

Tibet Oral History Project

**Interview #7C/24B, Part 1 – Arjia Rinpoche
June 10, 2013**

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TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #7C/24B, Part 1
2. Interviewee: Arjia Rinpoche
3. Age: 62
4. Date of Birth: 1950
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Dhashae
7. Province: Dhoday (Amdo)
8. Year of leaving Tibet: 1998
9. Date of Interview: June 10, 2013
10. Place of Interview: Tibetan Center for Compassion and Wisdom, Mill Valley, California, USA
11. Length of Interview: 2 hr 01 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter:
14. Videographer: Tony Sondag
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen

Biographical Information:

Arjia Lobsang Thupten Jigme Gyatso, known as Arjia Rinpoche, was born in 1950 in Amdo. He talks about his Mongolian and Tibetan heritage and fondly remembers his childhood days. He recalls how he was recognized as the reincarnation of the 7th Arjia Rinpoche at the age of 2 and describes in detail his life in the Kumbum Monastery as a reincarnate lama, and the responsibilities and privileges that go with it.

Arjia Rinpoche talks about the drastic changes that came with the Chinese occupation. His life of privilege ended abruptly with the imprisonment of his teacher and entire staff. He was sent to a Chinese school for a few years and then was fortunate to be taken to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Lhasa. When the Cultural Revolution began he was sent back to Kumbum to work in the fields with the other disrobed monks. He describes the Panchen Lama's initial influence over the Chinese, his patriotism and how the Chinese denounced him subsequently.

After the death of Chairman Mao, Arjia Rinpoche met the first Tibetan delegation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that visited Tibet in 1980. As religious freedom improved he was appointed Chairman of the Buddhist Association and visited many monasteries in Tibet. He explains the struggle to re-open monasteries and re-establish the system of reincarnated lamas.

Topics Discussed:

Amdo, childhood memories, monastic life, Cultural Revolution, oppression under Chinese, brutality/torture, Panchen Lama, destruction of monasteries, forced labor.

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Age: 62, Sex: Male

Interviewer: Marcella Adamski

Interview Date: June 10, 2013

[Interviewee speaks in English. No interpreter required.]

Question: Tashi Delek.

Interviewee #7C: [Nods]

Q: Please tell us your name.

00:00:15

#7C: My name is Arjia. People call me Arjia Rinpoche. My official name is Arjia Lobsang Thupten Jigme Gyatso.

Q: Rinpoche-*la* [respectful term for a respected lama], could we begin by asking you when you were born, what date and what place?

#7C: Okay, so I was born in 1950, September 21st in Amdo, Tibet, Amdo. It's a nomad place in Mongolian tribe; Tibetan name called Dhashae—Dhashae *dewa*, which means Dhashae tribe. In Mongolian it is called Pase hosho. Yeah, that is my birthplace. Really nearby the Kumbum also there's a very beautiful blue lake people call Tso Ngonpo in Tibetan, [Dhashae is] nearby this lake; in Mongolian [Tso Ngonpo is] called Kokonor.

Q: Can you describe some of the memories of your childhood?

#7C: Yes, definitely. Usually in Tibet when a family has children, they are willing to send them to a monastery to be a monk, one of them, you know or a nun. So that's the age usually around 7, 8, 9 [or] 10. However, mine is very different. When I was 2, I went to monastery because they considered me as a reincarnation. Then I went to monastery with my parents. I was the 7th Arjia Rinpoche's reincarnation. Seventh Arjia Rinpoche is the abbot of Kumbum [and is] also considered as Lama Tsongkhapa's [founder of the Gelug tradition] father's reincarnation. So the Arjia officially in Tibetan language in our place is father, you know. So [I am the] reincarnation of him and then I went to monastery with my parents, then also with my two older brothers. I have a big family.

Q: How many were in your family?

00:02:47

#7C: We have 11 brothers and sisters. I'm the number nine. [Laughs] So two of my older brothers, in our [line up of] brothers and sisters, they are [among the] younger. They are with me and we grew up in the monastery. We have a lot of wonderful stories I still can remember.

Q: Can you tell us one story?

#7C: Sure, sure, sure. You know when I come to Kumbum [Monastery], I stayed in Arjia Rinpoche's *ladang*, which means Arjia Rinpoche's, you know like residence which is a big mansion, maybe 200 rooms in that house. Then [there's a] beautiful, beautiful Buddha's shrine and you know, lots of people serving me. Then I have my own tutor and my own cook and assistants and a bunch of people playing with us like kids, you know. Anyway, so I grew up in that kind of background. Then because I am a reincarnation I have to get special education. So I have several tutors. Then an interesting story I would like to share.

00:04:19

My teacher is the...Mr. Norbu or Professor Norbu who is His Holiness' [the Dalai Lama's] older brother's teacher. So His Holiness' older brother Taktse Rinpoche—in Kumbum we call him Taktse Rinpoche—so Taktse Rinpoche left Tibet in 1950 because the Chinese Communist come. When he left, our you know *nangchen*, which means like our people, you know like from our residence invited Lhaksam Gegen, which is my teacher's name, to our residence to be my teacher; before he was the Taktse Rinpoche's teacher. So then I study with him.

Then in 1958, I will tell the story separately, but that time the whole thing changed. Then he [teacher] went to jail because [of] the Chinese' Great Leap Forward. Then he came back and he passed away. So I have his relics, you know like ashes [that] I kept. Then [in] 1980 because of the Chinese policies little bit changed, so that is why Mr. Norbu or Taktse Rinpoche [was] allowed to come back. He came back and visited Kumbum Monastery. Then I explained the story. He knew, you know, [that] after he left, his teacher became my teacher. So then we are kind of [shared the] same teacher. The age is different; I am much younger. Anyway then I gave little relics to him. He said, "Oh, that's great. I'm building a stupa, *chorten* in Bloomington, Indiana. I am going to place this in my *chorten*."

00:06:28

Then he did and after so many years I came to the United States. And [in] 2005, actually 2006, His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] asked me to [be] in charge [of] his center in Bloomington. Then I have to move to Indiana from California. [Laughs] So anyway, then I went there. I saw that stupa and then I right away, I remember, "Oh, 30 years ago Taktse Rinpoche visited Kumbum. I offered some...you know, my teacher's ash or relics. Now the stupa is here." That's a kind of little something story very interesting to me, you know like a coincidence. So I always remember that.

Q: Thank you. Beautiful coincidence and story, maybe your life has lots of interesting phenomenon like that. I just wanted to go back a little bit. You grow up in a very large family. Your parents, they were nomads or farmers and can you tell me...?

#7C: Nomads.

Q: What was their life situation like? You went to the monastery at age 2 but you've heard stories. What was their life like before you went to the monastery?

#7C: That's many background there. My parents are nomads, so my father is...you know, our family...The life condition is just an average life, not really rich or very poor; so, normal. You know in our place the Tibetans and the Mongolians live together. So my grandfather is a Tibetan; he is a Tibetan ex-monk, I guess. He went to our monastery; he loved this place, then he stayed. Then he became my grandfather, you know. My father is half [Tibetan] and half [Mongolian]. So to me it's one-third. I am one-third Tibetan and one...two, let me see, one-fourth Tibetan and three-quarters Mongolian. So that's the kind of combination, you know. That's the kind of family thing. So anyway, they are nomads.

00:09:00

So then the reincarnation thing, the monastery sent some monks they call the research group. They came to search for me. They come to our nomads tribe. Then they find my name and other kids' names. Then they report those names to the 10th Panchen Lama. That time the 10th Panchen Lama stayed in Kumbum Monastery since he was very young. Anyway then finally the Panchen Lama decided me as the reincarnation of the 8th Arjia Rinpoche. So then I moved to Kumbum but they [parents] are still in their place, so then we have...Because the nomads, we live in Mongolian *ger* not Tibetan tents. It's a Mongolian *ger*.

Q: Can you describe what a Mongolian *ger* looks like?

#7C: Yeah, Mongolian *ger*, they have a very unique wooden structure around a wall that's all integrated [interlocks fingers] like sticks, like that. Then they have small beams that go just like the sun shining, you know like round, big round one in the middle. Then the little beams attached around and to the wall. Then covered by very thick, you know like felt, right? So then that keep [it] warm.

Inside has...middle of the area has a fire. So that's the fire for light and cook and warmth and everything, heater you know. Then around the *ger*, the people are going to stay. Usually there's a door coming in, right side [of which] is the kitchen area. So that's area you can't go. Then the left side is, you know like family gathering place. Across that fire in front of the door there, that's the guest, you know important place. Guests, honored guests and everyone can sit there. So, that's the kind of Mongolian *ger*.

Q: About how large would that Mongolian *ger* be?

00:11:39

#7C: That's pretty big, some of them pretty big. Maybe bigger than a small guest [room], you know living room.

Q: Bigger than a living room, average living room like 12x12, bigger than that.

#7C: Something like that. Maybe 20 feet diameter, maybe 20 feet, 25 maybe something like that. So, that's the kind of, you know, our living condition. Then also they herd animals. Every family might have 50-100 or several hundred sheep; they also have yaks; yaks, maybe 30-40 yaks, then maybe 10-20 horses. Some places have camels but [in] our place we do not have camels. So, those are kind of, you know the...

Q: You were so little when you went. You were 2 years old when you went to the monastery. So were you able to go back and see your family and be in that area from time to time? Did you watch them grow up, some of your brothers and sisters?

00:13:02

#7C: Supposedly, yes, but not me, you know. I didn't have the chance to visit my family since I was 7. I just visit one time, which was my first time and the last time. Then I visited my home because before that my position [was such that] if I go back to my hometown it's a big deal, you know. The monastery has to make big arrangements, the village has to do something, the tribes have to do something. So that's maybe because people [were] thinking about that and I didn't have the chance to visit my home but at 7, I visited once. So I enjoy that very much.

Q: Did you?

#7C: Yes. We rode horses from our monastery to our family. It takes 2-3 years on the road. Actually just one year...oh, 2-3 days I mean. Yeah, 2-3 days. Actually it just takes one day to get there but because we were [on a] kind of summer vacation.

Q: Having fun.

00:14:16

#7C: Yeah, having fun. When I went to my hometown, lots of people gathered there. Then lots of children come together; then we all played. You know the kids are playing, the elders are staying [in] *ger* and chatting, like that. My tutor and my housekeeper and my assistants and cook and everyone went together. So we have a big group, maybe 20 or so people together, yeah.

Q: When would you say at what age did the realization that you were seen and recognized as a special reincarnation? When do you think that occurred to you or did you feel like you grew up sort of accepting that?

#7C: Yeah, I think so. I think that way. I think that way but usually around 6, 7, I have this feeling because they train me always like reincarnation. Reincarnations have special responsibilities. They have to greet people; you know when some special guests come and visit. Then some occasion you have to say something.

Even [though] you are young, you have that position. You must say some prayers or lead some chanting or you might say something, you know whenever they make some decision;

you have to say it. So that's kind of thing I have; that's special responsibility. That has occurred to me like "I'm special" you know something like that.

Q: Yes, something different.

00:16:07

#7C: Yes. So then that's also my life is different than others.

Q: ...than the others in the monastery?

#7C: Yes.

Q: ...than the other students that were your age?

#7C: Right. I was born in 1950 I mentioned, right? In 1958 big thing happened in our monastery. That time our monastery had almost 2,000-3,000 monks there.

Q: Before you get into that, that's what I wanted to understand. Where are these 2,000 monks coming from? You're talking about a monastery in a very wide and unpopulated area aside from the nomads. So, where are these monks coming from? Who supports financially the monastery? How do you survive in terms of food and other needs? Can you talk a little bit about the functioning of the monastery even though I know you were young; you must have witnessed some of that?

00:17:08

#7C: Sure, sure. That's a big question. If we discuss that maybe [it] take a very long time but I will make them shorter, okay? So in Tibet we have different monasteries. Small monasteries, every village has one. That's just like a, you know, church in a town, so we call them Manikhang. Then the bigger monasteries, like every county has one, maybe. So several hundred people or 50, 20, 50 monks live there. So that mostly serves the village. When something happens to village people like somebody passed away or somebody has to say some prayers or somebody [is] ill or some ceremony or something, they serve those things.

Then the bigger monasteries we call monastic universities. That's like, you know. [at] provincial level [and] so every province has one. The monks are from all over the area. For instance, Kumbum is one of the biggest monasteries. That's also related to some kind of background. Our monastery was the Lama Tsongkhapa's birthplace. Lama Tsongkhapa is the founder of Gelugpa tradition, which is His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama and those tradition. Then the monastery has several thousand...we used to have 7,000 monks.

Q: Seven thousand at Kumbum?

00:18:47

#7C: Seven thousand at Kumbum. One western missionary went there; that time that's in [the] 1800's. They had 7,000 monks. Usually they have 3,600 monks. So that large [number

of] monks stay there. The main purpose is study. They have, you know, studying program just like the universities. They have different grades and they have different classes and take time to, you know, study and the curriculums and everything just like set up by a school.

Then the how—who's going to support them and how they survive because around this area are villages. All [the] villages support the monastery. That's usually in our tradition they establish a monastery at a certain county and certain area. They all come together and set up a monastery in that middle area, so that the village can send the monks to the monastery to study. The village will support that monastery.

Q: The monasteries were often...The wish to have a monastery arose from the people themselves or at least in terms of their providing support for it?

#7C: Exactly.

Q: Because there's a lot of criticism of monastic life in Tibet by critics such as the Chinese who say that the monasteries were taking advantage of the people or subjugating the people. So, I'd like to know from the inside how did you feel the monasteries were held by the people in the community?

00:20:40

#7C: Yeah, that's really told the truth. They criticize that [because] they have some reason. They've not just...like out of nothing to say or something...No, they have some reason. In the very beginning because the local people needed that monastery and they supported [because] their sons have to send to monastery to study, become educated like that. That's why they gave to have that monastic university in this area. When they settle down that monastery, then all the local people [continue] supporting them. Then they grow up, bigger and bigger.

Of course, the village people, they don't have the ability to help the monastery. Then the monasteries have big, you know, lamas and very important reincarnations they become very famous. Then they have students all over the place, maybe even in Mongolia or in far away China or somewhere. So then the teacher goes to those very places, give teachings and talks and initiations and so forth. They will have those students following them. They can come to the monastery to stay, so that's why one point I mentioned the Rinpoche's, you know, the high lama's house is as big as a mansion.

When I was young I was playing [in] those places, empty rooms, lots. They all are empty, nothing there. Then I was wondering what's this for, you know? What's this for? Who is staying here? Then later I found out those are guesthouses. During the big ceremonies, you know the patrons or the owners, the sponsors from different places; they have to [have a place to] stay. So they provide this place to stay. When they stay they make donation for the monastery; they make donation for the Rinpoche. So, in that case they will support the monastery.

00:22:52

That depends on the high lamas. [If] the high lama is very qualified and studied well and [is] very famous, then that's wonderful. If sometimes, you know, people always can't make even, right? So some of them maybe lose their sponsors; maybe they behave not well or whatever something happens, the housekeepers, they have to go somewhere to find the sponsor. They have to ask some donations. So those are later on, the Chinese Government criticize you know, "You go and you just give the burden to the local people." You know, kind of take away their money or value or something. So that's the reason they criticize.

Q: Thank you. I see. Did any Mongolian or many Mongolians and Chinese attend Kumbum for education in the Buddhist tradition?

#7C: Mongolians, yes, but that time in [the] 1950's and earlier, I don't think there were lots of Chinese but lots of Mongolians. For instance, I mentioned the...you know, in our monastery almost we have 3,000 monks; maybe one-fourth are Mongolians. Yeah, they're from Inner Mongolia, from Mongolia now they call the Republic of Mongolia, you know.

Q: That was when you were living there?

#7C: Yes.

Q: About one-quarter people from Mongolia?

#7C: Yes.

Q: Rinpoche-*la*, it sounds like the...that period in the monastery from [age] 2 on was somewhat tranquil but exciting and you were learning and many, many...having access to many good teachers, etc. When did your life begin to change in the monastery? How old are you and what happens?

00:24:57

#7C: Age of 8, age of 8, which is 1958; it's a big change. My life [turned] almost upside down. So, what's happened? There's a political, you know, movement or political campaign occur to our monastery. There was the Chinese Government, the Chinese Communist Government; they change the policy. Before that they allowed the Tibetans to say prayers and do the, you know, practice and do whatever they have traditional thing. They allowed [the Tibetans] to do but then in 1958...I would like to share one story, very fascinating story.

When I was very young I'm studying sutras and so forth with my teacher like that. Then people came to ask, they have to kind of make an appointment, you know. An assistant come and will report if somebody is coming and so forth. Then the teacher say, "No, no, no, that's not a good time" or later or they have a [fixed] time.

So one day four people come in, one of them wearing a robe and three of them just wearing civilian clothes. They came in. They said a lot but I can't understand. I feel like those people [are] a little bit rude, you know. They didn't make that kind of appointment and

you know, greetings to the teacher. They come and like saying something loudly. Then my teacher just said, "Say yes. Say yes." And then I have to say, "Oh, yeah. Yes, yes, yes." Then they kind of *huh* laughing like that. Then they left.

00:26:47

So then starting that time my teacher and the others, they are kind of worried, you know like worried. They are showing that sad face. You know, anyway then the next day, next morning we went to a big meeting. Before the meeting my teacher told me, "Boy"—he always told me "boy"—I'm 8 years old. "Now you have to take care of your life on your own. What's going to happen, we don't know. Starting today, you have to believe in the karma. The karma is the most important cause and effect. Don't do bad things. Don't do something against your conscience, like do bad things. You always have to protect, you know, worship the three jewels and protectors, by your own." That's his message and then we left.

Then we went to a...there's a big courtyard. Every monastery almost has; that's [where] all monks gather there and doing New Year's party and big prayers and the debating and the *cham* dancing and those kind of things happen there. So [in] our monastery I mentioned, you know we have 3 or 4,000 monks we used to have, so that's why a big courtyard, courtyard. Then all monks gathered there on the ground, [including] myself.

00:28:27

Then there's a stage area. Usually we stay on the stage area, the abbot and high lamas [but] not that day. That day they [the Chinese] set up a table. On the table, you know all Chinese officials sitting there. They have a big banner all in Chinese. We can't read what they said. They all are wearing a kind of you know, like blue Mao suits and some of them are soldiers, you know military person; all of them with guns. They are sitting on the stage. All monks are sitting on the ground, like all 2-3,000 monks gathered there. Then other soldiers, they are with machine guns and they are on the roof and they surround us like that, but I'm not scared because I've never seen that kind of thing before. [Smiles] What's the difference, right?

So then everybody is serious. They are really quiet. Then one of the leaders, a Chinese leader stands up and give a talk. He said something...They put big speakers, very loud. He said something very strong, almost kind of yelling at. So then he was saying something. After...I don't know, after 30 minutes or so then his talk is over. Then one guy, somewhere he stands up and [raises right fist] shouting slogan. The slogan later on we learned, it said, "Time to uncover the feudalism, time to you know, uncover the...Time to reform the religion, time to revenge" or so forth.

00:30:26

Then after a few slogans, then everyone has to follow him [raises right fist] and say that loudly. Then say it several times and, oh, the sound is *wong, wong* [reverberating] like that...very scared. Then some soldiers with guns and some trained village people and plus monks with big ropes; they come to our group. Then they arrest one monk from our group. Then tied [puts hands behind back] him up; then started beating him. He was the former abbot. He's an elder like 60 or so. Then he can't handle it. He never happened...that kind

of thing in his life. He started crying. He can't handle it. They tied him very tight, you know.

So then they started beating with...like some sticks and something, some whips or something, you know. They started beating him. Then maybe after 10 more minutes maybe, they started shouting the slogans. They come to the monks; our crowd and then they arrest the others. That day they arrested maybe 500 monks. So my teacher, my tutor, my cook and assistant, everyone's gone that day. They all went to jail, directly went to jail. Later they [the jailed monks] said that they [the Chinese] sent 30 or 50 big trucks [that were] waiting for them outside the monastery. Then they arrested them and they went to a big truck and directly went to a city to a jail.

00:32:26

So then starting that day, when I came back—usually you know, I mean in that residence I said that, you know, they treated me very high because I'm the abbot of Kumbum...treated [me] as a little king, but after that nobody is with me. So when I came back my room is already occupied by some strangers. Then I don't know where I should go. I don't know where I get the food. Then maybe I cried a little bit, you know. Then I'm just playing; there's a big courtyard there, you know [at] my residence. Then around evening one older monk came and, you know, adopted me. So that is a big change.

Starting that day the monks cannot wear the robes, no more practice and no more prayers. Everything they [the Chinese] called religious reform because all religion is considered as poison; they stop. All high lamas are arrested and went to jail and some of them, most of them passed away. Some of them, they stayed in jail like 20 years. So my parents, same thing happened to my parents but later we know, but that time I don't know...Same time almost, you know they [the Chinese] come to every place, every Tibetan [place], China, everywhere just like that.

00:33:59

So they [the Chinese] came to our village and they had the kind of same meeting. Then they arrested my father because my father was a high lama's father. So, that's the reason. Otherwise, he's just a nomad. Then he went to jail. He never came back. He passed away in jail. That's a kind of a little sad story. You know when I recall; in my family they almost arrested 29 people. My parents, my you know, my father and my tutor and my uncle and lots of people. So that's something I would like to share.

Q: What a tragic ending to a beautiful monastic life. So what were you and the other monks feeling at that time? Can you remember how you felt; you were only at that point...?

#7C: Eight.

Q: Eight years old. Do you know, I mean this very nice older monk adopted you, meaning he was going to keep an eye on you?

#7C: Yes.

Q: And so maybe you could continue with the story. What happens then and what were you feeling?

00:35:12

#7C: After that I guess 90 percent [of the] people are scared. Of course, they are worried and sad; they are scared mostly because the worry is they [the Chinese] might arrest them. They might have something to arrest them. You know, even they arrest you, arrest, that's worse [but] we didn't know that. So that time even people kind of complaining [to] each other, they might say, "They're going to arrest you," like that. Then afterwards the monks have to forcefully disrobe [and] work in the fields. I was sent to a Chinese school. [I] became a Chinese student.

Q: Where?

#7C: In town, at town Kumbum, near Kumbum. Near Kumbum is a big town called Huangdong County. Yes, so I was in that Chinese school. So those are [the] kind of stories. [Smiles]

Q: If you went to Chinese school, were you expected to speak Chinese and were the other students Chinese or were they Tibetans? Tell us a little bit about that school.

00:36:22

#7C: I don't think there is...There were a few Tibetans there, maybe few Tibetans there. Most of them were local Chinese people there; they were Chinese students.

Q: A city near Kumbum where the majority were Chinese?

#7C: Majority is Chinese. That's actually near Kumbum. Kumbum is a very, you know, special area [located on the] edge of Tibet and edge of China. So mostly the local people are Chinese. Some of them are Tibetan tribes like that but they can't speak Tibetan because of influence from China. There are lots of Muslims around our area, too. When I was sent to a Chinese school, all speak Chinese. You have to study Chinese. Then we have to cut our robes and wear it...kind of making [it] as a Chinese... like Mao suits. And wearing them [I] went to school.

Q: You didn't know how to speak Chinese at that time.

#7C: No.

Q: What was the school like for you? Just tell me a little bit about...?

00:37:37

#7C: In the school, you know, we went there; we studied. I'm [at the] age of 8, so that's not too big for school. Then some of the other monks...I guess I remember seven of us sent from the monastery. Some of them little older like 13 or something. Otherwise, [we were] almost the same age. Then we studied Chinese and speaking Chinese very quick, you know because [we were] kids.

Q: Smart.

#7C: Yeah. Anyway, [in] our place they speak local Chinese, though. So that's why [it was] easier for everyone.

Q: How does your life progress then between 8...what happens in the next eight years?

#7C: Another eight years has lots of back and forth. I can't really complete all the story in several minutes. After that, right after that, starting 1959-62, our place had a very big tragedy, which we call famine, big famine. Actually not the famine though because there's a political movement, so people [have] no food. They don't have...we don't have food to eat. We eat green grass. We eat green grass. We eat very terrible things. So wood, sometimes maybe like shoes, that kind of thing. Then lots of people died. I don't know the number. I don't know the number.

Q: What year?

00:39:08

#7C: That was, you know my 10-12, 9-12. Yeah, starting 1959 to '62. So, that all happened. That time I'm going to a school but monks work in the fields like they do hard labor as a farmer. Afterwards then the situation slowly eased because [of] the Panchen Lama. Not only the Panchen Lama because the Chinese Government had little bit...[not discernible]. You know some liberals say, "We have to change the position" and some of them say no. Afterwards the liberals win, so that's why the situation little bit eased.

Q: Could you explain what the Panchen Lama is?

#7C: The Panchen Lama, actually the Chinese Government's expectation is when [in] 1959 the Dalai Lama left, escaped, the Panchen Lama [was] still in China. They [the Chinese] will train or ask him to, order him to say something good for, only good for the Chinese Government, so even criticize the Dalai Lama. That was their expectation. However, when Panchen Lama grew up, [he was] totally different. He's very strongly supporting and not only supporting, he's preserving Tibetan religion and culture.

00:41:01

When he came to our monastery in 1962 we had a big meeting. On that meeting...conference, kind of conference we had. On this conference he asked [the] monks to say something because that time monks are already afraid; they can't say anything. They just say, "Oh, the government is wonderful and wonderful. The policy is wonderful." Then he said, "It seems to me you all have some kind of worry behind you. You don't need to [be] scared. You don't need to worry. You just tell what's happened to your monastery. What's happened to your life?" Then somebody started crying and they told what sad stories happened to their, you know, history and how many monks were arrested and then the monastery was terrible and no more practice and so forth.

That time, actually the Panchen Lama was doing a kind of research for the Tibetan area [to know] what's happened. His idea is he's going to write a big report and report to the Chinese Government to change their policy because "your so-called policy for the Chinese ethnic groups, that's wrong." That he did.

Then that time, you know, two other...myself and another young Rinpoche, we went to Lhasa, to Tashi Lhunpo [Monastery] to study. So that's a little better, gap you know, the sun shining from the out breaking clouds. We had a little chance to, [we] went to Tashi Lhunpo to study with Panchen Lama and some other monks there. Then just three years or four years, then the situation has changed again. So then the...

Q: Excuse me, but what year did you go to Lhasa to study? How old were you?

#7C: Twelve. I was 12, maybe '62.

Q: So if you were 12 in '62, His Holiness has left, Lhasa has been obviously attacked...

#7C: Four to five years.

Q: ...and under terrible conditions. I just wanted to understand something, when you went to that Chinese school, when you were that young boy, did you come back to the monastery to live?

#7C: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Could you talk to us like what were the conditions in the monastery because people who weren't there have no idea what the conditions, how they changed or deteriorated? Can you describe what happened from the time you were out of the school and then would come back to live?

00:44:01

#7C: Yeah. That time actually all monasteries are closed, not destroyed, not destroyed. That was 1958. Because they're closed, they consider the monasteries as, you know place for the feudalism and for the, you know religion as poison. So that's why they're closed. Then all monasteries...you know all belongings they [the Chinese] confiscated, like the wealth; like you know, money or material or food or everything the government take away.

Q: What happened to the...any of the sacred teachings...?

#7C: Scared teachings they [the Chinese] stored. They put them in storage. They put them [in storage] in the monastery. You can't have Buddha's alter. They just take them down [from the alters] and put them [in] like boxes or like, you know, somewhere.

Q: And what about sacred texts?

00:45:01

#7C: The sutra? All same thing; they put them...

Q: They put them away. They didn't destroy?

#7C: They put them away; they didn't destroy. They didn't bring them down.

Q: Hmm.

#7C: That was 1958. Then [in] all the monasteries the monks have to disrobe. Then they disrobe. They stay together living in the monastery. They [the Chinese did] not allow the monks to go away. Some of them, they come and pick some of them up to send to a school. Some of them became like workers or at factories or somewhere they pick up some but most monks are staying in the monastery. They allowed them to marry but not... They didn't destroy the monastery that time [in] 1958. So then we all [are] working in the fields, the monks. They [the monks] come back [and] stay in the monastery.

00:45:54

No more practice, no more prayers, anything. Even the Buddhas and everything, they put them away, in somewhere. So all Buddha's room became big storage. They piled up like big things, like you know, containers or some food or something but not Buddha's shrine. During the Cultural Revolution they [the Chinese] start to destroy them.

Q: That was later.

00:46:25

#7C: That's almost 10 years later.

Q: We'll talk about that next. So in a way the heart of the monastery was taken out.

#7C: Yes.

Q: Repressed or hidden.

#7C: Exactly.

Q: And it was like living in a shell in some ways...

#7C: Exactly, exactly.

Q: ...if you couldn't pray, you couldn't gather as monks, you couldn't do any kind of ceremonies.

#7C: Yeah.

Q: Were the people depressed or upset?

00:46:49

#7C: Oh, of course. I say, the first thing, 90 percent [of the] people [are] scared. They are all scared, “What’s going to happen next?” You know they don’t know; we don’t know what’s going to happen. So that’s why they’re very scared.

Q: Your teacher said something, “remember karma.”

#7C: Yes.

Q: So was there any talk among the monks of “is this related to our karma? Why is this happening to us?”

#7C: Because that’s happened due to karma. Of course, some of them according to our teachings, you know that’s karma; karma made this happen but his message is “you have to be careful” because some of the trained monks, they went crazy. They start like denounce the elders and they do the bad things. So, that’s why his message is, “You have to behave well. Don’t do bad things. That’s going to accumulate bad karma. So you have to be, you know, [maintain] kind of nice conscience and self-discipline.” Like self-discipline, like that’s his message later I remember.

Q: Do you think there was any particular reason why some of the monks went mad or crazy as you said and decided to become mouth pieces or instruments of the Chinese? Do you have any sense of why people would have done that?

00:48:16

#7C: That’s...of course, everywhere that can happen because there are several reasons. Most of them, they’re afraid. If they [the Chinese] ask, “You have to denounce somebody;” they have to. Otherwise, they might affect that person. So, they’re scared. Secondly, some of them, they are brainwashed. So, they [are] just like, “Oh great, I should do that.”

So [there are] lots of reasons. That’s why mostly the young people did this. Elders are better. So then when afterwards, that’s after, after that everything changed, the young people are better [and] the elders are worse because the elders are so scared. They are kind of you know, like conserve for something. They can’t say bad; they can’t say good; they just say something quiet, you know.

Q: They felt very vulnerable.

#7C: Yes.

Q: So you’re going to school; you’re coming back to the monastery at night to live there and then what’s the next big change for you?

#7C: Then I went to Lhasa, Tashi Lhunpo to study. Then almost the same thing I just mentioned to you happened again in my life. That’s called the Education Movement or something they call the Communist Education Movement. That time the Chinese...Oh, the Panchen Lama himself became counter revolutionary. So they put him in jail and arrested

him. Then the whole monastery changed again. Before, the Panchen Lama [was] protected, so the monastery in Lhasa, in Tashi Lhunpo they are allowed to practice and so forth. Afterwards, then no, nothing.

Q: For people who don't know, can you explain the role of the Panchen Lama within the Tibetan tradition? Who was he? They know the Dalai Lama but they don't always know about the Panchen Lama.

00:50:28

#7C: Yes, yes. The Panchen Lama...the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, the Tibetan people will describe both of them as sun and moon. So, one is sun [and] one is moon. Of course, Panchen Lama is [the] moon; compared to the sun it's little bit less but still, you know like two spiritual leaders in their mind. So, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama left, then the Panchen Lama act as the Dalai Lama. Also the government, the Chinese Government, you know offer him such high position at that time. That's why he can officially go this way and he also personally protect and support the dharma in Tibetan culture, yeah.

Q: How did he become a counter revolutionary?

#7C: Because of another political campaign. The political campaign is the preparation for the Cultural Revolution. After that, then they [the Chinese] that time, they arrested lots of Chinese officials too because the Chinese officials, I'm assuming they had different ideas in between. You know some of them are crazy [and] some of them liberal. They said, "We shouldn't do that because that way the country can develop; the people can become rich" or whatever. Then some of them said "No, no, no, that's not Communist. That's capitalist." That's why they have a kind of controversy in between. Then later the Cultural Revolution started. Then the liberal officials plus those, you know, lamas and priests all became very bad people.

Q: I just want to ask how did you...When things eased up you were allowed to travel to Lhasa to study...

#7C: Yes.

Q: How did you get from Kumbum Monastery to...?

00:52:34

#7C: Actually that's easy because you know, [in] olden days it take years and years to get there, right? No, no because I was [with the] Panchen Lama. Then there's a special jet from Xining, which is capital of Amdo to Lhasa; supposedly to Lhasa but you know, that time still we are half way down and we stop there. Then we [travel by] cars, you know. We buy cars and we ride cars.

Q: So you were with the Panchen Lama?

#7C: With [the] Panchen Lama.

Q: In what role were you accompanying him?

#7C: [The] Panchen Lama and [the] Panchen Lama's entourage, then a bunch of Chinese officials because he is a very high official in China that time. Then there's another very high Tibetan official called Ngabo Ngawang Jigme. He just passed away, you know some time ago. He was the one of the four important like Prime Ministers under...you know, ministers under the Tibetan Government. He's one of them, *kalon* [minister]. Four *kalon* [make up the] *kashag* [cabinet]. So he's one of the [members] of *kashag*.

[There was] a lot of criticism for him because he, you know, kind of initially contacted the Chinese in 19...early '50s or something. Anyway, that person was there. Then myself and another young *rinpoche*, Serto Rinpoche; two of us...then with my uncle. My uncle Jaya Rinpoche is...was the Panchen Lama's...10th Panchen Lama's teacher, tutor. So we were all together, a big group. Maybe 200 people together, maybe so.

Q: You flew from Amdo and got into Lhasa and then what happened? Tell us about your life in Lhasa at age 12. What do you do there?

00:54:44

#7C: Then I went to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. Tashi Lhunpo Monastery had those kinds of terrible things in 1959. However, very soon they kind of recovered because the Panchen Lama is supporting them and like protecting them. Then I went to monastery and with teacher and study in monastery just like olden days. Then I went to the monastery to practice and study debating and, you know like, morning prayers and evening prayers and we had lots of fun. After three or four years all of a sudden [it] changed. Then we have another big political campaign, so I just...

Q: Upheaval?

#7C: Yeah, that's called the Social Educational...Socialistic Educational Campaign. So we studied one year and two months or something, altogether [for] 14 months [we] studied Communist documents. [Laughs]

Q: Did they bring...So you're at Tashi Lhunpo. I did want to ask, what was it like after all those years to be back in a monastery and practicing again? How did that feel?

00:56:21

#7C: That for me is interesting; for them maybe they change everything. For me before 1958 in our monastery, even [though] I'm young but I still remember those traditions and those customs and so forth, right? So after that's all gone, then I became [a] Chinese student, student's life there in China and working in the fields and so forth. In '62 I went there [to Tashi Lhunpo]; [it] looked like I've come to a new world, you know like, "Oh, [I] remember all the traditions like here in the monastery," like that. Soon after I said that the educational so-called Socialistic Educational Program...the Campaign started...

Q: From the Chinese Government?

#7C: [Nods] From the Chinese Government...started that and the monastery before was just studying, you know read Mao's books and so forth. Then later on you can't have practice. They [the monks] are not allowed to practice. Then [like in] the 1958, that happened again but in 1958 they just come one night all of a sudden. But this one's like gradually. So then slowly, slowly...before you can practice, later several months you can't. Then later said no. Then eventually we have to denounce Panchen Lama. So that's a big thing. So then...

Q: Who had to...The Chinese were saying you now have to denounce the Panchen Lama?

#7C: Yeah, the Chinese...

Q: Because they were angry at him?

00:58:02

#7C: Yeah, the Chinese Government always they call the...what they call the...work team. They call [it] the work team. The work team from the soldiers and some other officials and Communist cadets and all together, maybe 200 people, maybe. They come and stay in the monastery. They will arrange the studies and programs. Then they have a plan, you know, first step what they should say, second step. Then they take time, you know like one-year plan. So they know what we should do, what we should do.

Then slowly, slowly, tighter and tighter, tighter and tighter, then in the monastery only study, you can't go out. If you want to go somewhere, you have to ask permission first. So without permission you can't leave, like that. Then they add more working things on it. You have to go out and work, like that.

Then after...then eventually I said, you know they [the Chinese] denounce some...in the beginning they denounced other monks, elders like that I mentioned that in 1958 it happened in our monastery? Sadly same thing...

Q: Same thing at Tashi Lhunpo?

00:59:27

#7C: Tashi Lhunpo, yeah. They arrested some older monks. They started denouncing them and yelling [at] them and complaining and like that. Then we know, "Oh, that's happened again." They didn't say the Panchen Lama, you know. Finally one day all of a sudden we had a big meeting. Then started, you know, denouncing him. So I thought maybe he's already somewhere. They're going to put the handcuffs and he'll come. I'm so scared but he's not there. But we just denounced him. I published my memoir, so you should read that. I mentioned all of the stories, you know, on it.

Q: So there was a slow, as you said reeducation program in the monastery, very slowly, slowly, slowly and they were teaching the monks about Mao's doctrine?

#7C: Yes.

Q: And did you find it useful or helpful or you...?

#7C: No, no, that's...no, that you don't...They're just telling the stories and everything. At that time one of the topics is the...Russia, you know. They said Russia's already become a kind of Communist country. So Russia, how wonderful it is and when you go to Russia like, what it looked like. They're almost; you know...

That's very interesting when I come to [the] West. They almost described the western system that time, they're dreaming, you know when they come to the...That's they call the Socialist country became a Communist country, they will look like that, look like that you know. So they described those things but never happened. Then they describe, describe and then finally they have [an] idea. They have to point at something; they have to denounce the Panchen Lama. So that's the reason.

01:01:33

They're just making comparisons, you know like [between] communism and feudalism. They said that the traditional thing is the feudalism. You're so bad, like oh, you know, slaves and so forth and bad and bad. The monks take people's wealth away and wealth away or something like that but, you know, the Communist is so wonderful, so on. Later they denounced the Panchen Lama.

Q: Did many people out of fear or whatever choice, denounce the Panchen Lama when they came that day?

#7C: They have to.

Q: They had to.

#7C: They have to. There's no choice. I guess, you know, I will say 80 percent [of the] people are so scared that they can't...they can't...they have to say it. Maybe 10 percent [of the] people [are] very brave. They can't say; they said, "No, I can't denounce. I can't denounce my lama. I can't denounce against my religion." Maybe those people [face] problems. Maybe they [the Chinese] are going to arrest them or something. So that's why lots of people are so scared. Maybe 10 percent, they are brainwashed; maybe they went crazy. Some of them went crazy, yeah. People are just people, you know, very difficult to describe.

Q: So, what happens to you next?

01:03:05

#7C: So then the Cultural Revolution. Soon after they sent us back. There are a lot of details, but I don't have time to describe all of them but then the Cultural Revolution happened, so they sent back...sent us back. When I...

Q: To where?

#7C: To Kumbum, from Lhasa to Kumbum.

Q: How old were you?

#7C: Seventeen...16—16 then I come back. That time there's no Panchen Lama, no private jet. [Laughs] So we have to sitting on the car...no, no, no big truck, big truck and the bus takes seven days or eight days to get to Amdo. When I come back in our monastery [it was] almost as before we left. All wearing civilian clothes and they all worked in the fields. Actually they were having a meeting because they have a political campaign in Kumbum as well. That's different, you know, if we told the Western people, like political campaign. What's this political campaign? What happens? They don't have any idea, you . [Laughs]

Q: No, they don't.

01:04:25

#7C: Political campaign is a very kind of...

Q: Repressive?

#7C: Repressive, yes. So all people, all people, you know, village people or monastery people and everyone together, they have to gather together and sitting there, maybe hours and hours [while] just one person come and read that document. All documents are just meaningless. This person said lots of long speech, that person's long speech; they read that over and over again. They read that one and after that this one and read that one. They read lots of documents. Then after that we have to discuss those things; what do you think? What do you think? Then you have to say lots. Some of them [because of] just short time they can't speak [while] some of them, they can say hours and hours though.

Then afterwards they [the Chinese] say "oh;" then they tried to find problems from this team. So some people said something very bad. Then they check your background. If your background is bad like [you have] some relationship with some high lamas or [the] Panchen Lama or something they try to target you. So that time you have a very bad signal because everybody come to you, kind of, everybody say, "Oh, that person Sonam or Lobsang or somebody did not..." then soon after, then you become a bad person. They [the Chinese] put the hat on you.

01:05:53

The hat...the hat...physically hat or just mentally, you know. Physically they really made a big hat, usually [the Chinese] made this hat with newspaper. So they write your name on it, then put on you and kind of, you know, humiliated you. You're wearing that hat and everybody come and denounce you. Sometimes even beat you. Mostly they don't have that hat; physically they don't have it. They [the Chinese] just say, "You have the hat." So that means like you're kind of person; you're a bad person in that team. [You're] not in jail [but] you know like house arrest, something like this idea. So you're going to lose your freedom and rights. You can't go somewhere. Then everybody start to denounce you.

For instance my uncle, Jaya Rinpoche, because he was [the] Panchen Lama's teacher, then he went to jail in 1958. [But] then soon after he came back because [the] Panchen Lama protected him. When he came back, then he...During the Socialistic Education Movement he had that hat. He [was] with this hat through the Cultural Revolution. So every time the Red Guards and the people came to denounce, he has to stand up. Then just denouncing him [points index finger], like he has to stand like that [bows head] and everybody just says nonsense, you know. They say "You are bad person. How bad"...terrible, terrible. You have to say it. You have to listen to all of them. That's the kind of [being] with [the] hat.

01:07:42

When I come back [to] Kumbum [the Chinese were] doing that kind of thing exactly. So after one year then we all work in the fields. No more schools. I grow up; I'm 17 now. So then I went to field to work and do hard labor. I became a farmer. Kumbum is a big monastery. Around Kumbum there's beautiful scenery, like very beautiful places. Then we cut all the green grass and turn [it] to a field, like a field. So then the field around the Kumbum area, we kind of, we're planting those...yeah. Then we became farmers during the Cultural Revolution; we're staying there.

Then the Cultural Revolution they started; [at the] very beginning they just kind of [held] discussions [and] nothing [else]. They discuss and they put the big, they call the big characters or something. You know, you have to write some articles to put on the wall to denounce somebody. That's free for everyone. You want to, you know, denounce somebody, you just make a poster [and] put [it] on the wall. Except Chairman Mao, you can denounce everyone you can say. Then they had the fighting in between; you know that they call the Red Guards. You know they formed lots of Red Guards. The Red Guards also [have] freedom.

01:09:26

If say, okay our team; we should be a Red Guard team, that's fine. You are the leader, I'm the second leader; maybe we have a team, that's fine. Then we are going against the other team because the other team is bad. Our concept is better; theirs is...then we have to denounce; we have to debate. Then if they win, then we're bad. They might put us in jail. If we win, they're bad; we can do something to them. Like that they started.

Q: How was it determined who wins? What happened?

#7C: That they have support by the government. Who knows? We don't know.

Q: Did they have guns to shoot the other...?

#7C: No, no, not that bad, not that bad. Mostly [they were] students. For instance, one university, one university become two parts. One they call...they have special names like Eight-point-eight or Eight-point-one or something, two teams there. Which months or which dates, they are named by that. Then the two teams, they're debating. They're debating. One said, "We should do that. That's the Communist way." The other says, "No, your concept is wrong. We should do that." Then they're debating. Actually behind [them are] two government officials, you know kind of supporting them. They [two teams] don't

know who is the right person. Later on that person [indicates right hand as one of the teams] wins, so that group [indicates left hand as second team] is bad. They put them in jail. [Laughs]

01:11:04

Later on the Cultural Revolution started...our way. So for the normal people almost nothing. You know they're just like, "Oh, every day is like very chaos, big chaos." There are soldiers everywhere. If you go to a store, there's no...Like very chaos but other than that there's nothing. Then just after 5-6 months or something, then everything changed. They came to, you know, attack the monasteries, priest and church like that. "The monastery is bad; we have to destroy the monastery." Then they went crazy. They came and destroyed the monasteries and destroy...bring down the sutras and damage the statues, oh terrible. Then just...

Q: Did you see this with your own eyes?

#7C: Of course, of course, Kumbum and the others. Kumbum...that time, you know in Amdo, our area, just one province almost has 600 monasteries. Maybe more than that but they said...later they said 600 monasteries. All gone! All gone in one year! Some of them [were] left. For instance, Kumbum is one of them. So they tried to attack Kumbum several times; [the] Red Guards come. So one time [when] the Red Guards come, we're working in the fields. The monastery monks they don't want to destroy because the monastery still they have inside [points to heart]. They know our Buddha's statues...how can they destroy, right?

01:12:43

So we're working in the fields one day. They [the monks] said...one person just, you know asking us to come back because there's a big meeting or something. Then they [the monks] all are scared, have they [the Chinese] come back? In the courtyard I mentioned, we call it *yana chodak*. *Yana chodak* was full of people there. Mostly like university students there; they [are] called Red Guards because they have red [points to left arm], some kind of bands on their...you know. Then they came and they said, "You all sit down." Then we sit down and they gave a kind of speech or talk or something. They [the Red Guards] can't recognize [individuals] because there [are] lots of people, different people; village people came too you know, lots of people there.

The goal is they're going to destroy the monastery but they didn't destroy. Their idea is they educate the monks to destroy them. But then they teach and they talk and give talks and so forth. Afterwards nothing happened. Then they're going to start doing something. Then between themselves they start a little debate and fight. So then one group said, "Don't destroy. We have to protect them because those are cultural heritage." One group said, "We have to destroy them. Those are bad things." Then those two groups fight, fight, fight. Then the two groups become bigger [and] bigger, you know. One group is supporting "protect them" and one group is saying no.

01:14:23

Then finally, and unfortunately, the bad group won. So the other group just disappeared, you know. Then they [bad group] said, “Open the door, open the door.” That time the monks who are taking care of the monastery, they locked the door and they’re just hiding behind somewhere. They [the bad group] said, “Come, come. Come back and open the door. We want to go in.” Then they [monastery caretakers] don’t have a choice [when] later they [bad group] found out. We opened the doors. They went in and they destroy the...by the time it became evening. You know whole day just chaos there, like debating, fighting, like talking, like that. [At] almost 5-6 o’clock they [the caretakers] open the doors; [it was] evening. So they [the bad group] come in. They destroy some *thanka* ‘traditional Tibetan Buddhist paintings,’ destroy some sutras. That’s all. Then they stopped. Then they stopped. Then they said, “Okay, let’s go.” And they just went away.

Then start the next day. The monks, they formed the Red Guard team. That was really bad. That was really bad because the team [was] founded by some so-called activist monks, bad monks, right? Brain washed monks. So those [monks] came house by house and you know, one by one, they just came and destroyed all the religious, you know, the sacred objects like sutras and everything. That may have almost remained one month or something. Then there’s some kind of notes or announcement from [the] government [which] said “Starting from today [you] cannot destroy.” So that stopped.

01:16:19

By that time all monasteries are gone. Kumbum maybe destroyed half, 50 percent gone. So lots of bad things [happened]. Afterwards then we just...then all the schools and everything stopped. There’s a school [but] you can’t study the books and everything. They considered that bad. You have to study Chairman Mao’s books. All principals and teachers are bad. They arrested them, maybe.

So then some other... you know, they’re fighting. They’re called the liberal and the conservative. The really good professors and teachers are conservative. The liberal they called the crazy ones. So they became the good ones and the Red Guards, and they kind of suppressed them. Then the schools became very crazy everywhere.

Let me tell you a very interesting story—that’s very funny, you know. We sat one day...We have a team leader. You know, the monks all mix...all monks gather together as a team [and] have to go to work like that. One day the team leader said, “We have a new rule. We have to report to Chairman Mao everyday, day and night.” Okay, well how? They had the meeting and gave him a big picture, Chairman Mao’s big picture, lot bigger than this *thanka* [points off camera], really big. Then he put this in his wall, then we all gather and take off our hats and very, you know, respectfully stand there. He [team leader] was leading us and we report to Chairman Mao, “Dear Chairman Mao, starting today we’re going to...today we’re going to [the] field to...so and so. This is our mission; we’re going to complete that mission. And please be well.” Or whatever some good wishes or something and then we left.

01:18:30

Then we went to [the] field to work and evening come back. We have to report to him [Chairman Mao's picture] again. That day he [team leader] with a little apology because you know, we didn't complete, with the weather and everything [said], "Sorry dear Chairman Mao, we didn't finish the whole thing but next day we will do better." [Laughs]

So that's very funny, right? That even became worse! Later we have to carry His Holiness—[laughs] almost His Holiness—Chairman Mao's picture to the fields. So we made a banner. We carry this one, you know, [and] go to a field, put him [banner] on the field. Then we have to report to him constantly.

Then one guy, one very funny story happened. One guy said, "I'm sick. I'm going to go home and see the doctor." The team leader and, of course, that person had a very, kind of bad complex or something and [the team leader] said, "No, I don't know. You should ask Chairman Mao, not me." That guy went to Chairman Mao [picture and] said that same thing, "I have to see the doctor. Two days, can I be excused [for] two days?" Of course, Chairman Mao said nothing. He [sick guy] just left.

Then that guy, the team, was upset because [he thought] "He's teasing me," right? So then he [sick man] left. After six days he come back. Then he [the team leader] was really upset, "You said you'll miss two days but you already spent five days." Then he [sick man] said, "I asked Chairman Mao [but] Chairman Mao didn't say anything. On his picture he's like that [raises right palm]. So that's why he might give me five days permission. So that's why I left." That's really a true story [that] happened. Very funny.

01:20:22

You go to a city to buy something. On the bus they send two students. They're sitting on the bus reading Chairman Mao's quotes, "Chairman Mao said..." something so and so. Then everybody has to read, repeat after the little students. They will lead you all the way to the city, you know like two hours you have to read Chairman Mao's book.

Even [when] you go to a store, if you want to buy a cup, so "Can I buy a cup?" No, you have to say Chairman Mao's quote first—"Chairman Mao said, 'Every farmer has to study *taazey* [?].' Can I buy this cup?" That person [salesman] has to repeat that way, "Chairman Mao said, 'So and so,' this cup is five dollars." [Laughs] You have to say! That's really a true story; that happened to us!

So, [if] this person [salesman] is a little bit difficult person, you know, he'll say, "No, no, no, not this quote. Say something else." You can't say it, right? Everybody just remember the easy ones, like mantra you know. "You can't say it?" They have a red book prepared everywhere. "Okay, have this one. Sit there—they set up a table there—before [you can] recite don't buy this one."

Then if you say, "Oh, okay I don't have time. I'm leaving." No, they are going to [get] serious. They're going to send [for] somebody [and] say, "That person's behavior [is] not good." Then you may be in trouble. So, you have [to] sit there and recite this one. After half an hour or something, then recite it and you come back and say to me [salesman]. If they

approve then okay, you can buy this one. Otherwise, you can't. So that's Cultural Revolution. [Laughs]

Q: A very strict religion.

01:22:19

#7C: Yeah, very [strict] religion. We had Chairman Mao's picture or statue on our altar. In the morning we have to go there and say certain Chairman Mao's quotes as mantra. Say a certain [number of] times and then bow to him, then leave. One monk, he had a Buddha, a Buddha's picture. Of course, he can't put this up because that's a very bad thing, right? He put Chairman Mao's picture in front of the Buddha. So behind that it has the Buddha, right? So he's doing little practice everyday. Every monk knew that but they didn't say that.

One day a Chinese cadet called Mr. Wang...Mr. Wang came [when] the monk was holding a butter lamp like saying prayers. That's a really dangerous thing. But this monk was very smart. He noticed that Mr. Wang was coming. Then he said [holds up tea cup reverently], "Long life for Chairman Mao. Long life for Chairman Mao." [Laughs] Then he was protected. Then Mr. Wang said, - "Aku Wangdu,"—his name is Aku Wangdu—"Aku Wangdu is wonderful. He really [has] a big heart and really [has] loyalty to Chairman Mao. That's wonderful but butter lamp before Chairman Mao is superstitious. That you can't do." [Laughs] So that's Cultural Revolution. That's all happened. That's a true story happened to our lives.

Q: Humor helped you survive...

#7C: Thank you. [Laughs]

Q: ...and your wisdom to handle the circumstances with resilience. So why don't we move on to what happens next?

01:24:17

#7C: [In] 1958 [1976?] the whole thing changed again because the reason is Chairman Mao passed away. So Deng Xiaoping ruled the country. Of course, Deng Xiaoping was denounced by Chairman Mao, that's why he's definitely upset. Of course, he can't [be] totally against Chairman Mao because the Communist team is very complicated. Even [though] that person doesn't like Chairman Mao but he has to hold Chairman Mao's flag. Otherwise, he can't overcome or control the whole team, so that is the...Vut anyway, the Communist, the Chinese Communist, the name didn't change but everything [else] changed. Monasteries fortunately reopened, monks can go to monasteries like that.

So I guess 19...early 80s, one day we had a meeting. We had a meeting [during which the Chinese] said, "Oh, starting today Chinese [will have] real religious freedom and you know, the real policies [have] come back. During those past years something happened, that's all sorry. That's all too bad, all gone." They [the Chinese] have a saying. They said...what they said...they have a saying like "All [that you] say as a wind [will] like flow away. If beating as water, just like current, just go away." That means like forgive them.

Anyway that's all they said and, "Now starting today you all have to be monks because you are monks, religious people. You have to wear your robes." [However,] there are no robes; all [are] destroyed. There are no robes. Maybe somebody has but they can't take them back because they're so afraid [thinking] maybe it's another trick or something, you know. So they [the Chinese] said, "No, no, no. Now the real religious freedom has come back and the real Communist's wonderful policies are back" and so forth. So then they...

Q: 1980?

01:26:47

#7C: 1980. So then after that education, long time education [for] several days, people are still afraid and they still can't do anything. Then finally they gave the real message. They said, "No. Tomorrow His Holiness the Dalai Lama's delegation is coming. You all have to wear the robes." Oh, okay. [Laughs] So then [we] know...

Q: ...the reason.

#7C: The reason, yes. So some of us...

Q: Just explain to us your role. What are you doing at this time now? You are now 30 years old.

#7C: Thirty years old and we're all working in the fields as farmers. [I'm] still in Kumbum. Kumbum has a museum. They [the Chinese] call the museum Live Museum. You know what's this Live Museum? So museum...if you go to a museum they [do] not consider it Live Museum...[with just] something in museum. Kumbum has a museum because the bad guys are living here. They are looking at us and said, "[The bad guys] used to live here. Those bad guys had slaves and those are slave drivers. You may denounce them. By the way you can take a visit." Like that, so we are like that kind of ...

Q: ...Living Museum.

01:28:02

#7C: Museum, live museum. So, that all changed. We're still in the museum; we're working in the fields, but of course, the situation is getting better and better. So then the 1980s I said that they...After that they said, "Tomorrow His Holiness' first delegation will come. You all have to host [it]." So then that time already, you know our, some monks come back. Because [in] 1958 they went to jail; [it's] 1980 already, you know 22 years [have gone by].

Some of them spent 22 years in jail without any crime. They didn't do any bad thing; just went to jail, that's all. So then some monks had come back, some monks went to fields to work [for] so many years, some of them stay in Kumbum monastery but during the Cultural Revolution and so forth they work in the fields. So they all have to be monks [again] but really some of them [are] scared. Some of them do not have robes. [For] some reason some people find some reason [in] having robes but most of them [were] just

wearing civilian clothes to host His Holiness' delegation. That was a very fascinating moment.

Q: What is your memory of that event?

01:29:30

#7C: In the morning we all gather together on the...one of the temple's outside door there. There is like an open area; we all gathered there. You know in China, it's not like the West. If something happens, everybody just [indicates whispering], you know they're just passing message. Then everybody knew that thing. By the time maybe a thousand people already gathered there, like around there. "What's happening? What's happening?" Then the police came there. They surround this area.

Then five or six jeeps came, cars you know. They are called Beijing jeeps. The Beijing jeeps came and they raise big dust and like that. Then they came and parked. Come out, those five delegates, His Holiness' delegation. The first person is Juchen Thupten. Juchen Thupten, he's passed away. He's the person, then His Holiness' sister, His Holiness' older brother Lobsang Samten, then two young people I can't remember; that time [they were] pretty young like in their 20s or something.

So, five people came and we thought like very brand new something in our eyes, you know. They're wearing like Tibetan *chupas* 'traditional dress,' of course its like little modern style. Then with big *khata*s 'ceremonial scarves' and you know. They're dressed very formally. Then they come in and they bow to us like that [joins palms and bows]. Then they went to the monastery.

Of course, before that we had a preparation for the monastery. We have to, you know dust everything and clean and put the... Then we couldn't find a *khata*. They said everybody have to hold their *khata*. Five or six lamas [were] there including myself. We couldn't find a *khata*. Then we find some *khata* from altar. Otherwise, at that time there's no *khata* to buy and where can [we] get a *khata*, you know. After the Cultural Revolution, those are bad things. [Laughs] We have some old *khata*s; we're holding them. Then they came and they introduced.

01:32:10

They're called the Chinese...what they call...Foreign Affairs Department or something. Those leaders, they accompanied them. They said, "Those are His Holiness' delegation, so and so..." like that. Then after that they [delegation] are saying prayers. Except our older monks say prayers, the younger monks can't. The younger monks can't say the prayers because they have forgotten [laughs], can't say it.

So we said short prayers and after visit...come to my residence. That time my residence became team number one, which is every team has a place to study, work, live together like that. So that's the reason our residence still exists there. Otherwise, they're going to destroy and [they are] gone. We host them there. And they asked lots of questions and so forth.

We have to hide lots of things; we have to pretend lots of... Then they asked, “Why didn’t...wearing the robes?” Like that. Then we can’t answer because “Ah...” like that. Some of the Chinese leaders very smartly said, “Oh, because in China we have religious freedom, so maybe they don’t want to wear the robes.” [Laughs] Like that. So they laughed. Then they said, “Okay, okay. Never mind we’re going to change our subject.” They changed to somewhere else. They don’t want to give us a hard time, right? So anyway, that day was first. Then after that the situation is getting better and better, better and better. So lots of things happened.

Q: During the delegation, do you remember the date that that was for the record?

01:34:13

#7C: That’s...it is summer. I can’t remember exactly. I guess sometime maybe July, maybe August.

Q: 1980?

#7C: Yeah, 1980. 1980, July of 1980, sometime like that.

Q: And you were 30 years old, you had been working as a farmer.

#7C: Yes.

Q: There wasn’t much practice going on in the monastery...

#7C: Yes.

Q: ...of any kind.

#7C: Yes.

Q: And you were not allowed to meet with this delegation privately?

01:34:42

#7C: No, no. The delegation doesn’t have a choice too. They just came as a team. They came to the monastery to visit it. Then we had that, you know like reception, food and everything. Then we had some time at a little meeting with somebody; then they left. That’s all. There’s no other arrangement for that.

Q: But wasn’t that delegation surrounded often by Tibetan people living in the villages and with complaints about what had happened?

#7C: That’s later on. That happened at different places, in Lhasa especially, not in Kumbum. Because Kumbum I mentioned you know, mostly local people are Chinese, Muslims and few Tibetans. So that day, I very clearly remember that when they leave around—they came very early, maybe 9, maybe 9:30—so when they leave around 4, maybe something like that, before even lots of people [were] there but still not really crowded.

When they leave, I guess thousands and thousands [of] people [were] there. Then Juchen Thupten ask me, “All of them are Tibetans? I don’t think so.” I said, “Some of them, yes. There might [be] some Tibetans.” That we said.

01:36:18

But even the Chinese or Muslims, they just from the crowd, they said, “Hey, say hello to His Holiness.” Something like that, they said that. They didn’t say something against the Chinese Government but they said, “Hey, hello. Say hello to...pass this message to His Holiness” or something, they’re saying that. Then he has to say, “Yes, yes,” like that. [Laughs] But who knows who is this person, you know from the crowd. They said that, yeah.

Q: What happens to you next?

#7C: Then everything’s changed. Then they gave me a...of course, then no more field, I’m not working [in the] fields. I became a...I went to college, though; I went to college two times. That time 1980s, early 80s I went to college. The college because there’s a Buddhist class or something opened. So, one of...very renowned lama, he was a professor. He was in the fields during the Cultural Revolution. Then the university opened up and then they kind of welcomed him back. He came back and he gave teachings. Then I request and then they said yes and then I went to this college and study with him.

01:37:49

So actually there’s one important thing I want to mention. During the Cultural Revolution, [it was] very bad, very tight. Everything you have to report to government, every time. The team leaders are terrible; you have to report [to] them. Even that time my teacher Jaya Rinpoche and one other teacher I mentioned—you know, the Taktse Rinpoche’s teacher—he was with me. Those people encouraged me to study. I even studied secretly. Some of the monks secretly practiced.

So I’m very lucky because I was [with] my uncle. The relationship is very important, right? If people ask; [I can reply], “Oh, he’s my uncle.” “Oh, okay.” So that’s covered. Otherwise, “You’re always with this person, what are you doing?” like that they might say that. So that time they’re giving us teachings, dharma teachings. I never stopped, even during the Cultural Revolution.

Q: Really!

#7C: Not really every day but you know I had chance to practice and so that’s why...

Q: With documents or was it just verbal?

#7C: No, no, that’s why I’m just telling the Western students, sometimes [when they say] “How come?” then I say, “You can go to Google all day, right, all [the] time. Tibetan lamas have live Google. They have everything in their brain, [in their] mind. They can say the prayers.” We don’t have the prayers and sutras and everything. So he really, Jaya Rinpoche encouraged me to study. [He said], “Even Chinese you have to study.”

A really very amazing thing he said, “In the future definitely you need the dharma, not the farm and fields. Those things you can learn; that’s a good thing but most important things [are] dharma, knowledge, wisdom. That’s [what you will] need.” So that’s why he encouraged me to study. I secretly studied. I studied my Chinese; I studied [on] my own. I went to Chinese school just four years. That’s all and after that I never had the chance to study Chinese but I studied [on] my own. Then I studied Tibetan on my own. Of course, he [was] teaching me, then the dharma and everything secretly.

Q: Even from that time or even after, what do you think are the most precious teachings of the dharma?

01:40:21

#7C: The most precious teachings of [the] dharma are lots but how to behave yourself, how to face your enemy, so that’s the most important thing. One time we are working in the fields. The team leader is really upset with us [for] some reason; I don’t know why. Then he couldn’t find the reason to complain [about] us. My uncle was older; then he just take a little break. I [was] with him; [we] stayed maybe just, I don’t know, maybe three minutes. I guess less than five minutes.

Then he [team leader] started yelling [at] us. He was really saying bad words and saying lots of nonsense words. If he’d said, “Okay, go and work. Don’t sit here.” That’s fine, right? But instead he’s really saying bad things and some of them message from the Communist language and really hurting us. So I’m really, really upset but he [uncle] was laughing, you know. He said, “No, no. Don’t worry.”

Then later he said, “You have to practice patience, you know. In one of our practice, patience is the most important thing. That is patience. He’s not really a bad person. He’s just saying dirty words and bad words like that, [which is] all controlled by something else, controlled by the ...[not discernible], controlled by the situation, not from him.” So that really, you know kind of make me calm.

Later on the Cultural Revolution and everything’s over, that person said, “Oh, I [was] always nice to you, right?” [He said] like that in front of people. Some of them are new people. They really don’t know. They thought like really they’re good. We have to say, what can you say? I said, “Yes, yes, yes.” [He said,] “I always protect them.” [Laughs] That is life. So anyway, later we really became good friends. Those kinds of messages really, really are important to us. So, anyway...so the dharma...

Q: Compassion...

#7C: Compassion can protect yourself. That’s his message, yes.

Q: What happens to you now? You go to college; it’s 1980...

01:42:56

#7C: Yeah, then after that I went to a...I was sent to a...kind of...I became a Chinese cadet, one of the cadets, worker, official maybe, let's say official. In the west the system is different. I went to a...I became a leader of [a] Buddhist Association. The Buddhist Association, even Buddhist Associations, they're formed by the Chinese Government. So that's why the secretary is the most important thing. That secretary is a party member. Then the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and so forth, those [are] all monks or high lamas.

So I became a chairman of the Buddhist Association in provincial level in Chinghai province. I stayed in a big city. Then I visited different monasteries, kind of doing like coordinator, like go between the monastery and the people and the government. You know if the monasteries have some kind of request or difficulties or something, then we can report to [the] government. Then [if the] government has some kind of, you know, message or something you have to pass them to the people like that. So [for] almost 10 years I was working in that office. That [was] actually kind of good sign though, not really [bad] compared to before; it's better. We have conference in Beijing and different places like that.

Q: What...Did they know your background as a Rinpoche?

#7C: Definitely, that's why they...

Q: That's why they chose you.

01:44:46

#7C: That's why they chose us. You know in China the system is very interesting. They say five religions...major religions exist in China. So, Buddhism, Taoism, Muslim, Catholic [and] Protestant, they considered those as two different religions. [Laughs] You know the Catholic and Protestant are two different religions. So, those five religions they considered as officially recognized religions. Those five religions had administrators and offices in central China. Every province has their offices, like their branches there. So I was in their branch in Xining.

Q: Just give me a little quick statement about what were your duties?

#7C: So the duties I mentioned, you know that time...

Q: Coordinating?

#7C: ... because the monasteries [were] destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, the monasteries have to reopen. So then religious reform again, reopen the monasteries, reopen the system and study that you can't [go] against the Communist and also you have to practice, in between. You know they said, "Walking..." the Chinese said, "Walking in the water and finding the [stepping] stone." You don't know where's the stone, right? You just like...that's their saying. So they don't know the policy. You know, the policy, they didn't create it yet. So you have to do something but you don't know how to do it. That is our

mission, go between and find out...that's very interesting. Let me quickly share one story, very interesting.

Q: Please.

01:46:40

#7C: So supposedly 600 monasteries [were] destroyed [that] they're going to reopen. The government said, "Now we can't reopen that much. Maybe we'll just reopen...maybe 10 percent, maybe 20 percent." But people said, "We don't need to worry about the government. If the government support and give the, you know permission, that will be fine. If they don't give permission, we're going to rebuild."

So then lots of monasteries restarted, reestablished. Then some of them, the government recognized. That's called the legal monasteries. Some of them they opened but didn't recognize, so that's called illegal monasteries. So when we go to those monasteries to visit, [we are] only allowed [to go to the] legal ones and not the illegal ones. But the illegal ones [are] doing a better job than the legal ones because they want to prove themselves, right?

We're so confused. We don't know which one is legal and [which is] illegal, you know. Our mission is go to the monastery, try to find information [about] the monastery, pass those, you know like the policies to them. "You can't do that. You can't do that. That's not allowed to do. Okay, you can do that. You do that. If you have difficulties, we're going to report to the government." That is our mission, right?

They say, "Okay, we have shortage of money because [earlier] we had full of money and gold and silver in the monastery. In 1950 they [the Chinese] confiscated [and] all of them [are] gone. Then even during the Cultural Revolution they destroyed. Now in our monastery we don't have anything. That is the main thing." Then we say, "Well, we're going to report to them, but when they're going to give money or not or yet, we don't know." So that is our mission, right?

01:48:47

Even though we can't go to illegal monasteries, one time we went to a monastery. We don't know [if] that is legal or illegal. We went there. We're assuming that it is legal. Then we're sitting down; they serve tea and we just start the meeting. They report and we make notes. Somebody just run and come to us, "That's an illegal one." Then [we] run. Then we all had to leave without tea and everything, just run. [Laughs] That's, you know, we're kind of playing, as kids all the time.

Q: It's like a game almost.

#7C: Yeah, yeah.

Q: It's like a game. How many years did you do this and where was the Panchen Lama at this point?

#7C: So the Panchen Lama's story...because that time I just mentioned the monasteries, you know, open certain monasteries or un-open, we don't know. We're not sure. Finally the government said, "Okay, if you have a monastery existing here [and] the people need the religious, you know, thing here, then you can reopen." That's their policy, borderline. They said, "If you had a monastery before, you had before [it] was destroyed or something, then people also need it, then you can have it [reopened]. You can't start a new monastery." That's their rule.

01:50:15

So then the reincarnation thing happened, the same thing. They said, "Okay, we have a reincarnation thing in the Tibetan tradition. We want our reincarnation." Then the government [became] confused [whether to] say yes or no. According to the religious, you know freedom, recovering that religious freedom policy, they should have it but that may not be a good idea. They said, "Reincarnation is reestablishing feudalism." So that means "No, you can't have it." They stopped [it].

Then we had like...We're coordinators, right? We just go between and then ask the government, "Please, you have to open up the policy. Otherwise, the people really need that." They said, "No, no, you have to tell and educate the people that it is feudalism and you can't do it." So we're having a hard time. Anyway, that time everywhere it's open. Monks and Tibetans can go back to India.

When they went to India, they ask His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] and ask the religious leaders in India; they find their reincarnation anyway. They come back and secretly they find [the reincarnation]. They said, "This is our incarnation. That is our reincarnation," like that. Soon after the Chinese Government, they realized this too. They called them underground reincarnations. Then they said, "Okay, we have to recognize this. Otherwise, we're going to lose the power. So later on all the reincarnations [will be] controlled by the outside, [laughs] Dalai Lama's group. So that's not a good idea. We have to do it." So they started.

01:52:04

When they started, then that time the Panchen Lama [is] already on the, you know, position and stage. He has really strongly protected religion and things. There are lots of things but I would like to make a very short point there. So what's happened in 1986-7 that time, in Lhasa had several times...the protests. The monks protested. Then the police came and arrested them. The government wants to crack them down; [the] Panchen Lama wants to protect them. [The] Panchen Lama said, "That is not the right thing because those things are from the people and not from the, you know, some organization or something. The people have some kind of request. They're not...they're complaining, maybe something, that's why they're acting like that. Also the Chinese constitution, they said allows people to protest. So that's why you should do that."

He was protecting them, right? When they arrested some monks or something, he's calling those leaders in Tibet [holds right hand to ear like a telephone], "Oh, I heard somebody was arrested. How come? Please release them," like that. So then later on lots of things, lots of stories, but I don't want to share all of them. For some reason he said, "That's not a

good idea. For the long run I have an idea.” His idea is [that] he’s going to form a big minister in Beijing. It’s very high level. He will become the leader of that minister...

Q: Ministry.

01:54:05

#7C: Ministry, ministry. He is the minister. Then that ministry will [be] in charge of all Tibetan monasteries. That ministry has to have money to...financial support. That time the Chinese Government is having a hard time for the financial support. Then he said, “I will start a company, which [will] be called Gangchen Company. The Gangchen Company [will be] doing lots of business and that money will support the ministry and I will [be] in charge. I will protect them to not do wrong things so then your government can’t always attack them, too.”

Then the government thought, “Oh, that is something very dangerous.” So then right after that he passed away. That’s a big issue, a big question [draws a question mark in air]. How come? Like that, but anyway, I don’t have any information why he died and so forth but anyway he passed away.

When he passed away, he was very young, like 54 or 55. When he passed away, his reincarnation thing is a big issue. How can [they Chinese] find his reincarnation? So that time fortunately, the reincarnation thing, the government already approved because you know, the issues in India and so forth. The government said, “The Panchen Lama’s reincarnation, we can have it.” But who’s going to find his reincarnation? There’s a big issue. That time the government, the Chinese Government is doing better than now. Lots of liberal leaders [are] still there. Then some of them they said, “We’ll have a search group. We’ll form a group called Search Group. The Search Group has high lamas and Chinese officials and scholars and so forth [and will be] doing several things. One thing [is] we have to search [for] his reincarnation. One is complete his autobiography. One is complete his...some kind of fulfill his dreams, what he wants. We have to complete them.”

01:56:27

So certain things they were doing. I was in that team. So then [the Chinese leaders] said one point, “The final decision—you know when they find the reincarnation—the final decision the Chinese Government has to do because the Communist Government is the, you know, the ruling, you know, like power, right? But we can ask His Holiness’ [the Dalai Lama] reference. We can include his ideas, what [are] his thoughts, what [are] his ideas.”

Then that time the Tibetan people are very happy. That [the Chinese] have allowed him to involve in the thing, right? Searching for the reincarnation thing. Then the situation is better. They secretly [for] some reason contacted His Holiness. Later on I found that out and I said...the people said that the Chinese Government from Hong Kong, they contacted Gyalo Thondup, which is His Holiness’ older brother. [They] contact him and report to His Holiness [and] said they were looking for Panchen Lama’s reincarnation, then please have your consideration, too. So that is the basic message. Then everything’s going better.

Then all of a sudden that changed. What happened? Because [of] the Tiananmen Square [incident]. So the Tiananmen Square, the students come out and protest and they wanted democracy. Then the liberal leaders said, “This is right because the students [are] doing the right thing. We have to support them.” The conservative leaders said, “No, the students [are] against the Communists.” That’s a competition between the Communists and the capitalists. They had a big fight [for] one month. Finally the conservatives won. So, then they crack down [upon] the students. They remove the liberal leaders; you know [from] position. So then our...Panchen Lama’s reincarnation plan [is] destroyed.

01:59:09

Then the new leaders came and they said, “We can’t contact His Holiness. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a counter revolutionary. We can’t contact him and we have to denounce this one.” So that’s the reason the situation became worse. Finally His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s [Panchen Lama’s] reincarnation came up [in] two, Chinese version Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama’s version Panchen Lama.

Q: Two different people.

#7C: Two different people. I have lots of stories but now I don’t have time to explain. What we should do?

Q: Rinpoche-*la*, I so appreciate our time together and the richness and complexity that you’ve shared with us, but I also understand that we have run out of time for this interview. So I guess I would like to know, is there another way we could continue?

02:00:07

#7C: Yes, of course. I would like to share more stories with you because you are doing such wonderful thing that’s really needed, you know. I’m telling my story all the time. This is not only my personal life or my personal story. This is 50 years [of] hidden Tibetan story, even Chinese story. So that history everybody should know. I will say that, so today I don’t have time now and tomorrow as well. I’m very busy. How about that, can I invite you guys to Indiana? To Hoosier’s place? [Laughs]

Q: We will be delighted to come.

#7C: Sometime you make a plan and come to our place. Then I can spend more time with you and share those stories.

Q: Good. It sounds like you understand the value of the work that the Tibet Oral History Project is doing.

#7C: Of course, of course, of course. Yes, yes.

Q: I’m going to conclude with this statement as I said I would come back. Rinpoche-*la*, if this interview was shown in Tibet or China, will this be a problem for you?

#7C: No problem at all so far [but] after I don’t know. [Laughs]

Q: Can we use your real name for this project?

#7C: Definitely.

Q: Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

#7C: You're welcome.

Q: Just the beginning.

#7C: Just the beginning. [Laughs]

END OF INTERVIEW