

# **Tibet Oral History Project**

Interview #28C – Jamyang D. Sakya  
November 15, 2014

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# TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #28C
2. Interviewee: Jamyang D. Sakya
3. Age: 80
4. Date of Birth: 1934
5. Sex: Female
6. Birthplace: Jekundo
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: November 15, 2014
10. Place of Interview: Sakya Monastery, Seattle, Washington, USA
11. Length of Interview: 0 hr 56 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter:
14. Videographer: Tony Sondag
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

### **Biographical Information:**

Jamyang D. Sakya was born in a small village called Thalung in Jekundo in the Province of Kham. She fondly remembers her blissful childhood spending summertime with the nomads and wintertime at home with her family. Her uncle, a reincarnate lama, admitted her to a school run by a private teacher, where all the other students were boys. In addition to learning reading and writing, she was taught Buddhist prayers.

Jamyang D. Sakya recounts that despite her family's wealth and status, her mother insisted that she learn cooking, milking, knitting and spinning wool. During her childhood, she and her mother embarked on a 3-month pilgrimage and walked from Kham to the central and western parts of Tibet to visit monasteries and holy sites. She describes the challenging journey and the kindness of people along the way who offered food to pilgrims.

Jamyang D. Sakya recalls her first meeting with her husband, His Holiness Jigdal Dagchen Sakya, head of the Sakya Phuntsok Phodrang lineage. She describes the circumstances that led to their marriage when she was only 16 years old, despite his mother's disapproval. She talks about the importance of the spiritual aspect of life and her experiences as a Buddhist teacher in the United States—a role she was reluctant to accept.

### **Topics Discussed:**

Kham, childhood memories, education, pilgrimage, Buddhist beliefs, customs/traditions.

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## Interview #28C

**Interviewee: Jamyang D. Sakya**

**Age: 80, Sex: Female**

**Interviewer: Marcella Adamski**

**Interview Date: November 15, 2014**

[Interviewee speaks in English. No interpreter required.]

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:09

**Interviewee #28C: My name is Jamyang Palmo, Dagmo Jamyang Palmo. In English, in passport, it's Jamyang Sakya. But my name was given to me the day I got married with Dagchen Rinpoche. My father-in-law, Trichen Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk, gave me the [name] Jamyang Pema Palkyi Bhuti, long, which means the...Jamyang Palmo Palkyi Bhuti means the God of Wisdom, which is Manjushri and bring lots of sons.**

Q: Oh, how beautiful!

**#28C: It's too long, so it's shortened.**

Q: Bring lots of sons.

**#28C: Yes.**

Q: The bringer of sons, the bearer of sons.

**#28C: Yes.**

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?

**#28C: I'll be very happy to do, especially His Holiness the Dalai Lama's wish. Whatever things we can do, yes.**

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.

**#28C: [Nods] Sure.**

Q: And if you do not wish to answer a question or talk about something, let me know.

**#28C: Okay.**

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

**#28C: I don't think so.**

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

**#28C: Thank you.**

Q: So let us begin. Dagmo Kusho 'title for wife of head lama' which is the name given to you when you married Dagchen Rinpoche. Let us begin by asking where were you born?

00:02:20

**#28C: I was born in Kham in the province of Jekundo, Ga Province in a little, small village called Thalung.**

Q: And what year were you born?

**#28C: I was born [in the] wood-dog year and 1934.**

Q: 1934. Can you tell us something about that village, Thalung? Like, were there many families there?

**#28C: That time when I was growing there, there's I think about 50 families and below [is] the big monastery, Thalung Monastery, which is like 4-500 monks, which [is] my uncle's monastery and the town is just below.**

Q: The town is below.

**#28C: [Nods]**

Q: So the nearest temple was Thaklam Monastery, that's what you said?

**#28C: Thalung Monastery, yes.**

Q: And the province is...

**#28C: Ga Province.**

Q: Is that...?

**#28C: Jekundo.**

Q: Is that Kham?

**#28C: Kham, yes.**

Q: In Kham?

**#28C: In Kham.**

Q: In Kham. I see. Tell us your father's name.

00:03:31

**#28C: My father was Gonpo Tseten. I can't remember much because he had to go back to Siling to his mission and then I never saw again.**

Q: What kind of a mission?

**#28C: Well he, you know, Ga Province is under the—what you call—the Chinese. You know, it's belong[ing] to the province of the Chinese. It's part of Tibetans, Buddhists, but it's [under] the power of Chinese, at the time of Chang Kai Shek.**

Q: During Chang Kai Shek?

**#28C: Yes, Chang Kai Shek time.**

Q: And he had...?

**#28C: So my father was the governor of Jekundo for three years.**

Q: Really?

**#28C: I think he has a term; people loved him so much he had a second term. During that time my mother married him.**

Q: I see. And your mother's name?

00:04:38

**#28C: My mother's name is Phuntsok Dolma.**

Q: Phuntsok Dolma and where was she from?

**#28C: She's from Kham.**

Q: She's from Kham, too. I see.

**#28C: Same house. Same place we're born.**

Q: So in terms of the actual family structure and finances like for a living your father was a minister or representative of...?

**#28C: ...of the Jekundo, yes.**

Q: Of the Jekundo, the...?

**#28C: The province of...the Ga Province.**

Q: ...of that province, the governor's province. I see. So was your family before that, were they well off? Were they farmers? Were they poor? What was their status?

**#28C: Oh, they have—I don't recall the riches but they are well off. You know, we're all very comfortable and happy. My youth time I remember it's just, you know, they have farms and lots of nomad animals and I spent summertime in nomad [camp] and wintertime home with my family.**

Q: Did your family...were they nomads?

00:05:44

**#28C: They're not nomads but they have [hired] nomads. This is the...My hometown usually Thalung people, they have animals, lots of yaks and *dri* 'female yaks' and sheep and summertime they go like three months in the nomad [site] and stay there.**

Q: And the nomads come to your area in the summertime?

**#28C: Then wintertime they come back and stay in the home to do...and the nomad servants, they take care of the animals.**

Q: I see. How many, besides your parents, how many children were in your family?

**#28C: My family, my mother has two sisters and two brothers. Two brothers both become, one is a *tulku* 'reincarnated lama,' a lama and one monk. And [from] two sisters one became a nun and then one married and she doesn't have children. So I was the only child.**

Q: You were the only child of your parents.

**#28C: [Nods] My parents, yes.**

Q: As the only child, were you treated in a special way?

**#28C: Yes, I was told that those times I was spoilt, but I was pretty much a tomboy.**

Q: Were you a tomboy? Tell us a little bit about your childhood. People who've never been to Tibet and didn't grow up in Tibet they would not even be able to picture it. So can you paint us a picture of what you would do on a daily basis? What was your schedule, your activity?

00:07:16

**#28C:** Well, my life was little unusual than regular children because my uncle want me to study the religion as [well as] the, you know, reading and writing things. Because [during] my time there is no girls' school and many girls [have] no chance to learn, and except nuns. Nuns have nunnery. My aunt has a nunnery. So I was sent to a private teacher with six young boys; six or eight—I can't remember exactly, maybe eight. So I was the only girl there, and so that's how I learned my reading and writing.

Q: How did the boys treat you?

**#28C:** Not very good. I was the last one in everything. I think I was pretty smart because our teacher gives us the assignment practice to memorize lots of religious mantras things and I [was] always very good. When teacher sits in next room, we have to do [practice in] our room [that] is different. So when I said [my mantras], boys are telling me, "We don't want girls [to] sound too loud." They were even telling me. I wasn't...but I tried it, you know...be there.

Q: You had to be brave.

**#28C:** Yeah, I was. Yeah, I think I was.

Q: Did you ever say to your mother, "I don't want to go to school?"

**#28C:** Yes, one time, you know, this is in monastery. The teacher was a relative of ours. At the side of the monastery he has a big temple and we have study class. And then the students, all boys, they become monks later. In the Tibetan...maybe in the country religion too, the Tibetan people when they [fall] sick or [someone] died or something, always bring offerings to monastery and the offering for the monks [are] all kind of delicacies, soup, rice and berry; Tibetan tea [is] served [in] all monasteries. In our class we get that but I don't get because I'm a girl. So then my teacher sometimes shares some portion for me but the boys always say, they always kind of shows me, "See what we get if you're a boy." So I, you know, feel like very longing.

00:10:03

So I went back to my uncle and said, "I'm not going because I'm not happy. I can't get all the drink and eat. So I'm not going." Then my uncle said, "Come here." He said, "You know where those offerings and all the delicacies come from?" I said, "Yeah, I know. The families are giving all offerings." It is sometimes little money. He said, "That is brought if somebody dies or if somebody is sick and ask to pray, and that's poison if you eat." He said, "If you accidentally eat or if teacher shares, you have to do some mantra, pray for this person. Otherwise, it goes poison." So I felt better.

Q: You felt better.

**#28C:** I'm not taking poison. So then I went back again.

Q: So you went back again. Did the boys eat the food?

**#28C: Of course.**

Q: They didn't think it was poison?

**#28C: No, no.**

Q: It sounds like he tried to make you feel better...?

**#28C: Yeah, otherwise, I didn't want to go.**

Q: Right. When children were outside playing though, maybe outside the school, were the boys and girls did they get along better? Did they treat each other nicely?

00:11:20

**#28C: Yes, very happy like Dagchen Rinpoche [Interviewee #27C] mentioned he remembers youth. I remember more my youth than, you know, yesterday. It's a really happy time even, you know...I did almost whatever...We have in Tibet those times they call harvest, hay piled like a story high and we jump from there. I did everything like the boys did.**

Q: You did?

**#28C: And go ice skate in all these rivers.**

Q: Oh, my goodness!

**#28C: I got lot of injuries, cut things, but I did like the boys. It was really happy time.**

Q: You were like a tomboy, you said.

**#28C: Yes, and then...**

Q: What age did you start? Excuse me but your uncle...your uncle was a monk.

**#28C: I was 5 or 6 until 10.**

Q: Five or 6 until 10?

**#28C: Yeah.**

Q: And it was because your uncle was special. Was he reincarnate?

00:12:17

**#28C: He's a *tulku*, head of the monastery, and his uncle was the older...my great uncle. My great uncle was the one who really supported me more. My uncle was busy with traveling, teaching but my great uncle...**

Q: ...he supported you.

**#28C: Yeah, supported me. He saw something, I've different than...**

Q: He saw that you were different.

**#28C: Yes, I was different because...For example like, you know, when I was young I dream so many dreams like we do. Sometimes dreams like, you know, big house with wings flying and sometimes dreams of tall buildings, almost see the, you know, sky. Later I came to America, exactly I saw that in New York. And then those times I never even heard about airplanes. I think the house with wings is airplane. When I tell my uncle all my stories, you know, the dreams, he always write down and then...but whenever I tell my parents and my other family [members] they say, "You always have funny dreams. Who cares?" like... [Laughs]**

Q: But they were like omens. They were preparing your mind.

**#28C: I think there are something coming...**

Q: Like something was coming. So you went to school roughly from like 5 to 10?

00:13:56

**#28C: Yes. About five years, I think.**

Q: About five years! Did you go every day?

**#28C: Almost every day.**

Q: Really?

**#28C: Sometimes in the summertime I go to nomad [camp], otherwise almost every day.**

Q: That was more fun in the summertime.

**#28C: Yes, more fun.**

Q: You went out with the nomads?

**#28C: Nomads. I was treated...because even my mother sent me the field trip, you know, field with the servants to make, you know, the cutting, harvest.**

Q: Really?

**#28C: And she sent [me] with them. I enjoy very much because you can see and they always treat me, carry on the back and when I go nomad, and then do the milking, making butter...**

Q: Did you learn?

**#28C: I learned all of those. Everything was manual. I'm telling my niece who came from Tibet, she know nothing. She said everything machine now.**

Q: Everything's machine.

**#28C: Everything. She said her mother tells her. Otherwise, there's nothing. Everything we had to do in hand, and I learned all those because my mother was very smart. My aunt, she said, "We only have one daughter and she has enough for living, money. So don't let her go to work or teach anything. Don't need it." But my mother said, "Even [if] she doesn't need, she learns. So she can teach." My mother sent [me] to all these places.**

Q: Isn't that...she was very wise.

00:15:27

**#28C: Very wise, I can see. Cooking, milking, knitting, spinning. My grandmother was the teacher of the spinning. She goes different town to town to do the weaving.**

Q: Really! Spinning. So she was the spinning teacher.

**#28C: Spinning the wool and then weave and make different textiles, special ones not just regular ones. Of course, Tibetans, we wear only wool and things. We don't have any of the outside material.**

Q: Did you learn spinning?

**#28C: Yes.**

Q: You did? So you learned how to make buttermilk, you learned spinning...

**#28C: ...yeah, making butter, spinning, milking from the *dri* and how to make butter. I learned all of those.**

Q: You did a...That was great. So what happens when you...? Well, let me go back just to school. Was it all memorization? Did you learn how to write and read?

**#28C: Not so much writing.**

Q: Not so much writing?

00:16:28

**#28C: Only reading and then memorize. Lots to memorize, most Buddhist texts and prayers. I memorized lots. I don't really know what I was doing. [Laughs]**

Q: I was going to say. I mean...

**#28C: Mantras.**

Q: They were prayers.

**#28C: Prayers, mantras.**

Q: So they were Tibetan. You understood the words but not the meaning.

**#28C: Religious words and regular are different. The mantras are completely different, but we know [when] we pray that doing the mantras will help.**

Q: Could you give us a sample of like one of the mantras that you maybe had to memorize? Can you tell us?

**#28C: For example like what they call the 100-syllable mantra. [Recites the mantra]**

00:17:12

*Om benzar sato samaya  
Manu palaya  
Benzar sato tei no pa  
Tistra dridho me bhawa  
Suto khayo me bhawa  
Anurakto me bhawa  
Supo khayo me bhawa  
Sarwa siddhi me prayatsa  
Sarwa karma sutsa me  
Tsittam shrihyam kuru hung  
Ha ha ha ha ho Bhagwan  
Sarwa tathagatha  
Benzar ma me muntsa  
Benzi bhawa maha samaya sato ah*

**That's 100 syllables.**

Q: So you just shared with us a mantra that you had memorized as a child and I was curious, when did you learn the meaning of that mantra? How many years before you understood?

**#28C: Well, most mantras is the Lord Buddha Sakyamuni taught. We don't translate. We know it's good but we know each deity has a different mantra. For example like Tara: *Om tare tutare ture soha*, and Chenrezig: *Om mani padme hung*, Manjushree like *Om ara baza nadhi*. You know, each... We know which deity we are doing.**

**So whatever we need, if we need some help like saving or something, Tara or compassion Chenrezig somebody passed away to pray. We know that but we don't know exactly word by word, but the 100-syllable when I say that, that kind are semi-translated because so**

**Westerners can...when every *pooja* ‘rituals of worship’ we do, they do and then they do also the English meaning and translation.**

Q: Little children what are they taught to do if they see, like you were mentioning if they see a little bug on the ground, what do they do?

00:18:57

**#28C: When children will start, first thing we teach, you know, children some kind of names like *Om mani padme hum* or *Sangay kyab*, the Buddha bless you. When they start 2-3 years, they start with *Om mani padme hum*. Like when they didn’t know. They didn’t know *Om mani padme hum*. That’s, they teach.**

Q: For people who know might not know, can you translate what *Om mani padme hum* means?

**#28C: *Om mani padme hum* is a 6-syllable of the Lord of Compassion, Chenrezig’s mantra. And we in the universe, we’re living with six realms of universe: the god, demi-god, human, hell realm, animal realm and hungry ghosts. So this 6-syllable, each of those, relieve their suffering. All of six realms are suffering. Even high realm, god realm, demi-god realm, human realm, we are the ones who have the most opportunity to become and reach the Buddhahood. But we still have suffering in birth, ageing and death and lots of others. So this mantra will help.**

Q: So that’s taught from very early?

**#28C: Yes, yes.**

Q: To very end of one’s lives.

00:20:24

**#28C: And then the child who doesn’t speak very good, we teach like Manjushree’s mantra: *Om ara baza nadhi* and then, you know, Tara mantra we teach so that children even [though] they didn’t know the meaning, lots know the mantra.**

Q: They would know, isn’t that? That’s very important for the tradition and for the development of them, spiritually.

**#28C: [Nods]**

Q: So what happens to you when you finish school at around 10? Do you stop going? Where do you go?

**#28C: Well, my uncle Desung Rinpoche...you know in Tibet my husband’s father, His Holiness Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk is the head of the Sakya sect. So all Sakya lamas from Kham, everywhere, many thousands of monasteries and head of the monasteries have to go get some teaching from him; so get some special blessing, then they even come higher. So my uncle wants to go to receive that from His Holiness Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk,**

**Sakya Trizin. And so he went a year earlier. The following year all our family followed pilgrimage in the west and that's...then...**

Q: And you went when you were 10 years old?

00:21:47

**#28C: Yes. I was between 10 and 13. I think I was doing, helping nomad and family and doing some other things, but I was 13 when I left.**

Q: When you were on the pilgrimage?

**#28C: Pilgrimage.**

Q: So with the nomads from 10-13, then around 13-14 you went on the pilgrimage.

**#28C: Yeah, with whole family.**

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about the pilgrimage? Where did you go and what was that like?

**#28C: You know, there's a lot...of course, main pilgrimage—Tibetans, all the Tibetan Buddhist people says [that the] holy site's in India. That's where Buddha Sakyamuni was born, right?**

Q: Yes.

**#28C: But our pilgrimage in Tibet is most[ly] in the south and then Sakya is the most holiest place—one of. And then the Padmasambhava's caves and where he built monasteries like Samye, all of those, we go[ to]. We just go, take off if you...you know, certain year your age, certain your obstacle year, so forth. So I went [on] pilgrimage with my mother, aunt and some other group we went together. Twenty some people and I was the youngest one in the group. So we went about three months just walking all over central Tibet and west and visiting all monasteries. So that's where we went [on] pilgrimage.**

Q: So when you say, Dagmo Kusho, that you went on pilgrimage, for people who don't appreciate what that was like when you were a young girl maybe 14, 15; can you tell us what were the conditions? Did you walk? Was it cold? Was it exhausting? You were going up and down mountains in Tibet. So please describe the conditions.

00:23:45

**#28C: The pilgrimage is you kind of really...[not discernible] you wear really some warm, but it's not dressed up, not dress up, no jewels, and so little sacrifice. That's what you do, and walk, go circumambulation some special places and to pray and much as you can do prostrations. Some pilgrims do with the prostrations from body-length; go all around and sometimes months it takes to reach from east Tibet to come to Lhasa.**

Q: So they stand up...describe for people who don't...have never seen it what a prostration entails.

**#28C: Prostration we, you know, whenever you do the prostration, you have to visualize Buddha [touches joined palms to the forehead], dharma [touches joined palms to the neck] and sangha [touches joined palms to the chest], the triple gem and then your body, give the...**

Q: Your whole body...

**#28C: Your whole body...**

Q: ...goes out flat on the ground.

**#28C: ...flat on the ground. That's the *changtsa*, they call the walk but when you visit a temple, you don't really go whole...you can do, just kneel down.**

Q: Just kneel down.

00:25:00

**#28C: Either one is okay.**

Q: But on the pilgrimage, when you do the length of the body and then where do you start walking again, where the body ended with the hands and then...?

**#28C: When we went [on] pilgrimage we did not do that on the road, only where the temples are. [At] each temple or some statues, caves, we did those three times or more, and ...but walking and then praying. All those you have to...voice is always praying mantras and thinking of your doing something good for yourself and benefit others and meditate and try to get blessing and help for all others. That pilgrimage time is you really do and sometimes I feel like, you know, my age I'm pretty healthy because of the pilgrimage.**

Q: Kept you in good shape. But you know, even though your mother had you milking cows and learning household things, you know you weren't a nomad's daughter; you weren't out in the fields, so what happened to your body, your feet when you were walking day after day? How was that? What happened to you?

00:26:12

**#28C: When we started from Lhasa to Samye, which took three days and the walk [to] Samye is all sandy. You know, river, with a river and lots of sand. You're sucked and I got really sore. My legs...a very hard time. We had one horse to carry our food and the needs. Then my mother put me on the horse and I felt kind of bad [because] that length maybe I missed. [For] pilgrimage you have to walk.**

Q: I see. You had to walk but...

**#28C: But I did go a second time.**

Q: But you did. What happened? Was your body, was not used to that kind of walking? You were young.

**#28C: I think it's okay. I think [it's] your mind. Everything you can do; everything good. Really, during the pilgrimage you don't get sometimes food, long time [no] drink. Long time [if] you have to drink couple of tea, you have to make fire to take hours to make.**

Q: So you are very motivated?

**#28C: Yeah, motivated. Motivation is very important.**

Q: I just...at one point you had to ride on the horse because your feet were in trouble.

**#28C: Yes. And we don't have proper shoes either. Pilgrimage, just one sole.**

Q: What do you wear on pilgrimage?

00:27:32

**#28C: There's like boots with layer at the bottom, you know.**

Q: Just one layer of leather on the bottom.

**#28C: Sometimes I think like pilgrimage time days you walk and hours you don't...when we escaped. Today when I go from here to California, if they don't give you food I complain but this is couple of hours. Those times you don't get... [from] river we drink water.**

Q: And that's it and you made it. So what happens? You do this pilgrimage and then you meet anybody along the way?

**#28C: Oh, yes.**

Q: Who?

**#28C: There are towns. At some towns we have ask them to help us some food for horse, buy or sometimes we ask [for] some kind of your needs like *tsampa* 'flour made from roasted barley' to buy. Some people are very nice. They treat the pilgrims special because they say that we give life for the religious cause. They feed you; they give you; very, very nice. Very good and like I said I was the youngest and some—my mother told me later—some of the families, they wanted to keep me, "Why taking this little girl [and making her] suffering? We'll keep [her]. We want to take that kid."**

Q: How sweet! They've got compassion for you.

**#28C: Yeah, right.**

Q: Is there somewhere along the way, do you meet, do you get introduced to your future husband, Dagchen Rinpoche? Do you meet him on the pilgrimage? You were on the...?

**#28C: No.**

Q: Where do you meet him at and how old are you?

00:29:12

**#28C: I was 15 I think.**

Q: You're about 15? Do you remember the meeting?

**#28C: Yes.**

Q: Can you tell us?

**#28C: Well, they were in...Dagchen Rinpoche's father and whole family were in Lhasa doing some special prayers for the Tibetan Government and then returned. And I visited with my uncle. Uncle is waiting for receiving the teachings. So my uncle took our whole family to meet Dagchen Rinpoche's father and whole family. When we do, we bring lots of offerings, gifts and all kinds of...even horse and animals, all kinds of gifts we visited, yes.**

Q: You know, before we go on with that meeting, it is...I have often heard that many gifts are brought by the people to monasteries, to spiritual leaders. You know, why do people give such expensive gifts because horses, jewelry, gold, why are these given to the religious teachers who are not...you know, they're not kings, they're not trying to become wealthy. They want to become spiritually wise. So why do the faithful give all this wealth?

00:30:31

**#28C: Because the Buddha says there is...teaching is so precious; it is priceless. So you want to give something special, you will gain some kind of your...blessing and that's why they feed and most religious teachers even [if] they have all the riches but it's still in the religious temple; it goes there...**

Q: It goes in the temple.

**#28C: ...instead of for the family cause.**

Q: I see.

**#28C: It goes in the Buddha's, building the Buddha's, building for religious use. So many things to, all for benefit for the offer.**

Q: I see. It's made as an offering and it's used to build and repair the monasteries...

**#28C: Yeah, not given like some lawyers or some political leaders. That goes for family. It's different.**

Q: That's different. That would be like a salary.

00:31:27

**#28C: Yes, how it is used? That's exactly, how it's used. If you receive and [put it to] good use for the benefit, for building and making books and charity, then it helps for the giver and yourself.**

Q: That makes sense.

**#28C: We don't use ourselves.**

Q: The intention and the use of it that follows...the intention is to help the monastery, and the teachers and then use...

**#28C: ...use, for good use.**

Q: Great. So back to...so your uncle went to visit Dagchen Rinpoche's father who was very famous and a great teacher. Your uncle went and you were with him and so did anything take place? Were you introduced to Dagmo Kusho or...?

**#28C: Oh no, no, no.**

Q: I mean to Dagchen Rinpoche?

00:32:28

**#28C: No, no, no. No, just Dagchen Rinpoche's sisters and mother—his mother was there too—and niece and I, myself. It was just a family introduction. That's all. Plus usually Tibetans don't introduce, that kind of...you noticed.**

Q: Yes, they don't. And then what happens next in your life?

**#28C: Well, His Holiness Sakya Trinzin was very busy and lots of his religious work and my uncle had to wait for a while [to receive] some teachings, waiting, waiting and they put us [in] his summer palace for my uncle and we stayed there. And meanwhile we had to wait there and Dagchen Rinpoche has, like he said he has five sisters. Two of...three of them—one is young—two of them are almost my age. So they go to study and then after study, play. I become a playmate. So then of course, when they go visit with the brother, that's how...**

Q: You went along.

**#28C: Along with and stayed with them in the palace. [I] went so many times.**

Q: And then continue what happens in your life next.

00:33:47

**#28C: And then Dagchen Rinpoche...I didn't know exactly but Dagchen Rinpoche sent his...you know, my mother's only with me and my uncle, and I didn't have father with me, right. So he...tradition in Tibet to get permission he sent one of his secretaries with a written letter [to] my uncle Dasung Rinpoche, "Can you give me your niece, I want to marry." He wrote that to my uncle and my uncle didn't know what to say because he is the Sakya Khon lineage. You cannot refuse but what [do] the parents think? And he can't say no, he can't say yes. Then this secretary didn't know what letter he brought and said, "I want an answer right now." So he [uncle] said, "Whatever you wish" or something I don't know exactly, but then Dagchen Rinpoche got happy because he got some permission. But his mother was...strongly rejected.**

Q: She was not pleased.

**#28C: No, of course not.**

Q: Did she have a reason why she was not happy?

**#28C: Of course. I was just a young Khampa girl, don't know much, not much education, don't even speak their language because completely the dialect's different. I was just a young girl. I thought, "I want to go home." [Laughs]**

Q: You were just visiting and she thought, "Oh, no. You're not a good match for my son."

00:35:32

**#28C: Yeah, there's no way.**

Q: But it sounds like Dagchen Rinpoche was determined.

**#28C: [Nods] I think he almost fought for...**

Q: He almost fought for your hand in marriage against his mother and she finally gave in?

**#28C: She already had an arrangement, a lady.**

Q: With somebody else.

**#28C: Yeah.**

Q: That was kind of awkward.

**#28C: A high noble daughter, a princess from, you know Sikkim. She already had [arranged]. Of course, every mother has that.**

Q: Of course, they try to make a decision and then life changes everything. So in the end did you marry him?

**#28C: Well, he didn't give up. So he said...I think his father told...he went to father. He told me he went to father. If father's against, then he will have to think because his father is his root lama and everything. Father said, "It's your life. Do whatever you wish." Then he really got permission for that.**

Q: So the father put the responsibility of decision back to him.

00:36:43

**#28C: Yeah, he said, "It is your wish."**

Q: Isn't that interesting?

**#28C: So then Dagchen Rinpoche told me he went to his mother and told her, "If I can't marry the Kham girl," you know, me "then I will never marry. I will become a monk." So she was very hurt. She couldn't give up that. Older son must marry. He was the older son.**

Q: Because he was the older son, he needed to marry.

**#28C: Yeah. [Nods]**

Q: To carry the Sakya lineage ...

**#28C: The Khon lineage.**

Q: And if he became a monk the line would end.

**#28C: That's the line. So then she gave up. She had to give [in].**

Q: He was a very strong person to stand up to his mother.

**#28C: [Nods]**

Q: And so how old were you when the wedding, the marriage took place?

00:37:31

**#28C: I was 16. Yeah, I was a child.**

Q: Can you...you were a child, of course. Do you remember the day? Do you remember the ceremony?

**#28C: Yes, I remember very well because we lived [in] Sakya, maybe a mile, maybe more than a mile from palace to where we live. So they came really, really early in the morning with a horse, few of the government officials with horse riding to get me from, you know, my place. So you know, Tibetan wedding is not an easy one. [You have to] check the astrology and so many things, timing, all kind of pray[er], and special ritual you have to do. And they had done everything. Then they brought me a horse, which is...I'm crazy about horse. I love the white horse.**

Q: Khampa girl!

**#28C: Yeah, the horse they brought was just like it hardly moved like a cow. [Laughs] So I was sad for that.**

Q: He hardly moved? He was...?

00:38:47

**#28C: I mean, you know not jumping like...**

Q: They brought you a safe horse.

**#28C: Safe horse because I'm wearing so many jewelries and two men each side. So I thought today I have to ride this kind of horse. [Laughs]**

Q: On my wedding day.

**#28C: Yeah.**

Q: What kind of horse you wish they had brought you?

**#28C: Little bit wild.**

Q: A wilder horse. Because you knew how to horseback ride?

**#28C: Oh, yeah. I love the horses. I lived with horses in Tibet. I loved...and so I remember very clearly when [I] stepped out of the door, all the officials lined up horse riding and there was a... This is early in the morning, like 6 o'clock in the morning, I think. There were some Sakya village people come to the river to get water carrying big buckets. So they all filled bucket [and were] coming in. So this is a good sign, they said. Everybody give *khata* 'ceremonial scarf' to those people. They didn't know because it's secret.**

Q: Yes.

00:39:54

**#28C: In the Sakya family when they bring wives it's supposed to be very secret. They don't want publicity.**

Q: They don't make it public.

**#28C: Because it's not good for private [privacy] and then a month later then they celebrate. So these people didn't know why they were getting *khata*. Who is this, like you know? That I remember.**

Q: But they were carrying water and that must have been seen as a good omen.

**#28C: Good omen.**

Q: And so here they're given a *khata* and they have no idea.

**#28C: So then after we arrived to Phuntsok Phodang, the palace, when walking in, like he [Dagchen Rinpoche] mentioned there're two big dogs barking [at] us so badly and I remember one of the caretakers said, "Don't bark. This is your owner coming," like you know, talking like that because they bark. So then we went straight to the golden room to Dagchen Rinpoche's father. And then he gave blessing, purification and new name and so forth.**

Q: Tell us the new name he gave you.

00:41:11

**#28C: My Tibetan name is Jamyang Pema Palkyi Bhuti.**

Q: And what does that mean?

**#28C: Which means Jamyang is Lord of Wisdom, which is Sakya Khon lineage emanation of Jamphelyang.**

Q: Lord of Wisdom.

**#28C: Lord of Wisdom. Pema is lotus.**

Q: Lotus.

**#28C: Pal means all. Bhuti means bring sons.**

Q: Bring sons to...

**#28C: ...to the Sakya family, yeah.**

Q: ...to the Sakya family.

**#28C: Jamphelyang, Manjushree family, yeah.**

Q: To be fruitful and have children.

**#28C: Yeah.**

Q: Wonderful.

**#28C: Yeah, that's what they gave.**

Q: That was quite a...that was the private wedding.

00:41:50

**#28C: That was the private wedding, just the family and officials there and very early in the morning. Then a month later, this big celebration.**

Q: Big celebration. So you went from being a somewhat...unusual girl...

**#28C: Very, very unusual...**

Q: ...you were educated and unusual to be taken from Kham...

**#28C: Kham...to this regular...**

Q: How far away by days by travel by horseback is Kham to your family home to Sakya?

**#28C: We left from Kham with the yak, traveling yak, it took over a month, almost two months.**

Q: So you were almost two months away from your home?

**#28C: It's just other end to the other end.**

Q: Other end to the other end.

**#28C: But my...I was born in a very, very religious family, and my ancestors who were religious leaders, *tulkus* 'reincarnated lamas' and all of, you know...the family. So I was raised with a really religious family, my mother, aunt, grandma, all.**

Q: Do you think that that helped Dagchen Rinpoche want to have you as a partner because...?

00:43:07

**#28C: I don't know that.**

Q: You don't know if he knew.

**#28C: I don't think so but it's really...it's given lots of blessing that I have to say, blessing.**

Q: It was a blessing.

**#28C: Yeah, blessing.**

Q: Okay.

[Discontinuity in video]

00:43:22

**#28C: You know, what you're doing with the elders' project, this project with His Holiness [the Dalai Lama's] wish and his permission. I think this is great benefit because even today**

young Tibetans don't know, and how we lived, how we're raised, how happy Tibet was. And so there's unique culture and lots of positive things. Sometimes they think maybe Tibet is too much superstition but it's not. I still [at] my age, we still do things, important things astrology or divination, we just don't jump [into] things, do. So it is so important [that] this younger generation have to learn this, and so might benefit because the older people, their mind...

And we had such a peaceful, happy time in my youth because many Tibetans like I told you especially girls like in my time, there was no school, but learn from grandmother to grandmother and every evening they teach stories. I remember when fall time we're sitting in the field looking at the stars, my grandmother knows exact the stars' names with the times goes what, and this you know, the year round, seasons. And so those are so unique. They tell all kinds of stories for children; very good stories, animal stories. I tried to write down then I stopped because it's too much.

Anyway, I think this project is really helpful, not only for Tibetans, I think lots for the world because we live in a fast world. They don't even think. Only thinking for tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow. It's not, you know...have to sit down and think. You know, in Buddhism we say if something comes with a cause of condition, of course, you think really not selfishly, it's just help others you always get good things. So this is your helping others. Not you're doing for yourself, and helping lots.

So when I was told when I became, you know, of course little understanding better, I was told if something comes bad in your life, just think removing part of your karma, maybe something you did wrong last time or something...If it's something good, this is blessing from triple gem or Tara. Think that and then I tell my students think that. Always don't blame something, your practice or dharma because we have to live with this. This is...most important is the like His Holiness [says] "My religion is love and compassion." Told to others, not self.

00:46:40

But most important I tell my students, "You have to take care of yourself, your self-esteem." Like for yourself [interviewer] you are very intelligent lady and you want to help others. And if you can't take care [of yourself] you can't help others. "Oh, I'm really special. I'm really—how to say?—can do, help others and myself too." Thinking if you don't have strong self, this you have to have. Of course, you can do. You can do anything if you want to. Just I can't do; I can't do; don't say I can't do...

Even in my life...I just tell, you know, people, "Yes, you can do it. You can do it." We have freedom in our living condition here. There's...you can't do lots of things like under Communist. *Lots I see* those interviews from the old ladies. I saw DVDs you sent Adrian, I was crying.

Q: Did you cry?

#28C: It's true. Those all are true. But now we have, you know opportunity. In Tibetan saying, like I said the 6-realm universe? Human realm is the most have opportunity. So in

**Buddhist teaching it says, “Whatever you are, whatever you’ve done in previous life, that’s why you’re here. Whatever you want to be, [it’s] in your hands.” [Joins palms]**

Q: That’s a good teaching. It’s a beautiful teaching.

00:48:28

**#28C: We cannot make people to become Buddhists because it’s their own wish but if somebody believe, really believe or have devotion and things, then our duty is teach what we know. That’s why I’m teaching.**

Q: Yes, what’s it like to be...there are so few women teachers from Tibet. What’s it like to be teaching as a woman?

**#28C: In Tibet there’s a lot of yoginis. For example, like my aunt who’s 94. She, all her life, she was 4 years old [when she] became a Buddhist and she does morning to night practice. But she doesn’t really teach, just do her, you know, pray. But, for example like that there’s...because there’s so many lamas and monks, they’re kind of men, you know, world. Not really unless special request, then they teach. But I was pushed in with [by] the Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and you probably know the Dongpa Rinpoche. Dongpa, Zumo Dongpa who’s a Colorado lama and they asked me, “You have to teach because you have the most...”**

Q: Training?

**#28C: “...receive training and everything, a qualified person. So in West there’s lots of women like to receive from a woman.” So I refused in the beginning. And then many of my students wrote letters. I said I didn’t have permission from my teacher; my teacher never told me to teach. So they wrote letters to my uncle and other lamas saying, “We want to receive teachings from her, but she won’t teach because you didn’t give permission.” So they brought back answers, “See, here.” That’s why I started.**

Q: That’s why you started.

**#28C: Yeah, I started.**

Q: How does it feel to be teaching?

00:50:30

**#28C: Feels very good. I realize, I notice the benefit lots. For example, I’ll tell one.**

Q: Please.

**#28C: I was helping the...translating [for] my uncle. And some...those times hippies, lots of hippies. They come with girlfriend, boyfriend; don’t get along, lots of things. So my uncle has a translator, a Tibetan monk and he doesn’t really tell exactly. He just said, “She needs help” and uncle said, “Okay. I bless.” Right?**

**Then several times I...Then one day I...my uncle, I said, “You’re not answering their question.” They said, “What?” They have different problems, you know, in the relationship. And of course, they both live monks’ life and don’t know anything about that kind. And then uncle said, “Why don’t you tell?” [Laughs] So I was doing a kind of counseling some students, counseling and it helped a lot...**

Q: It did.

**#28C: ...in their relationships.**

Q: What kind of advice would you give people who are having conflict in relationships?

**#28C: Relationship mostly...you know, it’s just you have to think yourself. You don’t look only the other person. Has to be not fight back right away, not argument; you have to think.**

Q: Understand yourself.

**#28C: Understand. Why?**

Q: What your feelings are.

00:52:09

**#28C: Your problem or their problem. Who knows? You know, if [you] don’t get along, don’t get along. That’s okay but you don’t have to argue. You don’t have to fight. It’s just nicely, happily. It’s just always like, “I’m right, you’re wrong.” That’s not, that’s not. You may...we all, I see all human beings, the race, age, I see all as same. No difference. Everybody wants happy.**

Q: That’s true.

**#28C: Everybody wants peace in the world.**

Q: I know, even the Chinese.

**#28C: Yeah, even Chinese. They inside...because [of] their policy. [They] can’t help it.**

Q: I know.

**#28C: So lots of Chinese...I have lots of Chinese students. You know, they’re not allowed. Their policy’s so bad. Otherwise, these lots of things they have, you know, inside, you know we all want peace.**

Q: In fact, that’s a good question for us to maybe wrap up on. What do you wish, if you could talk to the Chinese people from where you are and your whole life experience and your Buddhist wisdom, training what would you want to say to the Chinese people, to the next...?

00:53:27

**#28C: I want to say that especially the closest relation with the Tibetans and Chinese, very close, race, many connect, especially the Sakya. The Sakya lamas they...[not discernible], their teachers, was very close. We are same person. But mostly I want to say [to] Chinese people “Please give peace. Leave alone the Tibetan people. Give peace. I don’t recall freedom [for] Tibet but give freedom what they wish. And taking good care instead of dominating.” That’s what I wish. And they are all, many Tibetans are Buddhists. So when you are a Buddhist, you have to be...**

Q: Chinese are Buddhists.

**#28C: Chinese are Buddhists. For example like when I went to...2006 I went to Manjushree Mountains, all the five mountains I went. And my lama...my friend a Sakya lama, his students came and all the transportation, everything, hotel was paid and I said, “What? Who’s giving?” They don’t want to tell. Then you can see there are Buddhists there. They cannot help a Tibetan Buddhist woman but all are paid. I was very, very...I said, “I...”**

Q: It was paid for by the Chinese?

**#28C: Paid by the...who drove as a...**

Q: Whoever drove you around?

**#28C: Yes, Chinese students.**

Q: Chinese students paid.

**#28C: But they don’t want to tell.**

Q: Right. I understand.

**#28C: So only thing we can do is pray.**

Q: Well, you have given us much wisdom, is there...? May we have a blessing from you for this project? What do you wish?

00:55:19

**#28C: I wish and I hope this project will go well and to...reach all world, especially in the Chinese and they understand better humanity and human right. Yes, we all are humans, so we all want to be happy, happiness in the world. That’s all I like to wish.**

Q: Thank you. That’s a beautiful, beautiful ending. Dagmo Kusho, thank you.

**#28C: You’re welcome.**

END OF INTERVIEW