

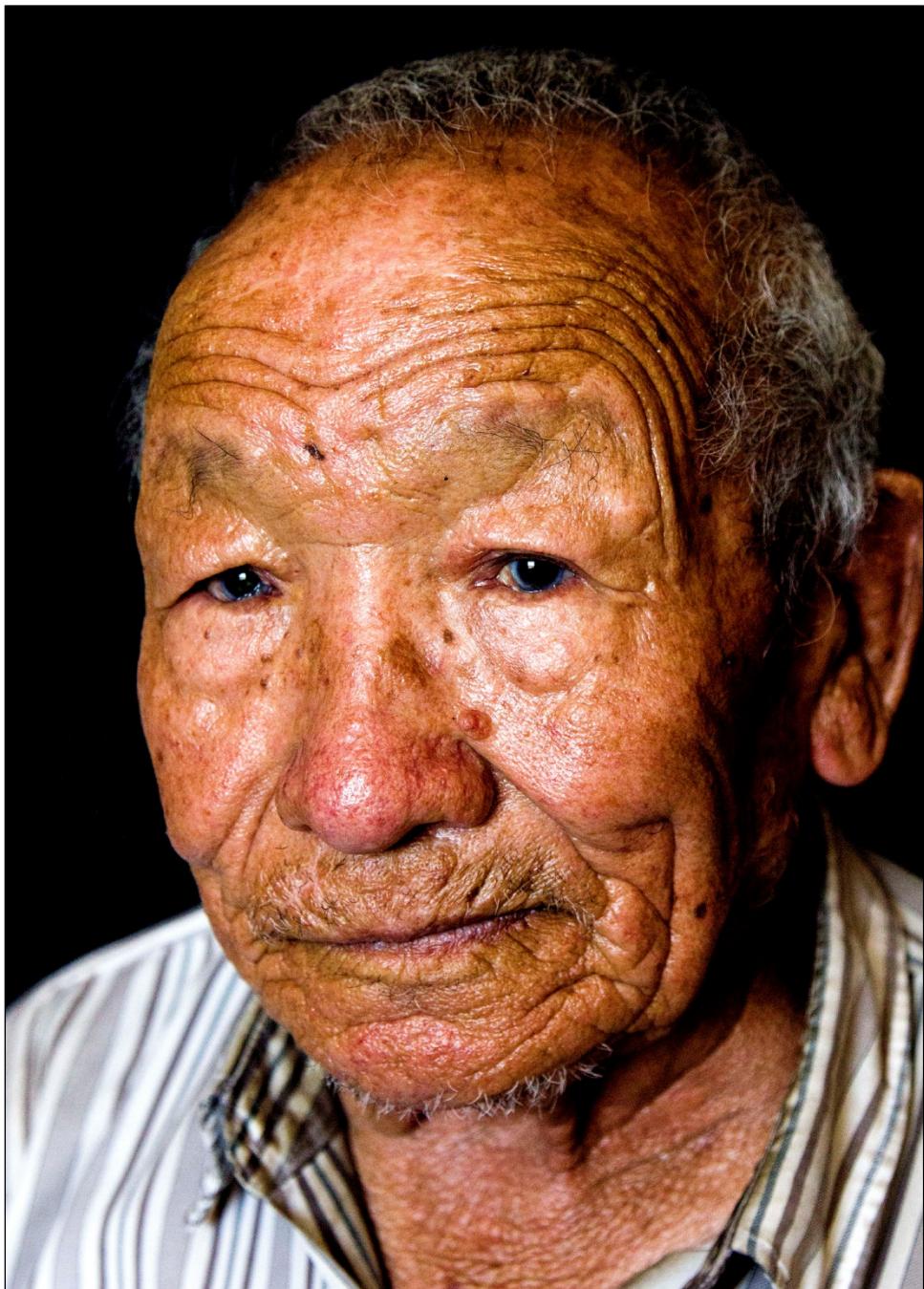
# **Tibet Oral History Project**

Interview #20D – Kunchok (alias)  
May 23, 2012

The Tibet Oral History Project serves as a repository for the memories, testimonies and opinions of elderly Tibetan refugees. The oral history process records the words spoken by interviewees in response to questions from an interviewer. The interviewees' statements should not be considered verified or complete accounts of events and the Tibet Oral History Project expressly disclaims any liability for the inaccuracy of any information provided by the interviewees. The interviewees' statements do not necessarily represent the views of the Tibet Oral History Project or any of its officers, contractors or volunteers.

This translation and transcript is provided for individual research purposes only. For all other uses, including publication, reproduction and quotation beyond fair use, permission must be obtained in writing from: Tibet Oral History Project, P.O. Box 6464, Moraga, CA 94570-6464, United States.

Copyright © 2014 Tibet Oral History Project.



## TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

### INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number:	#20D
2. Interviewee:	Kunchok (alias)
3. Age:	86
4. Date of Birth:	1926
5. Sex:	Male
6. Birthplace:	Chushul
7. Province:	Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet:	1959
9. Date of Interview:	May 23, 2012
10. Place of Interview:	Hotel Tibet, Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India
11. Length of Interview:	0 hr 53 min
12. Interviewer:	Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter:	Thupten Kesang Dakpa
14. Videographer:	Pema Tashi
15. Translator:	Tenzin Yangchen

#### **Biographical Information:**

Kunchok's birthplace is Chushul, which he describes as one of the biggest towns in Utsang Province. He speaks about his family occupation—working for the Tibetan Government in the Telephone Department. Kunchok gives a detailed account of how telephone lines were installed in Tibet by the British during the time of his grandfather and how the service was continued by his father, brother and himself in Chushul. Phones connected the cities of Gyantse, Ralung, Nangatse, Pedhe, Chushul and Lhasa.

The phones were located inside a few individual's houses, such as Kunchok's and those persons were responsible for delivering messages, both personal and official, received over the phone. Visitors could also place their own calls from the phones. Kunchok also was responsible for repairing the cables and replacing the wooden poles. In 1959 the Chinese confiscated his telephone.

Kunchok recalls joining the *Chushi Gangdrug* at the age of 33 and the futile resistance they put up against the Chinese for the next 17 years. He describes the encounters between the guerrillas and the Chinese soldiers that he witnessed and also some of the skirmishes that he was involved in. Ultimately the superior arms and might of the Chinese army outdid the Tibetan forces.

#### **Topics Discussed:**

First appearance of Chinese, Chushi Gangdrug guerrillas.

## TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

### **Interview #20D**

**Interviewee: Kunchok [alias]**

**Age: 86, Sex: Male**

**Interviewer: Marcella Adamski**

**Interview Date: May 23, 2012**

Question: *Pa-la* ‘respectful term for father,’ what is [your] name?

**Interviewee #20D: My father’s?**

Q: *Pa-la*’s name.

**#20D: My name? My name is Kunchok.**

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?

00:00:38

**#20D: [Speaks before interpreter] Kunchok is the shortened one. [It] has been...now it is only Kunchok.**

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

[Interpreter interprets previous question] His Holiness the Dalai Lama has advised our organization...

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama has advised our organization...

**#20D: To the organization?**

Q: ...has advised our organization to record the experiences of the older Tibetans to broadcast to the Tibetan people, the younger generation, 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.

Q: Therefore, do you give your permission to this organization to film the interview?

**#20D: Yes, yes.**

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

**#20D: [Silent]**

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

**#20D: [Nods] Yes, yes.**

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

**#20D: In Tibet?**

Q: Yes.

**#20D: In Tibet...**

Q: Is that okay?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Is it okay?

**#20D: Yes.**

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

**#20D: [Nods]**

Q: *Pa-la*, please tell me how old you are and where you were born?

00:02:58

**#20D: 86.**

Q: Where were you born in Tibet?

**#20D: Where from in Tibet?**

Q: Where were you born in Tibet?

**#20D: Residence in Tibet?**

Q: Birthplace.

**#20D: It is Chushul. Chushul.**

Q: Where is Chushul and what province?

**#20D: Chushul is right in Shol. Chushul is the biggest town.**

Q: Is it in Utsang?

**#20D: Chushul is the intersection where [people] coming from Lhasa and from India meet.**

Q: *Pa-la*, what did your family do for a living?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: What work did your family do in Tibet?

00:04:04

**#20D: Presently [they] are engaged in farming; there is not any work other than that.**

Q: What were [they] doing earlier?

**#20D: Earlier [they] worked for the government.**

Q: Working for the government?

**#20D: Yes.**

Q: Government service. What kind of service was that they provided?

**#20D: Government work...If there were any damages to the [telephone] wires, I had to go carry out repairs until Nyethar. If there were damages in the direction of Pedhe, I had to go until Nyaptso Duka. Duka was the border. [Damages to wires] on the other side of Duka were repaired by [people] from Pedhe. I was responsible for repairing on the opposite side.**

**My monthly salary was two [?] grains and housing. When [I] had to travel to repair wires, the people provided horses.**

Q: You said your family worked for the government. Which person in your family worked for the government? Was it your father and what job did he do?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: What work did your father do?

00:05:45

**#20D: My father's father was the one that initially brought [telephone] lines to Lhasa during the period of the British. I was not born then. My late father and mother journeyed with the English laying wires along the road. My late father said that [they] were asked to**

**live in Lhasa. However [my] late father said, “I want to live in Chushul.” That was how my late father came to be in charge of the telephone office in Chushul.**

Q: I see. Can you tell us...who taught you how to do this kind of work, telephone work?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: How did you learn to repair the wires?

**#20D: Chogye?**

Q: Lessons. Where did you get lessons in repairing wires?

**#20D: There was a full set of tools for carrying out repairs. We were sent to repair wires; [repairmen came] from the Lhasa Telephone Office as well. Assessing the length of the damaged wire, we joined and repaired it.**

Q: Who taught it to you?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Who taught you to do that?

**#20D: Rubberband?**

Q: Who was your teacher?

**#20D: My teacher?**

Q: Yes.

00:07:42

**#20D: I did not need a teacher! My late father did this work and then my older brother did it. I observed and worked along with them. That was it. I did not have a teacher.**

Q: Your grandfather worked with the British and then did your father work with the Tibetan Government? Who...what department was he working with?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: ...worked with the British in laying lines.

**#20D: Initially?**

Q: Yes, initially.

**#20D:** Initially with the British...there were no lines in Lhasa. And then along with the British...the British set up wires in Lhasa. For instance, [telephone centers] were there in Gyangtse, Ralung, Nangatse, Pedhe, Chushul and Lhasa.

Q: Gyangtse, Pedhe and...in five different [places]?

**#20D:** Yes, yes. Five different...I cannot say where [telephone centers] were beyond Gyangtse. [They] were present until Gyangtse.

Q: Could you name those five areas that were connected?

**#20D:** Yes?

Q: The wires were connected in different areas. They were Gyangtse and...

00:09:50

**#20D:** Gyangtse.

Q: Then?

**#20D:** Ralung.

Q: Then?

**#20D:** Nangatse.

Q: Then?

**#20D:** Pedhe.

Q: Then?

**#20D:** Chushul.

Q: Then?

**#20D:** And then it was Lhasa.

Q: These were telegraph connections, to send telegraphs or phones?

**#20D:** Telephones.

Q: [They] were telephones?

**#20D:** Yes. [Makes gesture of holding phone to ear]

Q: Who were the people that owned phones who could actually use these connections?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Who used the telephones?

**#20D: We were the ones that made the calls. We were the ones that also went to repair the lines and made calls over the telephone. It was I.**

Q: Did you make them on behalf of somebody or did they tell you what to say and can you give me an example?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: You made the telephone calls. Did the Tibetan Government give this work?

00:11:17

**#20D: There were visitors [traders], some of who asked to be connected to Nangatse or Pedhe or Lhasa. Each visitor had [his or her] own place [to connect]. Hence, wherever they asked to be connected, we did.**

Q: It was the people that asked?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Upon the people's request?

**#20D: Yes. There were visitors that were passing here and there or those that lived in our region or anyone that came to make calls to others; we connected [for them].**

Q: What would be the kind of messages that they wanted you to make a call about?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: As an example, what would the call be about?

**#20D: It would save someone of a journey by making a call over the phone. If I made a call to Lhasa, there would be someone to receive the call in Lhasa. He [the person that took the call] would go to the concerned families wherever [they] lived in Lhasa and say that such a message had been received. For instance, if I received a call, I would go to the respective family in Chushul and relay the message. That was it.**

Q: *Pa-la*, where were the phones located? Were they like in a phone office in each area and was there someone to receive the phone call all the time?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Were the phones located in offices?

## #20D: Phones?

Q: Where were the phones located?

00:13:42

**#20D: The phones were located right at home.**

Q: Right in the home?

**#20D: There was a square [?] for the phone. A wooden box had been made and inside it...**

Q: Wasn't there an office?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Wasn't there an office?

**#20D: There was no office.**

Q: Was it kept at home?

**#20D: Yes. There was an office in Lhasa, a telephone office. Those like ours by the roadside did not have offices. The calls were made from the respective homes wherever they needed to be made. If it was official, the message would be stated and if it was personal, [we] would say that such was the message and such was the request. Thus, the calls would be made but there were no offices.**

Q: Was there like one telephone and was it conn...was there one telephone and people would come to your home and make the phone call?

00:15:03

**#20D: There was only one telephone. There was only one telephone and I will tell you a story. When the *Chushi Gangdrug* [Defend Tibet Volunteer Force] and Andrug Jindha [Andrug Gonpo Tashi, its founder] went to get arms in Sangatho, they had a Chinese boy traveling with them. [They] lost him en route. He was a spy and later sent a message upon reaching Lhasa. Then Chinese [soldiers] came rushing. [The *Chushi Gangdrug* men got separated] with Andrug Jindha taking one route and a group coming through our region. So on account of this, the Chinese seized my telephone. A representative of the District Administrator, a Chinese leader and an interpreter came and said, "We need this telephone for the time being."**

Q: The Chinese said that?

**#20D: Yes, the Chinese wanted it and said that it would be returned later. [They] said that and took my telephone. The Chinese spent one night and then they were gone. Those [*Chushi Gangdrug* men] that had arrived went towards Gongka. [They] had a small encounter with the Chinese at Gongka. Then the Chinese were gone. I went to Gayi from**

**where the Chinese left to ask about my telephone. However, [they] had taken the telephone away. Later I met the Chinese interpreter in front of the District [Office]. “You say that you have come to help the people. Actually you have come to rob because you took my telephone. Where is it?”**

**He very honestly told me, “Your telephone is worthless. More than that is the nation.” [They had planned] to occupy the country and [he] mentioned that the country was more [valuable] than [the telephone]. That is the reason I did not want to remain [in Tibet]. I detested [the Chinese].**

Q: You just said the nation is more important. That's what you were told by the Chinese soldier after he took your phone. Did you ever get your phone back? What happened next?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: The Chinese leader said that the nation was more important.

00:18:59

**#20D: [He] was an interpreter. I told him, “You claim to have come to help the people. [You] have come to rob.” He told me, “Your telephone is nothing. Much more than that is the nation.”**

Q: Did you get the telephone back...

**#20D: [Interrupts] They already had designs to occupy the nation. Actually, China is iron-gated and Tibet is wooden-gated. The Chinese should stay in their place behind the iron gate and we in Tibet with a wooden gate. Though there is a phrase “China, the iron-gated and Tibet, the wooden-gated.” The bigger sized insect has consumed the smaller insect. The Buddha in flesh and blood [His Holiness the Dalai Lama] could not live in his country and has been forced to live in difficult circumstances in an alien land.**

Q: Did you get your telephone back later?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Did [you] get your telephone back?

**#20D: [I] never got it back. How would [I] get it?**

Q: How many years had you...about how long, *pa-la*, had you been working on the phone service?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: How long did you work in the phone [service] in Tibet?

00:21:04

**#20D: The Chushi Gangdrug established base at Lhoka in the year '59. Since then the telephone was taken away.**

Q: For 59 years?

**#20D: [The telephone] was taken away since the year '59.**

Q: How many years did [you] work before that?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: How many years did you work in the telephone [service] before that?

**#20D: In Nepal?**

Q: No, how many years?

**#20D: In Nepal?**

Q: Not in Nepal. How many years did you work in Tibet, in the telephone [service]?

**#20D: Telephone?**

Q: Yes.

**#20D: The first time [it] came?**

Q: No, no. You were working in the telephone [service], the telephone job. How many years did you do the telephone job?

**#20D: Since the telephone was left behind?**

Q: Telephone job. The job.

00:21:45

**#20D: The telephone job was being done since the time of my late father. After my late father's demise, my late older brother did the work. And then I did it. I was a monk initially. It is not necessary to give [my] monk name. [I] was initially a monk. Then leaving it, I did the telephone job. My late brother had left home to get married. I was living at home and I did the work.**

Q: So about 10 years, 20 years?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Did [you] do the telephone work for around 10 years? Around 10 years?

**#20D: Yes.**

Q: Around 10 years?

**#20D: It was taken away in the year '59.**

Q: *Pa-la*, what were the typical messages before the Chinese came and people would use the phone? What were the typical kinds of messages that people would call and want you to go give them the message?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: When people made personal calls on the telephone...

**#20D: Telephone?**

Q: Yes. What did [they] call about?

00:23:35

**#20D: I would be told to give a message by phone to Pedhe, to a particular family.**

Q: What kind of message?

**#20D: The message would be whatever they wished, which we must convey. For instance, you [to the interpreter] were a visitor [trader] and you had numerous horses and mules with you. You would ask me to convey, "Please keep the corral empty for me. I'm coming at such a time with [my] horses and mules." I conveyed [this message] there. Likewise, it could be to your home, "I am coming at such a time" or "I am not able to come until such a time." Whatever you wished to say, you would tell me and I must convey it. That is it.**

Q: *Pa-la*, do you remember any...can you remember any messages that were either very important or very memorable, some message that you had to take care of when you were a young man and delivered? Anything exciting or sad or adventuresome?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Do [you] remember any messages that were special?

**#20D: [Shakes head to indicate "no"]**

Q: *Pa-la*, was the phone service when you named these places, was that all over Utsang province?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: There were telephone [services] in Gyantse, Pedhe and other places. Was that only in Utsang?

**#20D: Where?**

Q: Were [telephone services] available only in Utsang in Tibet?

**#20D: About Utsang?**

Q: Were all the telephone [services] in Utsang?

00:25:55

**#20D: That is what I told you. There was one telephone connection in Lhasa. I had the one in Chushul. There was one in Pedhe, then in Nangatse, Ralung and Gyantse. Each town had one [connection]. Every family did not own a telephone.**

Q: Were the phones connected by wires overhead and telephone poles? Is that how they were connected?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: The wires for the telephone...

**#20D: The wires?**

Q: How were the wires...

**#20D: [They] were of metal.**

Q: Metal?

**#20D: You have them here. They were like the metal wires that are connected here. The instrument used to make calls inside the house had a cover. It was called *benthar* and had a sheath. If we had to make repairs, there were pliers. We called them *kampa*. It was used to carry out any types of work. Inside the telephone instrument was a thin wire called *benthar*. That must be inserted.**

Q: *Pa-la*, who put in...who were the people who...They had to build poles for the wiring. Did you do that kind of work or other people?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: The wiring was not done underground...

00:28:09

**#20D: No, no. Wooden poles.**

Q: On wood?

**#20D: Wooden poles. For instance, at distances of every 3-4 mela [?]...a [pole] was erected that had a...[not discernible] behind which was a provision for fastening [makes screwing motion]. Then [the wire] was connected to another [pole] and then to another. [The wires] were connected like that.**

Q: Who set up the wooden...?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Who set up the wooden [poles] for the wires?

**#20D: The wood?**

Q: Did you fix [them]?

**#20D: Particular places were assigned to the people and [they] supplied the wooden [poles] for their respective areas. [The wooden poles] were called *chakuka*. For example, if two or three *chakuka* had decayed and fallen, the people brought replacements. [They] pulled out the rotten one and fixed a new one. Binding atop the [pole] was my job. I would do the binding and everything else. Then the *chakuka* was erected.**

Q: Who erected the wooden [poles] and wires long ago?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Who connected the wires and the poles? Did your family do it?

00:29:45

**#20D: Yes. For instance, you cannot manage by pulling the metal wire just like that [makes pulling motion]. There was a rope, a grass rope through which the wire was inserted and pulled. Then it did not slacken. You could pull it to the fullest and make it taut. That was it.**

**There are metal poles in India. But in Tibet there were only wooden poles and no metal ones.**

Q: Where did they get trees that were tall enough to do that? What region?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: You needed tall trees.

**#20D: Trees were available in the respective areas. There were plenty of trees.**

Q: They were available?

**#20D: Yes, yes.**

Q: How did the weather affect the lines and the poles? In Tibet there's a lot of serious winter weather, so what would happen?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: The weather was cold in Tibet. Didn't cold weather damage the wires?

00:31:27

**#20D: There was the clash of the *salo* 'earth lightning' and *namlo* 'sky lightning.' Cold weather had no effect but during summertime thunder rolled. If it so happened that you were unwinding the wires when it thundered, even the telephone fell from the hands. There would be a *thaa* [clap of thunder] while you were making a call, [the phone] fell from your hands and the whole body quivered. It was not good if you happened to be working with wires when thunder rolled and lightning struck. It is said that the *salo* and *namlo* had clashed.**

Q: Were any people ever killed trying to either manage the phones or install the wires? Were people killed?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Did people die from errors while repairing wires?

**#20D: People dying?**

Q: Yes. Did people fall to death while installing wires?

**#20D: It did not happen. I fell once. We had to repair wires once a year and erect replacements for rotten poles. I fell once from a pole. [I] fell but there were no risks of death.**

Q: *Pa-la*, did you ever receive any messages from the Dalai Lama's office that you had to give to different regions?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Have you ever received any messages from the office of His Holiness, the office of the Tibetan Government?

00:34:09

**#20D: That was in Lhasa, the main office.**

Q: Did the office send you any message?

**#20D: Responsibility?**

Q: Messages from the office over the telephone?

**#20D: What?**

Q: Did the office of His Holiness send messages over the phone?

**#20D: Of course.**

Q: What kind of messages did you get?

**#20D: The messages were whatever each one liked to send; yes, that was sent. We were not at liberty to say, send this or that.**

Q: No. For instance, weren't the advices of His Holiness not transmitted?

00:34:51

**#20D: It was at Norbulingka, the Potala Palace and likewise, the Tsugalakhang in Lhasa where His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave advice, and whatever the instructions, everyone must follow.**

Q: Weren't [they] conveyed over the phone?

**#20D: [His Holiness] did not speak to us. No, [he] did not. [He] did not speak over the phone.**

00:35:34

**That year—[joins palms] I take refuge in him—when the Chenrezig ‘Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the patron saint of Tibet’ [the Dalai Lama] was escorted from there [hometown in Amdo Province], [he] was very young. [He] was escorted from there at the age of 13...[not discernible] and then at the age of 25, Tibet was lost. That was it.**

Q: Before the Chinese took your phone, did you have to give any messages for the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: The Chinese took your phone...

**#20D: Yes.**

Q: Did you receive any messages from the *Chushi Gangdrug* before [it] was seized?

00:36:37

**#20D: There was no way to receive any messages from the *Chushi Gangdrug*. For the *Chushi Gangdrug* to relay a message, there were no telephones where they were coming**

from. They emerged from the valley of Chushul. Another splintered group with Andrug Jindha was elsewhere. They had split into two groups. One group emerged from the valley of our region. While they were emerging from the valley...the Chinese boy [had passed information] and they encountered the Chinese. They encountered the Chinese and broke into two groups. One group came through our region. The Chinese had pursued them right away and arrived in Chushul. [The Chinese] arrived in Chushul.

[The *Chushi Gangdrug* men] crossed [the river] in boats and burned the boats on the other side. Then the Chinese rushed in. [I] thought there would be a fierce battle between them and the Chinese. I owned a pair of binoculars then that I took and looked from atop a hill. All the *Chushi Gangdrug* [men] managed to cross [the river]. Behind them...the Chinese possessed rubber boats that were similar to leather. The Chinese crossed [the river] using those. Then they clashed a bit at Gongka. It was not a fierce encounter.

Q: *Pa-la*, what happened to you when the Chinese took your telephone? How long did you stay in your area or did you ever leave?

00:39:14

#20D: [I] stayed in the area for a little while and then...I told you that the *Chushi Gangdrug* was formed at Lhoka. The *Chushi Gangdrug* was formed to resist [the Chinese]. The *Chushi Gangdrug* was formed and I too joined it. [My] late mother said, "Do not go now. A time will come when [you] have to and [you] can go then." However, I was not at ease.

Q: How old were you then?

#20D: Yes?

Q: How old were you then?

#20D: Then?

Q: Yes.

#20D: [I] was 33 years old. I owned a horse and fed it well. And then I rode the horse to Lhoka.

Q: *Pa-la*, would you like to tell us what happened at Lhoka and your experiences, please?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: In *Chushi Gangdrug*?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: What?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: In *Chushi Gangdrug*?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Yes, with the *Chushi Gangdrug*.

Q: What was [your] experience with the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: What was [your] experience with the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

**#20D: The experience...[shakes head]. One used the little amount of arms that one owned and that was it. Though the Americans provided good support, those weapons were not used.**

Q: Are there any other parts of that experience...

00:41:32

**#20D: [Interrupts] Little by little...how could they [the Chinese] be overcome? They had numerous men and readily available armaments and possessed everything while we had nothing. Then we fled from there and fought a little at Chaksamdoka. How could [we] overcome [them]? And then [we] clashed at [the place] called Dangdha. Once again, how could [we overcome them]? They came rushing. One stood up and another came rushing. One lay down and another came rushing. One lay down and another came rushing. How could [we] overcome them? They were huge in number and we were hardly any. Even our weapons were not much.**

Q: Were there many other people in that group at the Lhoka camp? How many about?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Around how many people were there with you in Lhoka?

**#20D: Colleagues?**

Q: Yes.

**#20D: There were many colleagues then.**

Q: How many men were there?

00:43:34

**#20D: There were [people] from Amdo. There were numerous people of our region but it is useless to mention names because everyone's passed away.**

Q: Around how many people were there? Fifty, 60, 100, how many?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Around how many people were there? Fifty, 60, 100, how many?

**#20D: We men of Chushul?**

Q: Yes.

**#20D: We were around 23 men of Chushul.**

Q: Were you able to defend yourself against these very organized Chinese troops?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Were you able to defend against the Chinese attack?

**#20D: Even though [we] resisted, it was useless. Three of us men dug holes in the night nearby Chaksam [a bridge]. The Chinese arrived in a boat. We were hiding in the bunkers when [they] arrived in the boat. The boat seemed to take another way. So I told my colleagues, “This is not good. I will go and inform the sentries. Losing ground here will not be good for us.” There was a man with a big nose who was from Nyetsang. The other one was called Nyima and we hailed from the same town. We were three men. However, after I’d covered some distance, the Nyetsang man with the big nose came running to join me. We could hear the sound of the boat close by. Fearing an attack, we retraced our steps. When we returned, instead of hiding in the bunker, Nyima was sitting on his haunches with the gun in hand. [We] asked, “Where are [the Chinese]?” and [he] replied, “[They] are here.” [The Chinese] fired at us considerably and so did we. But it was useless.**

00:45:58

Then I said, “This is not the right thing. We should leave before daylight. If [we] do not leave before daylight, we will be easy targets for them along the way.” The pathway led up a slope and it was simple to fire from anywhere as we climbed up. “Or we should wait until nightfall. [We] should hide in the bunker the whole day and wait. [We] will have to remain hungry.” Nyima said, “That is impossible. It will be scandalous for us to leave. Let us remain.” The Nyetsang man with the big nose replied, “Nyima, this is not good. There are supposed to be sentries around. We have been sent to fight. However, nobody has come to ask if the enemy has arrived. This is not good.”

Then we left before daylight. Around daybreak we were in the Changthang ‘Northern Plateau.’ Around 36 horsemen passed us towards Gamba from Changthang. Artilleries were fired from there, which struck the side of a hill. Then a machine gun was aimed at us. Except for 5-6 horsemen that might have escaped towards Gamba, the rest scattered like peas. Then [the horsemen] had crossed over the Changthang pass. [Relating these experiences] are useless, just a waste of time. Everything is over.

Then [we] fought at Dangdha as well. It was the same at Dangdha. We were assigned the duty of keeping watch at the *tseri* ‘mountain top,’ but failed to watch the back and kept watching the front. The Chinese crept from the back and [we] lost the *tseri*.

Q: *Tseri*?

00:48:27

**#20D:** [We] fought from the *tseri* but it was useless. [We] lost the *tseri*. Again we fled. There was nothing to do but flee. [Relating] these stories will just take time; it is useless. I have struggled for 17 years and what do [we] have now? It has not been beneficial at all.

Q: Were you 17 years in the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

**#20D: Yes?**

Q: Yes, were you there for 17 years?

**#20D: In the *Chushi Gangdrug*?**

Q: Yes, were [you] there for 17 years?

**#20D: When [I] joined the *Chushi Gangdrug*?**

Q: Were you 17 years in the *Chushi Gangdrug*?

**#20D: Seventeen years?**

Q: Were [you] there?

00:49:21

**#20D: [Shakes head] Oh, [you] mean there at Chumi [Mustang, Nepal]?**

Q: Yes.

**#20D: [I] was there for 17 years struggling hard. What was the use of spending 17 years?**

[Interviewer to interpreter]: "I worked there for 17 years or fought there for 17 years?"

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Fought there.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: "I fought there." You fought the Chinese for 17 years?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: "I was in the *Chushi Gangdrug* for 17 years."

Q: *Pa-la*, because the wires...they took your phone and the Chinese were using the wires, was there anything done to prevent the Chinese from using the telephone wires?

**#20D: The Chinese did not use [it]. The Chinese took [it].**

Q: I see.

**#20D: I was not in a position to see where they used it or not. Then when I met the Chinese interpreter at the door of the District [Office] and said, "You claim to have come to help**

**the people but you have come to rob,” he replied, “Your telephone is nothing. The country is more than your telephone.” [He] said that. Now would it hurt me here [beats chest] or not?**

Q: *Pa-la*, is there anything else that you would like to tell us before we finish our interview today about *Chushi Gangdrug* or what happened when you left Tibet?

**#20D: Family members?**

Q: Experiences. Any special experiences to relate?

**#20D: My...**

Q: Experiences that you’ve had. Do you have any special stories to relate about your life?

**#20D: No, [I] do not.**

Q: *Pa-la*, thank you very much for telling us about your experiences. We appreciate it.

END OF INTERVIEW