

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #4 – Paljor
July 2, 2007

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #4
2. Interviewee: Paljor
3. Age: 81
4. Date of Birth: 1926
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Changdong
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: July 2, 2007
10. Place of Interview: Home for the Aged and Disabled, Lugsung Samdupling Settlement, Bylakuppe, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 24 min
12. Interviewer: Rebecca Novick
13. Interpreter: Tsering Dorjee
14. Videographer: Ronny Novick
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Paljor's village, Changdong, is a day's journey from Lhasa. His family worked as farmers and grew different types of crops and flowers. The village Changdong was an estate of Sera Mey Nyetsang. His family was poor and life was made more difficult due to the high taxes paid to the government. His sister was given to the estate in lieu of tax payment. After the disintegration of his family due to his father's death and the inability to pay all their taxes, Paljor became a servant of the abbot of Gyumed Monastery and served on his estate in Tsang.

Paljor is one of the fortunate Tibetans who received the first Kalachakra initiation given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Norbulingka in Tibet. He also witnessed the Dalai Lama when he was escorted from Amdo to Lhasa as a little child. He gives a vivid account of the official ceremonies and arrangements for His Holiness' journey to Lhasa.

Paljor escaped to India in 1959 amid growing apprehension that he would be arrested by the Chinese. He nearly made the fatal mistake of returning to Tibet after reaching India, thinking the situation would have improved after a short time.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, childhood memories, farm life, taxes, invasion by Chinese army, Chushi Gangdrug guerrillas, Kalachakra in Tibet, escape experiences, life as a refugee in India.

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Age: 81, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Rebecca Novick

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[Questions are asked by either interviewer or interpreter. In Interview #4, the interviewer directs questions to the interpreter, who then asks the questions of the interviewee.]

Question: So Paljor-*la*, tell me about your village in Changdong growing up? Was it a beautiful village?

Interviewee #4: The place where I was born—how would they [interviewer and videographer] know, even you [interpreter] don't know about it. It was toward the easterly direction of Lhasa, it's very close to Lhasa. In one day you could go back and forth. Everywhere there were farmers. There were no nomads. All were farmers and the livelihood was bringing grass or things for sale to Lhasa. From Lhasa we purchased the things that we required. It was very close, toward the east. It is called Changdong and was the estate of Sera Mey Nyetsang.

Q: When you went to Lhasa to sell your things, did you go walking?

#4: Yes, by walking.

Q: What kind of things did you farm there?

#4: We grew barley, peas and a crop called *gyarama*, which resembled corn with a thick skin. Potatoes, radishes and turnips were also grown. We were very close to Lhasa and it was a large area. In the gardens we made furrows and planted flowers like *serchen*, chrysanthemum, and marigold. When they were in bloom, we made small bouquets and took them to Lhasa for sale. What do the Lhasans do with it? They put the flowers in vases filled with water and make an offering before the gods. That's how it was done.

Q: How old were you when you first went to Lhasa?

#4: It becomes a long story and that is not good. My parents were poor and they belonged to the estate of the Sera Mey Nyetsang so the taxes were difficult. Including me there were four children. The children were small and livelihood was tough. The tax for the farm fell on my mother, not my father.

When my father died, my mother couldn't manage the tax; because of this the family fell apart. Each child had to look after himself and my mother took care of the youngest. I was the oldest and the next was a sister. At Tsangre there was another estate of the Sera Mey Nyetsang and she was given [to the estate] in lieu of the tax payment. Our family had to meet half of the tax share and the other half by my aunt. So when my family was unable to meet our share of the tax, it was to be accounted for by my aunt. Our family disintegrated.

Q: Did you have to pay tax after your family broke up?

#4: No, once our family fell apart, we did not have to pay tax. Our share of the tax was to be paid by my aunt. Our family disintegrated.

Q: Your aunt paid all the tax?

#4: Yes, she had to pay both half-shares; ours and hers, which made it a complete whole for her. My mother had four sisters. Among the four, two sisters paid half a tax share each. Two sisters stayed outside the place and they did not have to pay tax. However, annually they had to pay an amount, not to the leaders, but to the families of the two sisters who were paying tax.

That was how it was in the early days. I remember it quite clearly. It was the Tibetan currency of seven *Ngusang* and *Sho-nga*. We had to pay this and they could live happily. We paid the difficult tax. We were poor, but the other tax payers had good cultivable lands, a smaller amount of tax deducted and owned *dzo* 'animal bred from a yak and a cow,' donkeys, etc., and led a good life. My mother and my aunt were very poor.

Q: So his mother was working. She was doing labor for Sera Mey and other members of his family were also working for Sera Mey?

#4: At that time my father was also there. My parents performed their half-share of tax. We had a little area of land and a garden. How we paid the tax is quite complicated. We were what were called the *Chueshi*, which meant we had to labor everyday. For five days my mother would go and the next five days it was my aunt's turn. This was how they did it. In autumn, during the harvest season, one person from each family was required to go.

Q: So how were they treated by their landlords?

#4: At that time they didn't put much value on us. It was taken for granted that they were the ones who made us work and we were the ones who did the work. It was not like how it is these days. Now-a-days if you are good, you are considered valuable. Then it was taken for granted that they were the ones who commanded and we were the ones who did it. There was nobody who said it was good.

Q: How did they treat you?

#4: There was nothing to take care of. After you labored for the tax, you had to lead your own life. When we went to work on the estate, we had to take our food with us. What they gave us was this: At around 9:30 a.m. there was a break during which time they gave us black tea. Then at 1 p.m. black tea was given again. And again at 3 p.m. there was another round of black tea. Whatever else you ate or drank, you had to bring yourself. What they gave us was the two tiny plots of land; that was sufficient.

Q: So they just gave tea and you would have to provide their own food. How did his father die?

#4: When our family broke apart, in Lhasa he fell sick and died. There were no weapons involved or anything. He died of illness.

Q: When the family was split up to be able to pay; where did he go to live?

#4: When the family split up, I came to Gyumay Monastery. You know the one we have in Hunsur here; there was a branch of their monastery in Tsang. The monastery belonged to the Gyumay Monastery. The *Khenpo* 'abbot' in this monastery was sent from the Gyumay Monastery on a tenure of five years. I came as a servant to such a person. He took me as a servant and I came there as a servant.

Q: A branch of the monastery in Tsang?

#4: Yes, a branch of the monastery.

Q: You worked as a servant?

#4: The branch of the monastery was in Tsang. The abbot couldn't remain in one place for long at the branch monastery. He had to go to one place to attend the *Yarnay* 'summer prayers' and to another place to attend the *Gunchoe* 'winter prayers'. There were many places to go to. I served the abbot as his servant.

Q: Can he describe his life like what he did for the *Khenpo*? What did he do on a daily basis?

#4: When I was the servant to the abbot, we had to...he [the abbot] had a lot of rights and there were three to four servants. I used to look after the horses. My daily duties were, for a few months... those who had to serve the abbot did that, but I was in a different place.

At Tsang Gamba, the branch monastery had an estate. There were two managers on the estate. I was sent there as a representative of the *Ladang* 'Grand Lama's residence.' So I couldn't stay long at the monastery. The estate was at Gamba. From spring, when the cultivation began to the festival of Gaden Ngachoe, I had to remain on the estate. After that I went to Gyangtse and spent the winter there because there was no work. Then when the fieldwork started, we had to come back. That was what I did.

Q: Was that better work? Did you enjoy that work better than working for Sera Mey?

#4: That was not exactly Gyumay's work. There was a branch monastery for which the abbot was sent from Gyumay. I was the abbot's servant and not the Gyumay monastery's servant. What is a branch monastery, you would know. In different places there were small monasteries which came under the Gyumay Monastery and the abbots were sent from the Gyumay Monastery. I came as a servant for the abbot and I was not the monastery's servant.

Q: What was this work like? Was it difficult? Did he enjoy it? How did he feel about the work he did?

#4: It was not hard work. To travel around, we had horses. We had enough to eat, whatever Tibetan people ate at that time. Work was not difficult.

Q: How old was he when he went to work for Gyumay?

#4: I may have been around 28 or 29 years old. I am not very clear.

Q: Going back a little earlier, when he first saw Lhasa, can he describe what it was like when he first saw the Potala? Does he remember the first time he saw the Potala?

#4: That was before 1959. Everything was as it was. After 1959, I had come here. In 1959, I did not come to Lhasa. I was in Tsang on the estate for about seven years. During that time the Chinese came and things changed. After that I did not see Lhasa. I don't know what changes happened there.

Q: When he was working for the *Khenpo*, where did he sleep?

#4: The *Datsang* and the *Khenpo's Ladang* was separate. There was a separate house for the *Ladang*, where there were quarters for the abbot's servants.

Q: Each servant had their separate rooms?

#4: The *Ladang* was one house and there were many rooms.

Q: Did he ever attend religious teachings at that time? Was he invited to attend? Was he able to attend Dharma teachings?

#4: No, I couldn't because I was young and as you know, there were no schools in Tibet. I had no religious teachings as I was on the estate. I used to be happy working on the estate and never thought about practicing the Dharma.

Q: Did anyone ever teach him to write Tibetan script?

#4: No. At that time there was none. If you belonged to a private family or a big family, there were private schools you could attend. However children of poor families like ours; we did not have the finance to go to such schools. We did not go to school. All children of

poor families worked. The big families hired private teachers and they had the means to pay them. We did not have the means, so there were no kindergartens and no schools for us.

Q: What would happen when somebody would get sick or get injured? Was there a local doctor with the Gyumay? Would they provide a doctor? What would happen if people got sick?

#4: There were few doctors dispensing Tibetan herbal medicines. We did not have the western medicines. However, the weather was cold and the environment was clean, so there were not many diseases that people fell ill with. When we were children—these days it's eradicated, but when we were children, there was the small pox, which left scars on the face. When you had it, you went to the hospital at Dickeyling run by the English and they gave you an injection. That [the injection] would cure you. Other than that there were not too many illnesses and for treatment, we only had Tibetan herbal medicines.

Q: Was there an English doctor at Dickeyling?

#4: Yes. I have also been there.

Q: Does he know which country the doctor was from?

#4: He was English [a term used for all Caucasian people].

Q: You don't know which country he came from?

#4: No, how would I know that! He was a representative of his government. He treated people and he was a representative of his government.

Q: Where was this? Was this in the part of Lhasa?

#4: Dickeyling was situated away from Lhasa. There was Lhasa and then Shoey. You still had to go further from Shoey. It was on the outskirts and not in Lhasa. In the west was Dickeyling. It was isolated with nothing else around.

Q: Did he ever go to see this doctor?

#4: We were not in a position to see him everyday, but I just saw his face at the time when he gave me the injection.

Q: Did he ever get a chance to go on pilgrimage in his life?

#4: No, I didn't. Because, as you know, to go on pilgrimage you either had to have a thick skin to be able to beg your way through, or you should have the finance. If you didn't have either of the two, you couldn't go on a pilgrimage. You just stayed put in your place. I haven't been on a pilgrimage.

Q: So either you are very poor or very rich. Did he attend the Kalachakra in Lhasa in 1958 at the Norbulingka? Did he hear about it? Did he attend it?

#4: Yes, I have been there. The first *Kalachakra* was given at Norbulingka. After we had left Tsang, I heard that the second *Kalachakra* was given at Lhamo Tsepa. I didn't attend the second but I was there for the first.

Q: The first was given at Norbulingka.

#4: Yes.

Q: So there were two? How far apart were they? How many years apart?

#4: Actually it was in Lhasa. It was at Ramoche, there's the Ramoche Jowo. I heard it was given at the Jokhang at Ramoche. We had already left for Tsang and did not attend it.

Q: That was the second one and the first one at Norbulingka. He attended the first one.

[Interpreter to interviewer] Yes.

Q: When he went to the first one, can he describe what all what it was like? What it looked like? How many people were there and what happened? Can he just describe it a little bit?

#4: It was very good, extremely good. It was very grand.

Q: Does he remember the throne that His Holiness sat on?

#4: His Holiness' palace was here and his throne was facing this side [gestures with hands] and in front was all the people.

Q: He was describing the position of the throne. Does he remember anything about the throne? Does he remember, was it a golden throne; does he remember that?

#4: The throne was made of gold and copper. In shape it looked similar to the thrones that we see in all the monasteries. It was grandly studded with jewels.

Q: What jewels were they?

#4: Normally thrones are studded with gems like turquoise, *dzi* [special beads made of agate], coral and pearls. These were studded in tiny clusters all over.

Q: Does he know who gave His Holiness the throne? Does he know that?

#4: That belonged to the government. It was there right from the beginning. Nobody offered it. There is another case. For the *Kalachakra* in Norbulingka, the throne was already there. However, for the *Kalachakra* at Ramoche, a new golden throne was

constructed. I have not seen it but I heard that it was jointly donated by businessmen in and around that area. The one at Norbulingka was there since the beginning.

Q: I see. That was probably the golden throne that we heard about at Ramoche. What was happening at Lhasa during this time? He said when he first went to Lhasa, there wasn't many Chinese there did that change and how did that change? What did he start to see in Lhasa with the Chinese presence there?

#4: The Chinese arrived in Lhasa and we had to live side-by-side for about seven to eight years. They came, but that was it as the power was with the Tibetan government.

Q: So actually they weren't interfering in the affairs of the government at that time?

#4: At that time, no. They were wicked and deliberated before doing anything. They didn't do anything on an impulse. They needed time to collect; whether it was finance or men. They collected finance and the men. When all the troops from China had gathered; when everything was ready they did it.

Q: How did he feel about the Chinese at that time?

#4: I was young in age. I thought that this was not a good thing and that gradually and eventually they would definitely make us suffer. Other than that I didn't think much.

It's quite simple. These days the children in India, they have education and they can think. They understand; they know the ways of the west and the ways of home. During our time, there was nothing. There was no education, no knowledge. That's why we couldn't think much. Just as an omen, we thought that in time they were bound to cause us suffering. We didn't know much.

Q: What happened on the Gyumay estate? Were there any changes that happened there from the Chinese?

#4: We were living in that village and the Chinese—whether we liked it or not—forced us to attend the Chinese meetings. You couldn't say, “I would like to come or excuse me I do not want to come.” The abbot was a highly ranked person. He had the rank of a *Rimshi*, so he was forced to go. He was a *Khampa*, a *Teo*. He was very well versed in reading the Dharma texts, but he didn't know how to write the *Umay* script. When told to attend the meeting, it was obligatory for him to go. On attending the meetings, the Chinese gave *Dhayen* ‘silver coins’ and gifts like brocade. However I, Khen Rinpoche and his *Chanzo* ‘manager’ did not spend much time together because they stayed at their place and I was away at the estate. So I do not know much.

Q: Did he ever witness these meetings?

#4: No, I did not attend. I was staying at the estate. They were living at Gyantse. The meetings were called at Gyantse. I was away at a distance of about four days.

Q: So he never saw himself. Did he ever have any personal contact with the Chinese?
Interaction?

#4: No, I did not. I want to say something. If you question me, I can answer. But if you don't question me, then...Khen Rinpoche was staying at Gyangtse. It was around the second lunar month and the western month of March that we lost Tibet. Khen Rinpoche was staying at Gyangtse until around the 4th or 5th lunar month.

Nearby there were people that he knew. Two young monks went to join the *Chushi Gangdrug* Defend Tibet Volunteer Force. They ran away. One is here. [Points with finger] Two of them went. Now we were suspects. We dare not remain. Close by the monastery were villages. One of them said that Khen Rinpoche should escape as he was to be arrested.

From where I was living, Lachen was very close. You could reach it within one day; it was quite near. When they received the message, Khen Rinpoche and his *Sopon* 'private secretary' escaped to where I was living. They had horses to ride. They fled to where I was. When they reached it, I was at a smaller plot of estate, a little further away. Someone told me that Khen Rinpoche had arrived and I was to come there immediately. I became worried thinking what the reason could be. I came there.

They had nothing with them. The servant had packed some food in the saddle, but they said it should be emptied because if they were pursued, the horse wouldn't be able to run with a heavy load. I was told to remove everything. From their monastery to where I was, it was quite a distance. If you were in a state of panic you would reach fast, but if not it took about three to four days. I arranged for their food. Khen Rinpoche was very worried and said that things were not going to work out right. They spent the night there. I was not unduly concerned. He climbed upstairs and kept looking out.

That night was spent and the next night at around 2 a.m. we escaped. That was because a messenger had arrived saying, "Khen Rinpoche, stay where you are. There is no danger from the Chinese. Remain where you are." That was a deception. Khen Rinpoche was smart and saw through it and said, "Now I must not remain here. If I stay, it'll be disastrous." That night at 2 a.m. we fled through Gamba Zong to Lachen. Then the next day at around 7 or 8 you were in the territory of Sikkim.

Q: Seven or eight in the morning?

#4: Yes. If you left at 2 o'clock in the night, the next day at 7 or 8 o'clock you were in Sikkim territory. Then there was no danger. That's how it happened. Have I spoken too long?

Q: That's fine, I'll translate briefly.

#4: Okay.

Q: Does he know what happened to him?

#4: We reached Sikkim. We stayed a few days at the place where the Sikkim police were stationed. What food we brought with us was finished. Then they went to Kalimpong.

Q: Did you go with them?

#4: Both of them went to Kalimpong. I kept the three horses we had. At that time I was stupid, I was thinking of returning to Tibet. I was at the mountain pass between Tibet and Sikkim. There were citizens of Sikkim there and I was staying with them. From news I heard, it was useless for me to go back. I was to be arrested. Of course they would arrest me. There was no use going back. There was a man who had escaped from Tibet and I came with him to Gangtok. I didn't stay long and then went to Kalimpong. At Kalimpong, the government was providing aid; distributing dry rations. One had to arrange for a vessel and then could cook.

Q: I'd like to go back to before he left his farmland with Rinpoche, when Rinpoche was sort of taking refuge where he was staying. Whose idea was it to go with him? Did he ask to go with Rinpoche or did Rinpoche invite him to come with him? How did that happen?

#4: I was Khen Rinpoche's servant and I had to go wherever he asked me to.

Q: Khen Rinpoche asked you to come?

#4: Yes.

Q: Did anybody else take refuge where he was living, fleeing from the Chinese?

#4: There were none because we fled suddenly. Later those working at the estate with me escaped. They came later.

Q: They joined them in Sikkim?

#4: Yes, we met in Sikkim. The story is turning upside down. When I reached Kalimpong, Khen Rinpoche was not there. He and his *Sopon* had gone to Dalhousie. In Kalimpong there was a Bhutanese monastery called Dongsar Gonpa. It has a large hall and we were all put up there. There were Government officials posted there and they sent us to Sikkim. We asked what do we do in Sikkim and they said, "You will be working as road crew."

Q: Tell us how you met them; the other workers from the estate?

#4: I had already reached the road construction site in Sikkim. They had escaped and were going to Gangtok and Kalimpong. We met only that day. We met that day and after that did not meet again for a year or two.

Q: You met the other workers in Kalimpong?

#4: We met in Sikkim. I was working on road construction and they were coming from Tibet. That's it.

Q: So that was kind of like an accidental meeting on the way?

[Interpreter to interviewer] Yes

Q: Can he describe what it was like to see them? Was it an emotional reunion?

#4: It was impossible for them to stay [in Tibet] though they remained. They stayed back but there was no way they could stay put. They took their time and were able to carry possessions and food with them. They went ahead while I stayed at the road construction site. Since then we have not met. I couldn't remain long doing roadwork as the Indian troops were passing up and down. It was the border area. Then I came to Gangtok. The area where we worked was further away while Gangtok was the capital of Sikkim. From there I was sent to the Bylakuppe settlement here.

Q: How many years did you work as a road crew?

#4: In Sikkim? I spent over two years working on the road crew.

Q: When he left Tibet, was it before or after the uprising in Lhasa that culminated His Holiness leaving?

#4: It was after that. I told you earlier. On 10th March the uprising took place and Khen Rinpoche could stay for sometime after that. I was already in Gamba. I told you earlier that two youngsters joined the *Chushi Gangdrug* Force. When they joined the *Chushi Gangdrug* Force, we were considered the enemy.

The youngsters left by themselves; we didn't send them. But they [the Chinese] would say that the elders sent them, or else they wouldn't go. Due to that, the villagers informed Khen Rinpoche about his imminent arrest and asked him to escape. Then they came to the place where I was living. From my place we came to Sikkim. From Sikkim he went to Kalimpong. When I went later to Kalimpong, he had already gone to Dalhousie—Khen Rinpoche and his *Sopon*. I couldn't meet them.

Q: He said that he tried to go back to Tibet at one point and he said it was stupid of him. What was he intending to do when he got back to Tibet? Why did he try to go back?

#4: Because my thinking was insufficient. I didn't think it could come to such a pass. Although the Chinese troops were there, so were the *Chushi Gangdrug* Force and the Tibetan Army. I thought they could take revenge on them and that we could go back. I never thought that I was escaping for good. That was why I wanted to go back.

Q: He thought maybe if he went back everything would be okay. I want to ask him a question about the *Kalachakra* that he attended at the Norbulingka. When he was at the *Kalachakra* in Norbulingka, was that the first time he's seen His Holiness?

#4: I had seen His Holiness earlier. At that time there was no great danger to him, so we could see him. When I was 13 years old, His Holiness was escorted from Amdo. In Tibet the roads were bad and all the villages on the way were sent to make roads. I was 13 and I was among those who made the roads. When His Holiness was escorted, I was there making the roads.

Q: Did you see His Holiness then?

#4: Yes. We were making the roads. I don't know the old stories, but it is said that His Holiness passed through Rigya. There was a *Ritoe* 'a cavern in the hill.' You [interpreter] are young and so I don't know if you have noticed.

There's a Tibetan song which goes, "Rigya Samten Linka, apricot trees on high rocks, your strange fruits are grown among your leaves." There were many apricot trees though the area was all rocks, where apricot trees are not supposed to grow. All around the cavern, there were apricot trees. The apricot trees grew on the rocks. The apricots were very good. When the apricots were a luscious red and the fields had been harvested, His Holiness the Dalai Lama reached there. At that time, it seemed like a good omen, but there was nothing to do about it.

Q: That was the first time you saw His Holiness?

#4: Yes, His Holiness was coming from his region.

Q: Did he actually see His Holiness processions go by?

#4: Yes, I saw that. Times were good then and there was no danger. His Holiness was a small child.

Q: What did he see? Can he describe what he saw?

#4: Until His Holiness reached the place called Rigya Samten Linka, he was on horseback. Everyone in the entourage, like His Holiness' father, mother and many others; all were on horseback. On reaching Rigya Samten Linka, he spent a day or two at Rigya Thang.

Various ceremonies were performed here. From this place to Lhasa, the distance was like, from here to Sera Monastery [around 3 kilometers] or perhaps more than that. The roads from that point were better. Roads in Tibet were not good. We had leveled the roads and it was quite alright. From then His Holiness was carried in a *phogyang* 'palanquin'. The others went on horseback with special saddles to prevent falling called *degyang*.

Q: How did His Holiness go?

#4: He was in the *phegyang*?

Q: What's a *phegyang*?

#4: (Laughs)

Q: We don't know what it is.

#4: The *phegyang* was a comfortable seat for His Holiness. Haven't you seen one?

Q: Now that you describe it, I understand. It is carried on the shoulders by four men.

#4: I don't know who he was, but I was told he was an army commander. There were eight men and they were called the pullers of *gyangdha*. When the *phegyang* had to move forward, the *gyangdha* pullers pulled the ropes forward while the *phegyang* pullers called *phegyangwas* pushed backwards. So they pushed backwards and the *gyangdhas* pushed forward. The real *phegyang* carriers pushed back straining with their feet and that was supposed to provide less shakiness.

Q: So he was on a horse before that? His Holiness was on a horse? Where the road was good, they put him on a palanquin. Did he say anything else? Did he actually see His Holiness? What did he look like and how was he dressed?

#4: Yes, I saw him. He was dressed in monk's robes. After the ceremony, he wore a yellow hat and his dress was the monk's robes.

Q: The place where the ceremony took place was Rigya?

#4: Yes, it was at Rigya. At Rigya where the ceremony took place, in attendance were members from the monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Gaden; each and every one of the serving nobles of the government and all the Grand Lamas' residence officials. The whole area looked white with the innumerable tents. It was a huge open ground and in the center was His Holiness' palace and a structure where the ceremony took place. It had a carving of a peacock on it and the ceremony took place here. All around it were a sea of white tents; the Government officials and the three great monasteries' members.

Q: Is Rigya a monastery? It's a village?

#4: Proper Rigya was a monastery; it was a *ritoe* in the hills. There's the Rigya Rinpoche. I don't know the story in detail, but I have heard that all the Dalai Lamas, on being recognized; it was obligatory for them to come to Rigya. The place was called Wobgya Thang and I heard most countries have their own open grounds. In China it is called Namdhe Goma Thangchen and in India there is the Raj Thang. Ours was called Wobgya Thang. In general the surface of the ground in Tibet is not good. You [interpreter] do not

know because you were born after coming to India. The roads were not even; there were stones and it was very rough.

Q: How did the crowd respond to His Holiness?

#4: The people stood in lines on both the sides of the road. That was it. From Rigya he was escorted to the Tsuglakhang for the ceremony. He spent a day or two and then he was escorted to the Potala Palace. That's how it was.

Q: How did the crowd respond to His Holiness? What were they doing? Were they excited, were they calling out, were they making noise; what were they doing? Were they praying, what were they doing?

#4: The people were extremely happy that they had the opportunity to see *Chenrezig*. Other than that there was nothing special to do.

Q: How did he feel?

#4: I also felt the same; that I have seen *Chenrezig* and that I am very fortunate. Now we would be happy. There was nothing much because to say in general, the people of the present times and people of those days are not similar. At that time we did not have education and knowledge. We were like, foolish. [Laughs]

Q: Has he seen His Holiness in exile or received teachings from him in exile?

#4: After coming to India, His Holiness has given teachings and I have received them after coming here to Mysore. When we were in Sikkim, His Holiness could not visit. I heard that His Holiness later paid a visit to Sikkim. After coming to Mysore, I have received my heart's desire of His Holiness' teachings; the *Kalachakra* here and the *Lamrin Wangchen* and *Kalachakra* at Mundgod. Whenever His Holiness visited this region, I always attended his teachings.

Q: A last question, we ask everyone the same question; if the young generation of Tibetans would listen to their elders, we know sometimes they don't but if they would, then what advice does he have for this young generation of Tibetans in exile?

#4: I cannot advise much because if I was living in the camp, there were children and I could tell them that such and such things happened earlier.

Q: This film will be shown to others and they are bound to hear it. So what is your advice for them?

#4: We are the people of pre-1959 and our time is over. At that time we did not have education or knowledge. You have to abide by the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and do whatever it is required towards regaining Tibet's independence. You have to work carefully towards that end.

Q: Please tell Paljor-*la* thank you very much for sharing his story with us. Even though he says that he is uneducated, he told us a story in a very interesting way and informative way. Ask Paljor-*la* how he feels about the Chinese?

#4: About the Chinese? I do not have much to say, but the most important thing is: from what I have heard and from what is being said on the radio, the whole world would like China to accept the proposals set forth by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is just a few of the top leaders who are opposing it and not the general population. The general population is the same as us. If they listen to it, it would benefit China, it would benefit the Tibetans, there would be peace between both the parties and there would be peace and happiness in the world. This is all I have to say.

Q: We agree. That would be very good.

END OF INTERVIEW