

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #48N – Dawa Dhondup
April 16, 2015

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #48N
2. Interviewee: Dawa Dhondup
3. Age: 80
4. Date of Birth: 1935
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Kepyang
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: April 16, 2015
10. Place of Interview: Tashi Palkhiel Tibetan Refugee Settlement, Hemja, Pokhara, Nepal
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 19 min
12. Interviewer: Katharine Davies Samway
13. Interpreter: Palden Tsering
14. Videographer: Henry Tenenbaum
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Dawa Dhondup grew up in Jang Tsakha, the place where one gathered salt. His was a large family of nine siblings. Dawa Dhondup shares the joys and difficulties in the life of a nomad. He speaks about the harsh winter months and how animals and humans managed to survive in the extreme cold and snow. Food for the animals was scarce and water for human consumption had to be melted from ice blocks. Heavy animal skins were worn for warmth and cloth or glasses worn over the eyes to protect from snow blindness. Summer and autumn were the best time of the year.

Dawa Dhondup explains that wealth was determined by the number of animals a family owned, making his own family wealthy since they owned around 200 yaks, *dri* 'female yaks,' a thousand sheep and goats, and 15-16 horses. He describes the different ways the animals used such as transporting salt and milking. The family had 5-6 servants who helped with the animals and preparing grains for consumption.

After the Chinese occupation, Dawa Dhondup's father was arrested for being a community leader and underwent "reeducation" before being released. The family escaped to Mustang, Nepal and most of their animals died from starvation. The remaining animals were sold for a low price and work was difficult to find in Nepal.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, childhood memories, nomadic life, customs/traditions, escape experiences.

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Interview #48N

Interviewee: Dawa Dhondup

Age: 80, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Katharine Davies Samway

Interview Date: April 16, 2015

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:09

Interviewee #48N: My name is Dawa Dhondup.

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 with which we work to use this interview?

#48N: Okay, okay.

Q: Thank you.

During this interview if you need to take a break or want to stop at any time, please let us know.

#48N: Okay, okay. [I] do not need to stop.

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

#48N: Okay, okay.

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

#48N: Yes, am facing, am facing. We are facing problems. What about Tibet?

Q: We are filming this interview. If we were to show it in Tibet or China, would you face any problem?

00:02:11

#48N: No, there will be no problem.

Q: Right, thank you. We're honored to record your story and appreciate your participation in the project.

#48N: Okay.

Q: So *pa-la* 'respectful term for father,' could you please tell us where you grew up?

#48N: The place where I grew up is called Jang Tsakha, Jang Tsakha.

Q: Jang Tsakha.

#48N: Jang Tsakha is where one gathered salt. I grew up there. [I] was a nomad, a nomad. There were no farmlands. [I] was a nomad and did nomadic work.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

#48N: I had nine siblings, four brothers and five sisters.

Q: So five sons altogether?

Interpreter to interviewer: Four sons and five daughters.

Q: Altogether there were five boys and five girls?

Interpreter: Total nine, four and five.

Q: Okay. Were you the eldest?

#48N: I was not the eldest but the third. The eldest were a brother and a sister.

Q: Your family was nomadic. So what do you remember about being a nomad?

00:04:29

#48N: About livelihood we, as nomads took care of animals and did nomadic activities. [We] went to gather salt at the salt pans in the north that I spoke about. Then the salt was traded in Mustang. Such was the work. Then there was milking to do in summertime while there was not much work during winter but to take care of the animals, feed them grass and water.

Q: What did you do during the winter?

#48N: Yes?

Q: What did you do during the winter?

#48N: During winter one took care of the animals...[not discernible] and fed them grass. It was just taking care of the animals for us during winter, taking care of animals in the winter. Summertime was enjoyable for there was rain, wind and plenty of grass and water

for the animals. Summer was very enjoyable while winter was a bit difficult while taking care of the animals.

Q: So was winter a harder time to work?

00:06:26

#48N: Yes, yes. There are three months of winter, three months of summer, three months of spring and three months of autumn. There are 12 months in a year and the three months of winter was the hardest.

Q: Can you please describe the winter to those of us who have not been to Tibet or been to Tibet in the winter where you live?

#48N: Initially there is the snowfall; there is very heavy snowfall. Then when there is no snowfall, the wind blows. When the wind blows, you feel very cold and water freezes.

Q: So when the water froze, what did you have to do in order to give water to your family, make *tsampa* 'flour made from roasted barley' and get water for your animals?

#48N: For the animals to drink, there are small springs that do not freeze. There are small [springs]. For people the ice must be melted.

Q: The small spring that doesn't freeze, why didn't it freeze?

00:08:48

#48N: This water is called "hot spring." There are such hot water springs. There are hot springs from where steam rises.

Q: Was there a single spring or were there several springs?

#48N: Such are available everywhere. There are many in various places.

Q: What did it taste like?

#48N: The water tastes the same; hot and cold water taste the same.

Q: They didn't have minerals in it?

#48N: What would one know about there being any minerals then? Presently the Chinese say that there are such things in there.

Q: The Chinese...?

#48N: The Chinese know about what is there not only in the water but under the ground as well. It is said that such are present in the hot springs, in the hot water. We did not know at that time.

Q: Was this water ever used for medicinal purposes?

00:10:35

#48N: For medicinal purposes...yaks suffer from mange when there is itching and sores, at such times the hot springs helped. However, [I] do not know about humans.

Q: Did you ever use it for, to treat human beings?

#48N: We had doctors to treat human beings; there were doctors. The doctors say that hot springs can cure but it has not happened to me. I have heard of it. It is used for humans.

Q: When it was very cold and you had to break the ice, how thick was the ice?

#48N: Yes, yes. There are incredibly thick ones. The ice has to be broken. The ice must be broken using metal rods. Metal rods were used to break the ice and if it was at a distance, [the ice] was loaded on animals and if it was nearby, people carried it and then the ice was melted.

Q: So how big was this metal spear, like this high, this high [gestures off camera]?

00:12:58

#48N: It is about this high [bends forward, gestures off camera].

Q: Like a pickaxe?

#48N: A hammer or a rock was used.

Q: So you carried the ice...you carried the ice home. What did you use it for?

#48N: The ice was carried home to be melted and the water drunk. People need something to drink for which it was used at home.

Q: So how thick was the ice, like this thick, this thick [gestures off camera]? How thick was it?

#48N: The ice is about this thick [bends forward, gestures off camera]. It was not like this [holds right thumb and forefinger two inches apart].

Q: Like this one [gestures off camera]?

#48N: Yes, like that.

Q: And was the ice in lakes and ponds or was it in rivers?

#48N: In rivers. Ice formed in rivers.

Q: How wide was the river?

#48N: There are big and small rivers.

Q: The big river, was it as big as from here to the building over there or could you see the other side of it?

#48N: About this size [turns to right]. There are [rivers] smaller than this and some about this size. There are various sizes. The bigger ones span from here to the building.

Q: And could you walk across the ice?

00:15:13

#48N: Yes, [we] walked across. For horses and yaks one must throw dust over it, which is called *sarap*. The dust is called *sarap*. Without *sarap* the yaks and sheep slipped and could not walk; yaks, sheep and horses. People walked across.

Q: How would you get the soil if it was all frozen?

#48N: There was dust on that side of the river and there was dust on this side of the river. There was dust everywhere.

Q: And when it was very deep snow, how deep would the snow get?

#48N: Round about our enclosures there was very thick snow, about this thick [gestures off camera]. And on the snowcapped mountains, snowfall cannot be measured.

Q: In the winter, did you go up to the mountain when snow was thick?

#48N: [I] have not been.

Q: So when you went out onto the snow, did you sink into the snow or did you have special equipment so you wouldn't fall into it?

#48N: What?

Q: Did one sink into the snow when walking?

#48N: One did not sink after 7-8 days. One sank in fresh [snow].

Q: Were there special equipment for the feet so one wouldn't sink?

#48N: No, no. There was not anything except for boots then. [The boots] one wore was made of leather. There was not anything special to be worn at the time of snowfall.

Q: Why was it easy to walk after six or seven days of snow?

00:18:04

#48N: It was easier because one did not slip like on ice and there was no need to sprinkle dust. One can walk easily.

Q: Did it become harder?

#48N: It became hard just like ice. I spoke earlier about the hardened ice in the river. It was just like that.

Q: So it gets packed down?

#48N: Yes?

Q: The snow gets pressed down and hardens?

#48N: Yes, yes. It became hard.

Q: So if it was one day of snow and it was hard to walk on and how did you move through the snow?

#48N: At such times we kept [the animals] in the enclosure and stayed home. There were times when one could not venture out.

Q: I've lived in towns where there was a lot of snow and the wind would blow snowdrifts up to the house and we can't get out. Did that ever happen with you?

[Interpreter interprets as: There was a lot of snowfall where she lived and it became difficult to go outside in the snow during which one had to wear a cloth over the head. Did you do that or what did you do when there was snowfall?]

#48N: We also wore a cloth. It had the skin of lamb in the inside and fabric on the outside. One wore it [moves hands over face] and over the head, on the legs as well and on the body, too.

Q: So around your head, around your waist, where else?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Knee.

Q: Did you ever wear protection for your eyes?

00:20:50

#48N: Yes, one did. One wore glasses when there was brightness. Without glasses, the brightness of the sun caused pain in the eyes. There was pain in the eyes for 2-3 days. It was not just pain in the eyes but the eyes became blurred and it was very hard for a day or two. So in order to prevent the blurring of eyes, one wore a cloth. Some people wore glasses while some wore cloth, cloth used in making prayer flags; thin prayer flag fabric. [Some] wore like that.

Q: Around your eyes?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Yes, yes.

Q: Did you make the eyeglasses or did you purchase them?

#48N: The glasses have to be purchased.

Q: Where did you buy them?

#48N: [We] bought at the fairs. We used to go to the fairs at Mustang, Tarum, Shungru, Pasangbu, Tangkar and also at Thok.

Q: Were they very expensive?

00:22:58

#48N: [They] were expensive and cost a sheep each.

Q: A sheep each?

#48N: Yes, a sheep each.

Q: How common was it for people...for people in your area to wear sunglasses?

#48N: Most people wore when there was brightness and not otherwise. [Glasses] were worn when there was snowfall.

Q: I've seen films where nomadic people used maybe yak hair to cover the eyes with just a little slit. Did you ever do that?

#48N: Yes, it is called *yakra*. The name is *yakra* and such were worn.

Q: What is it made from?

#48N: It is made of yak hair that are plaited and holes made in them. It prevented brightness.

Q: When it was winter, where were your animals?

00:24:53

#48N: The animals were in the enclosure. At places where there was no snowfall...there would be a snowstorm at some places and the snow gets blown away by the wind and then the grass is exposed. So [the animals] were taken to the places where grass lay exposed. At the time of sunset the yaks were put in the yak enclosure and the sheep in the sheep enclosure.

[Snowfall] was not continuous; [snowfall] was not continuous.

Q: How did you know that winter had ended?

#48N: When winter ended plants sprouted. Grass that animals fed on began to sprout in summer. In the 1st, 2nd months...plants sprouted in the 3rd and 4th months. At the end of the hard winter months were the three months of spring. The three months of springtime was also difficult for the animals. The animals found it difficult for there was sparse grass and the wind blew away the little available. This period was difficult for the animals. However, summertime was enjoyable. The three months of summer and three months of autumn, these six months were most enjoyable.

Q: So if the winter lasted a long time and there's a lot of snow and the grass didn't grow, what did you feed the animals?

00:28:01

#48N: It is not possible for such a thing to happen. It is not possible for such a thing to happen. It was hard for animals during the journey to sell salt when storms blew in barren regions. It was very dangerous for both men and animals when such storms blew. Else, back home there was no great hardship on account of lack of fodder for the animals.

Q: It sounds like winter was quite hard. Was there anything that you really liked about winter?

#48N: There was not anything much good about the three winter months. The three months of spring were also not enjoyable because there was not much to eat for the animals. Winter was the 10th, 11th and 12th lunar months while autumn [spring] the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lunar months. It was enjoyable from the 4th lunar month. The 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, these six months were enjoyable.

Q: What did you like best about summer?

00:30:19

#48N: The best thing about summer was that there was plenty for the animals. Then the area became warm. It was warm.

Q: Warmth?

#48N: It was very warm and likewise there was curd and milk. The animals produced more milk.

Q: So did you have a more varied diet during summertime?

#48N: Yes, one got various kinds [of food].

Q: Did you ever get to eat vegetables?

#48N: Such were not available. There was never such practice. There was never the practice of eating vegetables.

Q: What else did you like about summer? You liked that the animals were in good condition and you got more milk and milk products. What else?

#48N: During summer it was easy to go to any place because there was no danger of storms, no danger of ice, no danger of feeling cold and then the animals were healthy. For us nomads animals were most important. When animals were healthy, wherever one went, if it was a long distance, one rode horses that were healthy. Happiness was when the sheep, the yaks and all the animals were healthy.

Q: Did you have different clothes for the summer?

00:33:01

#48N: One wore different [clothes]. There were clothes for the summer, clothes for the winter, clothes for the spring and clothes for the autumn. There were four kinds.

Q: What was the difference between the clothing for the seasons?

#48N: The difference was in the thickness of the clothes. The thickest clothes were worn during winter. One wore skin with thick fur. One wore only skin, skin with thick fur. This was followed by autumn when one wore a slightly thinner one and for summer one wore lambskin that was thin. Spring was not hot or cold, so one wore *chupa* ‘traditional dress.’

Q: *Chupa* is...?

Interpreter to interviewer: Traditional Tibetan dress.

Q: And in the autumn?

#48N: As mentioned earlier it was skin but slightly thinner; skin with slightly thinner fur was worn.

Q: So can you tell us about the animals that your family had? Which animals did you have and how many?

00:35:13

#48N: We owned *nor* ‘cattle.’ The male species of *nor* is called *khel* and the female *dri*.

Q: What’s the male called?

#48N: *Khel*.

Q: *Khel*?

#48N: It is called *khel*. These were used to carry loads during the journeys.

Q: The yaks?

#48N: Yaks were used to carry loads when gathering salt and to sell it. Some call [these pack animals] as yaks and some *khel*. These were used to carry loads during the journeys and were called yaks. *Dri* is for milking. We owned around 200 of such animals.

Q: 200 yaks and *dri*?

#48N: Yes, [we] owned 200.

Q: Sheep and...?

#48N: There must be around a thousand sheep—sheep and goats. There were a thousand goats and sheep. Then there were goats. Goats could also be milked. Male goats were taken on salt trade while the females were milked. Then there were horses. [We] owned 15 or 16 horses.

Q: Fifteen?

#48N: Fifteen or 16, sometimes there were 15 and sometimes 16. There were five or six dogs. There were 20-odd people consisting of both employers and servants.

Q: Family members?

#48N: Yes, family members and servants that took care of the animals. Including my family members, there were 22 or 23 people.

Q: So did you have servants?

00:37:40

#48N: Yes, there were. There were five or six servants that performed jobs.

Q: What did those servants do?

#48N: Their job was herding the animals—herding the animals and at home roasting barley in order to make *tsampa*. [They] did the roasting, grinding, household chores and herding animals; [they] did all kinds of jobs.

Q: What else did they do?

#48N: There were no other duties except herding animals and doing household chores.

Q: Were these men or women?

#48N: There were men and women.

Q: Any children?

#48N: No, little children cannot do the work, except the adults.

Q: About how old were these servants?

#48N: The workers were aged around 30. All were 20-something and 30-something.

Q: Did they have families of their own like wives and children?

#48N: [They] had family members.

Q: And did their families live with you also?

00:39:42

#48N: We were together; [they] lived close by.

Q: So the servants at the end of the day go back to their families or did they live with you?

#48N: [The servants] lived at our house and did not go back to the families. [They] returned at times but stayed in our house most of the time.

Q: And how did these servants get paid?

#48N: There was wages and there was food. The parents of those servants and maidservants that stayed with us were also provided food.

Q: Was any money paid?

#48N: What?

Q: Was any money paid?

#48N: There was no money. Money was scarce; money was scarce. Money was scarce but clothes were provided.

Q: Was it new clothes that you gave them?

#48N: New clothes were not given. New clothes were not given. Those that were used by us and slightly old were given.

Q: You mentioned that you had 16 horses, about 5-6 guard dogs, thousands of sheep and goats. How many yaks did you have?

00:41:29

#48N: There were 30-odd yaks, 30 or so used to carry loads and a similar number for milking and then there were the calves and *dzomo* 'female animals bred from a yak and a cow.' There were small ones that were of no use. Yaks when they were small were useless, which were many in number.

Q: About how many?

#48N: At times there were around 100 and at times nearly 200. It depends on the *lang malang* 'survival' of the young ones. When young ones survived, including calves the number could be nearly 200 while if [young ones] did not survive there were only around 100.

Q: What's *malang*?

#48N: *Malang* means that the young ones died when [they] were calves.

Q: So depending on whether they survived?

#48N: Yes, depends upon the survival, survival of the calves.

Q: What were they likely to die from?

00:43:06

#48N: The reason for the death of the little yaks was the storm in winter that I spoke about earlier. If there was a heavy storm during winter, since these animals were not strong, calves born from yaks [*dri*] did not survive, kids born from goats did not survive and also lambs born from sheep. Earlier [I] spoke about the hardships during storms. When many storms occurred, animals were enclosed in the pen and they were not strong enough. Since the little ones were not strong enough, all of them perished.

Q: So would they get lost in snow?

#48N: [The animals] did not get lost but were killed by the storm. Being weak and without fodder, not having grass to feed for 2-3 days the animals perished. Animals need grass to feed.

Q: And then how many *dri* did you have, the females for milking?

#48N: We owned around 30 *dri*. There were 30 *dri* for milking and around 30 [yaks] for carrying load.

Q: Was your family considered wealthy?

00:45:16

#48N: Yes, yes. We were among the well-off. We were among the well-off families.

Q: If a nomadic family came to your community who didn't know you, how would they know that you were wealthy?

#48N: One understood wealth just from the animals. One that owned many animals was called wealthy and having few animals was not wealthy. Animals that we owned were yaks, sheep, horses and a large number of goats and sheep. "They own a large number of goats

and sheep. [They] are wealthy.” That was the reason. Our economic status depended upon the number of animals. A nomad that owned a large number of animals was wealthy and one without animals was a beggar.

Q: Did it also depend on which animals you have and how many, like how many sheep or were you considered wealthy if you have more yaks or more sheep?

#48N: [All animals] were considered equal, considered equal. If it were yaks it was said, “They have a large number of yaks.” And if it were sheep, it was said, “They have a large number of sheep.” It was the same.

Q: Being a wealthy family, were your animals ever stolen by other people?

00:47:32

#48N: Nobody steals; nobody steals. No, no.

Q: Do you remember when the Chinese came into Tibet?

#48N: Yes, [I] do.

Q: Do you remember?

#48N: Yes.

Q: Can you tell us, please what you remember about?

#48N: How the Chinese came...when it was said that the Chinese were coming, we fled.

Q: Fled?

#48N: Yes, we fled by loading all the animals; loading the horses, loading the yaks and then we fled, fled and reached Mustang, reached Tsokhading in Mustang. Around 10 days after reaching Tsokhading, the Chinese came in pursuit of us.

Q: In the hometown?

#48N: Hometown...on the mountain pass of Mustang. We encountered the Chinese at the top of the mountain pass in Mustang.

Q: On the way?

#48N: On the mountain pass of Mustang.

Q: On the mountain pass of Mustang.

#48N: Yes, on the mountain pass of Mustang, at Tsokhading in Mustang. The Chinese took my father away at Tsokhading.

Q: The Chinese took [father] away?

#48N: Yes, took [him] away saying, “You are the leader.” [He] was the leader of our community. Perhaps other people had revealed such. [Father] was taken away.

Q: At Mustang?

#48N: Yes, yes at Mustang.

Q: What happened to your father?

00:49:37

#48N: The Chinese said, “You are a leader. [We] have been told that you are a *gopa* ‘leader.’”

Q: *Gopa*, a leader?

#48N: *Gopa* means a leader, someone who leads. “You are a leader and possess a gun.” [The Chinese] entered our house and frisked us. “You need have no fear. We are called the Liberation Army. Our name is Liberation Army. The old government has bound you. We are the ones who will liberate you. You need have no fear.” [The Chinese] said such things and took my father away.

Q: Accused [your father] of having a gun?

#48N: Yes but we did not possess a gun. [The Chinese] claimed [my father] owned a gun and took [him] away.

Q: And for how long did they keep your father?

#48N: For around a month and 20 days.

Q: Was he the only person taken by the Chinese?

#48N: I only witnessed my father being taken away.

Q: When your father was released, what did he tell you about his stay in prison?

00:51:43

#48N: Father said that some prisoners were subjected to great suffering. Father was not assaulted but others were and it was incredibly hard. A great number of people were taken to the region of Bapa, the region of Bapa where there were many prisoners. However, father was not put to any danger or assaulted, but was given reeducation for 20-odd days and then told, “You have been reeducated. Your brain was green. Now the green brain has become white. You can go back.” He was then released. Others were subjected to a great deal of assault.

Q: I don't understand that. What was the Chinese told you when they released your father?

So did your father have to pretend he believed certain things that he didn't really believe?

00:54:26

#48N: Yes, yes.

Q: What did he have to say?

#48N: During the reeducation the Chinese said, "Your brain which was green has now become white." That was one, and secondly, all the people of our village were asked about my father, asked the people of our village, "Did he cause any suffering to the people? Was he corrupt? Did he assault?" Such questions were asked. "He is a leader but has not been corrupt nor beaten anyone," the people gave such replies. Then [the Chinese] said, "You have been reeducated." And [Father] was released.

Q: Are you feeling okay? Are you all right to continue the interview?

#48N: Okay. You can continue with the questions.

Q: It'll not take much longer. Perhaps 10-15 minutes.

#48N: Okay, okay.

Q: You don't have anywhere to go?

#48N: Okay.

Q: While your father was in prison for almost two months, what did you and your family do?

00:56:54

#48N: We were at home. There was no other option. [We] waited for father hoping [he] would return the next day or the following day. We were at the Chinese garrison. We were kept near the Chinese garrison and at times were not allowed inside but they came to our home and said Father would return. [We] waited hoping [he] would come the next day or the following day. So we stayed in the village.

Q: How did you live for all those weeks?

#48N: We had the most beneficial animals. For us nomads, irrespective of the seasons animals were most beneficial. At times [we] slaughtered animals for consumption and at times consumed curd and at times consumed milk. It was summertime when Father was captured.

Q: So you just continued with your life the way you worked earlier?

#48N: Yes, yes as usual.

Q: So when your father was released from prison, what did your family do?

00:58:49

#48N: Then we fled and reached the valley of Mustang. [We] fled, fled in the night. [We] fled in the night. [Father] was captured on the mountain pass of Mustang. That is where we were. It was close by and [we] reached Mustang in one night.

Q: And did you still have all your animals at that time?

#48N: The animals were there but [we] sold all in the valley of Mustang. [The animals] were sold but at a throwaway price; [they] did not fetch a good price.

Q: So the Chinese didn't take away your animals?

#48N: [The Chinese] did not take the animals; the Chinese did not take the animals. [They] did not.

Q: Did the Chinese take any of your wealth?

#48N: The Chinese did not take our wealth; [they] did not.

Q: Didn't take?

#48NN: No, no. The Khampa [people from Kham Province] took away all the wealth. Yes, the Khampa.

Q: So what happened...?

01:00:24

#48N: The Khampa came prior to the Chinese.

Q: How did that happen?

#48N: That was by using the right of might, through force. "Either give or [you] will be killed or cut into pieces."

Q: So did they take...you had a lot of animals, didn't you, or did they take all or most of your animals?

#48N: The Khampa did not take the animals but only wealth. [They] took away clothes, gold, silver, turquoise and coral from our homes. [They] did not take animals except a horse or two.

Q: So you had to sell all our your animals once you got to Mustang?

#48N: Yes, [the animals] were sold but not at a good price. [We] did not get a good price. There was not the former size of flock because all the animals died from starvation in the valley of Mustang. There was no grass available in the valley of Mustang. The valley was not good like our region. Hence, the animals died. There were only 100-200 left that were sold off at throwaway price.

Q: That must have been a very frightening time for you and your family?

01:02:31

#48N: Oh, yes very frightening. We underwent great hardship for there were no animals and many people. The many people needed to eat and there was hardly any wage working in Mustang. Working one whole day earned 3-4 *mani*, which is a little bigger than this [gestures off camera] of grain. That was it. [We] faced hardship, incredible hardship.

Q: So when you sold your animals, you said you didn't get the right price. What would have been the right price and what did you get?

#48N: We did not receive a good price. Normally when an animal was sold, one received 30 *rupees*, which we called *tamka*, around 30 *tamka*.

Q: Nepalese *tamka*?

#48N: Yes, one received 30-40 Nepalese *tamka*. In Mustang it was just 5-6 for each animal.

Q: So you sold them for *rupees* not for...you didn't barter them for grain?

01:04:40

#48N: No, not [for grain] but for money.

Q: Well, thank you very much. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience of living in Tibet and going into exile?

#48N: What should [I] talk about? [Laughs]

Q: I don't know. Maybe you have something to tell.

#48N: [Laughs] What to talk about? What to talk about? If you do not start, what should I talk about?

If [you] want [me] to talk about *gentok* I will.

Q: What?

#48N: If [you] want [me] to talk about *gentok* I will.

Q: What's *gentok*?

#48N: *Gentok* means my grandfather and father. If [you] want stories about the old people I will.

Q: Yes, please tell us about them.

01:06:04

#48N: There are interesting stories about my late grandfather, late grandfather. An interesting story...

Q: *Pa-la*, please continue...

#48N: It was in the 3rd lunar month when we were at the spring site. My wife was also there then. She was young and so was I. [I] asked late grandfather to come to our home.

Q: To your home?

#48N: Yes, asked Grandfather to come. We had already started to live separately. We were no longer living in Father's home but separately. [I] invited Grandfather to our home. Grandfather came to our house where we were living separately. Then the ground shook.

Q: An earthquake?

#48N: An earthquake struck. When the earthquake struck, late grandfather...When an earthquake strikes you feel panic and nothing else. However, when the earthquake struck Grandfather said, "An earthquake has struck, which is not a good omen. We are old and have already lived [our] life. [We] are old men and women. You are young and at this young age [you] will have no happiness. Now the time has come for transformation in the three realms of Tibet. This indicates that the deities above have changed, the *lu* 'naga; serpent-like beings' below have changed and human beings in the middle have changed. The time for changes in the three realms has come about.

Q: The deities above...?

01:07:52

#48N: The deities above have changed, the *lu* below have changed and human beings in the middle have changed. "The time has come for transformation in the three realms of Tibet. Now you will see no happiness. We have lived [our] life and are old men and women. Now you young people will have no happiness." [Grandfather] said such things. There was no talk about the Chinese then. Later the Chinese appeared and we have had not one day of happiness. Late Grandfather spoke of such things.

Q: Did Grandmother live separately from Grandfather?

#48N: What?

Q: Was your grandmother, Grandfather's wife living separately from Grandfather?

#48N: No, no. They were not living separately. Earlier I was living in Father's home. Then I got married and was living separately in another tent.

Q: You?

#48N: Yes, I was living separately with my wife and asked Grandfather to visit our home. Then Grandfather complied and came home. After that there was the earthquake and [Grandfather] spoke of such things. That talk was immensely...

Q: About what year was this that your grandfather predicted this?

01:10:40

#48N: I was around 19 or 20 then...no, 23. I was 23 years old.

Q: He said that many changes would come in three ways, Gods, humans and hell. Did he predict...did he say what changes were likely to happen?

#48N: [Grandfather] said such changes were going to happen, which came true. There have been a lot of changes; things changed.

Q: What was his prediction, specific prediction?

#48N: [Grandfather] spoke of such things, about happiness and suffering but [I] do not know about any other particular talk.

Q: And when did your grandfather die?

#48N: [I] wonder when it was that Grandfather...Grandfather did live for many years. [He] was healthy at the time of passing away but suffered from cold and then passed away. I cannot recall when [he] passed away exactly.

Q: You mentioned that you had a story to tell about your father. Do you still have the story about your father you'd like to tell us?

01:13:24

#48N: [I] do not have any other story.

Q: Any other?

#48N: I do not have anything else to say.

Q: All right. Just one thing. You mentioned that the Khampas came and robbed you. Could you please tell us in some detail what happened that day?

#48N: The Khampa caused us a lot of suffering. The Khampa caused a lot of suffering. The Khampa seized wealth, seized food and assaulted people. Comparing the Chinese and

the Khampa, at one point the Khampa were worse. The Chinese, poor things, the enemy of the dharma, only told lies.

I went back to Tibet once after the invasion. [I] went back once to Tibet after coming to this place. The Chinese had subjected my relatives and my wife's paternal uncle to immense suffering. This was not the Khampa. The ones that caused suffering were the Chinese. At the time of subjecting [the family members] to suffering the Chinese had said, "You have to accept, have to accept." "What to accept? What should I accept?" "You have to accept that the Dalai Lama is a bandit. Will you accept this or not?"

01:14:53

"Religion is poison. Will you accept this or not?" [The Chinese] said such things. "I will not accept these. You can stab me or you can shoot me but the Dalai Lama is the one I take refuge in this and the next life. I will not say that he is a thief and a bandit. I will not accept it. As for religion, the Buddha's dharma is a religion in which to seek refuge in this and the next life. I will not accept that it is poison. It is like I have to say that a man of truth is a liar. 'You are a liar, a thief, a bandit. You are honest...' I cannot say all of these." And then at once...there had been a pit dug nearby and the man was made to stand at the edge of the pit. [He] was shot and fell into the pit and was buried.

Q: In the pit?

#48N: Yes, a pit was dug. The man who was earlier asked whether [he] would accept or not was made to stand by the edge. He was shot and fell into the pit and was buried there.

Q: Was he your wife's maternal uncle?

#48N: Yes, yes, wife's paternal uncle.

Q: It happened to the paternal uncle?

#48N: Yes, to the paternal uncle. Paternal uncle was a fine man.

Q: Do you remember a day when the Khampas came to your place and robbed you?

01:17:52

#48N: [I] do remember. That was after we reached Mustang that the Khampa caused us suffering. The Khampa caused suffering at times and not over a long period of time. It was at times when we had fled to Mustang. Just before that we clashed in the north. [The Khampa] took our horses and arms.

Q: Just before coming to Mustang?

#48N: Just before [we] reached Mustang. [The Khampa] took our horses and our clothes. That happened once and not always. One day [the Khampa] came and took our horses and clothes. That was just once and not for a long period of time.

Q: Well, thank you very much for the interview and I have a couple of questions. If this interview were to be shown in Tibet or China, would it be a problem for you?

#48N: It will not be. I believe so. It will not be.

Q: And can we use your real name?

#48N: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW