

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #29N – Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu
April 9, 2015

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #29N
2. Interviewee: Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu
3. Age: 65
4. Date of Birth: 1950
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Derge Wenthoe
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: April 9, 2015
10. Place of Interview: Hotel Norbu Sangpo, Boudha, Kathmandu, Nepal
11. Length of Interview: 2 hr 28 min
12. Interviewer: Katharine Davies Samway
13. Interpreter: Palden Tsering
14. Videographer: Henry Tenenbaum
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu was born in 1950 in Derge, Kham. He describes in detail how the region of Derge was administered by a king and several advisors and ministers. Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu's father was one of the ministers. He explains the various duties the leaders performed for the welfare of the people along with the importance of education and ability in selecting a minister. As a child he was carefully watched over by two servants to ensure his safety and proper upbringing since he was to inherit the job of minister from his father.

The Chinese came to Derge around 1953. His Holiness the Dalai Lama traveled through Derge on his visit to China, receiving a reception accorded by the rulers and people of Derge. His father also traveled to China as a delegate to the meeting. During his father's absence the Chinese assaulted his mother and uncle, took all of their valuables and then later demolished their house.

The Panchen Lama advised Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu's father to leave Tibet soon. So his family along with 10 others fled on the pretext of going on a pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash. He describes the lengthy arduous journey to reach Nepal and the support they received from the King of Mustang upon arrival. In exile Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu served in many community organizations and came to learn about the formation of the Defend Tibet Volunteer Force and how some of the men were trained by the CIA in the United States.

Topics Discussed:

Kham, childhood memories, education, trade, invasion by Chinese army, thamzing, government/administration, resistance, life as a refugee in Nepal.

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Interview #29N

Interviewee: Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu

Age: 65, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Katharine Davies Samway

Interview Date: April 9, 2015

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:08

Interviewee #29N: Tashi Namgyal Dayag Bhu.

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama has asked us to record your experiences, so that we can share them and your memories with many generations of Tibetans, the Chinese and 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 your interview?

#29N: I am very happy about this and would like to thank you very much. I wish to talk whole-heartedly since you are doing this as per the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Q: Thank you. Thank you very much for sharing your story with us. If during the interview you want to take a break or you don't want to...or you want to stop at any time, let us know.

#29N: Okay.

Q: And then if you don't want to answer a question I ask or you don't want to talk about something, please let us know.

#29N: Okay.

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

00:02:25

#29N: If [I] speak the truth about what China has done in Tibet that I know of and have witnessed, [I] do not think there's anything to fear when the truth is told.

Q: Thank you. We're very honored to record your story and appreciate your participation.

#29N: Okay.

Q: Thank you. So just some questions that we already have here but we need to get it on record. Could you tell us your age and when you were born, the year in which you were born?

#29N: [I] was born in 1950 and I am 65 years old presently.

Q: Could you tell us the names of your mother and father and what their livelihood was?

#29N: My father's name was Tashi Tsewang and mother's name was Phuntsok Wangmo.

00:04:05

My father was...in our region, which is called Derge...in the region of Derge in Kham there was the King of Derge. The king had five *loptonpa* 'advisors' who were lamas and within [the royal palace] a *chanzo* 'treasurer' and a *nyerpa* 'supervisor.' Outside in the four larger districts were four *pongo* 'chief governors.' Under them were 38 *lonchen* 'ministers'—it used to be 30 but these days it is considered 38—and below them were 80 *honda* 'assistant ministers.' Under their jurisdiction were 451,000 people.

My father was one of the ministers of the King of Derge. The duty of a minister was to look after the welfare of the people. Generally, our livelihood included both farming and nomadic activities. There was also trading for which [merchants] traveled to Kalimpong [India] and Dhartsedo in China. That is how [we] earned a livelihood.

The five advisors were five reincarnate lamas.

Q: Was your father one of these advisors?

#29N: No, my father was one of the ministers.

Q: As a minister what were his duties?

00:06:56

#29N: His duties were...each minister governed a region and its people. [The duties] were looking after the people and implementing the King's advice. There was the tradition of reporting to the King about the council of ministers' activities once in 5-6 years.

Q: What kinds of works and duties to the king did he have to oversee?

#29N: In order to bring happiness to the population the King's duties were to bring development where there was poverty, to construct roads where there were none—there were no bridges across huge rivers but boatmen that rowed boats—it had to be seen that the boatmen did not charge above the stipulated rate and if they did, to dispense punishment and then to punish thieves and robbers. There were all the laws akin to a country.

Q: So it is a little bit like being a chief of a community and you know, also serving as the judge in a court.

#29N: Yes?

Q: Is it like being, you know, a chief of a community, the head of a community and also I think like a judge.

00:09:30

#29N: There were the four chief governors and 38 ministers; they governed their own regions. Any issues [they] could not handle were brought before the King.

Q: How many people did the King rule over in Derge?

#29N: Four hundred and fifty-one thousand; around 450,000.

[Interpreter interprets as 458,000.]

Q: Four hundred and fifty-eight thousand. Wow, that's a lot of people!

#29N: There was that many.

Q: How many people did your father...was he minister to?

[Interpreter interprets as: How many leaders were there under your father?]

#29N: There was one leader under him, the one called *honda* who were 80 in number as [I] mentioned earlier. One among the 80 was there.

Q: Were there 80 people under your father?

00:11:01

#29N: No, [I] mentioned earlier about the 80 *honda* under the ministers who were like assistant ministers. One from the 80 was with us and then there were the people below that. The ministers had the responsibility of looking after their people, solving problems and settling disputes.

Q: How many people...He was like a minister to the village? How many people lived in the village?

#29N: Including villagers and monks, there were around 4,000 to 5,000 people.

Q: And the assistant ministers, the 80 assistant ministers, what were their duties?

#29N: They must follow orders of the ministers, "Go there and see to this or that." If there are disputes within, [they] must take these to the minister. Together they discussed and reached a decision.

Q: So the assistant ministers would seek problems in the village and what? Go to your father and then your father would go to the king?

00:13:01

#29N: When there was a dispute...say for instance a dispute takes place under my father's [jurisdiction], my father would try to settle the dispute. Then there are disputes with others on account of land and water, like on account of land and water boundaries between leaders and when the problem escalates and if the minister is not able to handle, it is referred to the king.

Q: Do you know what were some of the most difficult problems for your father to deal with?

#29N: There were never any problems that arose during my father's time, it was said, because father used to always tell me. [He] said there were never any problems during his tenure. Others did have big problems. In such cases there were the four chief governors; the four of them, the King, the five head lamas and in addition if required the 38 ministers, everyone gathered together to settle a very serious problem.

Q: You said that there were four chief governors under your father's ministership...

00:14:53

#29N: No, the four chief governors were senior [to my father]. Below the king were the five advisors who were lamas and under them four chief governors, and next to them were the 38 ministers. In our language ministers are known as *dhunkor*. *Dhunkor* means those who can sit in the *dhun* 'front' of the king in a *kor* 'circle' to attend a meeting.

Q: What kinds of problems were there between ministers?

#29N: Land disputes due to encroachments. There were disputes on account of land boundaries leading to murders and bloodshed. Such problems were referred to the king. Then the king, along with five advisors—the five reincarnate lamas—and the four chief governors who are like leaders of a state in foreign countries...

Q: Like a judge?

#29N: Not a judge but like the chief of a state...

Q: Like a chief minister.

00:16:56

#29N: Below them were the 38 ministers. When a serious problem reached the King, the King, the advisors and the four district administrators, the ministers and everyone got together to discuss and reach a conclusion, which was put down in writing. There was a seal, too. When the seal is stamped only at the bottom [of the page] it indicates that one can petition a review of the case and if the seal is stamped facing downwards it indicates that the decision is final without any reconsiderations. Take Nepal for instance; there are three courts: the district court, the state court and the country's court. The decision taken by the King is treated like the Supreme Court.

[To interpreter] You left out the part about the stamp. If the seal is stamped facing upwards once, it indicates that the decision is not final and one can seek a review. If it is stamped facing downwards at the bottom [of the page] it is like the decision of the Supreme Court.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: My interpretation may not be exact but your interview will be translated again. I will make her [interviewer] understand...

Q: How did your father become a minister?

#29N: In the region of Derge this tradition is passed through generations. The son of a minister, if he is capable, if the son is capable of doing the job, it is passed on from father to son. It is hereditary. However, one should have the ability, be educated, literate and knowledgeable.

Q: So who decides who the minister is? Who is that leader of the community?

00:21:11

#29N: The King appoints.

Q: Your father could read and write?

#29N: [He] could.

Q: Where did your father learn to read and write?

#29N: My father, his elder brother and younger brother...the younger one attended a *sheta* 'study center.' The youngest one attended a *sheta*. Both [my] paternal uncle and him [father] were left with an accomplished abbot; there were abbots in Tibet. And there was a lama in our home who chanted *solka* 'petition offerings to Dharmapala' and Dolma 'praises to the 21 Taras.' A lama was there to chant Dolma [prayers] 100,000 times annually. Initially, [they] were taught here and then went to the abbot. Some [boys] attended a *sheta*.

Q: What's *sheta* in English?

#29N: *Sheta* is a Buddhist University. Paternal uncle and father studied with the abbot and another paternal uncle attended a *sheta*.

Q: *Sheta* is like a university or is it like a monastery?

00:23:28

#29N: It was the *sheta* of Dzongsar Monastery.

Q: The education that your father and your younger brother received from the high lama, was that at home that they received that?

#29N: It was at a distance.

Q: How far?

#29N: Over a day's journey on horseback.

Q: So he lived away from home when he was being educated?

#29N: [Nods]

Q: How long was he in the monastery?

#29N: The one that attended *sheta* stayed at the monastery until the end [of his education]. That's around 10 or 11 years. My father and paternal uncle...father studied for around three years and returned home to take care of the home while the paternal uncle remained until the completion of his education.

Q: Your father and a paternal uncle...?

00:24:40

#29N: Father studied four years with the abbot and returned to take care of the home. And the two paternal uncles...one stayed with the abbot and the other at the *sheta* until the completion [of their studies].

Q: From what age to what age was your father educated?

#29N: My father studied from around the age of 21 to 25 and then came to take care of the home where there were fields, nomads and the subjects. [He] returned to take care of everything.

There was someone to teach the at home.

Q: By whom?

#29N: By the one that made prayer offerings in our house. It is called a *gonkhang* 'protector's temple,' which is making petition offerings to protective deities. There was someone that made petition offerings every day.

Q: Are they like priests?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Like monks.

00:26:41

#29N: A monk, *rinpoche* 'respected lama.'

Q: Had your father been identified as a leader at this time when he was in his twenties?

#29N: [He] became a leader from the time of birth. Because of the heredity [factor], [father] was a leader by birth. [I] spoke about it earlier.

Q: So when he went to the monastery, was he considered a monk?

#29N: No, one need not be a monk. A layperson, anybody can go there.

Q: Was his education as a layman and as a future leader different from what an ordinary monk would receive?

#29N: There was a difference.

Q: Could you tell us about those differences?

#29N: When a minister or an important person was receiving education, [they] studied from an abbot or at a good *sheta* and not where ordinary people studied. [They] were sent to teachers that were accomplished abbots, as [they] must be educated in a variety of subjects including the history of Derge and such. [They] went to study from accomplished [teachers].

Q: What else were they taught?

00:29:11

#29N: The subjects were the traditions of Derge, customs, political administration and how a minister carried out his duties. The abbots and such people knew these and [the future ministers] were sent to study from such [teachers].

Q: What kinds of fields or were they taught with regard to becoming a minister? You said that they were also taught the skills that are needed to become a minister. What kinds of skills were they taught?

#29N: One was already a minister due to heredity.

Q: The abbots taught...

#29N: The abbots taught and one must also appear before the king and would be sent to other regions to bring about harmony where there was unrest. If he succeeds in the mission and brings about peace, he became more and more famous and a minister could get promoted to one of the four men [district administrators].

Q: Were there special qualities that the king looked for in future ministers?

00:31:48

#29N: One is education, then capability and amiability with other people. Having achievements will bring about fame from different quarters, “Oh, this minister is very able. [He] does good work. [He] is good.” And then the king and the five reincarnate advisors will hold discussions along with the supervisor, business manager and the four [chief

governors]. For instance, if my father was very good and capable, there was the tradition of promoting one to the post of one of the four men [chief governors].

Q: So the four judges...the four judges really weren't judges, they were like chief ministers...

#29N: Yeah, chief ministers.

Q: And they have responsibilities for the laws in the south, the east and the west, right?

#29N: Yes, exactly.

Q: It wasn't like in other countries where there's a minister for finance, a minister for economy and a minister for agriculture. It was regional, was it?

#29N: It was not like that.

Q: Thank you. So you grew up in a very important family and I think you left Tibet when you were about 7, right?

00:34:11

#29N: I was 7.

Q: As the son of the leader, of the minister, were you treated differently by other children or were you treated like any other child?

#29N: It was different, different in terms of relationship, respect; everything was different.

Q: Can you tell us about that, please?

#29N: Whomever came addressed [me] as *bhu-la* 'respectful term for son' and paid respect. If a person happened to meet [me] on the road, [he] moved away and bowed and listened to whatever [I] said. Such was the great respect shown. Those that cared for me as a child carried [me] as [I] might eat something dirty from the ground. There were two special people from among the subjects to care for [me]. Such used to be done.

Q: So you had servants?

00:36:18

#29N: There were two that looked after me as a child.

Q: What did your servants do for you?

#29N: They played with me and did not let [me] play around in the dust or anything dirty and took me to clean areas. [They] guarded [me] so that [I] did not fall off.

When I wanted to play in a particular area and they did not allow, I would get angry and scold them and scream. [Laughs]

Q: And what would happen?

#29N: Despite the scolding they would not let me.

Q: Did you realize at this young age that you were very privileged?

#29N: [I] did not realize that because I was not allowed to play everywhere. In fact, I felt sad. In particular, father would not let me go anywhere while my sisters were allowed to play everywhere. I was not allowed to and I used to feel sad.

Q: That's different from my family where my brother could do things that we weren't allowed to do.

00:39:10

#29N: That means your parents had great hopes on you.

Q: So what were the things you were not allowed to do and your sisters were allowed to do?

#29N: [They] protected [me] in every way for [I] might eat something bad, that dust might enter [me] and that [I] might fall and injure [my] head.

Q: And they weren't so concerned about your sisters that they eat the right food and not fall down?

#29N: The two sisters are four and seven years older than me. When I was that age, they were already big. I do not know how [they] were treated when younger.

Q: It's just that you had said that you were restricted in ways that your sisters weren't restricted.

#29N: [I] wonder how [my sisters] were treated because [they] were older.

Q: You mentioned that you were...in the pre-interview you mentioned that your family was semi-nomadic. Did you have any responsibilities, any jobs that you had to do as a young child?

00:41:35

#29N: How can I have responsibilities as a 7-year old? [I] was a child.

Q: According to the pre-interview your family was semi-nomadic. Were there any responsibilities?

#29N: In Tibet?

Q: Yes.

#29N: During father's time?

Q: Yes.

#29N: Father performed all his responsibilities. Where there were serious problems, one time my paternal uncle and on another occasion my father went and succeeded in solving the issues.

[To interpreter] What did [the interviewer] say just now?

Q: Was your family semi-nomadic and have a business, too?

#29N: Yes, [we] did business.

Q: Were you semi-nomadic, sometimes nomad and sometimes...?

00:42:34

#29N: There was a different set [of people] that did nomadic activities, those that herded horses and other animals. On the business side, some traders were sent to Kalimpong in India and some to Dhartsedo in China. We had men that engaged in such.

Q: And what did your family do?

#29N: The family...my father served as the minister. There was an older son [paternal uncle] who drove around 20 mules together with our able men to Kalimpong to bring goods to Tibet and then to China to bring [goods]. [They] went on such trade missions.

Q: What were they selling?

#29N: Things required in Tibet from Kalimpong were tea, *therma* 'serge' to make monk's robes and Tibetan costumes, boots, shoes and horseshoes. Things required in Tibet were available in Kalimpong and brought from there.

Q: What did you sell?

00:45:13

#29N: In Tibet?

Q: From Tibet.

#29N: There was not anything to sell from Tibet.

Q: Your father was a minister. Did he get paid for that work?

#29N: No, [he] did not. You must fend for yourself.

Q: So did your father have any animals? Did you have any land that you cultivated?

#29N: Yes, [he] had land.

Q: Could you tell us about the animals you had, where they were kept and then the crops that you harvested, that you grew?

#29N: We had workers at the nomadic site that took care of the animals. They churned butter, made cheese, milk and curd. They utilized these or distributed to the subjects. *Dzo* ‘animals bred between a yak and a cow’ were used to plow the fields. A pair of *dzo* plowed the fields with a plow. The crops cultivated were barley, wheat, peas, radish, turnip and buckwheat.

Q: So the animals that were taken care of by the nomads, did the animals belong to the nomads or to your family?

00:47:39

#29N: [The animals] belonged to us.

Q: How many animals did your family have?

#29N: We owned around 200 *dri* ‘female yaks,’ yaks, *dzo* and *dzomo* ‘female animals bred from a yak and a cow.’

Q: Three hundred altogether?

#29N: Two hundred.

Q: Two hundred altogether, right. So the nomads who took care of your animals and they would bring cheese and butter to you. How did you...did you pay them for their work? If so, how?

#29N: It was not necessary to pay wages. However, [we] must take care of the family. [They] were given animals like cows and *dri* in order to earn their living but not wages.

Q: What crops did your family grow?

00:49:10

#29N: The crops were *nay* ‘barley’...

Q: Wheat...

#29N: Not wheat. [Speaks in English] *Nay* is different from *dro*. *Dro* is wheat. *Nay* is...

Q: Grain? Barley?

#29N: Barley, yes, barley. That is the one used to make *tsampa* ‘flour made from roasted barley.’ Then there was *dawu* ‘buckwheat.’

Q: What’s *dawu*?

#29N: Dawu is *phapar* in Nepali, and then peas, radishes and *yung* ‘turnips.’

Q: What’s *yung*?

#29N: It resembles a radish and is sweet. Turnips and then there was...turnips, radishes, peas and potatoes. Then there were fruits. There was one called *migen nachok* ‘old man’s ear’ [touches right ear] that looks like a person’s ear.

Q: *Migen nachok*.

#29N: Yes, and then peach.

Q: Ah, peach. Any other fruits?

#29N: That is about it.

Q: This is the first time that I have talked with a Tibetan farmer who grew peaches, who grew fruit. Is this because you lived much lower down than many Tibetans?

00:50:58

#29N: It is lower; the place is lower.

Q: Do you remember more or less how low?

#29N: I do not know that.

Q: Were there any other fruits, other than peach that you grew?

#29N: There were many other different kinds of fruits like *suto*, *khamphu* and such, but these are not found in other countries. *Suto* is a small, red one of this size [gestures off camera], reddish. I used to pluck and eat it as a child with the caretakers that [I] remember.

And then onions grew.

Q: Oh, orange?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Onion, onion.

Q: What is “onion”?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Onion.

Q: Oh, onion. What kind of food did you eat at your meals?

#29N: In the morning [we] had breakfast that consisted of churned tea and *tsampa* mixed with butter and cheese. For lunch at times rice was prepared, at times bread, sometimes

***momo* ‘dumplings,’ sometimes *sha balep* ‘bread stuffed with meat’ and sometimes [we] ate boiled meat. That is it and at times [we] ate sweet potatoes and curd.**

Q: Did you have dinner also?

00:53:30

#29N: Yes.

Q: And for dinner?

#29N: [We] had *thukpa* ‘noodle soup’ for dinner. *Bathuk* ‘noodle soup.’

Q: Which is what?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: It’s like broth, broth.

Q: The food that you ate in your family, did you eat better than other families in your village?

#29N: It was better.

Q: As a child in Tibet did you ever have to help on your farm or in the house?

#29N: I went to watch [people do fieldwork].

Q: So you didn’t have to work.

#29N: I did not have to work, as I was small. My paternal uncle did the supervision, my paternal uncle.

Q: Were there other children of your age in your village who did have to help their families in the fields or with the animals?

#29N: When their parents went to work they tagged along.

Q: What did your mother do? What was your mother...what were her responsibilities?

00:55:24

#29N: Mother supervised the cooking at home and looked after the children. Mother looked after everyone in the family.

Q: Did she have servants too?

#29N: Yes, there were.

Q: How many servants did you have?

#29N: Five.

Q: Five servants and did they live with you?

#29N: All lived at home, ate at home, everything. Clothes, too. Food and everything else was given in plenty to be taken to their homes.

Q: So did they get paid in money or did they get paid in goods?

#29N: Should they require, money was loaned. Wheat, barley, meat, butter, cheese or whatever food they required was given for their homes in plenty.

Q: So if you lend them money, did you...did they have to pay interest when they paid it back or if they borrowed a 100, did they have to return a 100 plus interest?

00:57:25

#29N: No interest was charged. [They] need not pay interest.

Q: Were the servants from your village or did they come from other parts of the country or elsewhere?

#29N: [The servants] were from our village, from among our people. And then those of our relatives outside, they brought, too.

Q: Neighboring regions?

#29N: Yes, from neighboring regions where our relatives lived like Kathok and Dogung. There were relatives everywhere. They brought people that were trustworthy and good.

Q: Were they also from Kham?

#29N: From Kham.

Q: How much land did your family have?

#29N: [We] had a large area. There was a three-story house and then a place to tether the animals, a place for the horses and enclosures for the goats and sheep during wintertime. Then there was land to grow peaches and *migen nachok*, a plot to grow potatoes, a large field to cultivate barley and wheat. Turnips, peas and radishes were grown upon the hills. I can remember there being such.

Q: Was your family considered a big landowner?

01:00:11

#29N: [We] were considered so.

Q: So when the Chinese came...they came in 1949?

#29N: It is said that [the Chinese] came to our region around 1953.

Q: So you were about 3?

#29N: Yes, [I] was around that.

Q: Can you tell us what you remember or know about when the Chinese came? How did it affect your family?

#29N: When the Chinese came...my father was a minister. At the time His Holiness the Dalai Lama went to China, the 16th Karmapa did.

Q: Both His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the 16th Karmapa to China?

#29N: Yes, [they] did. I was around 5 years old then. I was put over a horse, tied and taken to welcome [the dignitaries]. The Chinese also invited my father, our other ministers and the four chief governors to the meeting in China, [I] was told. When they were invited my father asked the Karmapa, "Is it better to remain with the Chinese or is it better to go away?" [The Karmapa] replied, "The sooner [you] go the better it is." So as soon as father returned from China in 1957, on the pretext of going on pilgrimage we left before the bad times began.

Q: Did you also go?

01:02:37

#29N: I was put over a horse, tied and led by a man.

Q: Went to China?

#29N: Not to China but to welcome [the dignitaries] at the Derge district headquarters where the King lived.

Q: Were His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa coming from China?

#29N: No, [they] were coming from Tibet, coming from Lhasa.

Q: They were on the way to China?

#29N: Yes.

Q: So where did the Dalai Lama pass through?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: He is going to China.

Q: Where did the whole village greet the Dalai Lama?

#29N: At Derge Dzong where the King was. Derge Gonchen.

Q: You were 5. You were tied on horseback and taken to Derge Gonchen. Did all of your family go?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: All of the village was there.

#29N: All the ministers, everyone.

Q: Your father left on his own from Derge or with the whole family?

01:05:43

#29N: Leaving a paternal uncle and three workers at home, all the rest left in the year '57.

Q: Where did you go?

#29N: We lived in the east and crossed over to the other side of the Dri Chu 'Yangtze River' and reached the place called Phundha where [we] spent three winter months. Then [we] came to Dhamshung. I can remember taking that journey on horseback and being tied at the legs to the horse.

Q: And so you went to India?

#29N: No, now [we are] on the way. At Dhamshung there was a very famous lama, Donang Gyatul Rinpoche, Gyatul Rinpoche.

Q: Where is Dhamshung?

01:07:57

#29N: It is right in Derge. My father wrote to the *rinpoche* to ask, "Is it better for me to take the route through the south or the north?" [He] sought a divination. [To interpreter] Please translate that.

Q: What's the name of the *rinpoche*?

#29N: Gyatul Rinpoche.

Q: Gyatul...

#29N: ...Rinpoche.

Q: What's the place?

#29N: Dhamshung.

He [Gyatul Rinpoche] said, "Do not go towards the south. Take the northern route."

[In addition] the written note said, “However, do not move like a flowing stream but like the hovering clouds.”

[Interpreter interprets as: He presented a letter that was written, “Don’t follow the path of a river, follow the path of the cloud.”]

01:09:15

#29N: [Speaks in English] No, no. “Don’t go like river.” River is very quick, right? “Go like cloud.” Go slowly, slowly.

Q: So go slowly.

#29N: Yeah.

Q: Why did he say to go slowly?

#29N: [Speaks in English] I do not know. Rinpoche said like that. Then we came [speaks in Tibetan] along with the animals. During the wintertime we pitched *ba* ‘tents made from yak hair’ and tents and stayed like real nomads. So even if the Chinese arrived, [they] did not cause any harm. That must have been it.

Then [we] arrived at Namtsokha. Namtsokha is close to Lhasa. Namtsokha. Along the way are many places but it is not necessary to talk about it. When we reached Namtsokha, [we] pitched *ba* and tents and stayed with the animals, and then a Chinese plane flew overhead, a plane with Chinese writings clearly visible, but it did not fire on us.

01:11:14

Tent, black tent, *ba*. It is called *ba*.

Q: So the Chinese plane went over. Did you say that they dropped papers?

#29N: [They] did not.

Q: So you were near Lhasa. You were with your family, and other people or just your family?

#29N: We were 11 families.

Q: So about how many people?

#29N: Around 70 people. There were 14 people just in our family.

Q: So the Chinese flew above you but they didn’t bother you. On your way from Derge you had met Chinese?

#29N: [We] did not encounter.

Q: Before you left your village, did the Chinese come into your village?

#29N: It was said the Chinese came but I did not see. My mother and paternal uncle were made to suffer and assaulted. [They] were made to kneel on the ground and told to surrender the weapons and whatever assets [we] owned. [The Chinese] brought people from our neighboring region, beggars that had been influenced by the Chinese and forced [them] to assault my paternal uncle and mother. Then [the Chinese] confiscated all the assets and guns.

01:13:51

[Mother and paternal uncle] were beaten and made to kneel on rocks.

Q: Did you see this?

#29N: I have seen [mother and paternal uncle] being in pain from kneeling on rocks after [they] returned home.

I and my two sisters were left home while the Chinese took paternal uncle, mother and everyone.

Q: Where were they taken?

#29N: To another village where they were interrogated in separate rooms. My sister tells me that [the Chinese] came home, opened up the wooden flooring of the house and took away all the things hidden there.

Q: What was in there?

#29N: There were *dhayen* 'Chinese silver coins,' gold and all precious items like necklaces and such.

Q: What were these precious items?

#29N: Silver, gold, necklace, ornaments.

Q: Were any of them religious objects?

01:16:04

#29N: The religious objects were kept in the shrine room.

Q: So they were safe?

#29N: They were safe then. However, after we had left local people came with the Chinese and destroyed our shrine and demolished the house completely.

Q: The whole house?

#29N: Completely.

Q: To the ground?

#29N: Everything. It was not ours alone but [houses] of all the leaders and all the monasteries.

Q: You remember when your mother and uncle were taken away?

#29N: [I] can remember.

Q: What were you thinking? What were you feeling?

#29N: I could not make anything of it but just watched.

Q: Did you realize that it was dangerous?

#29N: [I] got a little scared after [they] returned and spoke about being forced to kneel and beaten.

Q: Where was your father at this time?

00:18:16

#29N: [Father] was in China then.

Q: And what did he do in China?

#29N: When His Holiness the Dalai Lama went, the Chinese called all the Derge ministers for the meeting.

Q: Did you see your father again?

#29N: Father came back, came back and as told by the Karmapa, [we] left.

Q: So your mother and uncle were humiliated, right? Beaten?

#29N: Yes.

Q: Was your father in China then?

#29N: Yes.

Q: At this time your father was away?

#29N: Yes, that was it.

Q: And your father returned before you all left? Did your father return before you all left?

#29N: Yeah. Father returned; he made the decision and [we] left.

Q: So after your mother and uncle were publicly beaten and humiliated, what happened to your family before your father came home and you decided to leave?

01:20:13

#29N: The situation at home then was very sad. That was the time when everyone was facing assaults, assets seized and father was not present. When Father returned...Father believed things were not good in China either. Since the Karmapa had said that it was better to leave, [we] did.

Q: What kinds of things had he seen in China that disturbed him?

#29N: Father told me this. There was also a minister colleague of father who was called Nyinda Akar, Nyinda Akar.

Q: Nyinda...

#29N: Akar. When they were staying together my father had asked, “What do you think of the Chinese objectives, plans?” He replied, “The Chinese are *chikyen*.” *Chikyen* means hunter. “The lamas, we ministers and such are the *chiwa* ‘Himalayan marmots’.” [To interpreter] Do you know what is a *chiwa*?

Q: Yes, it’s the one hunted by the hunters.

#29N: It is the prey, an animal that goes *peep, peep, peep*. “All the poor are the hunters’ dogs.” He cited such an analogy. Father too saw the same thing. Then [they] decided that it was better to leave.

Q: *Chiwa*, what animal is that?

01:23:25

#29N: *Chiwa* is found only in Tibet.

Q: Is it like an antelope or a deer?

#29N: It lives underground, underground and sometimes comes out—*peep, peep, peep*.

Q: And the poor are like...?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: ...hunting dogs. This is like an analogy his father’s friend gave.

Q: Yeah, it’s a very powerful analogy.

#29N: My father saw the same thing, too. I can recall something. The Chinese used to hang pictures, “Imperialist America is the enemy of the whole world.” There were [pictures of] long-nosed, ugly men that were shown to everyone and told, “America is not good.”

Q: Where did they put this up?

#29N: [The Chinese] showed and pasted them everywhere on houses, walls and also wooden boards.

Q: In China or in Tibet?

#29N: In Tibet, in Derge, in our place. [The Chinese] drew ugly caricatures with long noses and wearing big hats and said, “Imperialist America is the enemy of the whole world.”

Q: I’m curious why would they have put the billboard of, photo of...saying that America is evil? Why would they put that in Tibet at that time?

01:26:03

#29N: I was a little child then but now [I] know the situation. There was the 17-Point Agreement between Tibet and China, 17 points. In it the first point as per the Chinese is “Every foreigner in Tibet should be expelled with immediate effect.” That means the Chinese fear the Americans. So they wished to teach everyone including little children that America was the enemy of the world so that everyone did not like America. Now that I can understand I think that was their objective. At that time [I] just looked at the long nosed [pictures] and did not think anything of it.

Q: So at this time in 1951 and when you were there, were there foreigners in Tibet? Were there many foreigners in Tibet?

#29N: Lhasa, there were in Lhasa. There were many discussions in Lhasa about establishing an American Embassy or a British Embassy but the Chinese created discords. Some of the leaders of Tibet colluded with the Chinese and said, “It is a bad omen to have monkeys come into our country.”—meaning yellow-haired foreigners. So there was no contact [with foreigners].

Q: What did they think the Americans and the British were doing when they met together? You said in Lhasa the Americans and the British met together. Who were they meeting with?

01:29:44

#29N: At that time people of the country of Britain, and American cartographers...a cartographer called MacLean or someone...They drew maps in 1910 and 1911 of the border between China and Tibet. They did such and planned to extend assistance. After that His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama declared that Tibet was an independent country. It seems due to these reasons that in 1951 their [Chinese] first point was that foreigners must be evicted immediately.

Q: So did they...?

#29N: I say this because of my present knowledge. [Speaks in English] Not at that time. [Laughs]

Q: So it sounds like the Chinese were afraid that the Americans and British were collaborating to take over Tibet and maybe invade China?

#29N: ...protect Tibet and her independence. America is powerful and if [Tibet's independence] is recognized by the United Nations then it is over [for the Chinese]. Suspecting that [the Americans and British] would do such things [the Chinese] stated the first point [of the 17-Point Agreement] as such.

Q: So at that time was there already a Tibetan independence movement?

01:33:09

#29N: Tibetan was already independent since long ago. It was independent. When the 17-Point Agreement was signed in 1951, it was between two countries. That is clear. However, Tibetans were not politically aware, did not practice politics, but were always in devotion and praying to the lamas and did not study the outside world due to which the Chinese seized the opportunity, [I] think.

Q: You said a little bit ago that the Chinese told Tibetans that foreigners were like monkeys with yellow hair, yeah? What's the significance of that?

#29N: That was a sign of resentment like creating caricatures and saying such things. That was a sign of one's resentment.

Q: Is this significance to a monkey having yellow hair?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No, that is like the Chinese showing how much they hate Americans, you know.

#29N: [The Chinese] remarked that it was bad omen if people that looked like monkeys came.

Q: So for the Chinese monkeys are bad omens?

01:35:48

#29N: No, no, no.

Q: I'm trying to understand the significance of them calling Americans, foreigners...

[Interpreter to interviewer]: They're calling Americans and British monkeys to the Tibetan people. The Chinese are manipulating the Tibetan people. These monkey-looking people, they should be like removed from Tibet. They are bad, they are evil, you know. Chinese were propagating like that.

#29N: Their specific point is that foreigners coming into Tibet are bad omen and should not be allowed to come. The reference to monkeys is inane just like drawing those caricatures.

Q: And then to go back to the caricature of the Americans, you mentioned it had a big nose. How else was the caricature of Americans on the billboards?

#29N: That was it. There was not anything else but a big nose and wearing a big hat. That was it.

Q: Uncle Sam?

#29N: Yeah, a tall hat.

Q: With stars and stripes?

#29N: It had that.

Q: So your family fled from Derge to Lhasa?

#29N: Not Lhasa.

Q: Near Lhasa.

#29N: Near Lhasa, Namtsokha.

Q: Right.

#29N: Namtsokha is a lake.

Q: How far from Lhasa was Namtsokha?

01:37:50

#29N: It is four hours in a vehicle.

Q: How long did you stay there?

#29N: Three months. [We] spent the whole winter there and traveled during summertime.

Q: And the families, the 11 families that went with you, were they all the families of ministers or was it a mixture of social classes?

#29N: They were people of our family.

Q: You said there were 11 families...

#29N: Eleven families...not ministers, just ordinary families. There was one minister, the one called Nyinda Akar, who went with father to China. His family was with us.

Q: So two ministers and then ordinary people and their families?

#29N: Not Nyinda Akar, but his brother whose name was Nyinda Tengyal, Tengyal.

Q: Nyinda Akar himself wasn't present?

#29N: He could not return from China.

Q: So another minister's brother?

#29N: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So did your group intend to stay in Namtsokha for three months? For long as possible or was the intention to stay for just the three months until summer came?

01:40:17

#29N: The intention was to stay only the winter.

Q: That was the original plan?

#29N: The plan was in accordance to the *rinpoche's* [divination] not to travel like the flowing stream but like the hovering clouds.

Q: Where was your end goal?

#29N: [We] continued to travel hoping to reach a place where there were no Chinese. However, there was not a plan to reach any fixed destination then.

Q: So was the plan at this stage to leave Tibet or just to go as far away from Chinese as you could?

#29N: It was to get away from the Chinese.

Q: ...but to stay in Tibet?

#29N: [We] came away wondering what would happen. [We] left saying that [we] were going on pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash.

Q: Mt. Kailash.

#29N: Yes, [we] left saying we were going to visit Mt. Kailash. After we had traveled three days from Namtsokha, there was a battle in Lhoka, Lhasa.

Q: Three days?

#29N: After three days.

Q: After reaching Namtsokha?

#29N: Three days after leaving Namtsokha. I can recall that.

01:42:40

And then His Holiness the Dalai Lama left. During the journey we set up camps for three months or 10-20 days and then moved. Having left from there in '57, after more than a year and half we were there.

Q: Where?

#29N: In Nepal.

[We] moved very slowly camping for a month or 20 days or 10 days or seven days. After reaching Nepal border, there were many that had arrived from different regions, from Nangchen, from Qinghai, Amdo. There was a large number [of groups] consisting of 20, 30, 10 or seven families, and *rinpoches*.

Q: Different families?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Different groups of families, which included *rinpoches* and high lamas also.

Q: So on this journey between leaving Derge and reaching Nepal, were you ever attacked by the Chinese?

01:44:51

#29N: Initially, when we were at the place called Phundha that [I] mentioned earlier, when our family was staying there, my older brother and a minister named Tenam they fought the Chinese army from across the Yangtze and killed a Chinese leader. Once a leader was killed, it was the custom for the Chinese to retreat, retreat and not fight. Therefore, there were no encounters for around a year.

[There were no encounters] at that place.

Q: It sounds like there may have been other incidents where there was war.

#29N: [To interpreter] What did [the interviewer] say?

Q: Was that the only time that you encountered the Chinese or were there other times when...?

#29N: It was happening in other regions. Other ministers were at war. Yesterday you conducted an interview with Kalsang Chime Womatsang. The interview was yesterday or the day before. They were fighting in the direction of the east. Their group and my uncle, my mother's brother Telpatsang...and then Womatsang, Gyangkartsang, Khandhotsang all these many ministers were fighting in another place.

Derge, Bawa, Lithang, Minyak, Chating, Dhargay and Nyarong, in all these places people were fighting and fleeing at the same time.

01:48:17

They fought and moved towards the south, to Lhasa and came together. Then [they] contacted the Tibetan Government and then America. The CIA of America helped...At that time we had already arrived. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Dhondup, the *Chushi Gangdrug* [Defend Tibet Volunteer Force], Andrug Gonpo Tashi and Chagoe Namgyal Dorjee selected many men and sent them to Colorado in America to train in guerrilla warfare and dropped [them in Tibet] by plane along with weapons.

Then the *Chushi Gangdrug* was established, Dhokham Chushi Gangdrug Tensung Dhanglang Maga 'National Volunteer Defense Army.' They protected His Holiness the Dalai Lama while keeping in touch with America through walkie-talkies. [They] escorted His Holiness the Dalai Lama and resisted [the Chinese] at the same time. Then His Holiness was able to reach India.

Among those that were airdropped included three ministers from Derge.

Q: In Colorado?

#29N: Airdropped [in Tibet] from Colorado. [The Derge ministers were] Sey Dhonyoe, Utsa Bhuchay and Rari Yeshi. [They] were airdropped. Among them were many men; men from Lithang like Lithang Athar, Lithang Gyato Wangdu, Lithang Wangchen...in this way around 17 men were airdropped. I cannot remember the other names. Among them two ministers managed to escape. One was killed. Yeshe was killed.

Q: How were the people selected to go to Colorado?

01:52:16

#29N: [The selection was done] in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. Contacts were established and from among those men that arrived in Kalimpong, the Derge selector was Namgyal Dorjee; Chagoe Namgyal Dorjee was a Derge group leader. He did the selection. From among [the men of] Lithang it was Andrug Gonpo Tashi who made the selection. Amdo Jinpa selected the Amdo [men] and for Gapa and others, the selection was done by one called Taopon Rinchen Tsering. In this way they were sent there and then airdropped.

Q: In Kalimpong the Derge [selector] was Namgyal Dorjee...

#29N: Yes.

Q: For the Amdo it was Andrug Gonpo Tashi...

#29N: Andrug Gonpo Tashi.

Q: And the other?

#29N: Amdo Jinpa, Tao Rinchen Tsering...Gyalo Dhondup, the brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. They contacted the CIA and sent [the men] there and had them airdropped. From among the three ministers one was killed.

[One of the selectors was] Sandho Lo Nyendak.

Q: Did these men volunteer or were they selected by somebody?

01:54:18

#29N: [They] were selected and were volunteers as well. [They] were both volunteers and selected.

Q: Who selected?

#29N: Those [people I mentioned] did the selection.

Q: Who made the selection?

#29N: Sandho Lo Nyendak, all of these people did the selection.

Q: These men were the leaders of the different communities?

#29N: Yes, exactly.

Q: Did you ever see the CIA, any Americans in Tibet?

#29N: Oh no, I was just a child.

Q: You don't remember.

#29N: [Laughs] These things I am talking about are from my present knowledge and experience because since the age of 19 I worked for the community. [I] was a member of the people's Deputy, Cooperative, Tibetan Freedom Movement, the Assembly, Election Commissioner, Director of School, a regional and central executive member of Dhokham Chushi Gangdrug. I served in all these capacities.

Q: [You] began from the age of 18, 19?

#29N: I began at age 19.

Q: It sounds like in Tibet your father was a leader and maybe you are a leader here in Nepal.

01:57:40

#29N: [Laughs] I am not a leader. Here I am a servant.

Q: Serving the community.

#29N: However, though one gets a good name, here the work is that of a servant.

Q: All of this work you've done here with the social organizations, has that been unpaid work, volunteer work or were you paid for any of them?

#29N: These were all voluntary. Up until now...earlier when [I] attended meetings in Dharamsala the daily allowance was six rupees. [I] have received that but the rest have been voluntary.

Q: When was the meeting in Dharamsala?

#29N: In 1972.

Q: What were you doing in Dharamsala in 1972?

#29N: All the members of Tibetan settlements were called for a meeting there.

Q: The Tibetan settlements in India only or throughout the world?

#29N: Everywhere; Nepal and everywhere.

Q: You live in Kathmandu.

#29N: Yeah.

Q: Do you have your own home?

#29N: Yeah.

Q: Which part of Kathmandu do you live in?

#29N: Boudha.

Q: Oh, in Boudha. In your own home?

#29N: [Nods]

Q: Yeah?

#29N: Yeah.

Q: Just one thing, when you were on this journey to exile and you were moving slowly like the clouds and sometimes the men fought the Chinese, what was your experience? What did you children do, the women and anybody else?

02:00:37

#29N: We...oh, I forgot about Riwoche. At the place called Riwoche, ministers Chime Gonpo, Karthok, Phuma Rinam, Tori Tathok, my father, Nyinda Tengyal, Perutsang...eight ministers' families converged at a place called Riwoche. We pitched tents and stayed there. It was around 2 o'clock in the night that [someone] screamed, "The Chinese have arrived. Run, run."

They were on the other side of a river while we were on the opposite bank. Everyone got together and crossed over a pass. Then 15-20 fighters were formed with a man from each family that stayed back to resist the Chinese while we descended the pass. Just as tea was about to be prepared there was a yell, "The Chinese have slipped through." We left the tea and trudged together in the evening.

The *rinpoche* had advised my father to go in the northern direction. There was a river and crossing it led northwards while moving with the flowing river took one to the south. So our father took [us] across the river for a day and half and we tethered all the animals upon a big mountain and stayed there for three days feeding only on curds and *tsampa*. Then yaks and sturdy *dzo* were set upon the snow to create a path and then [we] crossed the pass and continued the journey. At that time our [men] fought the Chinese a lot.

Q: At Riwoche?

#29N: At the place called Riwoche.

02:03:46-02:04:07

[Interviewee repeats incident at Riwoche for interpreter.]

#29N: [We] survived only on curd and *tsampa*.

If we make a fire [the Chinese] might notice the smoke. Then we crossed over the snowy mountain through new paths created by yaks and descended from the mountain.

My foot got stuck in the snow. I was riding a horse and the helper who was leading the horse asked me to get down. When I got down from the horse, my foot got stuck and [I] could not pull it out, as I was a child. He came and pulled it out and then put [me] over the horse. I can recall this.

Q: How deep was the snow?

#29N: [I] think underneath it had turned into ice. On the surface as a child I sank until here [gestures of camera].

Q: About half a meter?

#29N: I cannot have been half [a meter] then.

Q: So quarter of a meter.

#29N: Maybe. [Laughs]

Q: Were there any times on this journey—this was a long journey of a year and a half—were there any times when you were really afraid?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: What's the question?

Q: Were there any times when you were really afraid?

02:07:28

#29N: [We] were afraid three times, once at Phundha where my older brother and Rari Tenam fought the attackers. The second time was at Riwoche. It was exceedingly scary at Riwoche. [I] was exceedingly afraid. Then when [we] were staying at Namtsokha a Chinese plane flew overhead and that was terrifying. There were no other fearful [incidents].

Q: When your brother and the minister were fighting the Chinese, how close to that fight were you? How physically close were you?

#29N: We might have been at a distance of 10-15 kilometers, something like that in a jungle. There was a large forest.

Q: What was it about that experience that was so frightening?

#29N: At that time I was not within hearing distance of gunfire but when older brother arrived and spoke about it, [I] was a little bit afraid but it was not much then.

Q: What was it about it that scared you?

#29N: [I] feared that the Chinese might come again because my family remarked, "It is better to go now else the Chinese might come again."

Q: Because you had actually seen Chinese in your village.

02:10:10

#29N: I had seen Chinese while living in the hometown...when mother and paternal uncle were led away.

Q: Did you actually see the Chinese...did you with your own eyes see the Chinese doing bad things to Tibetans?

#29N: [I] have not.

Q: And then the Riwoche incident, what was so frightening about that one?

#29N: There was a scream, “The Chinese have come!” [I] got up from sleep in the night and it was terrifying thinking [the Chinese] might have reached close by. [I] was terrified then.

Q: [You] were little then.

#29N: [I] was nearly 8 then.

Q: So was it because everyone was rushing around?

#29N: Yes, everyone was running at the same time.

Q: Where did you go? Where did the children go?

#29N: My siblings? They were on their individual horses. My younger sister sat upon blankets placed on the back of a mule and was tied to it with a rope. [She] was placed like that.

Q: Could you tell me a bit more about that kind of experience of how the children were treated when there was a frightening incident?

02:12:22

#29N: How would I know what the children thought?

Q: How the little children were treated, like your younger sister was placed upon a mule. Likewise all the little children were kept safely...

#29N: I do not know what they thought. The younger sister who was placed on the mule was crying. When the mule trotted speedily, she was crying, “Eee...”.

[Interpreter interprets *di* ‘mule’ as *dri* ‘female yak.’]

#29N: No, *di, di*.

Q: Oh, tied on top of a *di*?

#29N: *Di* is mule, horse. *Di*.

Q: Do you know what I thought you said? I thought you said that your sister was tied in a blanket on top of a tree.

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Not tree.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: No, no, tell him that’s what I thought.

Interpreter: *Di, di*.

Q: I thought the translation was tree.

#29N: *Di*.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

[Interpreter to interviewee]: She heard *di* as tree!

#29N: [Laughs]

Q: I thought how would they know where she was if they came back?

#29N: No, no.

Q: Your sister crying. Was that dangerous for the group?

02:13:57

#29N: It was not dangerous. Perhaps she was crying out of fear or hunger or was feeling uncomfortable; [I] do not know.

Q: That's not the question. She was crying. There were a large number of people fleeing. Were the others put in danger because of her crying?

#29B: No, it did not.

Q: This has been a fascinating story that you have told us. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about life in Tibet, your life in Tibet, your family's life in Tibet?

#29N: There is not anything to add. We had reached Nepal and then [people] left for the settlements. [I] do not think this story is necessary because it is evident. [I] do not think there is anything else.

Q: Do you think that your life...when you came to Nepal as a child was your life very different from your life in Tibet, in Derge?

#29N: I had a happy life in Derge. As a minister's son I could do anything and be happy. After coming here I was a refugee who did not know the language and it was very difficult. However, I picked up the language very fast, the Nepali language. I learned very quickly and could interpret for family and other people.

Q: Were there other...you mentioned that in Derge you were the son of a minister and then you were a refugee. What were some of the biggest differences?

02:16:42

#29N: The differences were housing, food and such. Otherwise, in general being a minister's son, all the people who came here give due respect. When [we] reached Mustang, there was the King of Mustang then who was very helpful to us. We stayed three years in

his region called Ghemi. [We] did not need to pay rent for the house and [the King] treated us very well.

Later, as we drove [our] horses and mules up and down it became difficult. The Nepalese complained that [the animals] ate the crops when they moved here and there. Then they called [us] '*botte totte*.' [Nepalese racial slur, *botte* 'belonging to Tibet']. It was very difficult for around three years.

Q: While at Mustang?

#29N: Yes, when [we] had to travel to Pokhara. [We] lived in Mustang and traveled to Pokhara to buy provisions.

Q: ...and take to Mustang?

#29N: Yes. While moving up and down on the roads, the horses and mules needed grass and as animals, they trampled everywhere. The Nepalese screamed, "*Botte, totte, cow killer*." [They] chided [us and we] had a difficult time.

02:19:56

Then my father—there were literate ones in my family—always made me stay at home and listen to people that came to engage in talks and taught me reading and writing. I used to feel very sad then and wonder why this is being done to me alone? But now I realize and feel grateful to father.

Q: What kinds of things was he teaching you?

#29N: About past stories, writing, reading scriptures and how to speak. I was around 9 when we arrived in '57 and then [we] were three years there. From the age of 12 I was sent out on duties in Mustang, "Go and meet such and such person, do this job and return." I was sent like that on horseback.

Q: So you stayed with the King of Mustang for three years?

#29N: Yes [but] not with the King. It was his house.

Q: It was a property that the King owned?

02:22:52

#29N: Yes, and then later American aid organizations and the Red Cross arrived. [They] registered the people and formed camps. Then a representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was deputed. By then settlements had been established in various places. There was a school in the camp where Tibetan, English and Nepali were taught.

Q: The Red Cross, the representative of the Tibetan Government, and who else?

#29N: The United Nations. It was in '62-'63.

Dorpattan, Mustang, Tashi Palkhiel in Pokhara, Tashiling in Pokhara, Jwalakhel and then Solukhumbu. These are the camps that were established then.

Q: Swayambhunath?

#29N: Not Swayambhunath. That was established much later.

Q: When you were up in Mustang, you mentioned the racial discrimination, the slurs. How has it been living in Kathmandu? Do you encounter discrimination as a Tibetan?

02:25:09

#29N: No.

Q: Even when you go outside of Boudha?

#29N: There is not. [We] were very happy from 1964-74, very happy. One did not need papers, nothing. There were no problems, nothing whatsoever. Then in '74 the *Chushi Gangdrug* was established in Mustang with help from American aid organizations. And then problems arose that were created by the Chinese. Because of this problem identity cards, refugee cards and such became mandatory. At last problems arose. Otherwise, it was very peaceful formerly.

Q: What problems?

#29N: One without an identity card was arrested.

Q: What would happen if they didn't have an ID card?

#29N: One was arrested and like last year [they] were handed over to the Immigration [Department]. The Immigration hands over some [refugees] to the Chinese and some were sent to India. [They] did such things.

Q: How did India respond to Tibetans being sent to India?

02:27:50

#29N: [They] were treated well.

Q: So the...

#29N: India, United States, Canada...all these [countries] give special facilities [to Tibetans].

Q: At that time?

#29N: Then and now as well. Switzerland.

Q: There are a lot of Tibetan exiles where I live. I mean in California. Tashi-*la*, thank you so very, very much.

#29N: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW