

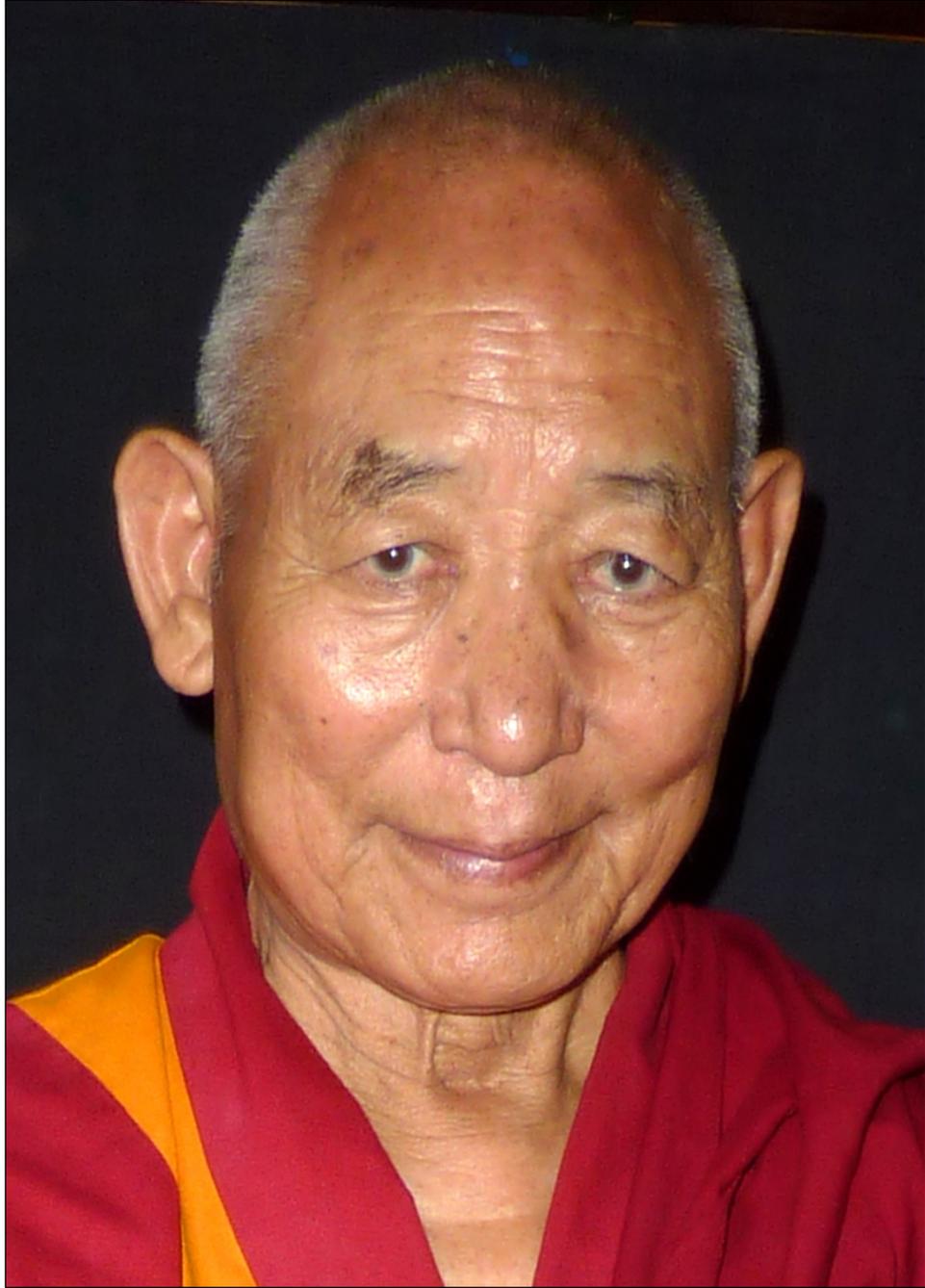
Tibet Oral History Project

**Interview #16B – Gelong Jamyang, Khensur
January 5, 2014**

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #16B
2. Interviewee: Gelong Jamyang, Khensur
3. Age: 78
4. Date of Birth: 1935
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Yangju Tanka, Kyerong
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: January 5, 2014
10. Place of Interview: Zongkar Choede Monastery, Gurupura, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 2 hr 18 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Pema Tashi
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Khensur Gelong Jamyang was born in the village of Yangju Tanka, which is surrounded by mountains and forests. His family grew barley in their fields and his father also travelled to Nepal for trade. Gelong Jamyang became a monk at Zongkar Choede Monastery in Kyerong at the age of 11. He describes his duties as a novice monk and how he later took on administrative responsibilities of the monastery at the age of 22.

Khensur Gelong Jamyang gives a detailed historical account of the origins of the four ancient Jowo, statues of Avalokitesvara. The Jowo portraying “power” was placed in Kyerong. Fearing an invasion by the Chinese army, the monks decided to escort the Jowo to India, but had to overcome strong resistance from the community. Gelong Jamyang gives a narrative of the escape journey and the numerous problems they faced escorting the statue through Nepal into India.

Khensur Gelong Jamyang speaks about the important role divination played in deciding whether to escort the Jowo into exile or not and guiding the team on the right path during the dangerous journey. The men of the *Chushi Gangdrug* Defend Tibet Volunteer Force provided security while the monks escorted the Jowo into exile. The Jowo was presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and remains at his residence in Dharamsala, India.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, trade, pilgrimage, monastic life, oracles, Chushi Gangdrug guerrillas, escape experiences, life as a refugee in India.

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Interview #16B

Interviewee: Gelong Jamyang, Khensur

Age: 78, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: January 5, 2014

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:09

Interviewee #16B: [I] am called Jamyang. It is Gelong Jamyang.

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked us to record your experiences, so that we can share your memories with many generations of Tibetans, the Chinese and the rest of the world. Your memories will help us to document the true history, culture and beliefs of the Tibetan people. Do you give your permission for the Tibet Oral History Project to use this interview?

#16B: Yes, [you] can.

Q: Thank you for offering to share your story with us. During this interview if you wish to take a break or stop at any time, please let me know. If you do not wish to answer a question or talk about something, please let me know.

#16B: Okay.

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

00:01:49

#16B: There will be no problems because [I] will describe the truth. It is a true story and not something to hurt the Chinese.

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

#16B: [Smiles] Okay.

Q: *Rinpoche-la* 'term of respect for a lama,' I would like to begin by asking where you were born and how old you are.

#16B: I was born at Jamden Tsuglakhang in Kyerong, Jamden Tsuglakhang.

Q: Jamden...

#16B: ...Tsuglakhang. [I] was born where this is located.

Q: How old are you?

#16B: At that time?

Q: Now.

#16B: At present 78.

Q: How many people were in your family?

00:03:00

#16B: There were many family members. There were four sons and two daughters.

Q: And father and mother.

#16B: And father and mother.

Q: Where were you in the order of siblings?

#16B: I am the youngest but one among two sisters and four brothers. I am next to the youngest brother.

Q: Can you tell us what your family did for a livelihood?

#16B: [They] did both farming and trading for a livelihood.

Q: How many families were in your village?

#16B: [The village] is called Tanka. It is the one called Yangju Tanka.

Q: How many families were in Yangju Tanka?

#16B: There were many families but I was small then and do not know well. I became a monk at a young age. So [I] do not know very well. There were many families.

Q: Can you describe the village from your memory? What did it look like? What did you see when you looked out of your door?

00:05:11

#16B: Because of the narrowness there was not much to see. All the houses were congested.

Q: What was the area like, the mountains, forests, rivers and such?

#16B: There were *pama* woods growing in the mountains of the region. There is a type of wood called *pama* that grew there. There were no other woods.

Q: *Pama* wood. Was there a forest in the region?

#16B: The *pama* is sort of bulky when it grows out of the ground.

Q: What about mountains and rivers?

#16B: There are mountains. Mountains surrounded the region. There are two rivers, one that flows in the east and the other in the west.

Q: When you think of your village, does it...is it a beautiful memory to have of the scenery there and of the houses and of the pasturelands?

00:06:35

#16B: It was a beautiful place. Below it is a large river called Thachok Khabab 'River Brahmaputra' that flows from the snowy mountains towards Lhasa. This river that flows to Lhasa is close by. It is a beautiful place.

Q: How far away was your village by walking to Lhasa?

#16B: It is far. For instance, it will take nearly 17-18 days.

Q: On foot?

#16B: Yes, on foot.

Q: You said your family was farmers and traders. What kinds of things did your family grow and was it their own property or were they farming someone else's property?

#16B: The crop was only grain [barley]. [The family] did trading as well.

Q: Did the land belong to you or was it leased from someone else?

#16B: There were lands leased from people and lands that belonged to you.

Q: Were there both types of lands?

#16B: Yes.

Q: "It belonged to the people," the people of the village or your family?

00:08:47

#16B: It was your own. It belonged to you and you were the owner of the land.

Q: The leased land...?

#16B: For the leased land one must make a payment. One cultivated the land and paid for it.

Q: Did you have to make a payment if the land belonged to you?

#16B: No, you need not. That is the land the government provided you.

Q: Whom does the leased land belong to?

#16B: Those were people that lived in and around the region. [I] do not know exactly.

Q: That was land leased from others.

#16B: Yes.

Q: You also said that your family was traders. What kind of trade did they do?

00:09:43

#16B: The goods that were taken from Tanka to Nepal consisted of blankets called *zen* and sheepskin.

Q: Sheep's wool?

#16B: Goatskin.

Q: Goatskin?

#16B: Yes. A lot of these were collected and taken to Nepal to be traded.

Q: To Nepal?

#16B: Yes, to Nepal. Trading was done in Nepal.

Q: How close, how many days of walking would it take to get to Nepal?

#16B: One must walk a number of days. Perhaps 18-19 days from Tanka. One must journey quite a distance, journey a great distance.

Q: How many times a year would your father go or you go on trading trips? How frequently?

#16B: Once, only once [a year].

Q: What kind of things did you like to bring back in exchange for the blankets that you brought?

00:11:27

#16B: Different things were brought from there like dyes, fabrics and such.

Q: Rinpoche-*la*, did you say that you went on these trips?

#16B: [I] went once when I was small, at the age of 9.

Q: To Nepal?

#16B: Yes to Nepal on pilgrimage along with the parents.

Q: What place did you go?

#16B: [We] stayed in a rented place at Swayambhunath.

Q: Which other places did [you] visit?

#16B: [We] went around Kathmandu to see the stupas.

Q: Do you have memories of that that you can share with us of that journey and seeing Kathmandu? It was a very big city I imagine compared to your town.

00:13:06

#16B: When [we] reached Kathmandu, there were a lot of people and there are stories of one being dazed. One must hold on to an older person and walk about. There was not anything else but to move along with an older person while shopping. Some people used to feel dazed there. [Laughs] Compared to Tibet there were a lot of people.

Q: How difficult was the journey?

#16B: During the to and fro journeys we drove donkeys that were loaded. [The journey] was not very difficult since [I] was with [my] parents.

Q: What's your family in terms of their economic status in the community? Were they poor or moderate or very wealthy?

#16B: In the past before my birth our [family] used to be wealthy. [They] took goods from Tibet and returned with money, around 17-18 sacksful of cash.

Q: Return...?

#16B: From Nepal. [The family] took goods there and on the return—that was before my birth—brought 16-17 sacksful of money, brought cash. The family grew poorer and poorer after my birth. Later, the family became quite poor.

Q: What do you think accounted for the decline in your finances?

00:15:33

#16B: The reason was that father passed away. Father passed away when I was small and there was no one to trade, due to which [the family's finances] gradually declined. By the time I was around 8 or 9 the family had become poor.

Q: You mentioned going to Nepal at the age of 9.

#16B: Yes.

Q: Was father alive then?

#16B: Father was alive then. However, father did not return from Nepal as [he] separated from mother. And then [we] grew poorer and poorer for father was not there to do trading.

Q: Did father pass away or...?

#16B: Then father passed away. They separated in Nepal and...

Q: Separated in Nepal?

#16B: Yes. When [we] arrived in Kyerong father passed away. [It] was on the return journey to Kyerong.

Q: You were around 8 or 9 years...?

#16B: Between 9 and 10.

Q: When your parents separated which parent did you stay with?

00:16:54

#16B: [I] lived with mother.

Q: So at 9 years old you came back alone with your mother, is that correct from Nepal?

#16B: Yes, [I] came with mother.

Q: Father wasn't with you then?

#16B: No, [he] was not.

Q: Was that your only trip to Nepal or did you go other times?

#16B: That was the only time. That was the only time. After becoming a monk I ran away and arrived in Nepal. I ran away after becoming a monk. With the parents that was the only time.

Q: You don't mean the final flight, right?

#16B: No, no.

Q: Ran away as a monk?

#16B: I ran away as a monk. [Laughs]

Q: To Nepal?

#16B: I ran away by myself.

Q: And so what year did you become a monk?

00:18:24

#16B: At the age of 11, at 11 years of age.

Q: What made you become a monk?

#16B: From the time of His Holiness the great 5th Dalai Lama we had a rule called “the middle among three sons and younger of two sons” [should become a monk]. So I was like the middle among three sons. [I] must be made a monk. It was sort of like a tax.

Q: How did you feel about and think about going to the monastery?

#16B: There were not any deep feelings then. The parents admitted me as a monk and [I] had to remain there. There were not any deep feelings at that time.

Q: Where did you go, Rinpoche-*la*? Which monastery?

#16B: It was the Zongkar Choede, Zongkar Choede.

Q: What was your reaction when you first went? What did you think about it?

#16B: [I] only thought about returning to mother and not about staying in the monastery. [I] wished to go to mother. [I] wished to return home, as [I] was small.

Q: You were homesick for your family and your mother.

00:20:38

#16B: Yes, [I] missed [them] and wished to go to mother. [I] had no desire to stay in the monastery. It was they that put [me] there.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother? Can you tell us about her? What was she like?

#16B: [Laughs] Mother’s name was Nyidon. Mother’s name was Nyidon. Mother was quite tall.

Q: What was her personality like?

#16B: Mother was gentle with the children. However, I did not live [with her] for long since [I] became a monk at a young age. [She] was very loving to the children.

Q: Tell us about life in the monastery? Besides being homesick what were your experiences when you first went and how many monks were in this monastery?

#16B: There were around 115 monks then.

Q: After joining the Zongkar Choede Monastery what were your life experiences there?

#16B: The life experience then was mainly about studying the scriptures. Scriptures were taught. Then there were duties for young [monks] in the monastery called *shontel* ‘mandatory duties for new monks.’ One must perform various tasks.

Q: Tasks?

00:22:26

#16B: Yes, tasks like serving tea in the monastery and cooking. There were many such tasks. [I] engaged in doing these, as one must perform the *shontel*. One blew the *dhung* ‘long horn’ during prayer assemblies and did the cooking. There were many such tasks that [I] performed until the age of 18.

Q: Until what age?

#16B: Until the age of 18...

Q: Eighteen?

#16B: ...from the time of becoming a monk at 11. It is called *shontel*.

Q: Were there any of those duties that you liked or that you found difficult?

#16B: Whether one liked [the duties] these were orders and you must perform them. In the case of cooking you must pay and hire someone because you could not do it. You did what you could and hired other people for [tasks] you could not do. [I] performed various tasks until the age of 18.

Q: And then what happened at 18, Rinpoche-*la*?

00:24:14

#16B: I completed *shontel* at the age of 18. [I] was done with *shontel*. Then at the age of 18 I started studying the scriptures, the requirements of the monastery. But in my mind [I] wished to go to a *ritoe* ‘cavern in the hills’ and not live in the monastery. [I] thought about going to a *ritoe*.

Q: Where?

#16B: To a *ritoe* and engage in chanting prayers.

Q: Did [you] say *ritoe*?

#16B: Yes, *ritoe*.

Q: Up in the hills?

#16B: Yes, in the hills. At the age of 18 [I] thought only about going to a *ritoe*. Once again [I] did not think of remaining in the monastery. There was no thought of mother, no thought of remaining in the monastery but the wish to go to a *ritoe*.

Q: [You] didn't think of going to mother.

#16B: [I] did not. For instance, to live in a *ritoe* like Jetsun Milarepa [great saint of Tibet, born 1052 A.D.] [I] had heard of this and thought about going to a *ritoe*.

Q: What was it about Jetsun Milarepa that inspired you? What made you want to be like him?

00:25:49

#16B: The birthplace of Jetsun Milarepa is Zongkar. It is Zongkar where he was born. [I] had heard a lot of stories about Jetsun Milarepa. His birthplace is Zongkar and the place where he meditated lies in Zongkar. [I] wished to be like Jetsun Milarepa in [my] mind. It was not possible but [I] just thought about it.

Q: What was it, what qualities did he have Rinpoche-*la*, that you wanted to try to emulate?

#16B: He lived in a *ritoe* meditating. I wished that [I] could be like that at the age of 18, 19.

Q: What were the benefits of meditating all the time? What does that enable a human being to be able to know or understand?

#16B: Except for wishing to do it [I] did not have any great understanding then. At that time [I] was studying the scriptures and the monastery would not have granted permission. Even though you wished to go, the monastery would not grant permission. One must remain in the monastery. It was a tax; a religious tax to remain in the monastery and you could not do as you wished.

Q: So what happened next?

00:28:12

#16B: One had a desire to go but was not allowed to, as one must remain in the monastery. [I] studied the required scriptures of the monastery at ages 18 and 19, for around two years. [I] learned the scriptures both day and night. [I] studied the required scripture portions day and night to become a *gelong* 'fully-ordained monk observing 253 vows' without which one was incomplete. One must take an examination and then the *gelong* vows. One became a good [monk] in the monastery only after taking the test.

Q: And how did that examination go?

#16B: We must memorize the entire chanting texts and give an examination. One cannot take the *gelong* vows without giving the test. It was mandatory to give the test and I memorized the entire portion within two years. So, [I] took the *gelong* vows at the age of 20. According to the rules one cannot take the *gelong* vows without giving the exam.

Q: How did that feel when you finished all that arduous study and succeeded in passing the exam?

#16B: After taking the *gelong* vows, [I] wished to study the debates. Now [I] had a desire to go to Lhasa to study the debates.

Q: Rinpoche-*la*, when you finished and took the exam and passed, did your mother come? Were families invited to celebrate with you or was it just done in the monastery?

00:31:20

#16B: Nothing like that [celebration] happened and one could not go to visit families. Nothing like that happened. I had a desire to go to Lhasa to study. At this time I had a relative in the monastery. I had a relative who was a monk. "I am going to Lhasa," [I] said. However, he did not give permission saying, "The Chinese have appeared in Lhasa. It will not be good, so you cannot go." He did not let [me] go and so I remained. [I] was forced to remain and could not study the debates.

Q: So this would've been like 1955. You were 20 years old, correct?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Right.

Q: You were 20 years old and your relatives were telling you there was too much... What kind of situation was going on in Lhasa with the Chinese that your relative warned you about?

#16B: A huge number of Chinese had arrived in Lhasa and it was mentioned that the Chinese would cause suffering. "Your going will not be good." That is how he stopped [me]. And then I turned 22. At the age of 22 [I] was appointed as a working member of the monastery. [I] was 22 years old. One must carry out the task and be a responsible person of the monastery at age 22. Now there was no thought about going to a *ritoe* but engage in working for the monastery. There was no thought about going to a *ritoe* or to Lhasa to study the debates. From the age of 22 [I] engaged in working for the monastery.

Q: So it's 1957 and you are just...this is the original monastery?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Zongkar Choede Monastery.

Q: Yes, your monastery and then what happened? Were you disappointed that you couldn't go to Lhasa and study the debates and had to work in the office of the monastery?

00:34:39

#16B: There was no disappointment because [I] was given the responsibility by the monastery. [I] only had the thought of carrying out the responsibility and no longer thought about going to a *ritoe* or to Lhasa. [I] was appointed by the monastery and took responsibility. From the age of 22 [I] continued to carry out [my] duties for the monastery.

Q: Was your monastery receiving any regular news about the situation all over Tibet or especially in Lhasa?

#16B: It was too far to receive all the news except that the Chinese had appeared but not about the kinds of suffering being caused.

Q: How long did you stay in that capacity in your monastery in administration?

#16B: In '57 I was 22 years old. [I] began [my] duty at the monastery in '57 and continued to do so until 2005. [I] worked for a long time.

Q: So you remained in Tibet from 1957 to 2005?

00:36:44

#16B: No, no. [I] left in '59. [I] left in '59 when the Chinese invaded the whole of Tibet. [I] came into exile in the 9th Tibetan lunar month of '59.

Q: Can you tell us about what made you leave and who you left with and where did you go?

#16B: The reason being that we have a protective deity, in '56 the protective deity of Zongkar Choede on consultation prophesied that the Jowo 'statue of Buddha' of Kyerong should flee. It was in the year '56. It was foretold in '56 that the Kyerong Jowo should flee and that the treasures of Zongkar Choede be hidden. Such a prophecy was given.

Q: Zongkar Choede's...?

#16B: ...articles should be hidden in the valley.

Q: Should be hidden?

#16B: Should be hidden. And it was said that the Jowo should...

Q: What was the prediction for the Kyerong Jowo?

#16B: The Kyerong Jowo should go into exile meaning that it should escape. That was in '56. Though the Chinese had appeared in Lhasa then, there were not any atrocities. The atrocities took place in '59. The protective deity gave the divination that the Kyerong Jowo go into exile and the treasures of Zongkar Choede be concealed.

Q: The deity gave a divination. Through whom did the deity give the divination?

00:39:16

#16B: Through a person. [The deity] entered a person, entered a person and spoke just like a person [through the medium].

Q: Who was the person?

#16B: The person was a woman. Our deity's medium was [selected like that]. If a mother has seven daughters, one of the daughters became a medium for the deity.

Q: What was her name?

#16B: She was called Choekyi-la.

Q: Choekyi?

#16B: [She] was called Choekyi-la.

Q: What age was she when she gave the divination?

#16B: [I] do not know the age but she had children. [I] do not know the age.

Q: Did someone solicit or ask for a divination or did it just happen spontaneously?

00:40:41

#16B: The deity can be consulted on many matters for which it is invoked. The lady was called and she wore the deity's attire and then the deity was invoked. The deity then entered [her] and spoke when consulted. However, the Jowo going into exile and about hiding the treasures of the monastery was given without seeking a prophecy.

Q: And the warning was...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: ...that the Jowo image of Kyerong had to...must flee Kyerong and the properties, the assets of Zongkar Choede should be hidden.

Q: Tell for people who don't know, can you tell us what the Jowo image of Kyerong is?

#16B: Okay, right. How the Jowo [statue] appeared is like this. Songtsen Gampo [617-649 A.D.] took political and religious powers of Tibet at the age of 13; Songtsen Gampo [became king of Tibet] at the age of 13. At the age of 15 the first of the *tentso* 'holy image' called *rangjung ngadhe* 'self-arisen image of five' came into being.

Q: Is *rangjung ngadhe* [the image of] Jowo?

#16B: It is Chenrezig 'Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the patron saint of Tibet.' It is the image of Chenrezig in the Tsuglakhang 'Central Cathedral' in Lhasa. That is the first *tentso*. [Another] Jowo is of sandalwood and small in size, not very big. It was escorted from India. [The first of the] *rangjung ngadhe* is large in size.

So Songtsen Gampo wished to create a Jowo and use the one from India as *zungshuk* 'precious items put inside a statue.' So clay was kneaded and mixed with *rinchen naynga* 'five precious things [gold, silver, coral, sapphire and pearl]' and many other blessed items. [He] thought of creating [the image] the next day. However, the Jowo had risen by itself in the night without anyone creating it.

Q: Is that the Jowo *rangjung ngadhe*?

#16B: Yes, *rangjung ngadhe, rangjung ngadhe*. It had arisen and now the story is nearing the Kyerong [Jowo].

Q: Is *rangjung ngadhe* Jowo of sandalwood?

00:43:29

#16B: Yes, there was a sandalwood Jowo not very big. This was escorted from India to Tibet and Songtsen Gampo wished to make a bigger Jowo of clay and offer the Jowo from India as a *zungshuk*. After kneading clay mixed *richen naynga*, the next morning the Jowo had created itself. “Oh, it created itself. I wished to offer the one escorted from India as *zungshuk* but it created itself,” [Songtsen Gampo] thought. Then the Jowo that had created itself raised its right foot and the other Jowo entered it.

Q: The wooden one?

#16B: The wooden Jowo entered it.

Q: Is this in the Tsuglakhang now?

#16B: Yes but the Chinese might have destroyed it.

Q: This Jowo, the clay Jowo went inside the sandalwood?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No, the sandalwood smaller Jowo entered the foot of the clay Jowo.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: The clay Jowo.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yeah, because the clay Jowo had formed naturally by itself overnight, since the mud was already kneaded there.

00:46:12

#16B: From this point begins the story about the Kyerong Jowo. The story of the Kyerong Jowo begins.

Q: Okay.

#16B: After the creation, Songtsen Gampo prayed to the *rangjung ngadhe* Jowo asking where else could [he] find other such Jowo. Then a ray of light appeared from the *rangjung ngadhe* that beamed towards the border of India and Nepal. A manifestation of Songtsen Gampo in the form of a monk was dispatched in the direction of the beam with the instruction; “There are Jowo [statues] along the border of India and Nepal. You must go to bring them.” The monk was given an axe.

Then the monk travelled through Thoe and Kyerong on the way to Nepal. When he arrived in Kyerong there were seven families in Kyerong. These seven families were afflicted with leprosy, the illness called leprosy and each year a father of one of the families passed away due to leprosy. The monk witnessed this and realized that there was leprosy in Kyerong.

Then the monk journeyed to Kathmandu in Nepal. Kathmandu was reeling under continuous epidemic disease. Then he proceeded to Yirang.

Q: Where?

#16B: To Yirang.

Q: Yirang?

00:47:54

#16B: Yes. In the land of Yirang a tiger took away a merchant every three months. The monk witnessed this. Then [he] arrived at the border of India and Nepal, to a place called Riwubicha. [I] think the place where the Jowo originated is at the border. In the depth of the valley was a sandalwood tree and below it a large town.

When the monk arrived there, [he] visited homes in the town to read prayers, as [he] could not go around immediately. All the families grouped their cows and send them out with a herder. A family owned a cow, though everyone owned cows but this cow belonging to the family was a manifestation of a *khando* ‘dakini’ called Kharkyi Wangchuk, a cow that was a manifestation of Khando Kharkyi Wangchuk.

Q: What?

#16B: A cow that was a manifestation of Khando Kharkyi Wangchuk that did not give any milk everyday. One day the family asked the herder, “Our cow does not give any milk. What have you done?” They asked the herder who replied, “I did not do anything.” [He] said he had not done anything. The next day he watched the cow’s movements and left all the cows there [at the grazing site]. This cow ran away instantly. [The herder] followed the cow. There was a sandalwood tree around which the cow squirted its milk. Many other wild animals too squirted milk while numerous birds circled the top of the tree. The herder returned and told [the family], “Your cow was squirting its milk on the tree. Besides there were many wild animals squirting milk.” [He] reported this.

00:49:42

The next day the family told the other families about what their cow was doing and everyone started discussing. The monk who was a manifestation of Songtsen Gampo sat reading prayers. “Let’s ask the monk about this.” They asked the monk who replied, “A Jowo will emerge from the wood. We must all make ritual offerings.” Hence, everybody went there to make ritual offerings. The wood was a sandalwood tree by day and an image of a goddess by night. It was an image at night and a sandalwood tree by day.

The monk and everyone made ritual offerings. Songtsen Gampo had given an axe [to the monk]. [He] struck the tree with the axe and from within the tree the Jowo of Kyerong spoke, “Boy, do it gently.” [The Jowo] spoke instantly. So a Jowo came into being. Every time the axe was swung a Jowo came into being. After striking four times with the axe, four Jowo came into being. Four Jowo came into being.

00:54:38

[Speaks to interpreter]: You pronounce *Jowo rangjung ngadhe* as [*Jowo rangjung*] *ngadha*. It is not *ngadha* but *ngadhe*. [You] must pronounce it as *Jowo rangjung ngadhe*. If not pronounced as *ngadhe*, it will lead to misunderstanding in the future.

Q: Can we have a brief description of what the Jowo is?

#16B: Okay. Songtsen Gampo brought the Jowo for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Q: What's the image of the Jowo?

#16B: It is Chenrezig, Chenrezig. There are four Jowo that are called *shi-gyay-wang-dak*: *shiwa* 'peaceful,' *gyaywa* 'bountiful,' *wang* 'powerful' and *dakpo* 'wrathful.'

Q: *Shiwa*...

#16B: *Shiwa*, *gyaywa*, *wang* and *dakpo*; *shi-gyay-wang-dak*.

00:55:56

They are the *shi-gay-wang-dak*. The Kyerong Jowo depicts *wang* from among the *shiwa*, *gyaywa*, *wang* [and *dakpo*]. The Kyerong Jowo portrays power. The Jowo Zamling Kamo in Nepal is *shiwa*. The one in the Potala Palace in Lhasa is *dakpo*. And there is the Jowo called Akang in Yirang that depicts *gyaywa*.

Q: What does *gyaywa* mean?

#16B: It increases lifespan and virtue. That is what [the Jowo *gyaywa*] bestows.

Q: Wealth?

#16B: Yes?

Q: Wealth?

#16B: It is called so because it increases lifespan and virtue.

[Interpreter ends interpretation with: And then at Yirang there's another Jowo, which is the bountiful Jowo.]

Q: Iran, the country?

00:57:28

#16B: Yirang.

Q: Where's Yirang?

#16B: It is right in Nepal. There were three large regions in Nepal: Kathmandu, Yirang and one called Boudha.

Q: Boudha?

#16B: Yes, Boudha or some such thing. It used to be called Khukum.

Q: Khukum?

#16B: Yes, Khukum.

Q: Khukum?

#16B: Yes, Khukum, Khukum region. These were the names of the three large regions. [Yirang] is in Nepal.

Q: We now know that there are those four images and how did your story continue regarding these images?

00:58:37

#16B: [I] have left out something in the story of the Jowo. Now the monk had to escort the [four] Jowo [to Tibet] and the first place en route was Yirang. At Yirang the Jowo called Akang spoke, “My *dothon* ‘benefit to beings’ is here and I am going to stay here.” The reason being that in the earlier part of the story a merchant used to be taken away by a tiger every three months in Yirang. It ceased from then onwards. Then they passed through Kathmandu. There was continuous epidemic in Kathmandu. Hence, Jowo Zamling Kamo said, “My *dothon* is here. I am going to stay here.”

Q: What’s the name of the Jowo?

#16B: Zamling Kamo.

Q: Zamling Kamo.

#16B: Zamling Kamo. It remained in the city of Kathmandu. There was unceasing epidemic in Kathmandu then, which stopped after the Jowo remained there. That ceased. And then the Jowo reached Kyerong. At Kyerong people were dying from leprosy. The illness of leprosy vanished. That is the story about how [the Jowo statues] came into being and traveled to Tibet.

01:00:56

Is that okay? And then should [I] talk about the story of this place or of the Jowo? The story of Jowo is not done yet. The Jowo [of Kyerong] arrived in India. After the Chinese’ occupation [of Tibet, the image of Kyerong Jowo] was escorted here and this part remains to be told.

Q: Please talk about the story of escorting the Jowo from Kyerong to India and the arrival of the Chinese.

#16B: The deity gave this prophecy to our monastery in the year '56, "Take the Jowo into exile and hide your treasures." This had been foretold. Again in the year '57 our deity gave a prophecy to a rich man in our region. A prophecy about how the Jowo should leave was given. The family was foretold, "You must convert all [your] lands and properties into cash."

Q: Yes?

#16B: The protective deity gave a divination, "Convert all your lands and properties into cash."

Q: To the family?

01:02:03

#16B: To the family. The father of the family remarked, "Our protective deity speaks inane. Who will give us money for the lands and properties?" Such remarks were passed then. [People] did not believe the deity. Our monastery did not believe the deity when it said that the Jowo must go into exile. One of our senior monks remarked, "It is neither a deity nor a ghost. It is neither a deity nor a ghost. The Jowo of Kyerong belongs to the government and how can we escort it suddenly? Where will it go into exile?"

Thus spoke a senior monk. "Why should we hide all the treasures?" That was in the year '56-'57 when there were no Chinese presence in Zongkar. There is a *ladang* 'grand lama's residence' in Zongkar and in the year '58 it was given a prophecy. [An official of the *ladang* at Zongkar used to go to Sera Jey [Monastery]. The Zongkar *ladang* [official] used to go to Sera Jey. The *ladang* was given the prediction, "You will no longer be able to give a report of the accounts in Tibet."

Q: Yes?

#16B: The accounts report. [The *ladang*] had to submit a report of the accounts to Sera Jey. The *ladang* [official] used to go to Sera Jey to submit an accounts report. The *ladang* was obliged to give a report to Sera Jey. The deity foretold, "You will no longer be able to give the accounts report in Tibet. It has to be done in an alien land. If the value is 100 *ngulsang* 'currency units' in Tibet, it shall be 10 *ngulsang* in an alien land. So, wrap up everything," the deity divined. Yet no one believed the deity and remarked that it was neither a deity nor a ghost because there were no Chinese in Zongkar then. Then the year '59 dawned and [the situation] grew worse and worse. His Holiness the Dalai Lama left for India and then it became worse and worse.

01:03:39

Then our monastery consulted the protective deity once again. The protective deity was invoked. We kept this consultation with the deity a deep secret because the Chinese had grown worse and His Holiness the Dalai Lama had left for India. Tibet was almost

occupied with Lhasa already being occupied. We kept it a secret. We were four officials of the monastery. The four of us secretly called the lady who was the medium and asked the deity, “These days it is being heard that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has left for India and that Lhasa has been lost. What has happened?” We asked this of the deity. Normally the deity would rise and prance about but that day the deity seemed to be grieving. The deity was grieving and did not speak at once.

Then our abbot said, “Our reason for invoking the deity is regarding the wellbeing of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the situation in Lhasa. Please give us a clear divination regarding Tibet.” [The abbot] requested that and the deity at last replied, “[I] have escorted His Holiness the Dalai Lama already to India.” The deity spoke like it had escorted [His Holiness] though many were involved. The deity spoke like that. “[I] have escorted His Holiness the Dalai Lama already to India. The people of Tibet have become helpless.”

Q: Yes?

01:04:58

#16B: The people of Tibet have become helpless.

Q: What does that mean?

#16B: ...become helpless, for His Holiness the Dalai Lama had left for India. “Zongkar Choede must get fuel and utensils ready.” It meant that [monks of] Zongkar Choede must flee. “Regarding the departure of Kyerong Jowo, consult it whether it wants to leave or not.” That was the prophecy given at that time.

Q: The Kyerong Jowo was to be asked whether it wanted to leave or not?

#16B: Yes, consult it.

Q: And the...[not discernible] to His Holiness?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No, to the Kyerong Jowo, the Kyerong Jowo image. His Holiness had already...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: To ask the image directly.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yeah...had gone to India and about regarding the shifting of the Kyerong Jowo image, the monk officials had to seek this advice from the image itself.

Q: It was said that the Kyerong Jowo had to be consulted and then what happened?

01:09:03

#16B: Then we held a discussion in the monastery. There were four of us officials of the monastery. The four of us and the caretaker of Kyerong Jowo held a discussion and then consulted the Kyerong Jowo by the use of *tharil* [divination in which words are written and

enclosed in a ball of dough, then rotated in an urn in front of the statue and the one which falls out of the urn is selected.] The Kyerong Jowo was asked, “Would you like to go away to a foreign land or stay back?” [We] had to make preparations to flee. Hence, the question, “Would you like to go abroad or stay back?” The Jowo himself said, “Escort [me] out.”

Q: The *tharil*...?

#16B: The *tharil* was done. His Holiness the Dalai Lama had gone to India, to exile. So the Jowo was asked, “Would you like to follow His Holiness the Dalai Lama or stay back here in Kyerong?” [The Jowo] indicated through the *tharil* that it wanted to follow His Holiness. Now the Jowo’s departure was certain.

Q: The *tharil* is when you...in a bowl...?

#16B: Yes, that is it.

Q: ...piece of dough...?

#16B: Yes, the [balls of] dough contained written words.

Q: What was the result of the *tharil*?

01:10:48

#16B: [The Jowo] indicated that it wished to go abroad. That was the outcome.

Q: How did the divination say that?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: It was the...

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Who selected the paper?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: You just rotate the bowl and one of the doughs fell out and inside the dough was the letter “Escort me out.”

[Interviewer to interpreter]: I see, “Escort me out.” So there were just two choices.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yeah, in the bowl. That’s the *tharil*.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Say what the *tharil* is.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: The *tharil* is, you know...in a bowl you had two balls of dough in which were letters saying “Escort out” or “Remain in Tibet.” So the one which said “Escort out,” fell out of the bowl while it was being rotated. So, that was the divination.

Q: And then?

01:11:52

#16B: It was certain that [we] would have to escort the Jowo out. Therefore, we sought a divination about the route. The first destination would be Nepal. So whether the route to Nepal was better through Mustang or Tsum or directly through Kyerong to Kathmandu, the Jowo was consulted about these three [routes]. The answer was to go through Tsum. Tsum lay to the north of Kyerong. Jowo Rinpoche's divination was that it wanted to travel through Tsum.

Q: Hence, [you] had to go north of Kyerong to Tsum.

#16B: Yes, and then [we] went to Tsum. Before going to Tsum the two district administrators of Kyerong and the people of Kyerong had to be informed. [We] could not just escort the Jowo suddenly. Although the *tharil* had divined, nevertheless the people must be consulted. There was a *dhingpon* 'leader' in Kyerong elected by the people. Below the two district administrators was the people's *dhingpon*. We informed the *dhingpon* and the two Kyerong district administrators about escorting the Kyerong Jowo. We informed them.

The two Kyerong district administrators and the *dhingpon* were informed, "We are going to escort the Jowo. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has left for India." "That is very good. Please escort [the Jowo]," said the two Kyerong District Administrators and the *dhingpon*. During that year there was a double 6th Tibetan lunar month. The escorting of the Kyerong Jowo took place on the 1st day of the latter 6th Tibetan lunar month. The two district administrators and the *dhingpon* had granted permission and the Jowo was escorted on the 1st day...

Q: ...of the latter 6th Tibetan lunar month?

01:14:01

#16B: [We] left on the 1st day of the latter 6th Tibetan lunar month. That very morning lots of talk floated around Kyerong, "This morning the Kyerong Jowo has spoken, 'I do not wish to leave today but [officials of] Zongkar Choede are forcefully taking me.'" Such talks floated around. "When a step was taken forward, unwilling to leave the Jowo took 3-4 steps back." The people talked like that. These were rumors.

Q: What year was this?

#16B: It was '59. '59. The Jowo was escorted out. A rumor circulated that the Jowo had refused to leave that morning but was taken away forcefully and that as one step was taken forward, [the Jowo image] took three steps back. The people reported this rumor to the two district administrators. So the two District Administrators sent out *gamchu*. Two supervisors on horseback were sent on *gamchu* since we had already left with the Jowo that morning. [They] came on *gamchu*.

Q: What does *gamchu* mean?

#16B: It means to pursue to capture someone. [They] came for the Jowo, meaning that [we] were not permitted to escort it. They came and we...

Q: Do you mean two men on horseback arrived?

01:16:39

#16B: Yes, two men on horseback that were the two supervisors of the district.

Q: Both of them came?

#16B: Yes, pursued on horseback with a letter from the two district administrators that stated, “You cannot take away the Jowo. It must be brought back to Kyerong.” They gave such a letter but we had to take the Jowo away and did not accept the letter saying, “We are going away.” Nevertheless, the pursuers—there is a place called Ragpa—requested, “Please stay here for tonight. We will bring a message before you leave tomorrow.” So [we] had to stay there that day.

Q: Who requested [you] to halt?

#16B: The two supervisors of the District of Kyerong. [They] had come on pursuit.

Q: They [district administrators] hadn’t come...

#16B: Yes?

Q: ...but sent two other men?

#16B: The two district administrators sent the two supervisors.

Q: ...and requested to halt a night at Ragpa.

01:17:25

#16B: Yes, requested [us] to stay that day at the place called Ragpa. [We] were forced to stay there because it was the order of the district administrators. [We] pitched tents and stayed there. The next morning it was a crowd of people that arrived and took the Jowo back. [The people] said, “[We] will not let the Jowo leave. You can go anywhere but we’ll not let the Jowo go.” Hence, the people escorted the Jowo back to Kyerong.

Q: Back?

#16B: Escorted [the Jowo] back to Kyerong. “[The Jowo] belongs to the people and we will not let it go.” Hence, the next day [the Jowo] was taken back to Kyerong.

01:19:00

#16B: The next day they [the people] wanted to escort the Jowo back. Then we send this information to the monastery, “The Jowo has been escorted back after we journeyed for a day. What to do now?” The monastery advised, “You should prepare to escort the Jowo

but speak gently to the district officials and representatives of Kyerong. Do not quarrel but talk gently. Should [they] still not agree, we have everything ready.” This meant readiness for a fight at Zongkar and seizing of the Jowo.

Q: While you were escorting the Jowo, the people took it back to Kyerong?

#16B: [The people] took it back to Kyerong stating that [they] would not let it go.

Q: And were the monks living at the monastery?

#16B: Yes. There were a few monks attending to the Jowo who were forced to return with the Jowo to the monastery.

Q: Back together...

#16B: Went back together. There was no other choice because [the monk attendants] must serve the Jowo. [They] went back and after escorting [the Jowo] that day...that was the 1st day [of the latter 6th Tibetan lunar month], no [the Jowo] was escorted back on the 2nd day and was in Kyerong on the 3rd. In Kyerong there are the nine hamlets. There are nine hamlets in Kyerong. The nine hamlets formed a district. There were nine hamlets in the district, nine hamlets.

Q: Villages?

01:20:15

#16B: Yes, families lived in hamlets. There were nine of them. A representative from each of the nine hamlets arrived to hold a meeting with the district officials of Kyerong. The discussion was, “The Kyerong Jowo is the people’s *tentso*. [We] will not let you take [the Jowo]. You can depart anytime.” That is what was said.

The gist of the matter was, “You can take the Kyerong Jowo’s gold and silver ornaments, embellishments and every asset with you. Just leave a bare Jowo here as the people’s *tentso*.” This was intimated. [We] gave back a similar reply, “We are not interested in the Kyerong Jowo’s gold and silver ornaments and embellishments. We understand the bad ways of the Chinese. [We] are escorting the Kyerong Jowo as a *tentso* for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. You can keep the Kyerong Jowo’s ornaments and we shall escort out the Jowo.” The talks got stuck for 12 days and the Jowo was not permitted to leave. The people would not let the Jowo leave.

Q: Did you and the others also go back?

#16B: Yes, [we] went back together.

Q: The discussions lasted for 12 days and...?

01:22:58

#16B: It lasted for 12 days and the monastery planned an encounter to seize the Jowo. This strategy was devised. The talks could not reach a consensus. Whether the two district administrators heard our point or they came to a realization—the two district administrators of Kyerong are government aristocrats and being aristocrats were highly educated—remarked on the 13th day, “We shall act as mediators between the people of Kyerong and Zongkar Choede, and you should obey.” The two district administrators said this. Then our monks replied to the two district administrators, “We shall first have to hear what you have to say. Say what you have to say first.”

Q: Who said that?

#16B: Our monks, they said, “We shall see if you speak fairly. [We] will see if it has to be obeyed. Hence, speak first.” The Kyerong district administrators replied, “[We] shall speak fairly. Initially, you escorted the Kyerong Jowo after performing a *tharil*, which the Kyerong representatives have no knowledge about. A *tharil* must be sought again.”

The two district administrators were concluding [the issue] between the representatives of Kyerong and Zongkar Choede. They said in conclusion, “A *tharil* must be sought regarding the matter of whether the Kyerong Jowo should be escorted out immediately or wait for the time being.”

Q: How, Rinpoche?

#16B: [They said], “A *tharil* should be sought for the Kyerong Jowo. The *tharil* must request whether it is better to escort the Kyerong Jowo out immediately or...”

Q: At once?

01:24:22

#16B: “...whether it is better to leave at once or wait for the time being.” The Chinese were coming and the fear was in regard to the Chinese. Everyone agreed because they were speaking fairly, “[We] agree to this.” That day was the 13th day of the latter 6th Tibetan lunar month. On the 15th two thousand butter lamps were offered to the Jowo. The representatives offered a thousand and the monastery offered a thousand, besides performing a great many prayers and ritual offerings. Then the representatives of the nine hamlets of Kyerong, the two district administrators and our monastery sought a *tharil*.

We from the monastery were very anxious about what the divination would be. The prediction came as “escort immediately.” The *tharil* divined “escort immediately.” Among the Kyerong representatives was the *dhingpon* called Norbu Tsering. He was a leader of the people who said, “Now [we] have no regrets. It has been divined that the Kyerong Jowo be escorted out immediately. There are no regrets. You can escort [the Jowo] out whenever you wish. Fifty men will be sent as attendants until Tsum.” He sent 50 men as attendants. [Laughs]

[To interpreter] Should [I] narrate the whole thing? Many people will have many stories about this.

Q: Fifty men were to be sent until Tsum...

#16B: Fifty men were sent until Tsum to escort [the Jowo]. At the highest point in Tsum is a monastery called Mu Gonpa.

Q: Yes?

#16B: At the highest point in Tsum is a monastery called Mu Gonpa.

Q: Mu Gonpa?

01:28:00

#16B: Yes, Mu Gonpa. The men were sent until this place. That is not proper Tsum, not where the village is. The Jowo was initially taken to the monastery. Now [we] were on flight. The 50 men went back from Mu Gonpa and the Jowo had arrived in exile. The Jowo was in exile. [We] escorted it out on the 16th day of the latter 6th Tibetan lunar month and remained in Mu Gonpa of Tsum until the 9th Tibetan lunar month of '59.

At that time our senior monks had left to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India. The Kyerong Jowo had to be taken to a *ritoe* in lower Tsum. Hence, the Jowo was escorted to lower Tsum. There are two regions in Tsum, an upper and lower Tsum. There are two clusters in Tsum. There is a tiny pathway between Chogang that is lower Tsum and a place called Gok. It was not a very bad pathway but narrow. Our monks had never been on such and [we] wondered how to overcome it. Then a native of Tsum carried [the Jowo]. It was a native of Tsum that carried the Jowo and walked across the pathway. A native of Tsum who was accustomed carried [the Jowo].

Q: On the back?

#16B: Yes, on the back. [The Jowo] was escorted to the *ritoe* by a native of Tsum. The Jowo remained at lower Tsum for around a year. The majority of monks and the Jowo were being separated at this point because only four men were allowed to remain with the Jowo.

Q: I see. Only four people could remain in the *ritoe*?

01:29:49

#16B: There were many [monks] but the Jowo had to be escorted. In lower Tsum was one called Nyima Dorjee, a native of Tsum. He carried [the Jowo] to Tsum. Later [guerrillas of] the *Chushi Gangdrug* [Defend Tibet Volunteer Force] arrived in Tsum and [we] felt secure. Then the Jowo was taken to upper Tsum to stay at the Rachen Gonpa, to the Rachen Gonpa.

Q: Rachen Gonpa?

#16B: Rachen Gonpa. It is a nunnery.

Q: Did the *Chushi Gangdrug* escort?

#16B: Yes?

Q: The *Chushi Gangdrug* escorted?

#16B: The *Chushi Gangdrug* arrived and we faced less danger from the Chinese because they provided security. The Jowo was escorted and we stayed there. The place was bigger and [we] stayed there.

Q: And then?

01:31:54

#16B: I will narrate the gist because it is taking a long time. Let me narrate the gist.

Q: Okay.

#16B: [I] will talk in gist about the Jowo being in India, right?

What is better?

Q: Do you want to stop a while?

#16B: No, [I] do not want to stop.

Q: Okay.

#16B: The Jowo was escorted and then the *Chushi Gangdrug* arrived there from Mustang. We now faced less danger from the Chinese because the *Chushi Gangdrug* was there to give protection. We had arrived in Tsum in '59 and remained until '67. The *Chushi Gangdrug* arrived to provide us assistance. However, we did not trust the *Chushi Gangdrug* wholly. [We] did not trust them wholly and the Jowo needed to be taken to India. [We] deliberated whether to confide to the *Chushi Gangdrug* or not. The *Chushi Gangdrug* was offering to do the job of escorting the Jowo. However, we of the monastery did not trust [the men] at once.

Therefore, a divination was sought from the Kyerong Jowo, “[You] have to go to India. Is it better for us to confide in the *Chushi Gangdrug* or not?” The divination given was, “Communicate with the *Chushi Gangdrug*.” And as per the divination we communicated to the *Chushi Gangdrug* and from then on the *Chushi Gangdrug* took the entire responsibility of escorting [the Jowo] to India. They took responsibility. [We] left Tsum in the 4th Tibetan lunar month of '67. [We] left Tsum in the 4th Tibetan lunar month of '67 through Nupri and Gyasumdhoo to Mustang. They had 14 military camps in Mustang. The *Chushi Gangdrug* had 15 military camps then, 15 military camps. [Guerrillas of] 14 military camps

came to pay respect to the Jowo in Mustang where [we] stayed for two months. From there the Kyerong Jowo had to leave for India and so a divination was sought as to the selection of route to India, whether the main road was better or a secret route. The Jowo replied that it wished to leave by the main road.

Q: From where?

01:33:59

#16B: Through the main road.

Q: Main road?

#16B: Main road. [A divination was sought as to] whether it was better to take the main road or a secret route, through a secret route. This was asked and the Jowo replied that it wished to take the main road. It was very difficult to succeed through the main road because of restrictions imposed by Nepal then. During the stay in Tsum Nepalese spies had arrived and created lots of problems. There were great restriction. When we were in Lo [Mustang], when the Jowo had arrived in Mustang the Home Secretary of Nepal arrived there. The Home Secretary of Nepal had come in pursuit of the Jowo, the Kyerong Jowo.

Q: By Lo, do [you] mean Mon Tawang?

#16B: No, no. Lo...

Q: Lo Chumigyatsa [Mustang]?

#16B: Mustang. The Jowo arrived there. We had the *Chushi Gangdrug* to lend assistance. The *Chushi Gangdrug* was there. The Nepal government put a lot of restriction on the image of Jowo. The Home Secretary came in the presence of the Jowo and met with the official of the *Chushi Gangdrug*. The *Chushi Gangdrug* leader was told, "Tomorrow we are going to Mustang. The Kyerong Jowo has arrived there. You have to be present." The *Chushi Gangdrug* official fled that day.

He came to us in the night and said, "Tomorrow a senior Nepalese leader is coming. Should I remain, [they] will take me to the presence of the Jowo and stop it from being escorted to India. I am going to run away tonight. I will flee to...[not discernible]. Tomorrow when the Nepalese leader comes, except for replying to his questions you are not to say anything else." Then the official fled through...[not discernible] to a military camp.

01:35:49

The next day the Home Affairs authority arrived along with 30-odd troops and two leaders from their army division in Mustang. [They] came to the presence of the Jowo. Immediately the Home Affairs authority questioned us, "From where have you escorted the Jowo?" [We] replied, "We escorted it from Tibet." "Where are you going?" "There is no place to go, no place to escort it. [We] face lack of food here but have no place to go," [we replied]. The Home authority said, "You cannot go anyplace but can live in Nepal."

[You] cannot leave because the image originated in Nepal. The image cannot be taken anywhere.” [He] said such things.

There was nothing for us to do after the Nepalese [leader] said that. “We will construct a monastery for the Jowo in Nepal. The Nepal government will provide for you.” [We] had to express thanks and we did. We were 22 monks whose signatures were taken at once forbidding [us] from going anywhere. [To interpreter] Was [the narration] too long?

Q: All the monks gave signatures and that...India?

01:39:56

#16B: ...that [the Jowo] cannot be taken [to India].

Q: ...that you will not escort out [the Jowo].

#16B: Yes. Mustang is a large place. There are many families in Mustang and the area consists of upper, lower and mid regions. The leader called a meeting of the upper, lower and mid Mustang regions and announced, “The Kyerong Jowo has recently arrived in Mustang. You should not permit it to be taken to any other place. You, the people must take this responsibility. [The Jowo] should not be permitted to leave.” After the announcement [people of] upper Mustang stated, “We will escort the Jowo to upper [Mustang] as we have a monastery for the Jowo. We will serve the Jowo and provide for the monks. Hence, [we] will escort it there.”

Those from mid region said that [the Jowo] must remain there and added, “We will construct a temple for the Jowo and provide for the monks.” The lower region is the place called Tha...[not discernible] and they asked [the Jowo] to be escorted to their region. The Tharpa are Nepalese and their senior leader lived in a house in Nepal and possessed a huge palatial house there. He said, “I will offer my house and lands to the Kyerong Jowo. Come to take charge of the house and lands tomorrow.” The leader said thus. We were forced to go to take charge the next day since [the people] did not permit us to leave.

The house was described as huge, like a palace. The house was large and well constructed. [We] could not take charge that day because the Kyerong Jowo could not remain there and had to depart to India secretly. “[We] will not take charge of the house and lands today but seek a divination of the Jowo and escort it where it wishes to go. [We] cannot take charge immediately.”

So they [monks] did not take charge of the house saying, “A divination must be sought of the Jowo.” The Jowo must depart to India, which was kept a secret. Hence, our monastery [monks] did not escort the Jowo anywhere but remained at the *ritoe*. It was stated that the Jowo must be asked for a divination and escorted to the predicted place and not be taken anywhere else. Later we escorted the Jowo to India without the knowledge of the people.

01:42:09

When a divination was sought of the Jowo...it was determined that the Jowo leave for India but the Nepalese would not allow it. So when the Jowo was asked if it wished to

travel by the main road or a secret route, it divined the wish to travel by the main road. [Laughs] It was very dangerous to take the main road because there were military camps and [the escorting group] may also encounter the people. Then we created a replica of the Jowo. There was a small Jowo on which [we] created a sort of mask by pasting cloth and paper. A similar looking face was created for it. This was a substitute for the Jowo. The face looked very similar to the Jowo's. However, the body size was very small. It was a small Jowo. The [original] Jowo's face is large, so [we] did some pasting. [We] had to steal [the Jowo] from Nepal and so a mask was created and the replica installed in the Jowo shrine.

It was perhaps the 18th day of the 1st Tibetan lunar month that the Jowo was escorted towards India. It had to be done in the night and the *Chushi Gangdrug* extended every help. Without the *Chushi Gangdrug* it was impossible to get to India. There were eight men of the *Chushi Gangdrug* to escort the Jowo. There were eight men of *Chushi Gangdrug* and four monks from our monastery. [The Jowo] was escorted out at night because daytime was impossible. It took 18 days from Mustang to the Indian border.

Q: How many days?

#16B: Eighteen days.

Q: Eighteen days?

#16B: Yes, travelling at night because it was impossible during the day.

Q: [You] left for India...

01:46:39

#16B: [The Jowo] was on the way to India. Day dawned when [the Jowo] reached the place called Banglung, which is Nepalese territory close to Pokhra. A small incident occurred here. Day dawned at Banglung. A broad road was being constructed through Banglung and dynamite used to blast rocks. Dynamite blasted rocks for the construction of a road. The Kyerong Jowo was forced to spend the day there as daylight had already begun. A tent was pitched wherein lay the Jowo covered with two blankets. The monks sat around pretending it was a sick person. The men of *Chushi Gangdrug* sat a little distance away and told people that there was a sick person. It was told that a sick person lay within the tent.

The Jowo was laid inside the tent and covered with two blankets. The four monks sat to the right and left of it. Numerous rock fragments flew around because of the dynamite. A rock fragment fell through the tent where the Jowo was and damaged the tent. A rock fragment fell through the tent, caused a hole in the tent and landed here [points to chest] of the Jowo after forming holes in the two blankets but the Jowo was not dented. The rock fragment ricocheted off it out of the tent. This incident happened in Banglung and it was like a miracle by the Jowo. The Jowo was not damaged in any way. The two blankets had holes but the Jowo remained intact. This happened in the place called Banglung.

01:49:46

And then [the party] had to advance towards the Nepalese border that was quite close by. One had to cross a river at the border. That was the border between Nepal and India but [I] cannot recall the name of the place. There was a river at this place. India lay on the other side of the river and Nepal on the opposite side. The one that carried the Jowo... Daylight appeared and [the party] had to move on during the day and reached the Nepalese border where soldiers manned it. [The party] had encountered two soldiers that saw the Jowo being carried and had questioned, “What are you carrying?” “This is our milk churner,” was the reply.

The soldiers would not let [the group] through but the *Chushi Gangdrug* guerrillas that were there drew their swords and said, “Why do you not let us through?” Then they were allowed to leave and reached another border post. [I] believe that day a great number of *Chushi Gangdrug* men had converged there. Should the Jowo be captured, they were going to launch an attack. The leader had come from Mustang and paid the Nepalese authority. Then [the group] managed to pass through as money had been paid. Perhaps the authority was paid. And then while crossing the river the one that carried the Jowo had removed his shoes but did not realize it until after reaching the other bank. He had reached the other side of the river.

Q: How?

01:51:19

#16B: [The one carrying the Jowo] said, “I did not realize [I] had removed [my] shoes. The shoes were removed because they were in [my] hands. [I] cannot remember crossing the river but [I] was on the other bank.”

Q: The person?

#16B: Him, the person that carried the Jowo.

Q: Was he carrying the Jowo on the back?

#16B: [He] was carrying [the Jowo] on the back.

Q: And the shoes?

#16B: He had removed the shoes and they were in [his] hands but [he] had no knowledge about crossing the river. [Laughs] He must have been terrified.

Q: Perhaps we can understand how large was the Jowo and how heavy it was.

01:53:04

#16B: It is the size of a 16-year-old person, around the size of a 16 year old.

Q: How heavy is it?

#16B: It is not heavy as it is [made of] sandalwood. It is not heavy. Since it swayed during transportation a rope was tied to it. It swayed but is not heavy. It is not heavy.

Q: A rope was tied...

#16B: A rope was tied from the head that was held during transportation. Another rope was used [to carry it on the back]. The head swayed. The head of the wooden [statue] swayed, so a rope was tied to it and held as [the carrier] walked.

Q: Was the Jowo on the back?

#16B: Yes, on the back. It was packed in a long box. The box is long as [the Jowo] is big in size. A box had been made in proportion to the size [of the Jowo].

Q: Was the head outside of the box?

#16B: Yes?

Q: Was the head of the Jowo outside or inside the box?

#16B: It was packed inside the box. When the Nepalese had asked what it was, [the carrier] had replied, "This is our milk churner."

Q: Then what happens when you cross the river? How do you get across the river?

01:54:21

#16B: [The carrier] swam across the river but [he] mentioned not being aware of crossing it.

Q: Wasn't the river large?

#16B: [I] do not think the river was large.

Q: Weren't you there then?

#16B: Yes?

Q: Weren't you there?

#16B: I was not. I was not there then. I was there.

Q: Where?

#16B: With the replica Jowo. [I] was serving the replica Jowo.

Q: Yes?

#16B: [I] was in Mustang then. Four of our senior monks accompanied the Jowo. There were four senior monks accompanying the Jowo.

Q: I see. You didn't leave Mustang then?

#16B: No. I was not there during the journey but there were four senior monks. It seems the river was not large. The one that carried the Jowo had no knowledge about removing [his] shoes but mentioned reaching the other bank.

01:55:20

Now [the group] was in Indian Territory and had to travel by train. However, the railway authorities refused entry on the train saying, "You cannot go there [to India]." Coincidentally at that moment a military official happened to be there after being on vacation. The military official asked about [the image]. The reply given was, "We are going to offer this image to His Holiness the Dalai Lama." The military official intervened and [the group] was allowed to proceed.

At the border a representative of the Office of Religious Department in Dharamsala waited with a *khata* 'ceremonial scarf' for the Jowo. A representative of the office of Religious Department arrived there.

Q: Where?

#16B: At the Indian border, a representative of the Office of Religious Department in Dharamsala. Word had spread and a representative of the Office of Religious Department offered a *khata* to the Jowo.

01:57:07

And then [the Jowo] was taken to Dharamsala. At Dharamsala [the Jowo] was escorted to the Palace, the old Palace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It was escorted to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Palace. The [monks of] Namgyal Monastery ceremoniously received [the Jowo] at the Palace. The two tutors [of His Holiness] and His Holiness the Dalai Lama escorted the Jowo inside bearing incense sticks.

Q: Was there any reason why you didn't continue on that part of the journey?

#16B: There were many of us monks then. There were 22 of us monks and the leader of Mustang called for senior monks and I was not one of them then. The senior monks left. The names of the senior monks are...one is a supervisor at Sera Jey [Monastery] who was the supervisor of the *ladang* and our leader. Then one called Norbu Tsewang who was our *lopon* 'master of meditation practice and study.'

Q: Norbu Tsewang?

#16B: Yes, Norbu Tsewang was one that left. Then Jampa Jamyang who was a substitute *lopon* was there and our incumbent *umze* 'chant leader' known as Lobsang Jinpa. The four of them were the ones that left. These were our four senior most monks that accompanied

the Jowo. Those of us remained at Mustang pretending the replica Jowo was the real one. [Laughs]

Q: I see, quite an adventure. Rinpoche-*la*, where is that Jowo right now? Where is it?

01:59:31

#16B: In Dharamsala in the private residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Q: In the private residence?

#16B: Yes, in the private residence. After we had arrived and were to move to the settlement [in Hunsur]—it is too long to go into every detail—when we arrived in Dharamsala the Jowo was in the private residence and later we had to move to the settlement. It was in '72 that we were to move to the settlement.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama sought a divination. We from the monastery chanted the *phathoe* prayers for a week. His Holiness the Dalai Lama called and asked us to chant *phathoe*. The Jowo was brought out and we chanted *phathoe* in the presence of the Jowo for a week. After a week of chanting the *phathoe*, a divination was sought as to whether [the Jowo] wished to leave for the settlement with us or remain in Dharamsala. The Jowo divined that it wished to remain in Dharamsala.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama made the announcement last year just as [he] has done so several times in the past, “The image belongs to Zongkar Choede. However, when the Jowo arrived here I asked, ‘Would you like to go to a hot place or remain here?’ ‘I want to be here. I want to stay here with you,’ it said.” [Laughs]

02:01:48

In that way the Jowo remained there. It was in the '70s that the Jowo was escorted from the palace to a *bumtso* ‘assembly of 100,000 offerings.’ It was brought from the Palace to the Tsuglakhang where a *bumtso* was being conducted. At that time [the Jowo] was fully dressed in the attire brought from Tibet as one can see in the pictures. The full dress was donned. During that year after seven days of *bumtso* [the Jowo] had to be escorted back to the palace. At the time of returning the Jowo was sweating like a human and the clothes were completely wet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama said—the clothes were put to dry in the sun because of the sweat. It seems the Jowo was then bathed at the Palace. The following year the Jowo was escorted in a thin dress like that [points off camera]. During the *bumtso* [His Holiness the Dalai Lama] remarked, “Last year the Jowo sweated a lot. This year I have made a change.” There was even a watch on the hand and then [the Jowo] was brought out. That was the following year.

Q: A watch where?

#16B: There was a watch on the hand of the Jowo.

Q: Did His Holiness offer it?

02:03:03

#16B: Yes, given by His Holiness and [the Jowo] was covered with a cloth. “Last year [the Jowo] sweated a lot. This year I have made a change for the Jowo.” [The Jowo] was brought out wearing a thin cloth. Normally [the Jowo] sweats a lot, which is the oozing of nectar. Later an artist from Chating requested of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “I would like to offer a golden face paint for the Jowo.” [He] informed His Holiness about offering a golden face paint. “That is very good if [you] can give a golden face paint. I was thinking of offering a golden face paint but over the whole body. You should come [to do it].”

When the dress was removed, it was found to be wet once again from sweat. The hand [of the Jowo] is in this position [bends right hand at the elbow] and water droplets had formed here [indicates elbow joint] from sweating. His Holiness remarked, “That happens.” [The Jowo] is said to sweat a lot. Offering of golden paint was made then. Such things took place.

After we had escorted out the Jowo, in the year '66 the one called red protective deity of the Chinese emerged. The red protective deity of the Chinese surfaced in Tibet and everything was being destroyed. A red protective deity surfaced in Kyerong and the temple of the Jowo was being destroyed. There were many images in the Jowo's temple in Kyerong. There were large images that were destroyed and dismantled. There was a large image of Lupon that was taken to the end of Kyerong and used as a bridge over a drain. Such things were done.

Q: Yes.

02:04:37

#16B: Images were being destroyed and there were many in the Jowo's temple in Kyerong. There were images of gold, images of silver, precious stones and numerous others. All the images were locked in a room and the temple was used as a pigsty. Since the year '66 the Chinese turned the Kyerong Jowo's temple into a pigsty, where pigs are kept. All the images were taken to China and turned into ammunition.

Q: Yes?

#16B: ...turned into ammunition. All the images were transported to China and turned into ammunition. Such things happened in '66. The [Kyerong] Jowo was already in India. At the time of destruction of the Jowo temple [in Kyerong] there was a substitute Jowo. A rope was tied to the Jowo [indicates neck], a rope was tied and the people pulled the Jowo out of the temple. Then the Jowo was taken down the stairs, assaulted with sticks and stones. I believe the hands and everything were broken.

However, the heart part was not damaged. It was not damaged even after being stoned or anything. [The substitute Jowo] remained for sometime and then the image disintegrated by itself. It disintegrated by itself but not when being stoned or such. The Jowo substitute is a very holy one. Such things happened. The Jowo temple was turned into a pigsty and all

the images transported to China. They [the Chinese] turned them into ammunition. That is the story of the Jowo.

Q: Now could you please describe the Jowo to us?

02:08:48

#16B: [Interviewee holds a picture frame with pictures of the Jowo and His Holiness the Dalai Lama] This is the Jowo [indicates a statue dressed in green].

Q: Is that the one you brought from Tibet?

#16B: This is the one. This is the one. The Jowo originated during the time of [King] Songtsen Gampo. This is the one.

Q: What year was that that it originated?

#16B: [I] wonder when it was. [I] do not know the period.

Q: And what year did you deliver it? Did it get taken to His Holiness the Dalai Lama? What year was that?

#16B: [The Jowo] arrived in '68.

Q: Does the Jowo image still remain in the home of the Dalai Lama?

02:09:56

#16B: [The Jowo] remains there. Earlier [His Holiness the Dalai Lama] made an announcement, "In the past in Tibet the Zongkar Choede acted as the caretaker. When it arrived in Dharamsala, there was no place to stay and I escorted the Jowo to my residence. These days I act as the caretaker. I act as the caretaker of the Jowo. I do my recitations in front of the Jowo. I am the junior caretaker." [Laughs]

His Holiness said, "For generations [the monks of] Zongkar Choede served the Jowo. However, these days I act as the caretaker. I am the junior caretaker."

Q: If we put it a little higher...that's good. We can see it.

[Interviewee holds up picture frame while a close up shot is taken]

Q: His Holiness is the junior caretaker...

[Interpreter to interpreter]: He said he was the junior caretaker now.

Q: His Holiness is the junior caretaker. So it'll remain there for an unknown amount of time? Is that correct?

02:11:42

#16B: Until perhaps we get Tibet's independence [the Jowo] will remain there with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. If Tibet could become like the past [I] think the Kyerong Jowo will go to Kyerong though there is no knowing if we will be the caretakers or not. We had been the caretakers in the past.

Q: It's still unknown, but, Rinpoche-*la*, we really want to thank you for this very important historical description of what happened to the Jowo and your efforts in bringing it safely to the Tibetan people outside of Tibet.

#16B: This has been very good because they [interviewers] will broadcast it to China and the world. It has been good today and I am very happy. It is good to broadcast it because that is the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It has been good and [I] express thank you.

My story has no lies in it. However, due to lack of time [I] have skipped some parts, skipped a little bit. Other than that there are no untruths because [I] do not have to fear anybody. There are some who tell a lot of lies regarding the Jowo claiming, "I escorted it. I did it." There are many. Those are not correct stories.

As for my [story], at the time of escorting out the Jowo I was working for the monastery and still am a working member and know everything. Last year at the Gyumed Monastery His Holiness the Dalai Lama extended [his] hand towards me and said, "They are the ones that escorted out the generations old Kyerong Jowo." [He] said so.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Is this a book of...?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: It's the history of the monastery and includes the Jowo.

Q: Rinpoche-*la*, maybe we could ask you to tell us just the title of this book? May I take this?

[Interviewer takes picture frame and passes a book to interviewee]

02:15:00

#16B: [Displays cover of book] This is after the Chinese destroyed our monastery. This is the main Zongkar Choede Monastery. These are the ruins of the monastery, ruins of the Zongkar Choede Monastery.

Q: I see. That would be a very interesting book for people to read.

#16B: I have letters, letters from government offices and many others to me in praise of it. There are [congratulatory letters] from different monasteries and offices. [I] have the letters here. One came yesterday praising the book. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was extremely happy with the book. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was extremely happy. I have letters written in praise of the book by all departments of the [Tibetan] government and various organizations.

Q: Well, we're very happy to let people know about this book. What is the exact title?

#16B: My name is written here.

Q: The name of the book?

#16B: It is *History of Zongkar Choede Monastery*.

Q: Thank you. We're going to have to conclude this very exciting and informative story about the Jowo image, but I want to say one more time to check—if this interview was shown in Tibet or China, would this be a problem for you?

02:17:32

#16B: There will not be. This is the exact truth without any additions.

Q: Thank you for sharing your story with us.

#16B: This story contains no additions but only the truth. [I] have skipped a bit because one cannot narrate every detail. Other than that there are no additions. Some others claim, "I escorted the Kyerong Jowo. I did it." There are many such [claimants]. Mine is the true story.

Q: Thank you very much.

#16B: It is good that you have come here since I wished to tell this story. This must be told.

END OF INTERVIEW