

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #22N – Tashi Dhondup
April 8, 2015

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #22N
2. Interviewee: Tashi Dhondup
3. Age: 70
4. Date of Birth: 1945
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Shingri
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1960
9. Date of Interview: April 8, 2015
10. Place of Interview: Hotel Norbu Sangpo, Boudha, Kathmandu, Nepal
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 15 min
12. Interviewer: Katharine Davies Samway
13. Interpreter: Palden Tsering
14. Videographer: Dhiraj Kafle
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Tashi Dhondup was born in the town of Dhingri within the small village of Shingri. His parents were farmers who could cultivate only barley because of the high altitude. They also raised animals like goats, sheep, horses, yaks, *dzo* ‘animal bred from an ox and a female yak’ and cows. He explains how being the middle of three sons entitled him to become a monk at the age of 8. He talks about the education he received at the monastery and what a happy life it was with nothing to worry about.

Tashi Dhondup’s narrates a folktale of how Dhingri got its name. Pha Dhampa Sangay, a great Indian master, threw a rock from India wishing to work for the welfare of sentient beings where the rock fell. The rock landed with the sound of ‘*dhing*’ and that explained the name of Dhingri. Pha Dhampa Sangay went in search of the rock and settled in Dhingri once he found it there. Many meditators came to see him and miraculous events occurred there.

Tashi Dhondup also narrates the story of Nalanda, an ancient Buddhist university in India and the ingenuity of the learned Buddhist monks there. He recounts how a great Buddhist master, Lopon Arya Deva, the disciple of Gonpo Ludup ‘Lord Nagarjuna’ defeated Muthek Tayang, a non-believer, in a debate and converted him to Buddhism. Muthek Tayang was renamed Lopon Pawo and became one of the best disciples of Gonpo Ludup.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, childhood memories, monastic life, Buddhist beliefs, customs/traditions.

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Interview #22N

Interviewee: Tashi Dhondup

Age: 70, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Katharine Davies Samway

Interview Date: April 8, 2015

Question: Thank you very much for coming here and agreeing to be interviewed by us. I have to ask some questions that you already told in the pre-interview. Is that okay?

00:00:38

Interviewee #22N: It bis okay.

Q: Thank you. It won't take long.

#22N: [Smiles]

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

#22N: Yes.

Q: Thank you.

#22N: Yes.

Q: Thank you, and during this interview if you need to take a break or you don't want to talk about something, please let us know.

#22N: Okay.

Q: If you do not wish to answer a question or talk about something, let us know.

#22N: Okay.

Q: If your interview were to be shown in Tibet or China, would it be a problem for you?

00:02:40

#22N: No, no.

Q: Thank you. We're honored to record your story.

#22N: Okay.

Q: Now for a few questions that you may have answered earlier, but they're quick questions.

#22N: Okay.

Q: Could you please tell us your name?

#22N: My name is Tashi Dhondup.

Q: And your age?

#22N: Seventy.

Q: Where were you born or where did you live in Tibet?

#22N: My birthplace is Dhingri, Shingri.

Q: Is Dhingri, Shingri a village, a town or a nomadic area?

#22N: It [Shingri] is a village but Dhingri is a town. The town in the village is called Dhingri.

Q: So you came from Shingri, a village?

#22N: I am from Shingri.

Q: In Shingri, how many people lived there?

00:04:32

#22N: There may have been around 40 families and not more than 150-60 people.

Q: Were you all related, all 40 families? Were you all related in some way?

#22N: No, [we] were not. Everyone lived separately.

Q: Your father, what was his name?

#22N: Tsewang.

Q: And what did Tsewang do for his livelihood?

#22N: [He] did farming.

Q: What did he farm?

#22N: Farming like growing grains.

Q: What kind of grains?

#22N: The grain is what is called barley. Other grains did not grow because our place was at a high altitude.

[Interpreter interprets barley as wheat.]

Q: How many crops did you have each year of the wheat?

#22N: There was only one harvest a year.

Q: Did you have animals?

#22N: [We] had animals.

Q: What animals did you have?

00:06:25

#22N: Goats, sheep, horses, yaks, *dzo*, cows and such.

Q: *Dzo* is the cross between a yak and cow, right?

#22N: It is a cross between an ox and a *dri* 'female yak.' That is called a *dzo*.

Q: How many animals did you have, about how many animals?

#22N: In our home?

Q: Yes.

#22N: We owned nearly a thousand goats and sheep.

Q: And horses and yaks and *dzo*?

#22N: There were two horses and sometimes when foals were born, there were three or four at times.

Q: Yaks?

#22N: We did not own any yaks.

Q: And how many *dzo*?

#22N: There were around eight *dzo*.

Q: Was your family considered a wealthy family?

00:08:30

#22N: Our family was supposed to be economically fairly good while in Tibet.

Q: What was your mother's name?

#22N: Dickey.

Q: And what did Dickey do, you know?

#22N: [Mother] took care of the home like cooking, making clothes for the children, overseeing and such.

Q: How many children did they have?

#22N: Our mother had 12 children.

Q: Did they all survive?

#22N: From the 12 children, four had passed away long ago and eight survived.

Q: Do the eight survive now?

#22N: After coming to India more passed away. We are only five that survive and the rest have expired.

Q: In your siblings, where were you? Were you the eldest, the youngest, where?

00:10:41

#22N: There were five elder to me. I am the sixth.

Q: What kinds of responsibilities did you have as a child in the family?

#22N: When I was a child...the practice in our region was that if there were three sons one must become a monk. Therefore, my responsibility was to become a monk.

Q: Were you sent to a monastery?

#22N: Yes, I was the middle of three sons and the middle son must become a monk at the monastery.

Q: How old were you when you went to the monastery?

#22N: I might have left at around the age of 8.

Q: How close to your home was the monastery?

#22N: The monastery was around a kilometer away. It was not far, quite close.

Q: So it was quite close. How long did you stay, until what age did you stay in the monastery?

#22N: I might have stayed around three years in the monastery.

Q: So until you were about 11?

00:12:49

#22N: Yes, a monk until the age of 11.

Q: Did you live in the monastery or at home?

#22N: [I] visited home but lived in the monastery. [I] spent nights in the monastery and could visit home during the day.

Q: So you slept at the monastery but you went home during the day?

#22N: One could not go home every day but only on visits for one must study there.

Q: [You] slept at the monastery?

#22N: One must sleep in the monastery.

Q: When you went home did you take care of the animals or do any of the farm work or did you go just for a short time to see your family?

#22N: I did not have anything to do with such things; did not have to take care of the animals.

Q: Can you tell us what you remember of monastery life? What did you do? How did you spend your days?

00:14:49

#22N: I had a teacher while in the monastery. The teacher taught. One got up early in the morning to learn the alphabets and in the evening the teacher orally taught the prayers which one must memorize.

Q: So did you learn to read and write in the monastery?

#22N: I knew reading from Tibet itself.

Q: Knew before joining the monastery?

#22N: No [I] learned in the monastery but I did not know how to write.

Q: Reading the script?

#22N: I could read the *uchen* ‘printed script’ of the scriptures that monks normally read long ago even as a child in Tibet. However, I did not know the *umay* ‘hand-written script’ while in Tibet.

Q: Is the other script the kind of script that is used in papers and books?

#22N: What?

Q: Are newspapers and books written in the *uchen* script?

00:16:50

#22N: I could read, read *uchen*.

Q: Is *umay* script used in writing newspapers and books?

#22N: In Tibet?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: When he said that he learned how to read the Tibetan religious scripts but he didn’t know the other Tibetan script until he came here. So the other script that he learned when he came here, what was that script and where would you see it?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: It’s just a different way of writing but it’s the same Tibetan actually.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: So is it religious text still?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Same script. It’s like we write D like this; some people write D like different kind of D.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Thank you.

Q: Did you learn any other subjects in the monastery like mathematics or science?

#22N: [I] did not get such opportunities.

Q: Did you enjoy living in the monastery, being a monastery?

#22N: [I] enjoyed it.

Q: What did you like about it?

#22N: While living in the monastery there was nothing to worry about livelihood and such. One must do the studies and beyond that there were no worries. So one felt happy, as there was not much to think about then.

Q: As a young child...you were just a child when you were in the monastery, right? What did you enjoy about the monastery as a child?

00:19:18

#22N: The enjoyment was that there were other little ones that faced difficulties at home like lack of food and such but I did not have such problems. As long as I could read the scriptures I did not have any other worries while in Tibet. Also everybody loved [me].

Q: We have to take a very short break.

[Discontinuity in video]

Q: When Tenzin Yangchen [pre]-interviewed you a few days ago you said that you'd like to tell us about how Dhingri Lakor or Langkor came into existence with the beautiful story of Pha Dhampa Sangay flinging a rock from India.

#22N: Yes.

Q: Would you still like to tell us that story?

#22N: Yes, I do.

Q: Could you tell us in some detail because we don't know the story or I don't know the story? And he will sometimes stop you so that he can interpret for me.

00:21:55

#22N: For instance, I say that my hometown is Dhingri Langkor. If asked, "How did the name Dhingri come about?" Dhingri...from among the 80 great mahasiddha, Pha Dhampa Sangay [Indian master who introduced the Pacification of Suffering teachings] flung a rock called Dhingdho Mukpo from India after praying.

Q: Rock?

#22N: Dhingdho Mukpo.

Q: Pha Dhampa Sangay?

#22N: Yes. The rock Dhingdho Mukpo was flung from India. It was flung after saying this prayer; "My future *dodhon* 'deed for the welfare of beings' shall be wherever this falls." [The rock] was hurled after saying the prayers.

Q: What was the prayer in his mind?

#22N: The prayer was, "In the future whatever I do for the welfare of sentient beings, I shall go to this place and be beneficial." One would have to perform a task wherever it may be and [Pha Dhampa Sangay said,] "My *dodhon* is greater if I go there." *Dodhon* means to do something in the future for the benefit of sentient beings.

Q: All sentient beings, right?

#22N: Yes.

Q: And so did he come?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Now he will continue the story.

Q: Oh, go ahead.

00:24:21

#22N: Then the rock fell. When the rock fell to the ground the sound *dhing* rang out, when the rock fell to the ground. Therefore, the name Dhingri came into being.

Q: And then?

#22N: And then Pha Dhampa Sangay went everywhere in search of the rock. [He] went everywhere and finally came to know that the rock had landed in Dhingri. At the time [he] learned about it, it was snowing in Dhingri. It was snowing and what happened at the site of the rock was that there was no snow around it. The earth looked lush and in the center was the rock.

When [Pha Dhampa Sangay] came to know of the rock there, seven *lawa* ‘musk deer’ consisting of a mother and kids were circumambulating the rock.

Q: *Lawa*?

#22N: Seven—mother and kids.

Q: What’s *lawa*?

#22N: *Lawa* is a wild animal, *lawa*. Seven *lawa*, a mother and kids, were circumambulating it, circumambulating the rock.

00:26:42

As the seven *lawa* circumambulated, each one merged into the other and finally there was a lone *lawa* left that merged into the rock. Hence, some people call [the place as] Dhingri Lakor.

Then Pha Dhampa Sangay lived there. There were many meditators and also people that came to see him, those that came to see Pha Dhampa Sangay. At such a time, a nomad came to see him and [Pha Dhampa Sangay] said, “Among your animals is one that does not have any black fur. Please give it to me.”

Q: Did [Pha Dhampa Sangay] ask him to bring it?

#22N: No. “Among your animals is one without any black fur. Please give it to me,” [Pha Dhampa Sangay] said. Then he [nomad] replied, “I do not have such an animal.” “There is

a *lang* ‘ox’ near your door. Please give it to me,” [Pha Dhampa Sangay] said. “Of course, if that is so.” And the nomad offered the ox to Pha Dhampa Sangay.

Q: [The nomad] was asked to bring an animal without any black fur?

00:29:08

#22N: Pha Dhampa Sangay knew about the animal without any black fur. “Among your animals is one without any black fur. Please give it to me,” [Pha Dhampa Sangay] said. He [the nomad] did not know that. “I do not have any animal without black fur among my animals,” [the nomad] replied. Pha Dhampa Sangay said, “There is an ox near the door. Please give it to me.” Saying okay, the ox was offered.

After the offering...there was many that sat in meditation at Langkor and what this ox did was to—there was a water body called Langkor Gyacha—bring water from Langkor Gyacha to the doorsteps of the meditators. It did so like a human.

Q: The ox?

#22N: The ox.

Q: What’s the name of the water body?

#22N: Langkor Gyacha.

Q: Was it a river or...?

#22N: It is a large water body called Langkor Gyacha.

Q: Was it a river or lake?

#22N: A river, river. It is a large river and can wash away a person.

00:31:23

On account of that, these days all people call [the place] Dhingri Langkor. Presently it is called Langkor because the ox brought the water. So because of the *lang* it is called Dhingri Langkor.

Q: And then?

#22N: Here ends the story of Pha Dhampa Sangay and the name Langkor of my village.

Q: It’s a beautiful story. Thank you.

#22N: Last time I told the lady [pre-interviewer] about the conversion of a non-Buddhist, Muthek Tayang to Buddhism.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: You want him to tell us?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: He wanted to tell us.

Q: Yes, please do it. So can you tell us the story please about the challenge between Muthek Tayang and Lupon Arya Deva, the Buddhist master?

#22N: Long ago in India, the university where Buddhism could be studied was called Nalanda. Nalanda was the topmost Buddhist institute and there was none above it. When Gonpo Ludup ‘Lord Nagarjuna’ was the *nyerpa* ‘steward,’ there happened to be a famine. During the famine Gonpo Ludup went to another island and brought a metal, which was transformed into gold. Gonpo Ludup sold the gold and met the expenses.

Q: Where was the metal brought from?

#22N: The metal was brought from another island like Jang Daminyen or some other place. The metal was given a gold paint.

Q: Then the gold was sold?

00:34:42

#22N: This was sold to fund Nalanda during the tenure of Gonpo Ludup. Palden Dawa Dakpa followed him [as steward]. When Palden Dawa Dakpa made offerings, it was said a cow was milked. What milking a cow meant was that a picture of a cow was drawn on a wall. The picture was milked instantly, the milk sold and the funds utilized. Nalanda was the place where people became so ingenious.

Q: They did such during the time of the famine?

#22N: Initially during the famine when Gonpo Ludup was the steward, in order to meet expenses during the famine, Gonpo Ludup fetched a piece of metal and transformed it into gold. This was sold and the funds used. Then Gonpo Ludup’s tenure came to an end. Palden Dawa Dakpa followed him. When Palden Dawa Dakpa needed funds, he immediately drew a picture of a cow on the wall, milked it, sold the milk and used the funds to make offerings. Nalanda was the university where such ingenious people emerged.

00:37:21

After that, among the *chipa* ‘non-Buddhists’ was someone called Muthek Tayang. He was the most intelligent among the *chipa*. Being the brainiest, he came to Nalanda and debated with the Buddhists in Nalanda, debating with anyone he came into contact.

[Muthek Tayang] debated with Buddhist monks and each of them failed to challenge him. Thus it came to pass that many Buddhist monks failed in debating [with Muthek Tayang].

Many debates later a learned Buddhist *geshe* ‘monk with Buddhist philosophy’ degree remarked, “Gonpo Ludup and Lupon Arya Deva live in Lhochok Pangkyiri. If they are not informed through a letter all the Buddhists may become *chipa*.”

The learned Buddhist *geshe* wrote in the letter, “Unless one of you come, there is a chance that all the Buddhists may convert to *chipa*.” A letter was written, which was stuffed in a *torma* ‘ritual dough offering.’ This *torma* was carried by a crow to Lhochok Pangkyiri and there Gonpo Ludup understood and removed the letter from the *torma*. On opening the letter [he] remarked to Lupon Arya Deva, “It is imperative for me to go else all the Buddhists are bound to come under the *chipa*.” When [Gonpo Ludup] thus remarked, [he] was asked, “How about if I were to go?”

Q: Gonpo Ludup?

00:40:20

Arya Deva asked. There was only one disciple. “The Buddhists are losing and those at Nalanda may come under Muthek Tayang. Hence, it is imperative that I go there.” Arya Deva asked, “How about if I go?” Lupon Arya Deva was the disciple and Gonpo Ludup the teacher. The disciple asked, “How about if I go?”

Gonpo Ludup was living at Lhochok Pangkyiri and not at Nalanda. Gonpo Ludup was living at the place near Amaravati where the Kalachakra was bestowed. It is called Lhochok Pangkyiri. Then Gonpo Ludup took the part of a *chipa* and Lupon Arya Deva as a Buddhist and they began debating.

Q: Were they just acting?

#22N: They were preparing for the debate with Muthek Tayang. Gonpo Ludup was not going and since Lupon Arya wished to go, they were rehearsing to find out if Lupon Arya Deva would be able to face the challenge or not. They were having a trial. Gonpo Ludup took the part of a *chipa* and Lupon Arya Deva as a Buddhist and they began debating. First they debated.

00:43:12

What resulted after many debate sessions was that Arya Deva won. In an aggressive manner Arya Deva circled around his teacher. “It is okay for you to go. However, do not look back during the journey,” advised [Gonpo Ludup]. “However, do not look back during the journey,” [he] said.

Then [Lupon Arya Deva] set out and came across a woman on the way and was asked for an eye. “Please give me an eye.” An eye was asked for and was given. After traveling quite a while and when [he] about to ascend a hill, he looked back and saw the woman crushing the eye on a rock like raw meat. “Alas,” [Lupon Arya Deva] felt regret and continued.

Because [he] had felt regret, the eye did not return [to him]. Had there been no regret, the eye would have returned. For one, the teacher had already advised never to look back but [Lupon Arya Deva] looked back. Because he had looked back the eye could not return. Had [he] not looked back and obeyed the teacher, the eye would have returned.

Q: Did Arya Deva give the eye to the woman or did the woman give to Arya Deva?

00:45:10

#22N: Initially, Gonpo Ludup had said, “It is okay for you to go.”

Q: So Arya Deva left.

#22N: [Gonpo Ludup] told Arya Deva, “It is okay for you to go but never look back during the journey. Do not ever look back,” [Gonpo Ludup] had advised. Along the way [Arya Deva] met a woman. “Please give [me] an eye,” [she] said.

Q: Did the woman ask?

#22N: Yes, the woman...

Q: ...asked Arya Deva?

#22N: ...begged Arya Deva for an eye. Arya Deva took out an eye and presented it. After giving it [Arya Deva] should have continued but he looked back after walking for a while. The woman was crushing the eye on a stone. On [seeing] the eye being crushed, [he] felt regret. Hence, Arya Deva is missing an eye.

00:46:49

Then [Lopon Arya Deva] reached Nalanda. At that point of time Muthek Tayang was in power in Nalanda and all the monks were being counted. Whatever the number, everyone was under Muthek Tayang. Muthek Tayang was regulating and counting all the monks of Nalanda. Since [they] were being counted, it was not easy to get in or out. So Lopon Arya Deva] met some water carriers. [He] sent a message to the Buddhist *geshe* through the water carriers, “I have arrived.”

The water carriers were asked to escort [Lopon Arya Deva]. [He] came in dressed as a water carrier. What happened after [he] came in was that Muthek Tayang used to count the Buddhist monks when they assembled. During the count there was an extra person from the regular number. [Muthek Tayang] was holding a stick in his hand that [he] hit on the head [of Lopon Arya Deva?] and asked, “Where did the extra head that was not there earlier come from?” To this Lopon Arya Deva replied, “The head has come from the neck.” Now he [Muthi Tayang] thought, “One more Buddhist monk has come.” He felt that the new person had come to debate.

00:49:50

Wherever they encountered each other, they debated. They debated whenever they met. What Muthek Tayang did to Arya Deva was...one day on encountering Arya Deva [he] held a bird in the hand and asked, “Will it die or not?”

Q: Did Muthek Tayang ask that?

#22N: Muthek Tayang questioned Arya Deva. To this Arya Deva replied, “That depends upon your compassion.” This was the reply given.

Another day when they met Muthek Tayang put one foot within the threshold of a door and the other outside and asked, “Will I go in or come out?” To this the reply was, “It depends upon your mind.”

One time there was a waterfall from a cliff. There was water flowing down a cliff. Muthek Tayang was swimming under such a fall. As [Muthek Tayang] was swimming, Lupon Arya Deva asked, “What are you doing?” The reply to this was, “I am cleaning.” When told that [he] was cleaning, Lupon Arya Deva did not say anything that day and walked away.

Q: Did [Muthek Tayang] reply he wasn't doing anything?

00:52:34

#22N: No, [he said] “I am cleaning.”

Another time Lupon Arya Deva saw Muthek Tayang coming. What [Lupon Arya Deva] did was [he] took a golden urn, filled it with excrement and began wiping it as Muthek Tayang neared. As [he] was wiping it, this question was asked, “What are you doing?” To the question it was replied, “I am cleaning.” Muthek Tayang said, “What is the point of cleaning the outside when it's filled with dirt inside?” The answer that was given was—earlier he had said he was cleaning under the waterfall—“What was the use of your cleaning the outside when there was dirt inside [you]?” [Muthek Tayang] had said [he] was cleaning while swimming.

Q: And then?

#22N: One time Muthek Tayang was performing *torma* ritual at a waterside. As this was going on Lupon Arya Deva asked him, “What are you doing?” He replied, “I am offering *torma* on account of my parents who passed away long ago.” [He] replied that [he] was offering *torma* for the late parents.

Q: And after that?

00:55:01

#22N: After that, one day as Muthek Tayang was approaching, Lupon Arya Deva was watering a dead plant. As [he] watered Muthek Tayang asked, “What are you doing?” Lupon Arya Deva replied, “I have planted a sapling in Lhochok Pangkyiri, which [I] am watering.” Muthek Tayang asked, “If the sapling is planted in Lhochok Pangkyiri, what is the use of watering here?” “If that is so, what is the use of your offering *torma* now when the parents have passed away long ago?” This was remarked.

So in this way many arguments took place. However, finally they decided, “Let us stake the Buddha dharma. If the *chipa* loses, [he] shall convert to Buddhism and if the Buddhist loses, [he] shall convert to *chipa*.” This was agreed upon and committed.

Then not just the two of them, but in the presence of kings, ministers and a lot of people...thrones were installed for the kings and a stage like a boxing match [ring] was constructed and the two of them began debating.

00:57:55

At that point Lupon Arya Deva had brought three things, a bottle of oil, hide of a buffalo and a cat. These were Lupon Arya Deva's tools.

Q: Cat?

#22N: A cat, a bottle of oil and a buffalo hide.

Q: Things he'd brought along?

#22N: Yes, Lupon Arya Deva had brought these things along.

And what happened as they debated was, if Lupon Arya Deva had been sitting like I am and as Muthek Tayang watched from there, it was being reflected on the wall behind like an image on a television screen or like letters that a teacher writes on a blackboard. When the reflection appeared, what Lupon Arya Deva did was to throw the oil like this [raises right hand to indicate throwing oil behind him]. When that was thrown the letters could not reflect there. That was one and after that he [Muthek Tayang] meditated. Everything appeared in the mind as [he] meditated; everything came to the mind. When that happened what Lupon Arya Deva did was to circle the buffalo hide [over Muthek Tayang's head] and then [Muthek Tayang] lost his memory and could not speak clearly. [Muthek Tayang] seemed to have lost consciousness and could not talk.

Q: Was this during the debate?

#22N: Yes, during the debate and due to that he lost.

01:00:35

In this way he was unable to respond to Arya Deva. [The images] could not be seen on the wall nor could [Muthek Tayang] recall anything after meditating. [He] was unable to answer and finally transformed himself into a pigeon. Muthek Tayang transformed himself into a pigeon and Lupon Arya Deva let lose the cat upon the pigeon, the cat. What the cat did after being released was to kill the pigeon. The cat killed the pigeon.

As soon as the cat killed it Muthek Tayang remarked, "You have to atone for the sin of taking a life." Lupon Arya Deva replied, "There is Gonpo Ludup in Lhochok Pangkyiri to atone for this sin." To this [Muthek Tayang] asked, "How can the sin be atoned here when Gonpo Ludup is in Lhochok Pangkyiri?" "If that is so why should I atone when it is the cat that took the life?"

"Why should I atone for the sin?" asked [Lupon Arya Deva]. In this way he lost once and for all and flew up into the sky. Gonpo Ludup too flew into the sky and finally caught him and imprisoned him. It was not a court or a prison as such but Nalanda was a seat of learning the Buddha dharma. So he was jailed in a library. He lay upon a scripture.

There was an open window nearby through which a breeze blew that caused a page to keep flapping. The flapping irritated him and he wanted to tear the page. He read the page

before tearing. In it was written, “In the future, from among the *chipa* one called Muthek Tayang will appear. He will go to Nalanda to debate with the Buddhists. He will debate with Lupon Arya Deva from among the Buddhists, which will be won by Lupon Arya Deva. He [Muthek Tayang] will lose and will convert to Buddhism. After the conversion he will become Lupon Pawo.”

01:04:08

At that point he had been thinking, “I am very intelligent.” However, by reading the page he realized, “I am stupid. This has been written before my birth. They are intelligent.” He felt remorse. Feeling remorseful he offered a confession. “*Uhulak Lama Dorjee zinpa chenpola sokpa la chak chuna shukpay Sangay dhang jangchup sempa thamchay dhang...*” He offered many such confessions and finally converted to Buddhism. After converting to Buddhism [he] was renamed Lupon Pawo and became Gonpo Ludup’s disciple and was one of the best disciples of Gonpo Ludup.

Q: You mentioned earlier that Muthek Tayang lost and flew into the sky.

#22N: Yes.

Q: Who caught him? Was it Gonpo Ludup or Arya Deva?

#22N: Gonpo Ludup was not anywhere around there. There were Lupon Arya Deva and he [Muthek Tayang]. Lupon Arya Deva and he had an argument. When he fled, it was Lupon Arya Deva himself that caught [Muthek Tayang].

01:07:05

That is it.

Q: Wow! You are such a good storyteller.

#22N: [Smiles]

Q: Where did you learn these stories?

#22N: Long ago I read little bits in books and later narrated these to people and heard some, and then I did some research, reflected and recounted serially. However, if [I] am asked in which books they are found, I do not have any books to show.

Q: So you learned the stories through reading and some of from other people telling the stories?

#22N: Yes.

Q: So did you encounter these stories...about how old were you when you first heard or read the stories?

#22N: It was not when I was small but after coming to Nepal and India that I read and researched about these.

Q: Do you tell these stories very often?

#22N: Tell the stories and say I know...if anyone asks [I] will, but otherwise there is no one to tell to.

Q: That's too bad!

01:09:33

#22N: Who will listen if I say, "I know a story and you should listen." If there is a conversation going and if an argument arises, one can talk about this and that. Else nobody understands who knows or who does not.

Q: What age group do you tell the stories to?

#22N: If I were to narrate the stories, it can be told to anyone, adults and children. If someone asks it can be told to anyone.

Q: Do you go into the schools and tell the stories to the children?

#22N: No, I do not do that.

Q: Would you like to?

#22N: It will be difficult.

Q: Why?

#22N: In order to tell in front of a large audience one must have a lot of experience. Without any such experience one will not be able to narrate what is in the mind even.

Q: I think we need to let people in this area know that you are a storyteller.

#22N: [Smiles]

Q: It's very difficult for me to tell stories like you did. What has helped you know how to tell a story?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Like how to tell a story?

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Yeah, the way you tell a story makes a difference to the audience. I mean I was spellbound even though it was through an interpreter. I wanted to hear more.

#22N: [Smiles]

Q: Do you have other stories that you tell?

01:12:57

#22N: Story...I can tell a little bit about the story of Khor Ngadhe Sangpo ‘Five Excellent Disciples’ of Lord Buddha.

Q: Ngadhe Sangpo is a disciple of the Buddha?

#22N: No. It is about how the Buddha came into being, how [he] attained enlightenment, how Khor Ngadhe Sangpo came into being, how the dharma... It is okay for me to narrate briefly about these.

Q: Could you tell us one more story, please?

#22N: Okay.

Q: Which one would you like to tell us?

#22N: For instance, the Buddha’s...

[Discontinuity in interview]

Q: We will do it some other time because to be frank, these are long stories.

#22N: Right.

Q: The life story of Buddha will take an hour or two.

#22N: Right.

Q: This has been very interesting, both to hear about your family and to hear the stories.

#22N: Okay. Thank you.

Q: I have to ask again. If the interview was shown in Tibet or China, would there be a problem for you?

01:15:09

#22N: I will have no such [problems].

Q: Can we use your name, your real name?

#22N: Yes.

Q: Thank you very much.

#22N: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW