

# **Tibet Oral History Project**

Interview #89 – Lobsang (alias)  
July 7, 2007

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

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

Copyright © 2009 Tibet Oral History Project.



# TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

www.TibetOralHistory.org

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

1. Interview Number: #89
2. Interviewee: Lobsang (alias)
3. Age: 84
4. Date of Birth: 1923
5. Sex: Male
6. Birthplace: Neysa Lanying
7. Province: Utsang
8. Year of Leaving Tibet: 1969
9. Date of Interview: July 7, 2007
10. Place of Interview: Sera Monastery, Bylakuppe, Mysore District, Karnataka, India
11. Length of Interview: 1 hr 37 min
12. Interviewer: Marcella Adamski
13. Interpreter: Tenzin Yangchen
14. Videographer: Tsewang Dorjee
15. Translator: Tenzin Yangchen.

### **Biographical Information:**

Lobsang became a monk at the age of 5. His days were spent in the Phuntsoling Monastery, memorizing the scriptures and learning philosophical debate. As he studied, his knowledge of Buddhism increased, allowing him to join Sera Monastery in Lhasa. At age 33 he was sent back to his monastery in Phuntsoling to teach the monks how to debate.

While at Phuntsoling Monastery, Lobsang first encountered the Chinese, who were engaged in creating discord among the people by inciting the poor to turn against upper class villagers. Lobsang and many other monks were imprisoned and forced to labor under unbearable conditions. Lobsang was almost on his deathbed due to starvation when the Chinese released him after seven years. He was told to return to his village and work in isolation.

In 1969, Lobsang fled Tibet and continued to serve as a teacher at the Sera Monastery in Bylakuppe, India. He shares many views about the harm that Communism can do to the world and the belief that other nations should urge China to adopt democracy. Lobsang strongly advocates for a more powerful United Nations Organization so that the world can live in peace.

### **Topics Discussed:**

Childhood memories, monastic life, first appearance of Chinese, life under Chinese rule, imprisonment, forced labor, brutality/torture, thamzing, life as a refugee in India.

**TIBET ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**  
www.TibetOralHistory.org

**Interview #89**

**Interviewee: Lobsang [alias]**

**Age: 84, Sex: Male**

**Interviewer: Marcella Adamski**

**Interview Date: July 7, 2007**

Question: Today we would like to ask you a little about your childhood as a monk in the monastery, about your experience in the Chinese prison and lastly about your escape.

**Interviewee #89: Okay.**

Q: Please tell me where you were born and where your family is from.

**#89: It's called Nesa La-nying.**

Q: Was it a big village? How many families were in the village?

**#89: It was not a large village and at that time there were no Chinese.**

Q: We will begin the story from your childhood.

**#89: At the age of 5 I was sent to join the Phuntsoling Monastery. We were three brothers and one among us had to become a monk.**

Q: How many families were there in your village?

**#89: Maybe about 10 or 15.**

Q: What kind of work did your family do at your village?

**#89: Nobody was very rich. People just about had enough to live on.**

Q: What was their livelihood?

**#89: It was farming. No one was into business in our village.**

Q: Since you went to the monastery as a little boy of 5 years old, what can you say are your earliest memories at the monastery?

**#89: It was very difficult as a young monk then. I lived with the teacher and memorized the scriptures. We gradually learned the philosophical debates by around the age of 16. Life as a monk was very difficult.**

Q: Did you have a teacher that was very important to you in the monastery?

**#89: I lived with my uncle Sangay in the monastery. I studied the scriptures under another teacher who also taught many other students.**

Q: As a young child, how would you describe what kind of a monk you were as a young monk? Were you very studious or playful or what kind?

**#89: [Laughs] When I was in the company of other monks in the monastery, I was an enthusiastic student. However, when I went home to see my parents, which we were allowed at times, I loved to play with the other children.**

Q: Do you remember what your favorite games were? What did you play?

**#89: There were many games little children played.**

Q: You would go home for three months a year or something like that?

**#89: The monastery granted leave at times for seven days or 15 days and the longest period was a month in a year.**

Q: Do you have any other memories of the time you were a monk from age 5 to 16? When you think about those times, what comes to mind as a memory?

**#89: It was difficult until the age of 16, I had to memorize a lot of scriptures. I was in the local monastery until then. Then at the age of 16 I went to the Sera Monastery in Lhasa.**

Q: What was the memorization?

**#89: Monks have a lot of scriptures to recite and all those had to be memorized.**

Q: What was the reason to move to Sera Monastery?

**#89: Unlike in the local monasteries, the study levels were much higher at the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Gaden. I had a great desire to pursue my learning.**

Q: At that young age, what was it about the dharma that was very important to you to study?

**#89: I very much wanted to learn the debate part of the Buddhist philosophy and the five *Pothey*.**

Q: Can you say a little bit about the *Pothey*?

**#89: The five *Pothey* are Namdrel, Pharchin, Uma, Dhulwa and Zoe. They are the five major subjects of the Buddhist Sutra. They are called the *Brahmana*.**

Q: Where did you get this love of learning and philosophy from? You came from a farming family, so how did this come into your heart?

**#89: Once you join the monastery, your heart is into religion. You are in the path of learning the dharma. The local monastery was more into memorizing the texts, while at the larger monastery you learned the philosophy.**

Q: How did you find debate? Was that easy or difficult to learn?

**#89: It is very difficult in general.**

Q: Can you explain a little bit about debate? What happens in debate because many people don't understand it?

**#89: When you learn the five *Pothey* of the Buddhist Sutras, it is to transform yourself and then develop yourself and your heart.**

Q: And you were studying this very hard from age 16 until when?

**#89: I studied it until I was 33 at the Sera Monastery in Tibet. After that I left to teach debate at my local monastery, the Phuntsoling Monastery.**

Q: That was a big change to go from Lhasa back to your hometown. What was the experience like to go back with new wisdom and to be a teacher?

**#89: That was very different. I was not the little child anymore and my thinking was changed. I wanted to help others and I was very enthusiastic. I came to my monastery with the sole purpose of teaching them philosophy in debate. I taught for around two years. Then the Chinese invaded in 1959. I was 35 years old when the Chinese put me in prison.**

Q: When you went back to your own town and monastery, were you able to see your family at that time, your mother and your father?

**#89: My father had passed away, but I met my mother.**

Q: How large was the monastery? How many monks were there?

**#89: There were a little over 400 monks.**

Q: While teaching debate, how many were you teaching debate to?

**#89: I was the only teacher who came to teach. Earlier the local monastery had no debate teacher and the learning there was not extensive like the three great monasteries.**

[Interpreter repeats question.]

**#89: Over a 100 monks were learning the debate.**

Q: That was your first time teaching and you had over a hundred students. What a big job you had?

**#89: Yes. [Laughs]**

Q: What kind of a teacher were you? Were you very strict or friendly or what?

**#89: I was a lenient teacher, not at all strict.**

Q: Was that because of your nature? Had the Chinese come into your village at that time? Were they coming around the monastery in 1956? In 1956 you went to your monastery back at the Phuntsoling Gonpa. Had the Chinese come to the monastery at all?

**#89: No, it wasn't 1956; it was 1957 when I came back. Then in 1959 the revolution started and I was put in prison.**

Q: Were there any Chinese coming into the monastery at that time?

**#89: The Chinese came in 1959. They started torturing the people and caused a lot of suffering.**

Q: Did they come into the monastery in 1959?

**#89: The Chinese came in the ninth Tibetan lunar month of 1959 and stayed until the first month of the following year. They started their indoctrination; in fact it was mostly torturing. The monks suffered immensely. The laypeople, especially the leaders suffered, too.**

Q: Can you tell us what happened when they came into the monastery? What did they do?

**#89: Their main intention at first was to turn the society upside-down. They paid the people from the low background and misled them. Those people did whatever the Chinese told them to and they became very powerful. The people from the upper strata were tortured. One would have had to endure a lot before being imprisoned. I did not suffer in the struggle sessions, but others were put through a lot and I suffered along with them.**

**During a *thamzing* 'struggle session,' the person was made to bend down under a table from early morning until late night. He was not allowed to touch his hands to the ground. It was very difficult to endure this torture.**

Q: Can you please share with us what circumstances led to your being arrested?

**#89: It happened at Phuntsoling in 1959. At that time, *thamzing* was not executed, but there was fear and dread. The Chinese misled the people coming from poor background and gave them power. That is how they spread Communism in the world. It is terrible. If Communism spreads in the world, having been born as human beings is worthless—I know it.**

Q: What were some examples of suffering that the people you knew had to undergo?

**#89: For example, the policy of Communist Chinese was to bring down the nobles and raise the status of the poor. The poor people were time and again instructed and made to feel important. The nobles and the wealthy underwent a lot of suffering for about four months even before they were imprisoned. They were made to bend down under the tables.**

Q: Under the tables?

**#89: Yes, under the tables. Those were high tables and the Chinese stood there to accuse the person of his so-called wrong doings, which were not true. Having to remain in that stooped position was worse than being beaten.**

Q: They had to bend under the tables?

**#89: Yes, they were under the high tables and the Chinese hit the table with their fists and accused the person of his faults. All the wealthy and those people who held responsibilities in the old system were made to undergo torture. Each one of them, in turns, had to remain in that position from morning until evening. All the blood rushed to your face and by evening when you tried to stand up, you fainted. That was very difficult, much worse than beating.**

**The policy of overturning the society happened everywhere in Tibet. The Chinese gathered the poor people and deceived them by encouraging and urging them to take a stand against the rich, not to fear the wealthy and that all the power rested with them [the poor]. They kept on and on, until finally the poor believed it. This happened not only to the Tibetans, but to the other countries which came under the Chinese.**

Q: Did the monks have to undergo this kind of struggle session?

**#89: Everyone whether they were monks or laypeople, whoever was in a position of importance or was wealthy. Every region had its leaders and the Chinese upturned our society.**

Q: And how did Rinpoche go from being in the monastery to being in the prison?

**#89: At that time, the poor supported [the Chinese] in turning the society upside-down. They received incentives from the Chinese. When all the wealthy people and the leaders were sent to prison, the condition of the poor people who had received a lot of riches gradually deteriorated. They, who had subjected the wealthy to struggle sessions and received their wealth, once again became poor until they were back to their earlier situation of having nothing. They also suffered. This happened in China, too. I know all these things.**

Q: Did the Chinese kill any of the monks at the monastery?

**#89: They didn't kill any monks. However, many monks were beaten and taken to prison. Some of the influential and the wealthy were not heard from again. Nobody knew whether they were dead or alive. Many prisoners died of starvation.**

Q: As a young man you had many students under you, hundreds in your class; did they all go to prison?

**#89: Those students who came from wealthy families or those who held positions were taken away. Those who had no wealth to speak of, those that were poor, rose against the former for the time being. That is how the Chinese functioned. If Communism extends anywhere in the world, the same thing would happen.**

Q: Khen Rinpoche, you had over a hundred students; were any of them arrested?

**#89: Yes, many of my students [were arrested]. Even among students you have those who are wealthy.**

Q: Where was Rinpoche taken? Which prison?

**#89: Shigatse and around Shigatse. I was made to work on the farms around Shigatse, cultivating the fields and we were not given enough food to eat. The *tsampa* 'flour from roasted barley' rationed to us in a day was not as much as this cup can hold [shows his tea cup] and nothing else besides it. Many people died. Besides *tsampa* we had only water, not even salt. This much *tsampa* cannot sustain a man. I, too, almost died in those seven years. Most people died in the prison. That's how the Chinese are; that's their way.**

Q: What do you think allowed you to maintain and to survive?

**#89: I was almost on the verge of death during those seven years. The work was difficult without sufficient food. I was vomiting blood and there was no flesh on my body. My bootlaces would not stay up because there was no flesh here [points to his legs]. I was on the verge of death when I was released. There was no time for religious practice, but we prayed in our hearts. I just about managed to come out.**

Q: Did the Chinese release you?

**#89: The Chinese released me after seven years. I was sent to the village to live under the laypeople. There, too, it was very difficult. If all of you knew those things in detail, you would know the ways of the Chinese [shakes his head].**

Q: Were there any special prayers, or whatever, that you could have said that was very helpful for you when you were enduring these sufferings?

**#89: You are not allowed to say your prayers aloud. Even if you shut your eyes, they [the Chinese] would say that we were meditating and subject us to *thamzing*. But your thoughts are your own; you are free to think in your mind and pray. You could not say it aloud.**

Q: Were there any special practices that you did in your heart that were helpful when so much suffering was imposed on you? I am asking any special practices, special prayers that you recited?

**#89: His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a part of the monks of the three great monasteries were already in India. We were left behind at the local monastery, so I used to pray that I should die soon in the prison—here was no fear of death due to the immense hardship—or that I should be given an early release to be able to go to India where His Holiness and the others were. I have spent many years at the Sera Monastery and prayed that I should reach the Sera Monastery here [in Bylakuppe] and be of service to the Buddha Dharma.**

**Then I was able to escape [to India] and this monk here [pointing to someone off camera] is my student. Since the time I arrived here, I engaged in teaching the students at the monastery.**

Q: Because you were a Rinpoche even back then, I imagine, were you treated differently than the other monks—just the way the rich people were often given a harsher treatment than the poor people? As a special teacher were you treated more harshly by the Chinese?

**#89: No, not that. I was treated just like the others. It was those people who were in important positions during the previous society that were treated more harshly, according to the degree of their crimes. Some were put in solitary confinement in small rooms. I was in the general category. Our prison was a storage depot for grains during the previous system. There were about 100 of us. If people of the world learned about the conditions in those prisons and the political ways of the Chinese, there is no use taking birth as humans, considering the suffering.**

Q: There was so much suffering. A hundred people in one room, is that what you are saying?

**[Interpreter to interviewer]: It was a storage space; a grain storage space.**

Q: I don't want to cause you suffering, but I would like to understand what some of the conditions in that storage room were?

**#89: [Laughs] The greatest suffering at that time was the lack of food! Hunger gnaws at your intestines and you cannot sleep with the pain. There was no flesh on the body; we were like skeletons. Even then we had to go to work! You don't know that if such policies are implemented in any place, the same thing will happen.**

**To go into detail, if the poor in any country are misinformed that their future would be rosy and that their leaders have been subduing them, those people can be deceived. Take India for example—the number of poor is in the majority and the wealthy are less in number. So if they [the poor] are told, "You have been subjugated by the rich. You should rise against them. You must unite and topple the rich. Then the wealth of the rich will come to you and you will become the owners of India," and in this way the poor of India would rebel and become uncontrollable.**

**Society will turn upside-down. Once the poor come into power, there would be torture and suffering for a few months. The wealth, like gold and silver would go to them for the time being. Once all the wealthy and important people were imprisoned, all the power would come to them [the poor]. Then within a year or two, the poor of India would utilize the wealth and then once again they would be back to the condition that they were earlier.**

**It happened in China when Mao Zedong misled the people and the society tumbled. The people of China do not want to live under their government; I know that. Now Russia has changed, it is only China that is left. The power of Communism has somewhat diminished. At that time there were chances of people being misled and Communism gaining ground. I know that. Times were dangerous.**

Q: When did you find out you were going to be released from prison? Did they tell you or did that just happen one day suddenly?

**#89: The release was very sudden. They [the Chinese] decide the sentence right at the beginning and then when the time came—provided you have been a model prisoner and worked hard—they released you on the appointed date. Those who had more serious charges against them were not heard of again; no one knew if they were dead. Their families have to undergo so much suffering. You didn't even know where your father, mother or relatives were. It's not like the children did not care for their parents' whereabouts, but each one was scared for his own life under the public administration. They [the rich and the influential] were oppressed a lot and had to undergo beatings all the time.**

Q: Khen Rinpoche, when you are under the public, what did those people do to you?

**#89: The Chinese had given all the power to those people [the poor]. There were different segregations among the people. Like in the first segregation, all the parents were imprisoned and never heard of again. The children since they belonged to the upper class families they were placed under the control of the [poor] people and suffered daily beatings and insults from them. They thought they might be taken to prison. No one was happy.**

Q: You mean they wished they were taken to prison?

**#89: They also had the added fear that they might be taken to prison. There were so many problems. No one in the world knows it in detail.**

Q: What kind of thoughts and feelings you have about the Chinese when you saw them inflicting so much suffering on your people?

**#89: Think like this: if the world followed this kind of practice where there is so much suffering, what is the good of taking human life? It's better to be born as an animal in the wild. You are undisturbed. Despite being born a human, there is no freedom but immeasurable hardships. If such a practice was followed in other parts of the world, why be born a human?**

At that time, I used to fear that it [Communism] would spread in the world. I think countries near China like Korea where society was going to be upturned, the United States provided help by splitting the country so that it [spread of Communism] halted for a few years. So it was America who extended assistance, I know that. I heard that the people of the United States of America complained to its government that it cannot provide security to its own country, but provide help to other countries. America knew that this policy would not succeed and that the people would suffer for themselves in the end by not having enough to eat. Stopping this was a great job on the part of America. If not it would have endangered many. Even India would have become a Communist state gradually. I know that.

Q: When you got out of prison, what happened? Where did you go?

**#89: I was sent to my home in the village, to my relatives who themselves were facing a lot of hardship. There was nobody in the monastery; it was completely ruined. On my release they [the Chinese] warned me that I was not permitted to practice dharma and if I went against it, I would be back in prison. I was in my village, but I had to remain under the [poor] people who were put in power. There was a lot of suffering, except during the night when I went to sleep.**

The whole day I worked alone as I was not allowed to have contact with anyone. This type of restriction was not given to me alone, but for all the people who lived under this system. I worked in the fields solitarily and it was very difficult. Even if I worked well, there were insults. I had to attend meetings that were held every night. Those people who were in authority argued among themselves, as there were no regulations; there was no trust between them. They met every night and indulged in fighting.

Q: Those poor people put in power?

**#89: Yes, among themselves. The cause of the fights was in regard to their tasks that someone did or someone didn't do it. They all had the same power. There was no proper administration due to this in-fighting. It was similar in China. They [the poor who were in**

**power] couldn't form regulations when they were quarrelling among themselves. Nobody could trust anyone. Those people who were put in power themselves faced a lot of trouble. Everyone faced problems; it was only at night when we slept that there was relief. Due to those events, I fled and reached India in 1969.**

Q: Did you escape with other people or alone or with a group? Were there monks?

**#89: There were no monks. I fled with the secretary of my village and his wife. It was the three of us.**

Q: The other person was a clerk?

**#89: He was a secretary at the Phuntsoling district administration.**

Q: How long have you been out of prison before you left for India?

**#89: I was seven years in prison and three years under the authority of the people, a total of 10 years.**

Q: In the end, why did you decide to leave Tibet?

**#89: There was so much misery that I was forced to flee! [Laughs] There was enormous hardship for everyone under the Chinese system. The people who were poor earlier, were later given authority by the Chinese. Initially they grabbed the power, but nowadays, they are also in trouble.**

Q: Was it a dangerous journey or was it easy?

**#89: How can it be easy? We traveled at night and hid in the hills during the day. We had to avoid anyone lest we be caught. There were Chinese everywhere. It took us 21 days from my village to India. We ran out of food and it was very difficult. Through the grace of God, we managed to reach India. Had we been caught, they [the Chinese] would have decided to skin us alive. In 1982, I went to Tibet along with another monk teacher. I went to my village. I left in 1969 and went back in 1982. My teacher was in Lhasa.**

Q: Khen Rinpoche, you went back to Tibet?

**#89: Yes, I went back to Tibet in 1982, with documents [travel permits] from the Chinese authority.**

Q: In 1969 where did you settle when you came to India? Where did you go?

**#89: At that time there was no monastery. All the monks were living in tents.**

Q: You first came to Gangtok?

**#89: Yes, first I came to Gangtok. Then I came here in the seventh Tibetan lunar month of 1970.**

Q: Then about 12 years later, you decided to return to Tibet. What was the purpose of your visit?

**#89: I had a teacher in Lhasa, who was the abbot of Sera Je Monastery. He was appointed so by the Chinese and was one among the representatives of the three great monasteries. So I went to see him and also my relatives—though my parents were no more, three of my siblings were there.**

[Discontinuity in interview]

**#89: For a few years the people of China remained hungry. I know that. From 1953 to 1954 to this day, the people of China do not prefer Communism. But the army was powerful and they were helpless. They suppressed the people. They created mistrust and discord among the people. They held meetings, which were grounds for arguments. The people of China—those poor people do not want Communism now, but they are helpless. When the army is there, pointing its gun at you to kill you, you cannot form any union. Nowadays, unlike earlier times, the people of China are coming to the realization. Even now it is difficult. It is important for the countries of the world to know the ways of the Chinese. If they do not realize that, it is very dangerous.**

Q: When you were in prison, did you see any Chinese who were kind to you or tried to help you?

**#89: There were some Chinese who were slightly different. Among the officers, there were some who treated the prisoners slightly better. They had to be careful because they could get in trouble for being good to the prisoners. They had to follow their rules, which were strict. In general, there were some Chinese who were better than others. Their rules were strict and complaints were made against each other. They could be imprisoned for certain accusations. When you observed them, you noticed that there were some Chinese who were quite lenient to the prisoners, but there were others who were terribly hostile. They treated us real badly and made us suffer—it was very difficult. They were of two types.**

Q: When you came back to India [from visit to Tibet], you went to a monastery?

**[Interpreter to interviewer]: He came here [Sera Monastery in Bylakuppe].**

Q: What does it feel free to practice as a monk and teacher after all those years of being under guard and being watched? What was it like?

**#89: Having been born into this *samsara*, everybody has some amount of suffering. Other than that there is nothing happier than this for me! When I look back on those days in prison, I feel so happy now, so free. I have done my duty towards the monastery. I have**

completed my *geshe* 'degree in philosophy,' shouldered the responsibility of a *gekoe* 'disciplinarian,' then served as an abbot and now I am happy.

However, as a human, we tend to dwell on many thoughts and at times feel worried. Otherwise, there is no need to fret. Mainly I think it is very important for all the countries of the world to know about the ways of Communism; if they don't, then it's very dangerous. It is not right not to know about it. If China becomes democratic—I can't say about the future of the world—for the time being there will be peace in the world, as was rightly said by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. If there is no change in China's Communism, there's bound to be great danger. The world should realize that it is not only the issue of Tibet. If the world wants peace, Communism in China should change. Otherwise, peace is difficult.

Q: After a person suffers so much and the memories of the suffering comes back, is there any practice that you could recommend that people could do in their heart to relieve the suffering of the mind?

**#89:** The main point in alleviating suffering is what I told you earlier. In 1963, the Chinese deemed it as educating us when they made us read the books written by Mao Zedong—his books were stored in a room. Sunday was the day of rest and as we didn't have to go to work, the Chinese thought they were educating us on this day, [we read the books] and considered it as learning how Communism was going to affect the world in the future.

Earlier I learned Buddhist philosophical debate and I also saw almost all of Mao Zedong's books in the Chinese prison. The world is in great danger. Mao Zedong mentions that they needn't go to war with any country; instead people in any nation who suffer under the wealthy would themselves realize it and topple their own society. In the end, all the countries of the world will come under Communism. This is mentioned in his books and it is dangerous.

However, with the change in Russia, the power of Communism has diminished to a certain extent. Otherwise, gradually all the world would have become Communists. Once that happens, we will not have the freedom that we are enjoying now. There'll be a lot of suffering. It will be work from sunrise until sunset. The nights will be spent attending meetings and witnessing the arguments. There'd be hardly anything to eat. That's the Chinese system.

Q: When you came back to Sera Monastery here, did you take up your teaching of the debate? What happened?

**#89:** Yes.

Q: Why did you return to Tibet?

**#89:** I went back to Tibet in 1982 to meet my teacher who was at the Sera Monastery and also my brother and two sisters.

Q: Was Lhasa changed from the time you left to when you went back in 1982?

**#89: The change is in the buildings, which look attractive from the outside. But in the earlier times there were over 6,000 monasteries holding holy icons and scriptures, all of which were destroyed. They [the Chinese] may claim to have brought development, but it cannot be compared to what we have lost. Only the structures looked good for people to see. So in that way I can say that Lhasa and Shigatse have changed, but the Chinese are deceiving the villagers. They dole out money to the people under the pretext of helping them, but their real intention is to deceive the people. On one hand they help the people, but on the other hand they restrict them. In the three great monasteries [Sera, Drepung and Gaden monasteries] they claim to have teachers, but there aren't. Things only look good from the outside. I know it because I have experienced life under the Chinese.**

Q: You said you wish to go on another pilgrimage, into China; where is it you would like to go? Can you tell us and why you wish to go?

**#89: Yes, to China for a pilgrimage and also on a tour. I'd like to see the birthplace of Je Rinpoche, which is Amdo Kumbum.**

Q: Where is Rewoche? Is it in China?

**#89: Yes, it is in China.**

Q: Gyanak Rewo Tse-nga?

**#89: That is the seat of Jamphelyang, Jetsun Jamphelyang.**

Q: How is your health now? Would you feel better soon, do you think?

**#89: I think if my legs get better, I would want to go, but it's a little difficult now.**

Q: How do you think that your life has been affected by this prison experience?

**#89: Now there is nothing else. It's not just about the issue of Tibet. If China becomes democratic, there will be peace in the world at least for the time being though I can't predict the future. If there is no change in the Chinese Communist government, it is very dangerous. The reason being that China has occupied the whole of Tibet and Xingjian. The country is growing in area and power and one day that will be very difficult to control.**

**Presently they have stopped because of America; otherwise, it would be very difficult. My life is just a matter of five to six years, but the future is in great danger. I would want all the countries of the world to do well. The other countries of the world should act towards the democratization of China. They should seek ways and means to achieve it. In case they remain idle, China will keep growing in power. A time will come when it will be impossible to face them. If one battles them, they have manufactured weapons. In the event a war**

**begins and the weapons are utilized, then the whole world will be destroyed. Instead they should look for ways to stop China before it becomes impossible to face their might. That's extremely dangerous.**

Q: Do you have any ideas of how they could be vanquished? What ideas do you have?

**#89: There is the United Nations Organization. It should have power because it is the United Nations! All the countries should unite and the United Nations should use its authority, but there is nothing like that now. The United Nations—it has a great name, but nothing else. It does nothing. It only monitors the movement of money. Even with no experience I can understand that. I don't know how every country functions, but in regard to politics, I understand a little of what goes on in the world now and I have studied philosophical debate. Earlier we had no knowledge, but these days we understand what goes on in the world. The United Nations should have the power and be fair. It should not involve in economics. If everybody works in unity and fairness, there will be peace. If it [U.N.] concentrates only on the movement of money, then a time will come when it will be difficult [to control China].**

Q: What advice or message would you like to give to the next generation of Tibetans whether they are living in exile or whether they are living in Tibet? What would be your advice for the next generation of monks and laypeople?

**#89: I always tell my students and others. When I was the abbot, I tell them what I feel during the meetings. I think Tibetans cannot do it [gain independence] alone; the other countries of the world should lend support. The United Nations Organization should have power. If the United Nations Organization does not have the power, then it is useless. To have power, it should be fair and not indulge in pleasing the nations and observing the movement of money. The United Nations should work justly. If this happens, there will be peace in the world. If not, it is useless.**

[Question is repeated]

**#89: My advice is that there should be peace and to achieve this, everybody must work together. Otherwise, it is futile.**

Q: If you could meet with some of the Chinese Communist leaders, what would you tell them? What would you try to teach them?

**#89: If only I had the freedom! But without freedom there is no one to talk to. I can talk to the Chinese leaders provided there is no fear and there is proper freedom. I will speak truthfully in regard to the future; the way they work and the bad results of some of the wrong things they did. If only there is no fear! Presently, we do not have the freedom to say that. I possess knowledge about the Chinese systems. I have been in Chinese prison and I have experienced their deceiving ways since 1951 when they came to Tibet. In 1959 a huge country invaded a nation with a small population; not only that, they then imprisoned the people and seized all power. In 1956, they completely destroyed about 6,000 monasteries,**

**including the priceless icons and holy texts. China will gradually become more powerful, until a time when it cannot be subdued easily. Then you will never know where the world is headed. Everyone should unite now.**

Q: Do you still engage in debate with any of the younger monks?

**#89: I still teach debate.**

Q: How have you learned so much about the rest of the world and world politics? You are somewhat unusual.

**#89: That's because when you learn debate, your mind is alert and you understand. When I lived in Tibet, I did not know about the world. It's been 36 to 37 years since I came to India. I understand a little bit about the ways of the world and then I apply my mind to it. Then you understand where things are going wrong.**

[Another person at interview] I am a lawyer and I also debate about these things.

**#89: Yes, that is true.**

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to leave with us as a final message for this interview?

**#89: I have nothing much to say except that it is certain there should be peace in the world. In order to have peace in the world, the United Nations Organization should have stronger power.**

Q: Do you think that oral histories are important to preserve the history of Tibet?

**#89: Oral only is not enough; that should be acted upon.**

Q: Will the action be a military one?

**#89: No, that is not necessary. The main thing is the United Nations Organization. Its name is the United Nations Organization. It is suppose to work justly for the world. At present none of the countries are doing that. Each country is only concerned about its own space. They do not talk about the Chinese. They fear for themselves and their business dealings. Those business dealings will not come to their aid in the future. You don't know what will happen. It is not only about business transactions.**

**For peace to prevail in the world, every nation—there are so many big nations—should talk frankly and support each other. It is not only about the issue of Tibet. Tibetans will be fine wherever they go. Until now, we are happy by the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Unlike earlier times—now that His Holiness is so popular and famous in the world—the Chinese are acting tactful in Tibet. I know how the Chinese first treated the Tibetans. They are different these days. That is not the truth; that is deception.**

**There are many big countries in the world that are only safeguarding their interests and their friendship with the Chinese so as not to harm their own interests. Every one should unite and work together with fairness. The main requirement is that the Chinese power should be subdued with nonviolence. China has a huge area as it has the whole of Tibet. One of the reasons for China's power is the mines of Tibet. I know that. They will keep growing stronger unless they are put in check. The countries of the world are not doing anything. They only look good.**

Q: I wish I could get you an invitation to speak at the United Nations and I mean that seriously. I wish you could somehow come and meet with people because you have such strong feelings about what the United Nations should be doing.

**#89: Me? Invited to speak at the United Nations?**

[Interpreter to interviewee]: Yes, yes.

**#89: If I could go with freedom I would certainly talk. I am 84 years old now and I will speak truthfully and even if I am killed for doing that, it does not matter. When I was the abbot, I have spoken frankly to many Indian leaders. The Indian leaders said honestly that for the time being they could not tell us to confront the Chinese and if there were four to five other countries from the outside world giving them support, they would certainly stand up for the Tibetans. "We alone can't do anything," that's what the Indian leaders said and that is the truth. If other countries would lend their support, India would keep aside friendship and talk directly to the Chinese.**

**At present the Indians know that they would be the losers in the event of a direct confrontation. In general, the Indians are very kind to the Tibetans. All the Tibetans on Indian soil enjoy a lot of freedom. That is the kindness of India and the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When I look at it, I see that the countries of the world are not in unity, each fearing for itself and maintaining relations by diplomacy. That should not be done. Now is the time for the countries of the world to be strong and stand up. I am not talking just for the issue of Tibet to be resolved. In general everything should be good. China has a huge area and they are still growing stronger. A time will come when they cannot be vanquished.**

END OF INTERVIEW