

# **Tibet Oral History Project**

**Interview #6M – Tashi Lhamo (alias)  
April 5, 2010**

The Tibet Oral History Project serves as a repository for the memories, opinions and ideas of elderly Tibetan refugees. The oral history process records the words spoken by interviewees in response to questions from an interviewer. The interviewees' statements should not be considered verified or complete accounts of events and the Tibet Oral History Project expressly disclaims any liability for the inaccuracy of any information provided by the interviewees. The interviewees' statements do not necessarily represent the views of the Tibet Oral History Project or any of its officers, contractors or volunteers.

This translation and transcript is provided for individual research purposes only. For all other uses, including publication, reproduction and quotation beyond fair use, permission must be obtained in writing from: Tibet Oral History Project, P.O. Box 6464, Moraga, CA 94570-6464, United States.

Copyright © 2012 Tibet Oral History Project.



[Anonymity Requested]

# TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #6M
2. Interviewee: Tashi Lhamo (alias)
3. Age: 70
4. Date of Birth: 1940
5. Sex: Female
6. Birthplace:
7. Province: Dhotoe (Kham)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1997
9. Date of Interview: April 5, 2010
10. Place of Interview: Home for the Aged, Doeguling Settlement, Mundgod, Karwar District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 2 hr 01 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Pema Tashi
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

### **Biographical Information:**

Tashi Lhamo was the middle child among her eight siblings. Her family lived in a three-storied house which was used for various purposes, such as living quarters, storage for the grains and as an animal shed. The family's occupation was farming as well as rearing animals. Tashi Lhamo describes the process of milking, making butter and their unique storage methods.

Tashi Lhamo recalls the difficult life she led first under the Tibetan system of paying taxes to the wealthy families and then under the Chinese commune system. She witnessed the starvation that began in Tibet in 1960-61 with the implementation of the commune system—when the majority of food the villagers grew was taken away from them by the Chinese. She describes many instances of death due to starvation, imprisonment and *thamzing* 'struggle session.'

She spent 37 years under Chinese rule and experienced the difference in their attitude when they first appeared, giving away *dhayen* 'Chinese silver coins' in her village and the gradual suppression leading to capture, imprisonment, *thamzing* and death of the wealthy and influential people. She narrates her family's suffering under Chinese rule and her decision to finally leave Tibet in order to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama and be near her sons already living in exile.

### **Topics Discussed:**

Childhood memories, farm life, herding, first appearance of Chinese, invasion by Chinese army, life under Chinese rule, forced labor, oppression under Chinese, brutality/torture, *thamzing*, commune system, life as a refugee in India.

# TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

## Interview #6M

**Interviewee: Tashi Lhamo [alias]**

**Age: 70, Sex: Female**

**Interviewer: Marcella Adamski**

**Interview Date: April 5, 2010**

Question: Please tell us your name.

00:00:18

**Interviewee #6M: My name is Tashi Lhamo.**

Q: His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked us to record your experience 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?

**#6M: Yes.**

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

00:01:35

**#6M: [Nods]**

Q: During this interview if you wish to take a break or stop at anytime, please let me know.

**#6M: Okay.**

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

00:02:06

**#6M: Okay.**

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

**#6M: No.**

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

00:02:37

**#6M: Okay.**

Q: *Ama-la* ‘respectful term for mother,’ before we begin, could you please tell me what subjects, what general stories you want to be sure that we cover in your interview?

**#6M: What do I say? What else apart from the miseries caused by the Chinese? My memory is not so good now. [Cell phone of interviewee rings.]**

Q: *Ama-la*, what do you want to make sure that we talk about today in your interview?

00:03:45

**#6M: I must talk about when I was young and the miseries caused by the Chinese since I was 16 years old. Is that okay?**

Q: Let us begin by just understanding where you were born and how many people were in your family?

**#6M: The name of the place I was born is Ganze.**

Q: How many members were there in the family?

**#6M: Should I tell you about the sibling who lives at home?**

Q: Your parents and who else? We are talking about when you were a child.

00:04:34

**#6M: I see, when I was a child, there were many [in the family]. My two maternal uncles, my sibling, who returned to Tibet from here...**

Q: When you were a child and lived at home with your parents, how many siblings were there? How many children were there?

**#6M: My mother had eight children. Both my parents were there.**

Q: In that line up of eight, what age were you? The youngest? The oldest?

00:05:17

**#6M: I was in the middle. There were three older to me and four younger to me.**

Q: When you think of your childhood, what kind of memories do you have of being a little girl?

**#6M: [Laughs] I used to herd the cattle. When I was young, I used to graze the animals and did a lot of work. We had to climb a ladder to reach the upper floors. I had to milk the animals. We did not have many hands in the family, as my older sister was given away in marriage and the two brothers became monks at a very young age. There were not many hands at home and I had to do a lot of work. I related this to my brother, who lives here [in India]. When I lay at night, I used to wonder how I could haul the milk pail up the ladder. Even as I lay down I used to worry about it. I had to do a lot of work at that time.**

Q: Did you have to go to milk the animals?

00:06:56

**#6M: The animals were tethered on the ground floor. They had to be milked in the morning and evening. There were many duties to be carried out for the leaders, which we must attend to and my mother had many children.**

Q: Tell us about the kind of work that you did as a little girl. What kind?

**#6M: It was mostly field work. I worked in the fields. In the morning I prepared bread and churned the milk. Those were my work in the morning.**

Q: Can you give us a little description about how you made the bread?

00:08:41

**#6M: We did not have a good utensil to knead the dough in. It was a round wooden container. We put the wheat flour in it, added a little bit of *bitho* 'baking agent' and made it into dough. The dough was then flattened into round shapes. As a young child, at times I could not make a perfect round shape and I would shape it using a knife. I did a lot of work. I could not stay idle.**

Q: And churning the butter, what was the process for making it?

**#6M: The skin of an old goat is thick. The hair on it is shaved carefully like we do with our hair. The milk is poured into it through the neck part and it is shaken. Some people churn milk in a *dhongmo* 'a narrow wooden barrel' like we do tea here.**

Q: How long does it take to churn the milk into butter doing it this way?

00:10:58

**#6M: If it [the milk] has not turned very cold, it does not take long. If it is extremely cold, butter does not form easily and one keeps peeping inside to check. A piece of cloth is placed [on the lap] and the goatskin upon it and then it is shaken like this [shows motion with goatskin on lap].**

Q: What animals gave you this milk?

**#6M: The *dzomo* 'female animal bred from a yak and a cow' and cows. The *dri* 'female yaks' stayed on the mountains with the nomads, so those people living in the plains do not have [*dri* milk].**

Q: And was this milk that you milked in the morning or the day before?

00:12:01

**#6M: That was the milk milked the evening before. Milk from the previous day was churned the next day and the milk milked this day was heated and churned the following day. That was how it was done.**

Q: The butter that you make, how many days would that butter last or do you have to make butter everyday?

**#6M: We churned everyday and the surplus [butter] was stored to be used during winter, when there was no milk.**

Q: You did not have milk in winter?

00:12:48

**#6M: Most animals did not give milk in winter; perhaps a little quantity in the evening but there was not enough to churn, as it was used for preparing tea. So during winter, we used the butter, which was stored from summer.**

Q: What happens with that butter that you make everyday? What do you do with it?

**#6M: We make the butter into big lumps and stack them one on top of the other.**

Q: Where are they kept?

00:13:33

**#6M: They are frozen and kept in a cupboard in a room. Once the collection becomes large in number, they are beaten with a wooden club to form one huge lump. It is then packed in a skin.**

Q: You did not do the packing in skin everyday?

**#6M: No, they are frozen and stored. Later they are packed. The weather is very cold in my region and so they can be stored.**

Q: What do you use the butter for after you do that?

00:14:58

**#6M: That was used during the winter. At that time, the animals gave very little quantity of milk, which was just about sufficient for tea. There was not enough milk left to churn. The butter was used during *pooja* 'rituals of worship' sessions and others during winter.**

Q: What other chores did you have...you made the bread and churned the butter? What other chores did you do as a child?

**#6M: There were other chores like dusting, sweeping, cleaning animal dung and taking the cattle to the hills. I cleaned the scattered grass and swept the dung from the animal shed.**

Q: What kind of house did you live in? Can you tell me a little bit about it?

00:16:41

**#6M: How do I explain the house? It is difficult to understand it here. It was very large. There were three floors and the uppermost was used to store the harvest. We lived on the**

**middle floor. It also had storage for the *tsampa* 'flour made from roasted barley' and wheat flour. There were separate rooms and verandahs and all the facilities to hold prayers. Certain houses in Tibet could house 50 to 100 monks to recite prayers for the family. There were large verandahs. Unlike here, they were built of wood. The houses in my village were like that. Behind the house were sheds to store hay.**

Q: What about the ground floor?

**#6M: The many animals were tethered on the ground floor. There were horses, cows, oxen, *dzomo* and *dzo* 'animal bred from a yak and a cow.' In the olden days, there used to be muleteers [who rented rooms] in the large houses, but the Chinese changed all that during my lifetime.**

[Microphone is adjusted]

Q: Could you please describe the house you lived in, in Tibet?

00:18:17

**#6M: The house was like I said.**

Q: There were three floors and the uppermost floor was...?

**#6M: The uppermost floor was the storage for the harvest. The grains were put in there when it rained. The middle floor was for us to live in. There were separate rooms with doors, which were all made of wood. The floor was made of wooden planks.**

Q: This sounds like a very large house. Was it typical of the houses in your village or was it exceptionally large?

00:19:36

**#6M: It was very large. There was space even for the mules. The house was large. All around it were hay stacks. There were some houses, which were bigger than ours. Some were very large. Except for the very poor, all the houses were three storied structures because storage space was required for the harvest. There were no single storied houses.**

Q: How many houses were in your village?

**#6M: There were not many houses in my village. It used to be said that there were 33 houses, but some moved away to bigger towns and now there are no longer 33 houses. I do not know the exact figure.**

Q: In addition to all the work you did as a little girl, what were some of the happy memories of your childhood?

00:21:24

**#6M: If you ask me to tell you, I did not have happy times because the Chinese started tormenting us since the time I was 17 years old. I have no memories of feeling extremely**

**happy except when I went to the monastery, wearing fine clothes, thanks to a beneficial uncle. We went to the monastery to listen to teachings.**

**I never had the chance to live a happy existence once the Chinese started tormenting us. One should be happy when one is young. Normally when one is around 17 years old, that is the time to be elated, but the Chinese caused us suffering and I have not been happy.**

Q: It sounds like it is important that we talk about that experience. Please tell us when did the Chinese first appear to your village?

**#6M: The very first time? They'd first appeared in our village when I was just a child. I was a very small child when they came. I had to be held by my hand when they arrived. It seemed like the treasury of the Chinese government was opened. Bags of silver dropped down from the airplanes. I now realize that those white things were the umbrellas [parachutes]. The sky was dotted with them when they were dropped from the airplanes. I was a child and we went to watch it.**

Q: Did they come down in parachutes?

00:23:30

**#6M: Those things were dropped from the airplanes. They were the big silver coins called *dhayen*. I was very young when they were dropped. They came from the treasury of the Chinese government.**

Q: And you were about five or six years old?

**#6M: I was not bigger than a small child. I was just a small child when I went to watch it, but we were not allowed to come close to see the airplanes landing. I saw it from afar.**

Q: Did the airplanes land?

00:24:33

**#6M: The airplanes landed and they also dropped silver bags. Many airplanes landed.**

Q: In your village?

**#6M: Yes. A huge ground was built for the airplanes to land. Many landed.**

Q: What is the next thing you remember that happened regarding the Chinese coming into Kham?

00:25:10

**#6M: Then as I grew older, they built many houses. Many a times, I have gone to work for the Chinese.**

Q: Did the Chinese construct houses in your village?

**#6M: The region of Ganze was teeming with houses belonging to the Chinese. There were hardly any Tibetan houses left. It was full of Chinese houses.**

Q: Was that when you were a child?

00:25:38

**#6M: I was a bit older as I could hire myself to work. Perhaps I was about 11 or 12. I used to stand on a stone to make myself look taller; otherwise I would not be hired. I made myself look big.**

Q: Did you go to work for the Chinese?

**#6M: Yes, my father took me with him. We were paid in white silver coins. That was the time when we could earn a lot.**

Q: Did it [standing on a stone to look taller] work? Did they hire you?

00:26:40

**#6M: Yes, I did. I got a lot of work.**

Q: What kind of work were you doing for them?

**#6M: First the airport was to be constructed. We had to fill the ground with soil and stones.**

Q: You mean you laid stones on the earth?

00:27:06

**#6M: We had to fill the ditches formed by running water with soil and stones. Later many buildings were constructed, where I used to carry stones and bricks.**

Q: How was the pay?

**#6M: I wonder how much it was, but they paid us in white silver coins. The payment was made monthly and we received quite a lot. I used to put the silver coins in a pouch hanging by my neck and slept with it. They give us white silver coins.**

Q: It was unusual for people to make that much money. Is that correct?

00:28:29

**#6M: Yes, there were no other sources for the people to receive such money.**

Q: How old were you when you were doing this and why did you think the Chinese were coming to your area?

**#6M: I was not very old when I worked for the Chinese. I think I was not more than 11 or 12 years old then.**

Q: Why did you think the Chinese were coming to your area?

00:29:10

**#6M: My mother used to say...[not discernible]. I do not know the reason. I just enjoyed myself going to see the Chinese army camp and they used to give us lots of rice.**

Q: Who?

**#6M: The Chinese soldiers. At that time they were very gentle and good. My mother used to say...[not discernible]. And then they gradually became worse. At first they were very gentle and good.**

Q: Give us some examples of how gradually they treated you differently?

00:30:33

**#6M: After a lapse of time they appointed leaders and started calling us for meetings and gradually turned stricter. Earlier they were calm and banned labor tax, giving us hope of happy times. There were many taxes we were obliged to carry out for the leaders. We had to work in the fields of the leaders; ploughing and fencing and providing other forms of taxes to the leaders of the olden days. We had to give the leaders, the leaders of yore even eggs as tax.**

Q: How did the Chinese treat you worse? After the Chinese arrived, they held many meetings and appointed the poor as leaders. Is that correct?

**#6M: That was much later. By then, it had been many years since they appeared in our village. We lived in proximity to the Chinese.**

Q: You spoke about paying taxes to the leaders. Did that happen a long time ago, before the arrival of the Chinese?

00:31:37

**#6M: That was a long time ago before the arrival of the Chinese. We used to have to pay a lot of taxes even when the Chinese arrived. We were obliged to pay taxes until it was stopped by the Chinese.**

Q: To whom did you pay the taxes after the Chinese arrived?

**#6M: Even after the Chinese arrived, we paid taxes to Khusartsang and Mazitsang [names of influential families]. We were obliged to pay a lot of taxes. We had to make contributions as well as work in their fields. Only when the leadership was discontinued, did it mean that tax payment became null and void. Until then, we were obliged to pay taxes.**

Q: To whom did you pay the taxes?

00:32:10

**#6M: The leaders.**

Q: The Chinese leaders?

**#6M: To our leaders.**

Q: The poor people who were appointed leaders?

00:32:17

**#6M: No, no, the leaders who were in authority since long time ago; like the Khusatsang, Mazitsang and Shivatsang [prominent families]. We were obliged to pay to them. Then the Chinese took away their powers and appointed poor people as leaders. The Chinese then abolished the tax payment.**

Q: Who were the leaders that you had to pay taxes to?

**#6M: If we take the example of Mundgod Settlement, everybody must pay their taxes to the Settlement office. Likewise, we paid to the Khusartsang. The village on the other side of the large river paid theirs to Mazitsang and Shivatsang. Taxes were paid separately to Khusartsang and Mazitsang.**

Q: Were these families nobles of the land or wealthy people or did they represent the government?

00:34:19

**#6M: I do not know who they were but they were superior people. The Shivatsang was a superior family and the people of Nyimo Gowothi served them. They were a wealthy family.**

Q: Did they represent the Tibetan government?

**#6M: I do not know how it was. They were leaders. It was like the whole of this settlement had to serve the Khusartsang family. Nyimo Gowothi villagers served the Mazitsang family.**

Q: Were the taxes very hard to manage or were they reasonable taxes?

00:35:31

**#6M: The taxes were very difficult to pay. If one was not able to remit their share, he was lashed until blood ran out of him. In the olden days, it was extremely bad. It used to be said that the Chinese' awful treatment was a result of the past deeds and I think that is true.**

**Gradually when the Chinese tightened their grip, the Shivatsang family fled to India. They still live in [the Tibetan Settlement in] Bylakuppe. Some of them live abroad. I heard that the Khusartsang lady passed away. Her husband was from central Tibet. Taking along his children, he surrendered to the Chinese. They live in China now.**

Q: Do you know what happened to the family that surrendered?

**#6M: My uncle worked for the Khusartsang family. Their elder daughter was my age. She had five children. After the children were born, she passed away.**

Q: Who?

00:38:10

**#6M: The daughter of the Khusartsang family. She died after her five children were born. After she passed away and he was subjected to suffering, her husband who hailed from central Tibet, surrendered to the Chinese. Of course, the husband must be dead by now. I saw the children later when they visited our village and they were all officials. They surrendered to the Chinese and now they are earning a salary.**

Q: They surrendered but they were not punished; they became allies of the Chinese?

**#6M: The Chinese treated them well because they surrendered to them. They gave up their assets and lands and surrendered to the Chinese and went away to China.**

Q: To go back to the wealthy families, what form did you pay the taxes in—was it material or money?

00:40:09

**#6M: We had to go and work for them. We worked in their fields: ploughing, harvesting and carrying out all other types of work. Besides that, we gathered firewood and animal dung for their fuel, and fenced the fields. They were wealthy people and we transported their things on our horses and *dzo*. When I was young, our animals were required to transport their things. My father used to go.**

Q: What did the people get in return from these families? If you paid taxes, was there any protection or any benefit you got from paying these taxes?

**#6M: There was never any benefit at all. Except for giving us work, there was not an iota of benefit. One would be happy at the end of the day if he was not beaten. One would say, "Today I did not get any beatings." It looks like the Tibetan leaders of yore were extremely bad. True that under the Chinese, families were torn asunder but that was not so bad. The elders used to say that what we were undergoing is the result of those actions.**

Q: Were these Tibetan leaders representatives of the Tibetan government or were they just individual citizens?

00:43:12

**#6M: I think they were individual people. If they were appointed by the government, they did not do anything beneficial for the government. They were individual wealthy families.**

Q: Did your family know anything about Lhasa and His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Lhasa at that time?

**#6M: In the old days, monks used to travel to Lhasa for admission into the three great monasteries. Two of my maternal uncles went there. Later my brother who served the Zigya Rinpoche left [for Lhasa]. He [brother] passed away in Hunsur [Tibetan Settlement in Karnataka, India].**

Q: After the Chinese gave you jobs and payment, did anything begin to change in the relationship between your village and the Chinese?

**#6M: After the passage of time, the Chinese started the commune system. I was quite young then. I was only about 17 when Tibet was occupied. Then when the commune system began, everyone had to work together. The harvested grains were kept separately and we were allotted a small quantity of it. Then they became more and more strict. And then we hardly had enough to eat.**

Q: About how old were you then, *ama-la*?

00:46:06

**#6M: The commune system was started when Tibet was occupied. Though I cannot remember, I was told that I was 17 years old then. A lama who was of the same age as me; we share the same birth sign, used to say that I was 17 when Tibet was occupied.**

Q: Who [was of the same age as you]?

**#6M: The lama. There was a lama who told me that he was 17 when Tibet was occupied.**

Q: Before they started the commune system, had there been enough to eat for all the families?

00:46:59

**#6M: We had enough to eat then. If the very poor did not have enough, they would work for others and get paid in the form of either grains or *tsampa*, whichever they wanted. These were measured in measuring devices called *dey* and *bo* and given to them.**

Q: What did the villagers think when they instituted this commune system? What did the people think?

**#6M: When I was young, I did not feel bad, instead I felt happy to be working together. One had to work very hard when working for your own self. I did not know anything then. I used to feel very happy to be working together with others in the commune. We toiled side by side, singing and feeling extremely happy. My mother remarked, "This is nothing to be happy about. It is a portent of bad things to happen, when we shall have nothing to eat." Then we were not given enough to eat.**

Q: When you harvested the grain, they made everybody take the grain to the same place?

**#6M: [The harvested crop] was piled in one place. They were evenly laid on the particular ground and people must thrash them with the *eko* because at that time there were no**

**machines of any sort. Using the flat *eko*, [gestures beating with right hand] we thrashed the whole day.**

Q: What did you do?

00:49:39

**#6M: There were barley, wheat and peas, which must be thrashed by the *eko*. Half [the people] stood facing one side and the other half faced them and started thrashing with the *eko*. We had to work that way.**

Q: Then?

**#6M: Initially the division [of grains] was equal, but later it depended on the scores. The best thrashers, who were the first rank holders, were awarded ten points. Next ones received eight points. Then there were five and a half points, four points, five points or any other points depending on the work performance.**

Q: You mean points were awarded based on the work performance?

00:50:25

**#6M: Yes, points were awarded.**

Q: And the allotment [of grains] was carried out depending on the points?

**#6M: After the good quality grains were collected, the left over inferior grain was divided among the people, which were carried out based on the points.**

Q: Did they take away half of it [the harvest]?

00:50:41

**#6M: Not just half, they took away most of it. We were given very little. Our area was very large and crops grew in abundance.**

Q: How did the marking system work? How did you get a high mark or a little mark?

**#6M: The young ones, who were able to work well, would be awarded ten marks. Those who could not work too hard were given fewer marks. Older people that could not work much received four, five or six points. There were people of different ranges.**

Q: What did the people think that the majority of their harvest went to China? What did the farmers think?

00:52:29

**#6M: They took away most of it. I wonder what they thought; just that what we have labored for is taken away. They did not give us sufficient [grains]. It was not enough for us. Then we had to approach and request them [the Chinese] to sell us some. They did, but we**

**had to earn enough money to buy [grains]. So we went up the mountains to look for what we could gather like worms [caterpillar fungus].**

Q: You gathered them from the mountains to eat?

**#6M: No, we gathered them to sell. They were medicinal plants. They were used for preparing medicines. There were many different varieties, which we could gather and sell them to the Chinese. Then we requested them to sell us grains. Otherwise, families with many children hardly had anything [to eat] because they cannot score points. Those without points had nothing to eat. Only those who earned points could eat.**

Q: What kinds of feelings did the people have about this kind of treatment?

00:54:0

**#6M: I wonder what they felt. I used to feel “What can I do?”, but I do not know what the others felt.**

Q: What happen next?

**#6M: Then it was '61 or '62. Then starvation began when they [the Chinese] did not give us the allotment. It seems the Chinese had a huge debt somewhere. Not just us but even those who were receiving a salary were also affected. We were given only eight *so*.**

Q: What is eight *so*?

00:55:06

**#6M: Ten *so* is equal to half a kilogram here. That was the portion.**

Q: Was it half a kilogram for one person?

**#6M: It was less than half a kilogram.**

Q: Per day?

00:55:19

**#6M: Yes, per day and then many died of starvation. Many, many died. Cooking was also conducted under commune system, just like we do here in the Home for the Aged. Each one received two *so* in the morning, lunch was better with four *so* and another two *so* for the evening. Besides it, we only had water.**

**It [the food] was watery and just about enough to keep away starvation. They took away the rest. The results of our labor were taken away by them. Our region was vast and they took away all the grains that grew there. I was too young to understand much but my grandmother used to say that half the people died of starvation.**

Q: Did your grandmother die?

**#6M: No, she did not. People were segregate into different groups like land owners, middle class farmers and poor farmers. We were then expelled from the commune system. A small plot of land was allotted to us, which we farmed and this kept us alive.**

Q: Why were you expelled?

00:56:56

**#6M: We were grouped in the higher class and so were not allowed to stay with the commune and were expelled.**

Q: So you were grouped among the wealthy class?

**#6M: Yes, we were expelled. The fertile lands were set apart for the commune, which consisted of the poor. Though we were expelled; those of us enjoyed a better life and did not die. Whether it was peas or whatever we reaped, we could eat them after giving the necessary portion to them [the Chinese]. No one from the land owners' group died of starvation. The poor did not have any stock in their house and many died.**

Q: *Ama-la*, you said that a few families were expelled and your family was among them. Why was your family expelled from the commune?

00:58:29

**#6M: They [the Chinese] said that the influential families could not be a part of it [the commune]. Those in it were the poor ones. We were told to follow socialism, which was said to be good and I believed that to be true. The leader deceived us by saying that if we followed socialism, we would get to eat Chinese bread and milk. *Gyako* 'Chinese bread' was considered tasty and we were told that those who followed it [socialism] would get *gyako* and milk. [Laughs] I believed it and thought I would be given the delicious Chinese bread and milk!**

Q: Was your family considered among the wealthy?

**#6M: Our family was not the wealthiest, but was grouped in the next class. In the olden days, my family was the richest in the village. We owned many horses and mules. The muleteers traveled to Dhartsedho and the Chinese stopped them there. It used to be said that we owned 25 horses and mules, though I cannot remember much. They and the traders were not allowed to come back and perhaps they were killed. After we suffered this loss, we could not recover to our earlier status. We were not very rich during my time.**

Q: It takes a long time for people to starve when there is little food. Did the starvation in the village take place over many years or just in one season?

01:00:54

**#6M: The starvation occurred over two years in '61 and '62. When I was young, I heard people say that it happened in '61 and '62. Earlier people used to eat a lot and when the harvest had to be given away, there was very little to eat. *Aloo* crops were grown in the**

**fields and people ate the leaves which led to their stomach bloating to this size. I saw such a child with a huge stomach lying down. His stomach was very big.**

Q: By *aloo*, you mean potato?

**#6M: Yes, potatoes. They ate the leaves of the potato plants.**

Q: Was there no potato bulbs?

01:01:47

**#6M: The bulbs had not yet formed. People lay among the [potato] crops and ate the leaves. A neighbor said to me, "After eating the leaves for long, I felt as if I could not carry my stomach. But it saved me from dying."**

Q: Who told you that?

**#6M: A boy who was my neighbor said that. He continued to eat the leaves and his stomach became huge but it prevented him from dying of starvation. Those who were able, went up the mountains to look for stuff to eat. People ate varieties of plants that grew on the mountains.**

Q: What did you find to eat on the mountains?

01:02:38

**#6M: There was *rongbu*, which grew on the mountains. It is a red grain, which resembled the ear of [rice] paddy. It is reddish in color. It grew aplenty and we could gather bagfuls of it. We stocked the bags in the house. We boiled it and added salt. This has been a life saver, preventing people from dying. *Rongbu* has been very beneficial to us.**

Q: Were the people becoming angry at the Chinese for withholding their food and their families were starving? Was there much opposition to this treatment?

**#6M: Nobody opposed. Nobody dared. There were none who were capable, as all the influential people were already in prison. The poor did not have any awareness and were afraid even when they [the Chinese] spoke loudly! We were made to attend meetings each and everyday. To suppress the people, meetings were held everyday. During the meetings, all the land owner families sat on one side and the poor on the other and this went on until midnight.**

**There was so much to do that we had no free time at all. There were many pigs in Tibet, so we took care of the pigs and gathered manure. We labored non-stop and nobody was allowed to roam about. It came to such a pass that there were no people walking on the roads at one point. According to the rules, people were not allowed to walk about.**

Q: Were there people arrested? Who was arrested and why were they arrested?

01:06:43

**#6M: At the time Tibet was occupied, my father and the likes of him were arrested. Most of them were arrested at that time. The more influential men were already arrested by the Chinese then. Some of them were put in jail.**

Q: Your father was arrested and taken away?

**#6M: He was taken away. The prisoners died of starvation in the jails. Most of them were killed.**

Q: Why was your father arrested?

01:07:28

**#6M: Eight people, including my father were captured on the flimsy ground that they had reared horses. They were arrested without any reason. Eight people were arrested in one day.**

Q: Was he called somewhere and captured?

**#6M: They [the Chinese] came home and arrested him. They killed all the dogs and came upstairs, shining their flashlights. Unlike the policemen here [in India], the Chinese policemen are very fearful. They are dressed in blue with a red *meeza*, a cap, and armed with guns. They give you the shivers. That's how they are.**

**My father was arrested then. I had been sick for sometime and when my father was captured, I was scared as well as sad. I followed them and when we reached the top of the ladder, my younger brother who was very small at that time, hurled stones and cried, "Do not take my father." He was very small and did not know much.**

**I fainted at the top of the ladder. I was the eldest of the three siblings at home. My other brother was in the monastery. After I regained my consciousness, I found that our dogs were killed and everything was over. Since then, I developed heart problems. Even now if I hear a loud sound, I feel my heart palpitating. The doctor advised me to relax and minimize my thinking. If I do not take my medications, my heart starts palpitating.**

Q: What happened next to your father?

01:10:34

**#6M: He was imprisoned for about a year and tortured a lot. He was accused of owning three horses, which was not the truth. He was made to kneel down the whole day without any reason. Those jailed in the prisons were brought out.**

Q: What did the Chinese do to your father after he was jailed?

**#6M: Then the Chinese brought him out to be tortured and opposed.**

Q: Was your father brought back to the village?

01:11:13

**#6M: The torture and opposition sessions took place at the village or larger towns. It was not my father alone but there were many people who were jailed and they were led out. They were tortured so much by the Chinese that there was no way they could escape poor health.**

Q: Do you mean to say that your father and the other prisoners were led out to be subjected to what the Tibetans call *thamzing* 'struggle sessions'?

**#6M: Yes, that is right. They were subjected to *thamzing*.**

Q: Were they brought out to the bigger towns to be *thamzinged*?

01:11:50

**#6M: Seating arrangements were made and they [the prisoners] were made to kneel down with hands at the back.**

Q: Were there hands tied at the back?

**#6M: Yes, they were. Those who had their hands tied were the less serious ones while the more serious ones had their hands in iron handcuffs. Once the iron cuffs were on, it tightened around the skin every time one moved. My father did not have handcuffs but was made to kneel. Looking back, I suffer more these days than I did then. Though I was old enough, I did not undergo such misery. We used to hear stories about young men in their 20's escaping from the jails or being killed by the Chinese. I thought my father was very old then but looking back, he was not old at all. He was only 52 years old then. I thought he was old then, but now I realize he was quite young, though very unfortunate.**

**Though they [the prisoners] had never uttered a harsh word, the poor people and the servants were cruel because they had the support of the Chinese and would hit them [the prisoners] on the heads as they passed by.**

Q: Did you say that when they [the prisoners] were brought to the place of *thamzing*, the Chinese hit them on the heads?

01:14:12

**#6M: Our people [the Tibetans] were made to do it. Those that did the beating were our people. The poor people and the servants were praised by the Chinese for doing so and they were so delighted. They were the ones who carried out the beatings. Our servants and the poor were those that did the beatings and destroyed our temples.**

**The lands and properties of the wealthy were distributed to them and they were overjoyed because they had never been rich earlier. They appreciated the Chinese to a great extent. Once when there was talk about Tibet regaining independence, the servants and the poor said, "It is better not to get our independence. Once independence is achieved, we must pay taxes and undergo labor tax. We are better this way."**

Q: Was your father arrested before you were kicked out of the commune or afterwards and why?

**#6M: My father was already arrested when we were kicked out of the commune.**

Q: Was your father arrested at that time or earlier to that?

01:15:42

**#6M: He was arrested earlier to that.**

Q: Where was your father at that time [when you were ousted from the commune]?

**#6M: Before he was arrested?**

Q: Where was your father at the time? Was your father already taken away by the Chinese and imprisoned before your ouster from the commune?

01:16:01

**#6M: He was already taken away by the Chinese. I think my father had already died in prison by that time.**

Q: ...when you were with the commune?

**#6M: I think my father had already died in prison when we were expelled from the commune. Those were terrible times and I can hardly remember. He did not live long and died in prison.**

**He did not reveal to anyone but he was kicked and thrown about. My father was one who did not say much. I heard [later] that my father was beaten and accused, "They are a family of rebels. He is a rebel." My brother and my two uncles had fled to India along with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.**

Q: Who fled?

01:17:33

**#6M: My two maternal uncles and my younger brother. He was a monk then but is not anymore. At that time all the three were monks.**

Q: Was your father subjected to harsher *thamzing* because they had escaped?

**#6M: We were labeled as "those with hats" and a rebel family. We were in the worst group. I had a relative who was a senior lama. He was also grouped among "the hat ones." He was locked up in the monastery along with many other monks.**

Q: Was he your uncle?

01:18:25

**#6M: Yes, he was [my uncle] and a lama. He was arrested and taken away...[Speech not discernible]**

Q: What did "the hat" portray?

**#6M: "Those with hats" meant that they were not allowed to mingle with the people.**

Q: *Ama-la*, who was left in your family at this time? Two of your uncles and younger brother went to India, so who was left at home?

01:19:46

**#6M: There was the lama and my mother.**

Q: Was the lama one of your brothers?

**#6M: Yes, he was older to me. The one who lives in Hunsur is younger than me.**

Q: So there was your lama and mother and...

01:20:00

**#6M: Then there was one younger to me, a sister. The one who lives in our house at present is a younger brother. When our father was captured, he woke up naked and threw stones [at the Chinese], telling them not to take away his father.**

Q: You think your father died in prison. Was the family ever allowed to reclaim the body and give it a burial?

**#6M: At that time, there was not one person to perform prayers. It was not allowed. One could not hold a rosary in hand nor tie a sacred thread around the neck. We had to be very cautious even when we moved our lips lest they [the Chinese] came to know [that we were saying our prayers]. Nobody dare make any offerings of any sort [for the deities]. All the monks were locked up in the monastery. Some lay people were imprisoned in the building of the Khusartsang family. Those accused of more serious crimes, like land owners were jailed in another house.**

Q: Did you get back your father's body?

01:21:47

**#6M: My mother went to claim the body. Perhaps she took a companion with her. They took the body to a big river nearby and interred it there. There was no form of any rites. If there were no claimants, they [the Chinese] dug a shallow grave and buried it there.**

Q: You were able to take your father's body to the river.

**#6M: My mother, along with her companion was able to inter it into the river. It was a huge river in our region. It was interred there. All the bodies, which were claimed, were**

**buried in the river. There was no form of any rites or rituals performed. Those were miserable times. If such were the times now, I would become mad. At that time everyone bore it numbly and we did not turn crazy. I could not even feel overly anxious, though I was old enough.**

Q: Did you see any *thamzing* going on in the village?

01:24:03

**#6M: We had to attend the *thamzing* sessions every day. Whether it was your family members or others who were brought to be subjected to *thamzing*, we were forced to witness. It used to be called *kheku* by the Chinese, so when it was announced that everybody must attend *kheku* that morning, we had to get ready to go, irrespective of what position you held.**

Q: Who did you see? Did you know anyone who was *thamzinged*?

**#6M: Many people I knew were subjected to *thamzing*. I believe we owned guns and many bullets. When my father was asked to produce them, he'd replied that they were at home. However, my mother and brothers had wrapped them [the ammunitions] in a scarf and thrown them into the river. They had thrown the bullets we owned into the river. So, they could not be given to them [the Chinese].**

Q: Was the gun thrown into the river by your mother?

01:25:36

**#6M: No, not the gun, but the bullets for the gun.**

Q: Where was the gun?

**#6M: The gun was already surrendered to the Chinese. The gun was surrendered long ago. However, there was much ammunition at home, which they [the Chinese] knew and asked to be given. But, these were already thrown into the river and could not be surrendered. He received a lot of trouble on account of it.**

Q: Was your father beaten?

01:26:12

**#6M: Yes, he was. My mother was also taken away in the night, released and then taken away. My grandmother cried and revealed the truth about the ammunitions and gradually it tapered off.**

Q: Was your mother released?

**#6M: Yes, my mother was released. She told them [the Chinese] that she feared keeping them at home and threw them in the river.**

Q: Do you think that he died because of the beatings?

01:27:41

**#6M: He died of starvation. He was not given food and he died of hunger. All those imprisoned with him died of hunger. The toilets of the Chinese are not like the ones we have here. Human waste matter was collected in a pit which was used as manure for the plants. If they [the prisoners] found a piece of *alo* 'dough formed by a mixture of *tsampa* and water or tea' nearby, they were so hungry that they would eat it.**

Q: If they found an *alo* at the toilet?

**#6M: Even if the *alo* had fallen onto the waste matter, they picked it up and ate it. That was how much they suffered.**

Q: By your father?

01:28:22

**#6M: It was not just my father but it could be anyone. My father did not come out much. Some prisoners were made to work. Those able bodied were taken to carve out tunnels in the mountains.**

Q: Your father was arrested; your mother was arrested; were you ever arrested?

**#6M: My mother was arrested not once or twice. She would be taken away and then released, taken away and then released. My mother could hardly live with us. I was arrested later during the commune on the accusation that I had damaged the crops and was jailed for 22 days.**

Q: Why were you arrested by the Chinese?

01:29:39

**#6M: I was arrested on the charge that I had stomped on and damaged barley crops during weeding, which was totally false because I would certainly not break the crops. They spitefully deducted points for me.**

Q: Was that during the commune?

**#6M: Yes, that was when we worked in the commune. By keeping me away for 22 days, it was a great loss for me. I had lost so many points resulting in my losing that much share of my grains.**

Q: Can you tell us about that [jail] experience?

01:31:04

**#6M: They [the Chinese] interrogated me about being a rebel and about other plans, but I did not know anything. I had no knowledge about when and where I had rebelled. I had no memory. Then I was told that I had damaged the crops and it looked like that was the cause [of my arrest].**

Q: You did not know of that initially?

**#6M: Initially I did not know. Then I told them, "I did not damage the crops. Never mind breaking them—knowing that they are what we feed on; I take good care of the crops. Please do not say that." Even though I requested them not to accuse me like that, they continued to do so and so I told them that I did not know I had broken the plants. Points were deducted for 22 days and that was a great loss for me.**

Q: What were you made to do during the 22 days in jail?

01:31:50

**#6M: I was made to work. Yaks' hair had to be spun for making tents. You know, nomads live in tents and these were made of yaks' hair. The yaks' hair needed to be spun to make into tents.**

Q: Were you made to make tents?

**#6M: Before making the tents, the yaks' hair must be woven, but I did not do that. I spun and combed the hair with my fingers. I did not have the tools for weaving.**

Q: How was the condition in the prison and the food?

01:33:14

**#6M: My family had to bring me food from home, as no food was provided. They brought me food from home. I was locked up in the house of a land owner along with several others.**

Q: Did they give you any time that they were going to keep you in prison? Did they tell you how long?

**#6M: They did not say anything. On the day of the release, I was taken elsewhere from the prison house where I had to stand and confess that I damaged the crops, which was very wrong and that I would never do such harmful deeds in the future. I had no knowledge that I had to say such things. One must confess to acts that one had not committed.**

Q: To whom did you have to confess?

01:34:44

**#6M: One must confess to all the people who were at the meeting. I had to stand up from my kneeling position and confess to having damaged the crops, which was wrong and promise to be careful and not repeat it in the future. They [the Chinese] asked me to say it and I said it.**

Q: Were you then released?

**#6M: I was released the same day.**

Q: What happened to your family home, *ama-la*, in all of these transitions? What happened?

01:35:53

**#6M: The ground floor of the house, which I told you about, was meant for housing passing muleteers, was converted into a shed for the commune goats on one side. On the other side was housed the commune's cattle.**

Q: The cows?

**#6M: Cows, *dzomo* and *dzo*. A large number of animals were also housed in our neighbor's huge home. The entire animals of the commune were kept in our two houses.**

Q: What about the middle floor of your house?

01:36:29

**#6M: We were living on the middle floor.**

Q: After the commune system, what happened to your family home?

**#6M: Then we got our houses back. It became our house after the commune system.**

Q: What about the monastery? What was the treatment of the monastery by the Chinese forces?

01:37:32

**#6M: You mean our monastery, the Ganzi Monastery?**

Q: Yes.

**#6M: The Ganzi Monastery was taken over in one day. Once the outer gates are locked, it's over. The older and senior monks were taken to Sigyatsang and the juniors were sent back home. Everything was over and done with.**

Q: Do you mean to say that the monastery was dismantled?

01:37:57

**#6M: No, initially the monks were rounded up.**

Q: Initially the monks were there in the monastery...

**#6M: Yes, there were many monks.**

Q: What did the Chinese do to the monks?

01:38:08

**#6M: When Tibet was lost, they [the Chinese] locked the outer gates of the monastery with the monks within. It [the monastery] was not like the ones here. There was a wall running around it and once the two gates were locked, there was no way out. The two gates were**

locked and [the monastery] surrounded. Then they captured the senior monks like the officials and reincarnate lamas and jailed them at Sigyatsang.

Q: What is Sigyatsang?

**#6M: There was a high lama called Sigyatsang.**

Q: Was it [the Sigyatsang residence] within the monastery?

01:39:07

**#6M: It was a little further away. The senior monks were imprisoned there and forced to attend meetings. Monks and nuns from nearby smaller monasteries were rounded up and all of them jailed in Ganzi Monastery. There were many smaller monasteries around like Dhotok Gonpa, Khongwa Gonpa, Phungo Gonpa, Tsoesu Gonpa and Khanu Gonpa. That many monasteries abounded in the region of Ganzi.**

**There were also nunneries like Nyemo Gesi Gonpa, Semo Gesi Gonpa and many smaller ones. Monks and nuns from all these smaller monasteries were kept in the Ganzi Monastery. Those with so-called serious crimes, like the wealthy and the senior monks were imprisoned at either Kongaju or Sigyatsang. Then they [the Chinese] took away all the wealth of the monasteries.**

**After that, many monks made their getaway, some of whom were captured. Terrible things took place because of the escape attempts. Many monks were imprisoned and most of them died of starvation. Innumerable monks died in prison, so much so that you felt okay if the older ones died because so many of the young monks were dying!**

**Later all the junior monks and monasteries' helpers were released, while the senior monks were taken to Tindhu or imprisoned elsewhere. They were segregated. There was so much grief. I was quite young then, but had it occurred at a latter stage, I would have become crazy. Such was the misery.**

Q: Is there anything else that we should know about this period because you were about 20 years old in 1960 and you stayed in Tibet until 1997. So you spent 37 years inside of Tibet. Did you get married and raise a family and you were under the Chinese?

**#6M: We, the two sisters, lived with one [man].**

Q: Did you go as a *nama* 'bride joining husband at his house' or was he a *makpa* 'bridegroom joining wife at her house?'

01:43:24

**#6M: We were both *nama*.**

Q: Where did you go?

**#6M: He lived just a little distance away in the same village.**

Q: Then?

01:43:37

**#6M: I have four children. My sister passed away. She was the oldest of the siblings.**

Q: Two sisters married the same man. Were they you and your younger sister?

**#6M: She was the older one. She was the oldest among all of us.**

Q: Oh, your eldest sister and you married the same man and then your sister passed away?

01:44:09

**#6M: She passed away.**

Q: Did she pass away later?

**#6M: She passed away much later when the situation was improving. She was quite young but died due to illness.**

Q: Before you came to India, what kind of work were you doing in your homeland?

01:45:05

**#6M: I worked in the commune and later when we were allotted our own land, I farmed. Then I ground *laphing*.**

Q: What's grinding *laphing*?

**#6M: We grew a lot of peas [which I ground into flour]. This was boiled and strained. A lot of it was given to the animals and from the rest, I cooked *laphing*, which was very delicious and in much demand. Here the grinding is done very easily at the mills. However, the *laphing* is not as delicious as the ones we made back in the village. We used to make it taste very delicious using pea flour. So, I worked in the farm as well as sold *laphing* as I did not know any trade. I lived selling *laphing* and never traveled anywhere.**

Q: How was life after the Chinese in your community?

01:46:30

**#6M: When I grew older, I realized how bad life was, which I never did when I was younger. I wondered at the way couples could not lead a life together. My grandmother always used to say that we would definitely see His Holiness the Dalai Lama. My mother also remarked that Tibet would never be conquered as it was foretold in a document and that she would see His Holiness one day and she passed away with this hope. She hoped to see His Holiness, but unfortunately she could not.**

**My son lives here [in Mundgod] and a few years back he became sick and returned home. He wanted me to accompany him [to India], but before that I had to settle my daughter's marriage and build a small house for her. However, my daughter said that she wanted to become a nun. She said she was determined to embrace nunhood. Then my son said, "We must go now [to India]. Your mother and grandmother said they would one day see His Holiness and they could not do so."**

**[Cries] They continued to say that they would get the chance to see His Holiness one day but could not see him. So my son said, "It will be too late for you, too. We will also not meet again as I have become [a monk] before His Holiness the Dalai Lama and will live [in India] and not return. We will not see each other again." My other son also lived there [in India] and I would not see him [if I did not go to India].**

**My son said that there was a Home for the Aged located between two monasteries and a nunnery where my daughter could join, which was situated close to the monastery and so we decided to go. I had broken my leg during the construction of the monastery and there would be no one to take care of me in case I fell ill. The monastery was being renovated. We obtained travel papers by giving false information and came away. Otherwise I, with my broken leg, would not be able to take the [escape] route like others.**

**Q: Your mother hoped but could not see His Holiness. Who advised you to go to India to His Holiness?**

01:48:52

**#6M: It was my older son who came home. He had left for India when he was very young. He said that my mother and grandmother had not seen His Holiness despite their ardent hope and it would be too late for me too, and also that we would not meet again. I did not want to leave my daughter behind, but she wished to become a nun.**

**After our decision to leave, it took us a whole year, as we had to make preparations like selling off our household items and animals. We applied for travel papers by claiming that we were going on pilgrimage. I had good friends in the office and they provided me and my daughter with the necessary papers. The documents mentioned that we were to return in three years.**

**Except my close relatives and son, we did not disclose to anyone that we were going to live here [in India]. We falsely claimed that we were going to return the following year. Had we not done so, word might have gone around and we would not have been able to get away. So we received our travel papers, sold our things and could come here.**

**Before the end of three years, my daughter became a nun and I lived with my brother. My older son had told me that I could live at the Home for the Aged and that we could meet once a week. He explained that the nunnery and Home for the Aged were located side by side and that my daughter and I could meet everyday. We received admission papers for my daughter to join the nunnery in Nepal [from the Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu]. It took me two years [before I could join the Home for the Aged].**

Q: And did you get to see His Holiness?

01:52:19

**#6M: I got to see him several times. I received the *Kalachakra* initiation twice in Dorjiden [Bodh Gaya, India] and once elsewhere. I also saw His Holiness at Sera Monastery [Bylakuppe, India] and here three times. I got the chance to see him many times.**

Q: You came with your daughter in 1997, that was about 17 [13] years ago. How was the journey? What was the journey like?

**#6M: Since we had proper permits, we did not face any problems on the way. We spent about a month in Lhasa, visiting all the holy places. Then one day we journeyed to Shigatse and I remarked that once we get to see the holy sites of Shigatse, we would have seen everything and I would be very satisfied. However, the vehicle continued on in the night and we missed Shigatse. Other than that, we could see all the holy places.**

Q: If we could go back earlier, you said that you and your sister married the same man. Was there a reason why you decided to do that?

01:54:36

**#6M: My sister was married to him first. The family did not have many hands and he was a very wealthy person, which was why later I too was given [in marriage] to him. First it was my sister [who married him] and there were just the two of them in the house. [A brother of my husband] was a monk and [a sister became] a nun. When the nun was released after imprisonment, she married.**

Q: Did your sister have any children with him?

**#6M: Yes, she did. She had five sons.**

Q: *Ama-la*, if this interview were shown in Tibet or China, would this be a problem?

01:56:11

**#6M: I did not hear you.**

[Question is repeated.]

**#6M: I will not face any problems. I have an alias, so there will be no problems.**

Q: Can we use your alias name, Tashi Lhamo?

01:56:41

**#6M: Yes, you can.**

Q: Thank you for sharing your story with us.

**#6M: [Nods] I am very grateful to you for asking me [to share my story]. This is about our misery and not yours.**

Q: What was it like to tell your story on camera?

01:57:07

**#6M: [Speaks before question is interpreted] There is no one to talk about our grief. I have kept all the sufferings caused by the Chinese within me. There is no one to talk to. I cannot tell anyone that I suffered so much. So I am very grateful to you.**

Q: And what do you want the world to know about the people of Tibet?

**#6M: What do I say? [Laughs]**

Q: Thank you for your participation.

01:57:55

**#6M: [Speaks before question is interpreted] I just hope we will get our independence and wish for nothing else. It would be such a blessing to get our independence. Whether I wake up or go to bed, I pray that if not in my lifetime, then in the lifetime of the children, we should get our independence. I have no other thoughts other than that.**

Q: Do you have any advice that you would give to the children of Tibet?

**#6M: My advice is that Tibet should get her independence and they should not steal and listen to the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which will surely get our independence. I keep telling this to the children, whether in the morning or at night.**

**Whenever I telephone them [in Tibet], I tell them to listen to whatever His Holiness says, to study hard, not steal. And even if we do not meet, you will surely meet your cousins. Do not steal or do any such things and a time will come when you can meet. I tell them this even to this day. I say this to my sons and my relatives. My sister is unfortunate as her daughter, a nun, is in prison.**

Q: Is she still in prison?

01:59:17

**#6M: She has been sentenced to two years and six months in prison. She is the youngest among three daughters.**

Q: Is she your younger sister?

**#6M: Yes, my younger sister's daughter.**

Q: Is she still in prison?

01:59:31

**#6M: Yes, she is still in prison.**

Q: Is she a nun?

**#6M: Yes, she is a nun. She was among the many nuns who were imprisoned.**

Q: Do you have many family still living in Tibet?

02:00:08

**#6M: My sister has three daughters and two sons, one of whom is in the army here.**

Q: In India?

**#6M: Yes, in India. The other has gone abroad.**

Q: *Ama-la*, thank you for your story. Please wait.

[Interviewer presents interviewee with an envelope and a picture.]

[Interpreter to interviewee]: In case you wish to talk about something, about today's interview, my phone number is in there.

[Interviewee looks at the picture and places it on her head in reverence. Interviewer and interpreter join her for photographs.]

END OF INTERVIEW