

Tibet Oral History Project

Interview #7B – Yeshe Tinlay (alias)
December 29, 2013

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #7B
2. Interviewee: Yeshi Tinlay (alias)
3. Age: 83
4. Date of Birth: 1930
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Lhasa Sapogang
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1959
9. Date of Interview: December 29, 2013
10. Place of Interview: Private residence, Old Camp 4, Bylakuppe, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 58 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Pema Tashi
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Yeshe Tinlay was born in Lhasa in 1930 and attended school for two years starting at the age of 5. His parents owned a shop in Lhasa that sold goods such as cookware and also turquoise and corals. Yeshe Tinlay describes the Nyarongsha School, the different types of Tibetan scripts and how writing was taught to beginners. He enjoyed drawing pictures when he was young.

Yeshe Tinlay recounts the circumstances that led him to join Namgyal Monastery, the monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and located in the Potala Palace. He narrates in fine detail the various aspects responsibilities performed by the monks according to seniority and how they were taught, such as serving food and tea to senior monks. Yeshe Tinlay talks about learning to play religious musical instruments like the *dhung* 'long horn' and *gyaling* 'clarinet.'

Yeshe Tinlay provides an inside view of the events that unfolded in Lhasa during early 1959 as tensions with the Chinese mounted. He was at the Norbulingka on duty as a *choeshang* 'making religious offerings in His Holiness' residence,' so he personally witnessed the meeting of the cabinet ministers who discussed how to handle the large crowds who had gathered outside to prevent the Chinese from escorting His Holiness to their military headquarters. He describes the shelling of the Norbulingka and Potala Palace by the Chinese and his escape soon after.

Topics Discussed:

Utsang, childhood memories, education, monastic life, Dalai Lama, Potala Palace, Norbulingka, March 10th Uprising, escape experiences.

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Age: 83, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: December 29, 2013

Question: 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?

00:01:06

Interviewee #7B: Yes.

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

#7B: [Nods]

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

#7B: [I] do not have any such problems. Though I did have relatives living in Lhasa, they are no longer there. Hence, there will be no problems and I can recount the real story clearly.

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

#7B: Okay. [Nods]

Q: Yeshe-la, can you please tell us how old you are and what city you were born in?

00:02:40

#7B: [I] am 83 years old this year.

Q: Where were [you] born?

#7B: Right in Lhasa.

Q: You're born in 1930 and can you tell us something about your family? What did they do for a livelihood?

#7B: My parents earned a living by managing a store in Lhasa. The parents sold goods acquired from India like cookware and such and earned a living. Father had been a monk earlier and then lost celibacy. [He] dealt in turquoise and corals.

Q: When you were a little boy, did you ever go to school or did you not have that opportunity?

#7B: At that time the Nyarongsha School...There used to be only two or three schools in Tibet [Lhasa] then. Our school, the Nyarongsha School was slightly bigger. There was a doctor who was the teacher. He established the school and there were 120-130 students both boys and girls then. I was 5 years old when [I] attended this school and have been to school for only two years.

Q: Are there any other memories you have when you were 5 years old about your childhood?

00:05:13

#7B: As a child...generally, [I] would not know about dharma and politics as a little one but [I] was aware and very imaginative as a child. [I] can remember clearly everything that [I] did as a little one.

Q: Are there any memories that stand out as very special to you from your childhood?

#7B: When [I] attended school as a little child, [I] was small and just starting school and there were many students as per the standard number in Tibet. [I] was more interested in drawing than writing as a little child. There used to be an adage in Tibet about a she-demon of Sakya having escaped. When it was said that the she-demon of Sakya had escaped...she-demon—they are used to masks of she-demons like Kamaysha in Tibet—and based on that [I] used to draw instead of writing. I was very interested in this from a young age. When it was said that [the she-demon] ate needles and metal, I used to imagine chains and draw. I was very interested in drawing as a child.

Q: Did they teach drawing in the school?

#7B: It was not taught. Except for doing it yourself there was not anyone that taught [drawing]. In our school...It must be [taught] in schools in India and abroad. The manner of teaching in our school—most of you would know—during our time was that initially an older student, whether boy or girl would hold the hand of a [new] student and teach [him/her] to write the alphabet. After one had mastered that, they would write a copy and [the new student] must trace over it with ink.

First it was the *tsugring* ‘long-stem script,’ then the *tsugthung* ‘short-stem script’ and then *yigchung* ‘small script.’ In the two years of schooling I completed learning the alphabet, the vowels and reached the level of *tsugthung*. I had not reached the level of *tsugchung* [*yigchung*] then though [I] can write it. However, at that time in Tibet there was not much stress on spelling and such, which has become presently. Though I studied for two years, my spelling...Great attention was paid to the handwriting but not much to spelling. [I] was there for two years and then at the age of 7 I joined the monastery.

Q: Why did you join the monastery?

00:09:48

#7B: My father's sibling, a paternal uncle, lived in the monastery and the parents sent me along with my older brother with the sole objective of learning the scriptures. Once [we] reached there, [we] found that the monastery had a school with hardly 15-20 monk students. The *chanzo* 'business manager' of the abbot was the teacher. [I] went there to study.

Q: Was it that special school with 10 or 15 students, was that for people that were more well-off or could anybody go to that kind of tutoring?

#7B: It was for those that had a desire to go to school and had nothing to do with wealth or being students of lamas or *geshe* 'monk with Buddhist philosophy degree' or high status. Taking admission there depended upon one's desire. However, there were more [students] interested in the scriptures than learning to read and write while our parents and teacher sent [us] there because they said being literate would make it easier to follow the meaning of the scriptures.

Q: What kind of memories do you have of that school? Are they happy memories? Was it difficult? Were you a naughty boy or a good boy? What was it like?

#7B: In general the teaching style was different from that of Nyarongsha. The student strength was less and the teachers stayed close by while at Nyarongsha the teacher did not actually teach but there were many subordinates like class leaders and assistants that did the teaching. So the learning was greatly limited. However, in this school there was a lot of interest in poetry and grammar—though I do not know much—handwriting, spelling and such.

[I] got to learn more here but did not get to stay much. We were there for only around two years. On the whole I was in the monastery for five years. Then I [joined] Namgyal Datsang at the Potala Palace where I had two maternal uncles. Because the Namgyal Datsang is the monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama the parents wanted to admit [me] there and so [I] was left there.

Q: So that would have been at age...?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Five years in this monastery and two years in the school earlier.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: So about 12 then?

Q: So about 12 years old?

00:15:00

#7B: [I] was 12 years old when [I] left [the monastery]. Then when [I] joined the [Namgyal] Datsang at age 12 [I] had to begin to memorize the scriptures. Initially one must memorize Gonpo Chogyal and Jigjay Dhagay that are petition offering prayers but not the

Bhumpa and Wang prayers, and then did some practice. There were two elder monks called *desung* that were appointed to take tests at the Namgyal Datsang. One must give a test with either one of them. It took [me] a year to memorize the text. Once you passed the examination it must be reported to the Committee of the monastery, “He has passed the examination.” Once it is declared that you had passed the test you received permission for admission.

And then through the *desung*, the private office...When the Parliament was in session, when the aristocrats were in session, the one seeking admission must recite the text in the presence of the *desung*. The *desung* held the scripture in his hands and we recited. The *tsidung* ‘monk official’ and *dungkhor* ‘lay official’ would not know much about texts but our biggest panic and fear was that His Holiness the Dalai Lama paid sudden visits. So one was a little panicky.

Once you had given the test you could join [the monastery]. We did not have to make any ceremonial offering during the admission process like other monasteries because the committee members—there is the *thue* in Tibet that is made of cheese and butter—a square shaped *thue* was offered to each of the members of the committee along with a certain amount of *tamka karpo* ‘unit of currency.’ That day during the prayer assembly you took the *dhinga* ‘sitting mat,’ made prostrations right at the back of the assembly and sat there. You were admitted then on.

Q: Yeshi-*la*, who were these aristocracy who were sitting there? I understand how monks and lamas would be there but who were these aristocracies and why were they sitting in on your examinations?

00:19:10

#7B: [The examination] happened during the function, the assembly session where the aristocrats were. All the aristocrats were there. This was symbolic of our giving the examination to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and not to the aristocrats. The assembly was in session and there were no prayers or such but some tea, rice or food. While the aristocrats sat there, we sat at the back and gave the test. They sat silently. Should the aristocrats not be there or should they disperse, I would have to recite to the end.

Q: Did you ever see the Dalai Lama at any other time while you were staying at Namgyal?

#7B: Yes, it is like this. For instance, we received the chance to see [His Holiness] when [we] joined the monastery and the time we could receive a special audience was during ceremonies when His Holiness was offered *tenshug* ‘special prayers requesting a master to live longer.’ Then we could receive blessings and an audience. At all other times we would be in the prayer assembly with His Holiness. While the general public was given an audience we sat close to His Holiness with the freedom to reflect upon it. That depended upon each one for [we] could be [with His Holiness] at all times during prayer assemblies.

Q: Were there any special occasions where you saw the Dalai Lama come?

#7B: It is like this. In our monastery there were certain groups that regularly chanted prayers with His Holiness. How this came about was that...for instance, just after joining, one was a *jadhe*. *Jadhe* are the young ones that serve tea and noodle soup to the monks. There was a standard number, which were 24. Twenty-four boys. During prayer assemblies the *jadhe* must get up in turns. There was a leader of the *jadhe* who ordered four or five boys and in case of a large monk assembly six, seven or eight [to serve tea].

We had a regulation in the manner of serving tea. One cannot serve without showing respect. The elders taught us at the beginning. If there were two rows [of monks], one of the tea servers must serve facing that side and the other this side and never back to back but [serve] sideways. While serving tea one should not pour in a sudden manner as per the regulation of our monastery. The tea should be dispensed gently like one would make water offerings; first a little and gradually increase it. The noodle soup and everything was served in this way.

Q: [You] mentioned [monks] sitting in two lines. Was it sitting back-to-back?

00:23:14

#7B: Let us take for instance, there is a gap [between two rows] and the *jadhe* are moving in a line. One serving this row must face this side and not show his back but stand sideways. There is a certain omen connected with the back to back [serving]. [To interpreter] Please translate this.

Q: Show me how [you poured tea]?

#7B: It is similar to how we make water offerings. Similar to making water offering, one must pour slowly at first and not suddenly. And then increase the quantity and as it reaches the brim decrease the measure. That is how it is done.

Q: Very graceful. How did you feel about those years in the monastery? Were they enjoyable or difficult or pleasant? What were they like?

#7B: There were many kinds [of feelings]. In general, we were young and it was the hope of the parents and teacher...if one had a great desire to study the scriptures and entered one [a monastery], naturally one would have no problems in studying the scriptures. However, we were young and wished to roam around and play and avoided studying the scriptures. [I] used to feel that a great deal.

Q: When you were a younger boy you said you liked to draw very much. Was it...were there ever be an opportunity in the monastery for you to learn how to do *thanka* 'traditional Tibetan Buddhist paintings' paintings if you were talented in drawing?

00:26:48

#7B: [I] have this to say because in general we had been *jadhe* for four years. Then one completed the *jadhe* responsibility. After the completion of *jadhe* and before reaching the class of *dhungpa* 'blower of long horns' *gyaling* 'clarinet,' there is the middle level called *bhashar*. What the *bhashar* did was...As a *jadhe* you stayed in the main prayer assembly

with the disciplinarians and could not go anywhere else. One must confine to the prayer assembly. But once one reached the *bhashar* level, one could instantly go not only to the prayer assembly but the *loena* ‘deity shrine.’ His Holiness’ private quarters and likewise Dheyangshar where we had many temples for protective deities. One could go there after attaining the level of *bhashar*. After the *bhashar*, we [reached] the *dhungpa gyaling* level.

For instance, we must go through three levels, five [years each] for three times. When we reached the *bhashar* level...reached the *dhungpa gyaling*, the *dhungpa gyaling* level, one must train for four months in the *dhungpa gyaling* class. [I] wonder how other monasteries did it but we faced a great problem while playing the *dhung* ‘long horn’ for the *cham* ‘religious dance performance by monks’ during *guthor* ‘offerings on the 29th day of the 12th Tibetan lunar month’ when one must continue to play the *dhung* for 5-6 hours. Should one not practice breathing, one could become exhausted and empty within. If it was the gentle note, one could play it very well. We did that and...I will talk about the drawing later.

00:28:25

Then [I] was in the *dhungpa gyaling* level. In this class we were ranked and I...We were 24 boys in the *dhungpa gyaling* class. From the 24 boys, 12 shorter ones must take up playing the *gyaling*. Measurements were taken and 12 taller ones were placed in the *dhungpa* class while the shorter ones played the *gyaling*. The *gyaling* players must learn to play the *kangdhung* ‘thigh-bone trumpet’ as well. If we were *dhungpa*, [we] must learn to play the *kardhung* ‘white conch’ too. For this too one must give a test to His Holiness.

One went to the private residence [of His Holiness] and there were stanzas depending upon the quality of the *dhung*. There were stanzas like Chenday Thingma and Dechen Namgyal. The better ones played the *hang*. I and a colleague, he was good in [short breath?] blowing and I in the slower version of blowing. We were the best *dhung* players among our group. [We] played the *dhung* and gave a test. I found playing *dhung* for the *cham* very difficult. As my responsibility [I] did it for a year and then for an additional two years [I] was hired by another since only the best could play it. I will talk about the drawing later.

Q: You said you joined the *bhashar*. What is *bhashar*?

00:31:16

#7B: *Bhashar* means the intermediary level when one has completed the *jadhe*, one no longer has *jadhe* duty having completed it but not yet reached the *dhungpa gyaling* and *choeshang* ‘responsible for making ritual offerings in His Holiness’ residence’ class.

Q: Please tell us again the names of the instruments, the horns that you learned how to play?

#7B: One learned [to blow] the *dhung* and during prayer assemblies...

Q: What type of *dhung* is it? Please describe a *dhung*.

#7B: The *dhung* is the long one, the long one.

Q: What’s it made of?

#7B: In most of the monasteries the *dhung* are made of copper and embellished with brass. Then there are brass *dhung* embellished with silver. The better ones are made of *li* ‘bronze.’ *Li* is yellow. There is [an alloy] called *li*, which is more expensive. [Longhorns] were made of such and embellished with silver. The best are made of silver and embellished with gold. Our monastery possessed all these types of *dhung*. Particularly during Monlam, *thorgyab* ‘offerings of pyramid-shaped dough’ and grand ceremonies, silver *dhung* were used. And then in the case of *gyaling*...in a *kangdhung*, the inner part is a human thighbone and covered in gold. There were *kangdhung*. There were four of each, four *dhung* and four *kangdhung*.

Q: Would *li* be gold?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: No, it’s not gold.

Q: What’s the *gyaling* one?

00:34:48

#7B: There were also *gyaling*. There were *gyaling* made of silver. Our monastery did not possess *gyaling* made of *thung* ‘nickel silver’ and copper. Most of our monastery’s *gyaling* were made of silver with silver embellishments.

Q: Did people not only learn how to blow them and get sound but actually play different kinds of melodies or songs on them?

#7B: When learning to play the *gyaling*...in the beginning it is the same training for both *gyaling* and *dhung*. You take a straw, a little thicker kind of straw and dip it in a cup of water. Then blow and create bubbles. One must learn to blow continuously. After mastering this, take [the straw] out and start blowing [in the air]. And then do the same using bamboo [instead of straw]. One must keep blowing through a hole in the bamboo into the water unceasingly. That is how the training takes place. It is the same for *dhung* and *gyaling*.

Q: Were there people with certain physical attributes that were better players, like people that had maybe big lungs or big chests; larger people were better? Was there a difference?

#7B: There were and it also depended upon the quality of the *dhung*. For instance, lips too make a difference because if one possessed thin lips and press it against the *dhung*, with thin lips these two parts [points to sides of upper lip] get pressed and forms a sort of hole here [points to the middle of upper lip]. Hence, when air is blown from the cheeks, it moves in a circular manner and produces a better [sound]. And it is the same with those that can hold breath longer on account of the lungs. So, there used be always differences among the *dhung* and *gyaling* [players]. Because of the difference, the good ones were sent [to play] during important occasions like [His Holiness’] arrival and the weaker ones were used during less important occasions.

Q: Were there different melodies or songs that were played?

#7B: Yes?

Q: Melodies?

00:39:01

#7B: Yes, there were. There were verses for all. Should one be a *dhungpa*, there was the Chendel Thingma that contains the musical notes *nyidhi nyitsa thenya*, *chikdhi gyangdhi nyitsa thencha*, *gyangtsacha gyangdhor*. That is called the Chendel Thingma played during a *chendel* ‘spirit invocation.’ *Nyidhi nyitsa* has the symbol of a circle, then the number one and a small symbol. Then *chikdhi nyitsa* means to play *han, han*. And then a symbol that should be played as *han han ee*. There were symbols. One must memorize all that. Then *gyangtsacha gyangdhor* is the ending when you play *dha han*. It differs among monasteries but ours played all of that. The *chamdhung* ‘long horn played during a *cham*’ is completely different. Each *cham* has a different melody and different lyrics in relation to the act. The *chamdhung* is the most difficult one.

Then in the night when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was present, there were four different times the *dhung* must be played, the first *dhung* call, the second *dhung* call, the third *dhung* call and the fourth *zimdha*.

Q: When?

#7B: For instance, if His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Sera [Monastery], should it be our monastery they [*dhung* players] must be on the roof.

Q: At the time of [His Holiness’] arrival?

00:40:36

#7B: Not at the time of arrival but when retiring to bed. [The *dhung*] is played once and then the *gyaling*. Then there is a gap. Then it is played a second time, a third time and then finally one called *zimdha* that is played at the time His Holiness’ retiring to bed. [The *dhung*] is played four times.

Q: At the time of [His Holiness] retiring to bed?

#7B: Yes?

Q: At the time of [His Holiness] retiring to bed?

#7B: Yes, at the time of [His Holiness] retiring to bed. That is the last call. Once at the time of [His Holiness] retiring to bed and that is the last one, and then the next day at the time of [His Holiness] waking up. This practice was prevalent in our monastery.

Q: Another call was given at the time of [His Holiness] waking up?

#7B: A call must be given at the time of [His Holiness] waking up. That is the practice at the [Namgyal] Monastery. Not all monasteries have the same practice.

Q: Were those tunes written down or were they just memorized by each generation?

00:42:12

#7B: No, the playing of *dhung* whether *chamdhung*...as I mentioned everything can be read. It is not like reading a script but in symbols. Look, a circle indicates a *dhor*, [which is played] as *dhaa*. A *dhor* symbol [is played] as *dhaa han* and then you added a single *haan* to the *dhaa han*. All such [musical notes] are written in symbols, similar to learning the melody of *namthar* ‘songs from holy beings life stories.’

And then what happened regarding the drawing is that...and then we completed [the *dhungpa gyaling* tenure] after five years. While we were serving the five years, the seniors of the monastery, the *choeshang*...there were three such levels with each level lasting five years. These levels consisted of the senior and junior monks. For example, if my generation was serving as *dhungpa gyaling*, senior to us were the *choeshang*, the ones that made ritual offerings in His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s residence. There was one junior level that lasted five years. Above this was the intermediary *choeshang* level and then the senior-most. One must serve *choeshang* duty for 15 years.

Then we reached the *choeshang* level and others would play the *dhung* and *gyaling*. Once at the *choeshang*, when [we] initially reached the *choeshang* we were taught drawing. The drawings taught were the *pata* ‘the endless knot,’ *mey* ‘fire’ and *sogcha* ‘living creatures,’ and in the case of *chogyal* ‘dharma king,’ *mahe* ‘buffalo’ and likewise in the case of *lhamo* ‘goddess,’ mules and dogs and such. One must draw and draw.

It was not the practice in the past during the previous reincarnations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama but since His Holiness the present Dalai Lama being so meticulous, one had to give a test to His Holiness. We made the drawings and put our names— for example, I would put my name as Yeshe Tinlay on all the drawings. There were 24 people in this. All those in the *dhungpa gyaling* group graduated to the *choeshang*. The [drawings] were forwarded to His Holiness.

My older brother was very good in drawing since long ago and has also been an artist. However, in the ranking I stood first as marked by His Holiness. I stood first. I stood first in the *choepa* ‘ritual offering’ [drawing] too. I stood first in all categories of drawing. One must flatten butter and then draw *pata* and such and I stood first in this category too.

00:45:30

Later when we had arrived in India I joined a carpet [center]. When I was at the carpet center His Holiness the Dalai Lama, having knowledge about my drawing ability advised me to take training in drawing, to [learn to] draw without fail. When [I] reached Dalhousie [Himachal Pradesh] there was a teacher who was known as Sangay, an Amdo. The Amdo said, “Draw an elephant.” [I] drew an elephant. Then it was erased. “Draw a horse,” [he] said. [I] drew a horse. “Draw a camel.” And [I] drew a camel, then a bird and such. “You

draw well. [You] must be taught *thiktsay* ‘proportion of a figure laid out with the aid of lines,’ [he] told me on the very first day. “I do not know much of drawing.” I did not think that [I] knew much. [I] had an interest in *pati*. Since that was not available [I] did not have much desire. However, they taught me *thiktsay*. When the lines were drawn for the image of the Buddha, the teacher, the Amdo, did this [gestures off camera] and the image appeared. The image appeared as [he] did this.

Later after drawing the lines, I copied the teacher and the image came out exactly similar. And then we shifted to Dharamsala [Himachal Pradesh].

Q: [You] mentioned *choeshug*.

#7B: Yes?

Q: What’s [the duty] one performed for 15 years?

#7B: *Choeshang*.

Q: *Choeshang*?

#7B: Yes, one that made ritual offerings. The *choeshang* has three levels, *tsema* ‘the top,’ *bharma* ‘the middle’ and *woma* ‘the junior.’

Q: Was the offering made in the residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama?

#7B: Yes, in [His Holiness’] residence and in the monastery and likewise during the Monlam and *thorgya*. Unlike other ritual offerings, the one at His Holiness’...The most difficult problem we faced in the monastery was that though the ritual materials could be availed from the government and were extremely good. For instance if one made ritual offerings today that is to be removed the next day, the dough must be very dry. Here, even though the dough is not very soft, [the ritual offering] sort of bends after two days or so. This should never happen. Therefore, the dough must be kneaded with as little water as possible. That was difficult for us. It was very difficult in particular for someone who was not strong. While kneading the dough one must squeeze in such a way that the air moves out. Otherwise, [the dough] becomes soft within. There is a great difference in the way dough is kneaded.

Q: *Yeshi-la*, it’s now...you are 29 and it’s now 1959 and so perhaps you can tell us what kinds of things you experienced that year.

00:51:48

#7B: It is widely known what actually happened... What the Chinese stated and did since arriving in Tibet is mostly well known. In order to narrate it briefly, when the Chinese initially arrived they carried nothing but guns and such. [They] did not have any supplies and ours is a small country and not very rich, yet everything was...[They] invaded through Kham and finally the government dispatched the aristocrat called Lhalu, who was a...[not discernible] in the past in order to safeguard the border at Kham.

Then to provide assistance to Lhalu, though different stories abound, but in reality Ngabo was sent to assist Lhalu. Hence, Lhalu and Ngabo worked together during the critical period there. Ngabo said, “I can do the job alone. It would be okay for Lhalu to leave.” So, Lhalu returned to Lhasa. Following that when the number of Chinese increased, as is the practice in Tibet in the past *sermak* ‘monk troops’ was formed—though without much ability to fight a war but as a form of spiritual protection—with some monks being sent from Sera, Drepung and Gaden [Monasteries].

Subsequently, [the Chinese] invaded through Kham and there are many stories most of which [you] must be well aware. [I] need not say much about it. However, after the invasion what the Chinese stated which I have witnessed clearly was, “Except for having come to help Tibet, even if asked we Chinese will not remain. We will go back after helping you.” That is what was stated in the beginning. Finally, [they] invaded and the happening of ’59 was horrible.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama had given consent to the invitation that the government authorities and the Cabinet had no knowledge about. It was about the invitation [extended by the Chinese] to His Holiness to visit Silonpa [Chinese Military Headquarters]. There were some among the Cabinet that were enthusiastic officials. Among the aristocrats were some that had made many successful contributions and [they] told the people, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama is visiting [Silonpa]. Therefore, you the people must contemplate.” [The message was passed to] everyone in Lhasa and it resulted in the 10th of March [Uprising].

00:54:57

At that time I was on *choeshang* duty from the monastery [to Norbulingka]. It was my first [year of] *choeshang* and [we] were going there. [I] was a freshman on *choeshang* and among the young lot. Along the way, just behind the Potala Palace is Bhashi. There is one called Dekyilingka, which used to be owned by the British and then the Indians and where the representative lived. Close to it is Bhashi followed by the Norbulingka. Troops were hiding between these [places].

It was around 6 o’clock when we were on the way. The sun was not up yet and it was a little dark. The troops were there, most of who belonged to the security unit at the Potala Palace. One of our monks asked a soldier he knew, “What are you doing?” One [of the soldiers] called Neychu Poro is presently in Camp Number 1 [Bylakuppe]. He was there and said, “You must carry on directly. Should Chinese vehicles come and the people fail to turn up, we are to...Should Chinese vehicles come we are to fire.” [He] said that. Should the people turn up, they [the people] would serve the need. That was a political approach. Should the people fail to turn up, fearing that His Holiness would be escorted [to the Chinese Military Headquarters] the soldiers were going to fire and that would have been disastrous. Had that happened His Holiness would not have been able to escape and of course, the people as well. That was one incident that took place then. Then I went there and was engaged in making *choepa* ‘ritual dough offerings.’

Q: Where?

#7B: The Norbulingka where His Holiness was living. When preparing *choepa* at the Norbulingka, we had to make *choepa* of this size [gestures off camera]. It was necessary to make 10 of such. The dough had to be very dry and [kneading] it was difficult. Placing it [*choepa*] on the shoulder [points to left shoulder] from where we *choeshang* were, [we] had to walk around less than half a kilometer...about a quarter [kilometer] to deliver to [His Holiness'] residence. Normally we could go directly and arrange it in His Holiness' residence. That day His Holiness was tense due to the screams of the people, so the *choeyok* who works there—we called him *choeyok*, the one that guides us—would not let us inside. We handed [the *choepa*] to him and he took it inside.

Q: Where were the preparations done?

#7B: It is at the Norbulingka, right in [His Holiness'] residence. There was a distance from where we made the preparations. [To interpreter] Please translate this.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: His Holiness was what?

[Interpreter to interviewer]: Tense.

[Interviewer to interpreter]: Oh, tense.

Q: And then what happened?

01:00:45

#7B: And then in the *Kashag* 'Cabinet' were the aristocrats Ngabo, Surkhang, Shasur, Liwusha and Sambu. There were 5 ministers in the cabinet then. Though there were five cabinet ministers, the people...There was the main person that served in [His Holiness'] residence called the Kungo 'Your Presence, title of address for government officials' Chikyab Khenpo 'high ranking official abbot' and another known as Kungo Donyer Chenmo 'Lord Chamberlain.' Since they served in [His Holiness'] residence, the people had great faith in them. The *Kashag* interacted with the Chinese, so the people had no faith in the *Kashag*. There were talks about [the members of Cabinet] receiving *dhayen* 'Chinese silver coins' from the Chinese. Hence, the people had no faith in them.

I had finished the ritual preparations and there was a lot of noise. [I] wondered what the noise was about and asked the senior *choeshang*, "Please excuse me. I want to go outside for a while." [I] sought leave of absence. There was a multitude of people. The Monlam had just concluded and some had not yet returned to the respective monasteries and those from the villages had not gone back. There was a crowd, a huge number of people. We being [monks] of the Namgyal Monastery, nobody at the doors stopped us from moving about. When [I] looked out, it was jam-packed.

Inside [the Norbulingka] the lay officials, monk officials and aristocrats were in a meeting, not formally but just sitting there, "What is going to happen?" The Chadhor Kungo who was a *khenchung* 'rank of clergy in the Tibetan Government' said, "If the people protest like this...Tomorrow His Holiness the Dalai Lama is going to be invited to the Chinese

Military Headquarters.” This had become known all over. “The cabinet is not doing anything. The cabinet is not correct.” They were sitting there and discussing such matters.

01:02:57

As they were sitting there, [members of] the cabinet slowly began to arrive. When Sambu arrived in a vehicle...we did not witness [him] arrive at first. When Sambu arrived the people [stood blocking the way]. The driver was a Chinese. Seeing the Chinese a stone was flung which hit Sambu’s head. When Sambu was hit on the head, he was immediately taken to a hospital near Dekyiling that had previously belonged to the British and was managed by the Indians then. [He] was taken to this hospital.

Finally Surkhang arrived and then Shasur. They had a tough time maneuvering through the crowd of people. Then some aristocrats that used to interact with the people protected and brought them in. Then they returned; the aristocrats returned. This a real story that... In general the one called Surkhang, at meetings and...used to while away his time in playing games and such that was certainly misconduct. However, while working or doing anything he was one with intelligence.

What he said went like this...Among those of the cabinet that spoke was Shasur, Liwusha and Surkhang; the three were present. Ngabo was there with the Chinese. Sambu was hit on the head. Hence, it was the three of them. Surkhang said, “Kungo Chenmo, please go. Please go [and say], ‘People, please stay calm. Whatever you wish to discuss, we shall do so gradually. Rioting like this will make His Holiness tense.’” [Surkhang] said that. Following this the Kungo Chenmo left. A loudspeaker was installed on the rooftop.

01:05:06

All the troops, all the Security troops had installed machine guns and were lying on the rooftop. [The Lord Chamberlain] spoke but nothing could be heard and [he] returned. Then once again, Surkhang himself went but before [he] could reach there, the people starting flinging rocks. He came running back and said something like “I found it impossible.” Then Kungo Dapon ‘Colonel,’ Kungo Dapon, the husband of His Holiness’ older sister went. Kungo Dapon went out and said—it was Surkhang that gave all the instructions—“All the people must disperse and select representatives from each area and send them to us and then we shall hold talks.” That was the advice [he] gave. The Colonel gave this advice.

After this the people finally became quiet. [I] looked out and saw everyone dispersing into the forest. Inside [the Norbulingka] were the monk officials, a group of soldiers, *tsichak* ‘treasury officers’ and *lachak* ‘treasury of a monastic household’ that were keeping guard at the doors. Finally word came that all the people had dispersed. [To interpreter] Please translate this.

Q: And then what happened after all the people dispersed?

01:09:59

#7B: Then all the people [dispersed] and after sometime the cabinet [members] were back. And then after a while as [I] looked out the people began to gather and their sound echoed.

A voice shouted, “All the people have gathered.” Then Kungo Donyen Chenmo spoke, “The people must sit outside calmly while the representatives file into the Norbulingka. Please do not rush.” The *tsichak* and the *lachak* stood there and as the door opened they took away swords, guns or whatever weapons each of the men [representatives] carried. [They] took [the weapons] away and sent them inside. I guess around 150 representatives entered there and then the door was closed.

The cabinet was sitting over there [raises right hand]. The cabinet included a Kungo Chenmo and a Kungo Gadang as well. Then there was the Kungo Dapon. They came where I was standing. Then Surkhang said, “Everybody sit down, everybody sit down.” Since I was close by, I too sat down. A while later Surkhang said, “One among you may please state the reason for your coming here today. One among you as the representative may please clarify the reason.” Then a man from Tiwu with a moustache, short in stature with a fair face, wearing good clothes and who, in the past used to sell tea and lived at Banashol, got up and spoke. One could not understand his words because of a very strong Kham dialect. Nothing could be understood. Hence, *Kungo* Shasur sort of raised his hand to indicate that he could not understand. So *Kungo* Surkhang spoke like this, “We are all Tibetans. However, you have a strong Kham accent and since I have not been to Kham—those aristocrats that have been to Kham can follow—I cannot understand. Can someone repeat what you have said in Utsang dialect?” Then someone called Pekong Jola got up.

01:12:37

He said, “The extension of six years for implementing change is an achievement on the part of the aristocrats. However, the reason for our coming here is that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the head of all Tibetans and not just a few of you people. Hence, your decision to accept the invitation [for His Holiness] to visit the Chinese Military Headquarters is a serious mistake. Your making the decision without so much as informing the people is...” This topic was raised. As he spoke like that, all the other representatives supported him strongly. Then Kungo Surkhang said, “I will make one thing clear for you. So far it has not been clear.” I saw Surkhang say, “I will tell you something. What I will speak about is my having accepted *dhayen* in the past. Not just that but now I am on the point of *simjak*. [I] will talk about this.” He narrated the story.

“When the Chinese initially came to Tibet, do any of you among the people know how many main offices [of the Chinese] are there in Tibet? If anybody can, please say so.” Nobody said anything. Then Surkhang said, “There are 5. There are 5 levels. When [the Chinese] first arrived, [they] came to deliver a box of 1,000 *dhayen* to me. I didn’t accept it. Next 2 boxes of 1,000 *dhayen* were delivered. Then [I] reflected over it, ‘Everything is so at present because of the benevolence of the Tibetan government but the Chinese are so mighty.’ After understanding the situation with the Chinese [I] realized that we cannot safeguard our interests. I have earned a livelihood in this manner since generations and thus [I] accepted the *dhayen*, accepted the 2 boxes of *dhayen*. After accepting the 2 boxes of *dhayen* [the Chinese] trusted [me]. [I] joined the first of the 5 levels [of Chinese offices] doing whatever was required by the Chinese and finally reached the 4th level. The 4th level specifies [removal] of the Tibetan flag, the withdrawal of the army and our currency. At this critical stage there were no people, no aristocrats, nobody. So I was forced to take up the issue and now I am on the verge of *simjak* ‘imprisonment’.” He gave this clarification.

01:15:05

When this clarification was given, those that thought badly of Surkhang and did not like [him] changed their expression. I was sitting there and [saw the changes] in their expression. Everybody nodded at him. “This is not all. Among your representatives...all of us must make plans without the knowledge of the Chinese. Let us select capable people from the group, approach the Cabinet and hold discussions.” [The members] left for the Cabinet. I withdrew from this point. I went back for *choeshang* duty and then returned.

Q: What are the 5 levels that Surkhang was talking about?

#7B: The levels in the office...according to their explanation the Chinese have five different levels in the office in regard to the techniques of presentation to the people. The end result is, of course always bad but the techniques of presentation...The *thamik* is one to be trusted, one who will even kill [his/her] parents for the cause of the country. That is *thamik*, one who can sacrifice. Such trusted people must learn all the levels right to the top, whatever his duty may be. There were different levels. For instance the 4th level pertained to currency, taking away all the characteristics of our country. That is in the 4th level.

Q: Who was doing that, the Chinese?

#7B: The Chinese.

Q: Why was Surkhang stating this?

#7B: Yes?

Q: Why was Surkhang stating this? Was [he] stating that he did it?

#7B: No. [He] explained that the Chinese had said so and that he was the one that stood up against the Chinese to oppose it. [He] opposed it and clarified the issue [to the Tibetan representatives]. The Chinese had trusted him so far but now they did not. “Now I am in *simjak*,” [he] said.

Q: What’s *simjak*?

#7B: *Simjak* means to be arrested and put in prison. [He said] that he was now in danger.

01:19:47

And then we returned from *choeshang*. When [we] were returning from *choeshang* the Chamdo Phakpala’s *khenchung* had already been killed. After the killing, the corpse...The Tibetan Women’s Association was mainly involved in this though the public was present. [The corpse] was tied at the legs and hands and was being dragged with [the women] shouting slogans around Lhasa. [We] were back at the Potala Palace. Since then [I] did not get to go to Lhasa again because [we] were busy performing petition offerings and such. After our prayer assembly ended, [I] saw Chinese atop all the mountains nearby except the mountaintops of Drepung and Sera [Monasteries] in preparation of war.

When such things were happening...the people refused to budge saying that if His Holiness visited [the Chinese Military Headquarters] the people would lie on the ground. [The people were reassured,] “His Holiness will not go but a message has to be sent there.” So Shasur and Surkhang went to deliver the message and there is a story about the Chinese being livid but that is only what I have heard and not witnessed.

And then what happened was that the most important thing His Holiness...to enable every one of us to exist in this world irrespective of religion is because of the benevolence of His Holiness. The one advice His Holiness gave to really save us that is not connected to religion but sincerely from the heart was to agree with China. I know the advice of His Holiness because when the Chinese began preparations His Holiness spoke [to the Chinese] through ...[not discernible] and ...[not discernible], “Please restrain. Some Tibetans who are thoughtless and totally ignorant about politics are indulging in this. I will advise them, calm them down and shall come there.” That is the advice [His Holiness] gave.

01:22:17

On account of this advice the Chinese refrained from attacking. In the meanwhile the 10th of March [Uprising] began. I do not know the exact dates but after three or four days we heard that the Nechung [oracle] ‘one of the main protector deities of Tibet and of the Dalai Lama’ was consulted who prophesied that it was imperative for His Holiness to leave immediately. The Nechung had in the past foretold “*Ra... kyi chuwo chenpola, de nga yi zampa gyap kyi yin, ...*[not discernible]’ that is well known. And then His Holiness decided on the journey. After His Holiness had left...

And then on the second level, perhaps it was on the 17th that His Holiness left and it was around the 20th, I am not sure of the date that the attack took place. When the attack took place, it began from the Norbulingka at 2 o’clock. Artilleries were fired at 2 o’clock in the night right upon the Norbulingka. After a while as [I] looked up at the top of the Potala Palace, perhaps the target was the Palace as shells fired from Northoelingka [park located in the upper part of Lhasa towards Gaden Monastery] were flying over the second floor of the Potala Palace. The shells should land near Ramoche of Lhasa—if one were to take a guess—but one could not see where they were falling. [The shells] were flying in the morning.

01:23:55

After this we...On the day following the artillery shelling—my quarters were located like this [facing the main road]—[I saw] Chinese army trucks come. The trucks came one after the other unendingly. As one passed by another appeared from beyond the mountains. The vehicles drove towards their camp called Dip in Lhasa. At that time I did not have much thought. The shelling had occurred in the morning and we wore protective amulets and then when the sun rose on Lhasa [I could see] directly from my quarters. The shelling came mainly from that side.

None of the shells landed on our *makhang* ‘protective deity shrine house.’ We believed the shells did not land because [of the power] of the protective deities. After sometime, 20 or 30 minutes later there was a series of firing. [A shell] landed there [points to right] in my

quarters, ricocheted and broke the windowpanes here [points to left] and the exploding shell formed a hole [points to ground on left]. Then it fell on the floor [points to ground on right] spinning. There was a small child that threw spit on it and it started smoking. [Laughs] That is how [the attack] began. [To interpreter] Please translate this.

Q: It wasn't glass or was it a piece of metal [that started smoking]?

#7B: It was metal. It was metal, a piece of broken shell. The shell had exploded and [the piece] was sort of with an angle. The shell hit the wall and then the window [pane] forming a hole and a few cracks around it. It was from the impact that had created a triangular [hole]. [The shell] ricocheted and formed a hole again [points to ground on right] and it was spinning.

Q: When you were watching this, all this going on what were you feeling? You were 29 years old, you are seeing your capital being attacked and shelled. What are you feeling inside?

01:29:53

#7B: Generally, strangely on my part it is nothing to do with spirituality but [I] was patient by nature and perhaps [I] did not realize, as my feeling was one of surprise and not of terror. It was not there. Some among the monks turned crazy, becoming totally oblivious. Such things occurred. I wondered if His Holiness was able to leave or not. We had heard the news about His Holiness leaving when we were in a prayer assembly. It was said that His Holiness had left in the night of the 17th.

We were in a prayer assembly session and at that time had not heard about His Holiness leaving. The disciplinarian was sitting there [points to left]. Our assembly hall is located beneath His Holiness' private residence. There is an eastern one [assembly hall] and a western one. The eastern one is located beneath His Holiness' private residence while there is an old story connected to the western prayer hall about the Regent Sangay Gyatso having...[not discernible] and where ceremonies are not held.

While [we] were sitting there, a man entered and approached the disciplinarian. The disciplinarian bowed and we, as children were observing. The disciplinarian was startled; [he] did this [straightens up with a jerk]. [I] wondered what it was. The disciplinarian got up and walked towards Kungo Lopon-la 'respectful term for spiritual master' and said something. Kungo Lopon-la [reacted] likewise. I used to visit the Kungo Lopon-la in the quarters regularly. As the disciplinarian started to speak Kungo Lopon-la was startled. [I] saw [his] expression.

01:31:33

[I] thought, "Oh, it looks like [His Holiness] has left. His Holiness has not remained." That is what I thought. After the prayer assembly ended I asked Kungo Lopon-la, "Earlier when the disciplinarian said something you seemed surprised. What has happened?" "Keep quiet. Keep quiet." [He] did not talk like [he] normally did. [He] kept it a secret and did not say anything. Then below us was a soldier whose wife is a relative of a monk called Baza-la. So the soldier talked about the matter though [I] did not hear everything. "His Holiness

seems to have left,” Baza-la remarked. I said, “Do not say such things. It cannot be true. Do not ever say such things.” Later it was true that [His Holiness] had left.

The officials remarked that... There was a ritual master abbot, an abbot of the monastery who served in the private residence of His Holiness. He had left and someone had to replace him. That is why the conversation had taken place and [we] came to learn of it. And then around three days later the attack began with the firing of artilleries. A great number of shells were fired and [the sound] was unbearably irritating. There was not much dread but irritation. One felt, “How irritating!” [I] did not feel that much of terror.

Q: And what happened to you? Tell us about the story from your eyes. What you saw.

01:35:23

#7B: And then there was nothing for us but to flee. We were on flight in the night. What was unusual was that behind the Potala Palace is a protective deity shrine house towards which Chinese tanks were moving. Should the tanks continue towards the protective deity shrine house, none fleeing from the Norbulingka and the Potala Palace could manage to escape. However, this [area] was vacated and we fled from there through the back of Sera [Monastery] into Lhoka. [We] faced food shortage along the way and begged throughout the journey until [we] reached Lhoka.

The *Chushi Gangdrug* [Defend Tibet Volunteer Force] was based in Lhoka. There were different kinds [of men] in the *Chushi Gangdrug*, some of whom were full of integrity and some that were not so, not taking responsibility and being the first to flee when the Chinese appeared but being oppressive when it came to the people. However, there were those like Andrug [Gonpo Tashi] and others that were incredibly... For instance when we fled and reached around Nyen, most of us planned to join the *Chushi Gangdrug*.

While buying hay at that time—[we] had begged and received horses—[the villagers] would not give us any hay saying, “The black Chenrezig ‘Avalokitesvara, the patron saint of Tibet’ is coming. This is to be offered to him.” Later [I] realized [they] meant it was to be offered to Andrug. Most of the people called [him] the Black Chenrezig and greatly... And then we came through the tribal region. Yes, through the tribal region. [I] believed we had not find anything to eat through the tribal region and wondered how to survive. One of our colleagues possessed six small bullets...no, 13 bullets. [We] hunted wild animals and survived. We were 13 people in a group including a cook serving in His Holiness private residence.

01:37:40

We contemplated... Then one day as we were across a bridge, a tribal child with a fair face and looking smart, who spoke a little bit of Tibetan and said, “Escapees come here. Escapees come here.” We went across the bridge and were told to line up. It was the first Indian Government... Thanks to the benevolence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; there inside a cave stood two big sacks and more seem to be coming. On reaching there we were a few people from *Chushi Gangdrug* and a group that consisted of Ada Wangyal and others. We lined up together on being told, “Escapees, stand in line.” [I] thought perhaps we were going to be given some task but were rationed two mugs of rice and a mug of sugar each.

There were no tasks. “You can leave and there are more on the way.” After every two posts there were Indian soldiers doling out food rations and then [we] reached a place called Daporijo [Arunachal Pradesh] in the tribal region, walking.

Q: So you arrived in India and were out of Tibet. How did that feel to have Tibet behind?

01:41:38

#7B: [Speaks before translation is complete] And then [we] arrived in Daporijo...at Daporijo the Indian Government had a plan. If one were an official of the government, one could have precedence in flying first. Non-government officials like ordinary people were to be sent later. There was such a plan. In general, the Indian Government had made very good arrangements of medicines for the sick and other assistances. It was extremely good. Since we were not used to it in Tibet, [we] were scared of injections and all Tibetans in Daporijo would run away at the sight of the doctor. [We] would hide yet they insisted. The food rations were very good though [we] could not get what [we] ate in Tibet. [We] received very good Indian [supplies] and felt very grateful.

At the time of our plane journey, there was an Indian at the border who had earlier visited Lhasa. There were others with me. We were all together. “What are you? Are you government officials?” “Yes, we have privileges of government officials.” “How do you have that?” he asked. “We are 170 monk officials, 170 lay officials and 170 monks of Namgyal Monastery. We are among His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s religious protective troops.” “Well, if that is so where are the Norbulingka and Potala Palaces located? Where is Lhasa?” he questioned. We replied, “We cannot give the [distance in] miles but approximately it is so and so from here to there. If Lhasa is in the east, the Potala Palace is located in the center. Next to it is Chakpori and below that is the Norbulingka.”

Since we did not mention Dekyilingka where he had lived, he asked, “What is located between the Norbulingka and the Potala Palace?” We remembered Bhashi, the aristocrat...Bhashi and Kundeling, which [we] mentioned. “Is that all?” he said. When he said “is that all” we became suspicious. Then [we] said, “There is a *lingka* ‘park’.” What is the *lingka* called?” “It is called Dekyilingka where the British used to live and later the Indians.” And finally [he] trusted [us] and we could go.

Then we were put in the plane. It was not a good plane. [I] do not know what is it with the air in [my] body but I wished the plane would crash. The air, the heart was rising and [I] felt, “[I] wish the plane would crash. It is better to die.” I felt so. Later it landed in Daporijo, in Assam. It was extremely hot in Daporijo. We had reached Daporijo and spent one night and the next day arrived in Mussoorie in a ship. Not Mussoorie...

Q: Missamari?

#7B: Assam.

Q: Missamari?

#7B: Missamari. Missamari. Yes, [we] arrived in Missamari.

Q: I think that's a good opportunity for us to maybe end this part of your very exciting and informative story and what I would like to do is to thank you for sharing your story with us and to ask one more time if this interview was shown in Tibet or China, would this be a problem for you?

01:48:19

#7B: I will have no problems.

Q: So we thank you very, very much for sharing your story with us. We've learned a great deal about the history of Tibet and especially through your eyes to have an experience of being there.

#7B: Okay. [Smiles]

01:48:58

[Discontinuity in video; Yeshe Tinlay stands in front of a large picture of the Potala Palace]

Q: Yeshe-*la*, what is that palace? Can you please say something about it?

#7B: Okay. The construction of this palace began during the time of His Holiness the great 5th Dalai Lama and had been built up to here [indicates half way] before [his] passing away. Later the Regent Sangay Gyatso completed the construction. There are two private residences of His Holiness, the eastern one and the western one. This [indicates top right of picture] is the eastern one while the western one is on the other side and cannot be seen from here. All the aristocrats attended assembly meetings and regular ceremonies here. It is here that [they] arrive before attending office.

Then the prayer assembly hall of the Namgyal Monastery is located here [points to the middle of building]. Our protective deity is a female deity called Palden Lhamo. The monk assembly gathered for prayers here and at times ceremonies are held both in the west and east halls. This is the west one [indicates red part of building] and the east is located inside and cannot be seen here. During such times His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived.

Within these [indicates central part of red building] windows are *kusungthukten* 'sacred objects symbolic of enlightened body, speech and mind' and *kyilkhor* 'mandalas' that are ornamented with unimaginable turquoises and corals. Such *kyilkhor* are housed here. And here [indicates top part of red building] are the deity shrines and assembly halls for *Phurpa* 'the tantric deity Vajra' prayers. These here [indicates lower part of red building] are wide within but no one in particular lives there. Except for hermits no one lives here.

01:51:02

These here [indicates central part of white building] are the government's storehouses. The Great Storehouse belongs to the government and the Small Storehouse to His Holiness the Dalai Lama that contained all offerings made to His Holiness. There were great quantities of boxes of tea. We talk about *bakchung* 'small brick tea' that are only of this size [indicates 9 inches] whereas *bakchung* of the past were this size [indicates 18 inches] and stamped with gold and silver seals. Such were stored in there. Whenever these were removed, we

would get pieces of this size [indicates palm size] during Losar ‘Tibetan New Year’ and the color of tea and taste was incomparable. [I] heard that after the attack the Chinese took away everything and rendered them empty. Those were the storehouses.

And at the time of the attack this storehouse [points to lower central part of white building] contained guns. These were guns of the English period stored here in the past and when the monks came, [the guns] were procured from here. And these [indicates right part of building] are our monastery’s monks’ quarters. These are the new quarters that were constructed during the previous reincarnation, during the time of the 13th Dalai Lama. The 13th Dalai Lama built the *dhungden* [?] and then [the monks’ quarters]. These are the old ones, the monks’ quarters of Namgyal Monastery. The standard number of monks is 175 with His Holiness at the head.

01:52:44

These [points to left buildings on ground level] are the libraries where there are the scriptures. Then the Military Headquarters is located here [points to right building on ground level]. In the past a stone pillar was located here. The Chinese were there in these two [points to right building on ground level] that is recorded in history. Within here [points to inside of compound wall] is a stone pillar just like the one there, a stone pillar. A stone pillar is located here.

Q: What did you witness [during the attack]?

01:55:25

#7B: The Chinese fired cannons at the Potala Palace from the front of the palace where there was a military base in Dip. The shelling began at the time of sunrise from the military base. The first assault took place on the middle [of the Palace]. And when this part [points to central part of white building] of the palace was being targeted, I was in the quarters here [points to right of building] facing this way. When artilleries were fired, the shells exploded here [points close to the palace] but did not hit it. In my mind [I] thought it wonderful that the shells were not hitting the palace. However, 10-15 minutes later another round took place and it hit here [points to central part of white building]. The white part was hit. A little while later the red part was hit. Later it was said that it looked like the palace was on fire and the building was not visible. Everything turned red.

However, the wooden parts of the windows started to drop while nothing happened to the walls, and none of the parts fell. One reason was the wide foundation of the palace. For instance, the base of the foundation is this wide [gestures off camera] and the top of the palace walls are this thick [gestures off camera] due to which [the palace] did not suffer any damage. Later it started to crack here [points to lower red part of building]. Perhaps it has been repaired or something. The [crack] was this wide [indicates around three inches]. It was not to be seen later, so perhaps they [the Chinese] repaired it. When we were there I saw it and so did some others. There are monks that have escaped here who saw it too. And then we fled, fled in the night. [We] fled on the third day.

END OF INTERVIEW