indian border, they had to give up everything.

#13: What we call our protective amulet is a piece of cloth or something of the lama we have faith in—in the one we believe in.

Q: What kind of clothes?

#13: A piece of the clothes of the lama of our belief.

Q: I don't understand.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: There is a lama for...an ideal lama whom we believe in—the root guru.

[Videographer to interviewer]: That means, like, your main teacher.

#13: They were very holy lamas, in whom we believed.

Q: You take something from the lama and you keep it with you and that helps protect you?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yeah, that's it.

#13: That was why many of the guerrillas did not die. If it was a strong protective amulet, then the bullets did not come close to you. If the protective force had diminished, then you might be touched by a weapon. Even if it touched you, it did not penetrate. Because we had the protective amulets, we were able to fight. If we didn't have the amulets, we could not have achieved that much. If we were fighting at one place and if 60-70 Chinese were dead, perhaps none of our men was dead or perhaps at the most one or two might be dead. That was how it was.

Q: I see. I understand. If you don't have such a good amulet, it might not protect you so well.

#13: Yes, then there was a greater chance of dying.

Q: When you go to sleep at night, do you ever dream of these things? Do you ever dream of the times you were fighting?

#13: I dream of it sometimes. Sometimes when I think of those days, I am unable to sleep at night. I remember all those places where we had fought and I cannot sleep at night.

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to tell me that I haven't asked you?

#13: I have left something to relate about in Tsang Nyenmo. When the sun rose at Tsang Nyenmo, we were climbing down towards Nyenmo. We were about 700 horsemen.

Q: At Tsang Nyenmo?

#13: Yes. On this road [gestures towards his left] thousands of Chinese were coming to surround us. On this road [gestures towards his right] thousands of Chinese were coming to surround us. In the morning we had camped there, removed the saddles from the horses, and prepared tea while the Chinese surrounded us until night fell.

Q: Then what happened?

#13: We were encircled by the Chinese. In Lhasa, at the Bhakor, the Chinese had set up loudspeakers from which they announced, “We have surrounded the *Chushi Gangdrug* in Nyenmo and made it impossible for them to escape.”

Q: Is Tsang Nyenmo close to Lhasa? Could you hear what they said?

#13: The Chinese had installed loudspeakers at the Bhakor in Lhasa. They even informed about it from the loudspeaker to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and asked the people to give their opinions saying, “We have surrounded the *Chushi Gangdrug* at Tsang Nyenmo and made it impossible for them to escape. Should we kill them all or capture them and bring them to Lhasa? Give your opinions.”

Q: What did the people say?

#13: When the people of Lhasa heard that the *Chushi Gangdrug* was surrounded, they feared greatly that all the *Chushi Gangdrug* [men] might be killed and the people of Lhasa went to offer prayers and burned incense at the Jowo Rinpoche and Pal Lhamo.

Q: Out of happiness?

#13: No, because they thought that we might be killed.

Q: Out of sadness?

#13: Yes, out of sadness. They prayed to the gods. All the people of Lhasa offered incense and prayers at the Jokhang and Pal Lhamo.

Q: They offered prayers thinking that you might have been killed?

#13: They offered prayers hoping that we might escape and not be killed. They also flew prayer flags. They prayed that we might not be killed and that we escape.

Q: And you did escape!

#13: Then we fought there and we won.

Q: You won. That's right.

#13: We fought with our swords for an hour and a half.

Q: With swords?

#13: We fought with our swords and chased the Chinese into the forests.

Q: Then the Chinese ran away?

#13: Later the villagers told us that about 700 Chinese were killed there. We lost about 12 men. The next morning in Lhasa they announced on the loudspeakers that *Chushi Gangdrug* lost the battle. [Laughs.]

Q: Actually you won the war.

#13: Yes, we did. The Chinese couldn't carry the bodies up to where the roadway began. So they asked the villagers to bring yaks. Each yak hauled three bodies to the motor road.

Q: Why couldn't they carry them in the vehicles? Where there not enough vehicles?

#13: They had to transport the bodies up to the road way. They made the villagers do it with their yaks, each yak loaded with three bodies. They said there were 700 bodies. The next morning all the bodies were taken to Lhasa in vehicles. The vehicles went dripping with blood to Lhasa. That was how it was.

Q: That's it?

#13: I have told you about the earlier battles. I had left out this story and I thought this was the most important.

Q: Thank you.

#13: Thank you. We have a *Chushi Gangdrug* office in Delhi. Sometime earlier they made a Long Life Offering to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When they were going to make the Long Life Offering, they came to ask me for some donation. I offered 500 rupees.

Q: What do they offer during the long life offering?

#13: They make an offering that His Holiness should live long. They told me that I could accompany them during the ceremony but I said that I couldn't go. I told them I was old and could not come. I said I would pray instead.

Q: I think we can stop here. Thank you very much. Thank you for calling us back. If you have any more stories, call again.

#13: I thought I must talk about how *Andrug Gonpo Tashi* was injured and that is why I called you over the phone. Now I have related the whole story. Now I am satisfied.

Q: Thank you. Thank you for calling us back.

#13: What I think about the future is this. The *Chushi Gangdrug* office in Delhi is hoping that we could organize an army somewhere outside India.

Q: The *Chushi Gangdrug*?

#13: Yes, once again. That is a secret. Beyond Indian Territory—we cannot organize an army on Indian Territory. There is a hope.

Q: I hope that Tibet will be independent one day again.

#13: If it could be organized, we would have to request the U.S. for help in providing us with arms.

Q: Thank you.

#13: Now I have related everything. Thank you. I am very happy that you have come here to ask me. I am very happy that you have come from such a distance to ask us. I have been waiting to tell my story.

Q: I am also [happy].

#13: Please have some tea.

[Tea is served.]

Q: The Tibetan Government Army and the *Chushi Gangdrug* army are both Tibetans.

#13: Yes, they are same Tibetans but the regions are separate. We worked separately. We, the people of Kham, were considered among the stupid.

Q: Khampas were considered stupid in Tibet?

#13: Yes, stupid and with no education.

Q: Considered by the other people of Tibet?

#13: Yes. [Laughs.] That's true—with no education.

Q: Really? I never heard that before. They were considered stupid, by the people of Lhasa?

#13: Foolish, with not much knowledge—with no education.

[Videographer to interviewee]: Can I ask a question?

#13: Very quarrelsome. [Laughs.] Even if there is a slight argument, they are ready to kill. This is not good.

Q: ...[not audible] ... foolish Khampa, there would be no *Chushi Gangdrug*. I was wondering, if you could think of three of the things about the *Chushi Gangdrug* that made it successful, what would they be?

#13: The reason why we won was, if we fought at one place, most of them died.

Q: Give three reasons for why you won.

#13: The reason is where we were fighting the Chinese feared to come. They dared not remain there. They feared us a lot. They feared us so much that they would send ten of their men for every one of the *Chushi Gangdrug* guerrillas.

Q: Fear was one thing that made it successful. What were some other things? Do you have swords that you used during the battle?

#13: All the swords are lost. I used them to cut wood. In India they have no use except to cut wood. [Laughs.]

Q: Can you show me when you were holding your sword—if you put this down... Can you show us how you would use the sword?

#13: You hold it like this [demonstrates]. When we struck the Chinese [action of striking on the shoulder] it didn't cut through because they were wearing thick clothes. It made a "bok, bok" sound and didn't cause any wound. However if you stabbed [motion of piercing the stomach], it went through. I struck many times but they did not make any wounds.

Q: The follow up question is this, what do you think the Tibetan army of [the] future would need to be successful?

#13: If they fight in the future, they should not directly confront the Chinese. It is not possible to fight face to face. They should be spread around different sites and strike at a Chinese army camp and retreat. They have to fight this way because we do not have a large army to fight at one place. They should strike at different places and retreat. That's how it should be done. They should have one base camp and the army should be sent out to far off places. Not many should go together. Perhaps groups of 10 or 30 or 50 men could go attack and retreat.

These days such type of attacks should be carried out. You can't do otherwise. In this way, they would be troubled. Then, from every part, there would be uprisings. We have the army Unit 22 in Dehradun. During the battle in Bangladesh, the Indians had fought earlier and lost many men. Many of their men were killed by the Pakistanis. The Indians were unable to go there; they were all being killed.

Q: Then the Tibetan army was sent?

#13: Yes. The place was very bad, swampy with bushes this high [gestures to chest level].

Q: What about a guerrilla war between China and Tibet? If the war you are describing is a guerrilla war, a war like that could go on 20-30 years with no clear winner.

#13: We have to keep continuing the attacks. They [the Chinese] should never be left in peace. There should be disturbances from every quarter. This is how it should be done if there is a battle in the future. The regions of Kham are full of forests. There are good places to make base camps in Kham. It's full of forests, high mountains, and waters.

Q: Have you been back since 1959?

#13: No, I have not been back.

Q: They cut down a lot of forests.

#13: I see. Yes, I heard that the Chinese were cutting down the forests; that they were transporting them to China. Our region of Kham is a happy place. It is like the domain of gods.

Q: What is the difference between the Tibetan Government Army and the *Chushi Gangdrug* army?

#13: The Tibetan Government Army was started by the Tibetan government. Ours is the army of volunteers. That is the difference.

Q: About how many Chinese have you killed?

#13: When we see them close, we take careful aim and fire.

Q: There is no number because you do not know?

#13: After the battle is over, there are many Chinese lying dead. I have struck Chinese on their heads. During the sword clashes, I have struck many Chinese on the backs with my sword. I have stabbed them, too—at Nyenmo, when we had the sword fight. If we didn't fight with the swords, the Chinese could not be defeated. We could not overcome the Chinese with our guns. There were such courageous men then. When they died, we felt a great loss. Now that is all over.

END OF SECOND INTERVIEW