

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #50N – Norbu
April 16, 2015

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #50N
2. Interviewee: Norbu
3. Age: 85
4. Date of Birth: 1930
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Tsang
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 16 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Palden Tsering
14. Videographer: Henry Tenenbaum
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Norbu was born in Tsang into a middle class family and was the eldest of five siblings. His family did farming and later when he left home as a *makpa* 'groom' to Namru, he became a nomad and a salt gatherer. He explains the difference between these two activities, believing farming to be more difficult work. Norbu describes the tradition of *nama* 'bride' and *makpa* and how marriages were traditionally arranged by the parents.

Norbu says that the oppression by the Chinese, their objection to practicing the dharma and confiscation of wealth led to the decision to flee from his hometown. He describes the problems the large group of escapees faced on the long journey which took 8-9 months to reach Mustang in Nepal. They survived, initially by eating some of their animals and selling some, and later when there were no animals left, they sold their jewelry to the tribal people.

Norbu and the other refugees started a new life in the Tashi Palkhiel Settlement in Pokhara, built the houses and received foreign aid. Norbu worked as a porter for foreigners going on mountain treks and now he spends his time selling souvenirs and chanting prayers.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, childhood memories, customs/traditions, escape experiences, life as a refugee in Nepal.

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Interview #50N

Interviewee: Norbu

Age: 85, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: April 16, 2015

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:07

Interviewee #50N: [I] am called Norbu.

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

#50N: [I think] it should be okay [with the Project] being connected to the [Tibetan] government. I cannot say otherwise.

Q: Thank you for offering to share your story with us.

#50N: [Nods]

Q: During this interview if you wish to take a break or stop at any time, please let me know. If you do not wish to answer a question or talk about something, let me know.

#50N: Okay.

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

#50N: [I] do not think I will face any problem in particular because [I] live in Nepal. So the Chinese cannot cause problems. If [I] were to return to Tibet I may face problems.

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

#50N: Okay, and thank you.

Q: *Popo-la* 'respectful term for grandfather,' can you tell me how old you are?

00:03:16

#50N: Am 85 years old.

Q: Where were you born, *popo-la*?

#50N: I was a farmer and was born in the place called Tsang. [I] was a farmer in Tibet.

Q: What province is Tsang?

#50N: It is in Utsang.

Q: *Popo-la*, when you were a little boy how many people were in the family? Mother, father, how many?

#50N: In the family were my father, mother and five siblings.

Q: Elder or younger siblings?

#50N: They were all younger. I am the eldest.

Q: *Popo-la*, can you tell us something about your father? What kind of a man was he?

#50N: I lived with the parents until the age of 19. [I] was young then and did not take much interest. [Father] served as a supervisor for a leader. In the past there used to be leading people like district administrators and estate holders. [Father] served as a supervisor and was a fairly influential man.

Q: Were you or was your father a supervisor?

#50N: My father was a supervisor. At the age of 19 I left as *makpa* ‘bridegroom/son-in-law/brother-in-law’ to a place called Namru.

Q: You said your father was like a treasurer for a *dzong* ‘district.’ What is a *dzong*?

00:06:10

#50N: For instance in Nepal there are the provinces and such. [Father] served as a supervisor for one shouldering the responsibility of making purchases and other expenses.

Q: Was your family more middle class or upper class?

#50N: It was a middle class family. It was not the best in terms of wealth nor was it poor lacking food and clothing. It was a middle class family. However, I left as a *makpa* ‘groom’ at the age of 19 and lived in Namru for 10-odd years.

Q: How many years?

#50N: About 10 years in Namru.

Q: *Popo-la*, when you say a groom, does that mean a man who’s going to marry a woman in that village?

#50N: I married into another family. They asked for me and a maternal uncle gave me away at the age of 19.

Q: Why do you think that family, your in-laws wanted to have you for a son?

00:08:40

#50N: The reason was that in my wife's family there was only a mother and a daughter and needed a *makpa* for her. Since a *makpa* was required, my hand was asked for. So I was given away when I was asked for.

Q: How old was the woman that you were going to marry?

#50N: [The woman] was a year older than me.

Q: Older?

#50N: Yes.

Q: Do you remember how you felt when you met the bride-to-be if you met her before or after? How did it feel?

#50N: [I] had seen [her] before. I had been to Jang and back on trade and also on work. [I] had been there at the age of 17 and 18 and at 19 began to live there. [I] had seen [her] having gone there three times.

Q: Did you like her as a wife-to-be? Were you happy with this new bride?

00:10:34

#50N: Whether one liked [the wife-to be] or not, at that time when the elders decided, whether one liked it or not...in the Tibetan tradition of the past, whether one liked it or not, when the elders gave one away, one must go accordingly. [Laughs]

Q: So how did you like change when you went from your farming family to live with her? Did anything change in what you did with your daily life?

#50N: The way of earning a livelihood was different. Earlier where [I] lived it was farming and now [the new family] were nomads. There were no farmlands and one used the produce from animals like sheep and yak. Then I lived there.

Q: Did you like the change?

#50N: One must like it; one must like it; otherwise...I cannot say whether [I] liked it or not.

Q: Tell me, but if you grew up as a farming family, how did you...how did you learn how to take care of animals and do the herding? Who taught you those skills?

00:13:09

#50N: There is not much about knowing or not knowing where a nomad is concerned. The only thing to know for a nomad is to take care of animals and the responsibilities connected to it. It is not like for a farmer who must sow, continue to work [in the fields] and at times [the crops] could grow or fail. The nomads did not have that but just took care of the animals and used the produce. That was about it. There was gathering salt from the north and acquiring grains from the south and packing these. That was it.

Q: That's very interesting. So being a farmer was more complex and more skill was needed in your experience than being a nomad.

#50N: [The work of being a nomad and] a farmer is different. [A farmer] must continue to work all through the 12 months depending upon the season. That was not so with the nomads. It was just taking care of the animals.

Q: *Popo-la*, did you find that boring to just look after animals all day?

#50N: It was enjoyable work. A nomad's work was more enjoyable than a farmer's. Farm work was more difficult.

Q: More enjoyable! What did you like about it that was enjoyable? What was more fun or more entertaining?

00:15:36

#50N: The work of a nomad is watching the animals, releasing [the animals] to the grasslands in the morning and bringing [them] back in the evening. There was no strain on the body. Going to the north to gather salt and to Tibet [south] to acquire grain was a little bit difficult, but normally it was just watching the animals whereas a farmer must sow the fields, let the plants grow, do the hoeing and harvesting and many such things. Nomads do not have many things to do except caring for the animals.

Q: So *popo-la*, going to gather the salt and actually having to dig the salt and bring it back, put it in bags, was that...that wasn't too difficult for your body? Your body was strong from farming?

#50N: It was not that difficult. I lived in Jang for 10 years during which [I] had to go to gather salt, go to the saltpan, gather salt from the lake, pack and load on the yaks or sheep and then return home.

Q: When you said you stayed as a salt gatherer for 10 years, was that part of the married...his family of farmers? Is that part of that experience or was that a separate experience?

00:18:13

#50N: After coming to Jang at the age of 19, [I] lived there until the age of 30. [I] did not go anywhere else. [I] lived in Jang for 10 years until '59 when bad times dawned.

Q: Before we get to that, I want to go back and ask how were you...is it...was it unusual for a man to be invited in to be a husband of a bride or did that happen rather frequently, the same as a bride would be invited into another family?

#50N: At that time it used to be like this: If one had a son, a *nama* ‘bride,’ must be taken in and if one had a daughter, a *makpa* must be taken in. It depended upon what the family had and did not have. If one had a daughter, it is essential to take in a *makpa* and if one had a son, it is essential to take in a *nama*. It depended upon what the family had and did not have.

Q: So there’s no...would a boy rather pick his bride to come to his family or would he rather go to another family? Is there any preference?

00:20:35

#50N: According to the past tradition of Tibet, the ancient tradition of Tibet, a father and mother would say, “Please give [your son as] a *makpa* for our daughter.” [The boy’s] hand was sought for and decided whether he likes it or not. During the present time unless the boy and girl like each other the parents have no say in the matter. Times have changed. In the old times, a *nama* would be brought from a great distance for a boy who has never set eyes on her. In the case of a boy, without having seen him, [he] could be sought as *makpa*. Since the parents have arranged it, there was no saying yes or no.

Q: Which tradition do you think...do you like better? Do you like having the parents decide or do you like today’s tradition where the couple can decide?

#50N: If one goes according to tradition, if one goes according to tradition, if the parents plan...[to interpreter] if you are the boy for whom a *nama* has to be brought in, it would be studied what her parents are like, the purity of the caste...in the old days purity or impurity of caste, what the parents are like and the girl’s nature, the parents selected the best. These days if they, the boy and girl, like each other, the parents hardly have a say in the matter. This is happening these days. The fact is that the decision of the parents is more stable.

Q: Because you’re saying that the parents had more wisdom and understanding of their son and of the nature of the girl and her family. So they can make a much better match.

00:24:28

#50N: That is right.

Q: So when you were married, did you have any children while you were married to this woman for 10 years and you were living as a nomad?

#50N: Before bad times took place [we] had five children until ’59, three daughters and two sons. When [we] fled in ’59 there were five children.

Q: Before escaping. That would be in the first 10 years of marriage, three daughters and two sons. It sounds like you had a very happy marriage.

#50N: [Laughs] That might be so. That is a sign of one’s mind. It is a pretension for otherwise, in *khorma* ‘samsara, the vicious cycle of existence’ there is just suffering. One is in a cycle of suffering. One gives birth to a child, feeds and raises him. Then something

happens to him and you suffer. It is all about suffering. There is no happiness. According to the dharma there is no happiness at all. However, one followed tradition.

Q: You found happiness and you understood that there is always suffering and worry about family, but you tried to find peace in your belief in the dharma and the Buddha?

00:27:14

#50N: That is right.

Q: *Popo-la*, what happens? You're a nomad, you're married, you have five children and your life sounds peaceful. Does anything change? Anything difficult happen?

#50N: It was like this. [We] fled in '59 and for 8-9 months...came walking for 8-9 months from Namru to Mustang in Nepalese Territory. [We] faced some hardship then.

Q: *Popo-la*, you said, "We had to escape." What made you want to escape from your beautiful country? Why did you get this idea to escape?

#50N: I cannot talk in length about the reason. In general, it was the oppression by the Chinese and the Chinese objection to practicing the dharma, and your wealth not belonging to you. Due to such reasons the Dalai Lama had left for India and feeling deeply saddened, there was no way we could stay behind. The Dalai Lama had to leave the Potala Palace empty. Once the Dalai Lama left for India, for us it was like living in an empty house. We left because of this and not because of the fear of being beaten or killed by the Chinese. We came on account of this.

Q: So please tell us, how did you...your family, your animals, who stayed and who went with you to make this journey? And where were you going? Did you have in your mind a place to go or were you just running away?

00:31:02

#50N: The most important thing is that for those of us that lived in Namru there was a senior person called Namru Garpon 'Leader of Namru.'

Q: Garpon?

#50N: Yes. Namru Garpon was the governor general of many villages. When he talked about leaving, 20 of us families left with him, 20 families. Then we came directly to Mustang that took 8-9 months. When [we] reached Mustang...Mustang is not a place for animals. There was snowfall and no good grasslands. So the animals died or were sold. [We] stayed in Mustang for around three years until our reserves came to an end, stayed in Mustang for 3-4 years. Then when the reserves depleted, [we] came down to Pokhara.

Q: You said you were with—how many families? Twenty families? Did you all follow each other and did you get on...did you use horses to ride for the babies and old people? How did you...how difficult was this journey, over mountains and over rivers? For that many months, it

must have been a very, you know, 8-9 months you traveled very, very far. So can you tell us about the journey?

00:34:02

#50N: We had yaks and sheep until Mustang, and the richer families owned many horses too. Provisions were laden on the yaks and the sheep driven along. [We] came with all that the family owned. We did not encounter any Chinese until Mustang. We managed to bring the animals, drive the yaks and bring supplies and everything to Mustang.

Upon reaching Mustang, the animals that belonged to the nomads...some of the animals of the nomads died, some were sold and some consumed and this came to an end in around three years. For a nomad, once there were no longer any animals left, [he] had nothing else. That was how it was with the nomads for there were no fields and lands, and no riches and properties. The little amount of jewelry and such worn on the body was gradually sold to the tribal people. Everything got over in three years.

Q: The question is did [you] travel like a nomad during the journey of 8-9 months?

#50N: [We] came as nomads driving the animals and everything. If one was on the way to Kathmandu, whether the journey took five or six days one traveled during the day and stopped at night. [We] came in that manner.

Q: Gradually?

#50N: Yes.

Q: Before you reached Mustang, how long did it take to get to the border of Mustang? Because you were still in Tibet, right? Can you remember, *popo-la*, from your home to the border of Mustang, how many days or weeks did it take?

00:37:01

#50N: It took 8-9 months from Namru to the time [we] entered Mustang.

Q: Did you pass many Tibetan villages along the way?

#50N: There were some that stayed back at the villages. Some remarked, "It is okay to stay back," and stayed back while some left. There were many with us. There were people that had come from Kham and people that had come from Utsang. There were many people. We were not the only ones; there were countless other people. Mustang filled with people and animals during those days. The animals died, people faced hardship and wealth and assets were depleted because of the huge number of people.

Q: It must have been thousands of people.

#50N: Many thousands converged. There were many of us from Namru and Kham. Then there were from nearby places like Bumpa, Bawa and such. They were close by, just a mountain pass away while we were from a great distance, nearby Lhasa and the place

called Namchu. [We] had to come from a great distance. There was a fewer number of people from far away. Thinking about the difficulties along the long journey, only those people that were able to overcome hardship managed to come.

Q: There was no Chinese. You didn't see any Chinese, either airplanes or following you or soldiers, nothing?

00:40:17

#50N: We did not encounter any Chinese. There were planes flying in the sky but the Chinese did not shoot or kill anybody or beat us. Planes did fly in the sky. There were a few vehicles that plied though there were no good roads in Tibet. Planes flew in the sky but did not harm us.

Q: *Popo-la*, were there any lamas, *rinpoches* 'highly-respected lamas' or monks, people coming from the monasteries that came with the people and held prayer ceremonies with you or did you stop at monasteries along the way?

#50N: There were [prayers held]. There were many lamas from Derge and Nangchen like Taruk Rinpoche and Dabsang Rinpoche who live in Nepal. These lamas were with us, and also Kyabje Trichen Rinpoche, the lama of Nalanda. Now all the older lamas have passed away; otherwise, there were a few lamas [with us]. However, majority of the monks of the monasteries left through Kalimpong [India] and through the route taken by His Holiness the Dalai Lama into India. Majority of the monks and lamas left through that. Those of us coming from the upper region, the Khampa and monks—except for Kyabje Trichen Rinpoche—lamas and monks were few.

Q: Was there a reason why you didn't want to go to the Indian border and you went towards Mustang?

00:43:07

#50N: The reason for coming to Mustang was that there was not the need for acquiring a passport to come to Mustang; one could come in directly. One must acquire a passport to go to India.

Q: At that time?

#50N: Many people [Tibetans] had initially arrived in India. Though many had arrived in India, until His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived in India, the Indians confiscated all the passports [?] saying, "You will have to go back." The moment His Holiness arrived in India, passports [residential permits] were brought to the doorsteps saying, "Here, your passport is here. You will be staying here." Things relaxed. Had His Holiness not been able to arrive, the Indians had planned to return the Tibetans to Tibet. There was no need for passports to come to Nepal nor did the police say anything; one could enter easily. The reason stemmed from there.

Q: You didn't need a passport to go to Mustang, but you needed one to go to India. But where would Tibetans get a passport from if they were escaping? You know, they didn't go to a passport office.

#50N: In the early days in Kalimpong and such, there were people trading with Tibetans and traveling back and forth. It seems there were Indian passports then though I have never been there. Coming into Nepal at border areas like Solukhumbu and Manang, one can enter easily if done cautiously. There was not need for passports nor were there any restrictions.

Q: Were there no passports then?

#50N: There were none in Nepal then.

Q: I see. *Popo-la*, was there any consideration that the weather in Mustang would be colder while India certainly had a much warmer climate? Would people prefer to go to where it was cool?

00:46:40

#50N: No. One did not have any experience in weather conditions then. Never mind India; it was rare to find Tibetans traveling to Nepal. One did not know about weather conditions, but it was the availability of easy access routes to each region that one followed. Those in the lower regions like Dromo entered Kalimpong, Bhutan, Sikkim and such. Those from the higher regions entered Mustang. Other than that there was not much attention paid to weather conditions then.

Q: So the main purpose was to get out of Tibet and get to a safe country? You weren't thinking about where would the animals live or where would you farm?

#50N: Yes, it was enough to get away. Those in the highest region entered Ladakh into India. Then those closest to the border areas of Mukhum, Tijirong or Dolpa entered the respective points.

Q: Which place is Tijirong?

#50N: Tijirong is in Nepalese Territory.

Q: Isn't it Taplijong?

00:49:19

#50N: It could be Taplijong. Tijirong, Mukhum...the inhabitants are Nepalese. Ladakh up north is in India. The places are such that Ladakh and Tibet are located side by side. Further down Kalimpong and Tibet share a border. The middle region between Tibet and India is occupied by the small area of Nepal. Tibet is a large country. It extends far away from the lowlands right up to Mount Kailash. It is a large territory. Though it is a large territory, the population is sparse. In the lowlands India and Tibet share a border and

higher up in Ladakh and Mount Kailash they share a border. In the middle is a small area occupied by Nepal. So it was less restricted.

Q: *Popo-la*, did everybody in your family survive that long journey? Were there other people on the journey from the village, I mean from the group you were with, did everybody survive, get into Mustang?

#50N: None of the people died along the way until we reached Mustang and nor did [we] face much hardship. But after reaching Mustang, the one I spoke about earlier called Namru Garpon passed away in Mustang. After Namru Garpon passed away in Mustang, our people had different views. Some went to India; some stayed back in Nepal and some went to stay in Dolpa.

Though there were 20 families [we] became separated. The reason for the separation was the death of one person. After Namru Garpon passed away everybody got scattered. Otherwise, there used to be many people; people of Kham origin, nomads, Bumpa, Bawa, there were many in Mustang, Dolpa and Nyeshang. Since it was easy to enter, everybody was in Nepal.

Q: How long did you stay in Mustang?

00:53:08

#50N: A little over three years.

Q: How did you make a living for your big family?

#50N: When [we] first arrived in Mustang there were a fair number of animals and belongings. [We] sold some of the animals and consumed some. Nomads believe in earning merit but kill animals without hesitation. [Laughs] So [the animals] were gradually killed, consumed and sold. That was how one survived for a year or two. Then when the animal stock came to an end, when the animal stock came to an end, [we] started selling the silver articles to the tribal people. Then one engaged in working in the fields. That was how [we] survived. Then an airport was being constructed at Zong Sarpa where some people went to work.

Q: Jomsom?

#50N: Yes, at Jomsom. In that way one did everything to survive. While in Tibet I worked in the fields and knew the work well. So [I] worked in the fields in Mustang. Working in fields earned good income. The practice in Mustang was to provide food and also wages.

Q: You went back to your old farming days of your childhood.

00:55:28

#50N: Yes, [I] went back to being a farmer for a year or two. [I] have done many things in my life. In those days there was not a single house here [moves hand around] at Tashi Palkhiel, not a single house existed. Not one single house existed and we started

constructing houses. [I] engaged in building houses, carrying things for foreigners and such. There is not a single thing [I] have not done [laughs] except going to school to study. That is it.

Q: What was the name of that settlement that you started? Here, right here? We're talking about this settlement. So when you came there was nothing here?

#50N: There were a few people here that lived like the locals in straw huts that you stooped to enter. There were no buildings, not even one. We have been here for 55 years and year by year there is construction. Such grand monasteries like this [gestures behind at monastery] are built and there are houses here, some of which are good and some poor. Earlier [we] lived in huts called *bakar* by the locals. These days, houses become better and better year by year. There are good houses. There are good houses now.

Q: *Popo-la*, so you have seen many things in your life come and go, come and go. Farming, nomad...no more nomad, now you're a porter. Many changes.

00:58:48

#50N: [I] have done many things. Earlier when [I] was 50-60, until 60, [I] carried things for foreigners going up Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and Machapuchare—climbed all these [mountains] carrying things for foreigners. At that time [I] was young and sturdy, between the ages of 50 and 60. [I] was healthy until age 70. One becomes old after touching 70 and then [I] spend time selling souvenirs. There is no other job one can do. Otherwise, earlier [I] used to carry things for foreigners who paid well.

Q: Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and where else?

#50N: Jomsom and places around Pokhara. There were no vehicles then and airplanes were rare. Once in a while a plane flew from Jomsom and this was on rare occasions.

Q: Are you selling souvenirs now?

01:00:34

#50N: Yes, I have spread a small amount of goods on the ground.

Q: We'll come and see your shop.

#50N: [Speaks in English] Okay, okay. [Laughs]

Q: *Popo-la*, are you saying that you were a porter for mountain climbers that went to Annapurna? You were a porter, not a Sherpa.

#50N: [Speaks in English] Sherpa...translator is Sherpa. Me only porter, no English. Thirty-five kilos a porter [carries]. Thirty-five kilos, and some...[speaks in Tibetan] you had to carry your food and blankets in addition to that. Thirty-five kilos is what one carries regularly. That is the standard limit. At that time there were no planes and no vehicles and the foreigners had to walk.

Q: Because we're talking about...if you were 50 or 60...let's get this straight. So you, okay 1935. No, I'm sorry...you were born in 1930 and so you were around 50 and you were still working as a...the year was...in the 1980s. In the 1980s that's 35 years ago you were carrying... a porter. Amazing.

01:02:34

#50N: That is right. Initially, we constructed the houses and when that was done and everything settled, people were free to do anything. Earlier, when the settlement was being built [we] could not go anywhere nor do something else. The Swiss Aid gave a small wage and one had to work right here. One could not go elsewhere. The Swiss Aid provided a small wage. There was the Swiss Aid then.

Q: So let me...just in conclusion...because you had so much big experience, wide range, what were your favorite jobs, being a farmer, a nomad, a porter or a builder? Which...is there one that you really enjoyed more, the most?

#50N: That is in the mind. If the mind is happy...as a young man one can do any job. Once a person ages, one cannot do any work, which is why I do some small business to survive. Other than that, in order to say doing this job gives happiness, one does not have satisfaction of the mind. The mind is always filled with desire.

Q: *Popo-la*, what do you think accounts for your very happy, good attitude about whatever happens? You respond with acceptance. What do you think accounts for that in your beliefs and in your understanding?

01:05:55

#50N: My jobs changed according to age. The changes took place due to age and not because of planning like saying "I will not do this" or "I will do this." That is not me. Presently, according to the rule of this settlement, we chant *mani* 'the mantra of Avalokiteshvara' in the hall for five days in a month. That is the best thing. Otherwise, in a person's life there is always something short or amiss. That is how it goes. The best thing is chanting *mani* for five whole days a month. That is the best thing. Other than that if one has wealth, one will want still more. If one has a child, there are more and more children and one keeps worrying about all of them. A person has nothing but worry and suffering. It is like that.

Q: Does the prayer give you a sense of wellbeing and peace?

#50N: The *mani* is first accumulated, recorded and sent to Dharamsala every month.

Q: So it feels good to do this.

01:08:57

#50N: His Holiness the Dalai Lama has advised that the refugees accumulate 10 billion *mani* in a year. Therefore, though one is not able to chant billions, each individual must

make an offering. His Holiness has advised, “Those of you in exile must not fail to chant 10 billion *mani* in a year.”

Q: By *mani*, do you mean *Om mani padme hung*?

#50N: [Speaks in English] Yes, yes. Six letters.

Q: And it means long life and...?

#50N: Yes. We pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has a long life and for resolving the issue about Tibet. [We] chant for these two reasons.

Q: Maybe as an ending *popo-la*, could you say one *mani* prayer for us?

01:10:40

#50N: [Removes rosary from neck] When accumulating *mani*, here [in this rosary] are 108 [beads]. One keeps counting [on the beads] and for every hundred [use the hundred marker on the rosary] and then accumulate a thousand and then ten thousand. After accumulating the required number, one gives the figure to the group leader every month.

[Chants several times and counts on rosary]

Om mani padme hung

The rosary is called Boddhichitta.

Q: *Popo-la*, you’ve given us a very, very wonderful story.

#50N: Okay.

Q: I hope that you will say very many *manis* for all the people of Tibet and all the people that are your friends who came today to interview you.

#50N: Okay.

01:12:40

The prayer is for the benefit of all the sentient beings in the world. [I] do say this prayer.

Q: So we are included?

#50N: Yes, of course. When all the sentient beings of the world are mentioned, even the insects are included.

Q: Thank you very, very much for sharing your story.

#50N: Okay. Thank you for through the government you have...America is very beneficial. [I] receive an old age pension since the age of 72 until now from an American. A

person belonging to an American organization that I know provided [me] with 300 rupees a month from the age of 72 to 82.

Q: Monthly?

#50N: Yes.

Q: Nepalese currency?

01:13:59

#50N: Yes, Nepalese currency. From last year [I] receive 800 rupees a month. This is being sent by a man from America and he must be part of an organization. [He] is a very old man.

Q: I'm happy. Thank you. I'm glad that's happening.

#50N: Thank you. [I] do not have anything to add. America is beneficial to the community, to the aged and the children. The American government has extended great help. [I] would like to thank all the people of America.

Q: We're very happy.

#50N: [Joins palms] Thank you.

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

01:16:00

#50N: It may pierce their [Chinese] hearts. When I speak about this they may also suffer. However, I will not face any harm for I have arrived in Nepal and India. So except for [me] to consider the welfare of this country, they cannot do anything [to me]. Should I be living in Tibet or go to Tibet, they may get angry at what I have said.

Q: Thank you for sharing your story with us.

#50N: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW