

## Interview H0023: with Shatra Rimshi Ganden Paljor [tib. bshad sgra rim bzhi dga' ldan dpal 'byor], (India, August 21, 1981) : Part No. 3 of 6

*Shatra was a well known aristocratic official from one of the largest and wealthiest families in Tibet. This interview discusses the Reting incident and the Sera Je War and explains how his family kept a Sera monk prisoner in his house. He also discusses Kapshöba's demotion, imprisonment, and eventual release.*

Q

Normally, how many days would it take to go from Reting to Lhasa? How could they bring Reting so quickly?

A

I have never been to Reting so don't know how many days it took when they brought Reting. He came through the Phembo Gola mountain pass.

Q

At that time, the [Sera Je](#) [tib. byes] monks couldn't do anything, although the [dobdo](#) monks [tib. rdob rdob] tried to do something, right?

A

Yes. Probably there were monks [waiting] on the mountain who planned to do something, but the soldiers escorting Reting fired machine guns.

Q

Did they bring Reting along the front side of Sera?

A

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Yes. They crossed the middle of the Tsesumthang [tib. tshes gsum thang] plain and brought him directly to the Potala. Actually, the monks didn't rush down. Probably they were on the mountainside. In case the monks would have rushed down, since the soldiers had the machine guns, it would have been impossible for the monks to get through because the soldiers were guarding Reting very strictly and Reting was also riding a mule and a soldier was holding the reins of the mule. So it was out of the question for the monks to grab Reting. He was brought directly to [Sharchenjog](#) [tib. shar chen lcog] in the Potala, although he was not put in the real prison.

Q

Probably that was a room of one of the monk official cooks of the Dalai Lama, right?

A

Probably. The Trelde Lekhung [tib. 'phral bde las khungs] gave awards like money and [khata](#) scarfs to the [Trapchi](#) [tib. grwa bzhi] soldiers.

Q

When you went as the representative of the Kashag to seal Reting Labrang, what did you actually feel at that time?

A

I had never thought there would be such a conflict between [Taktra](#) and Reting.

Q

You didn't know that they had contradictions?

A

There was the disturbance of [Sera Je](#) and I just heard that Reting told [Taktra](#) to hand over the regency, but I didn't know that there was so much guilt [over loss of celibacy] [tib. gnong chen po]. When I saw that Reting Labrang was sealed and Reting was brought to Lhasa and imprisoned and made feeble [tib. nyams dma' po], I felt astonished. This is because I had seen the glory and the fame [tib. mtshan zil] of Reting and I thought this was too bad [tib. dpe red [gang](#) drag].

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Q

How long did Reting stay in [Sharchenjog](#) before the investigation was done?

A

The Assembly was probably held on the next day. They did it very quickly.

Q

There was also the Sera War. How did that happen?

A

This was at the time when Reting was in the prison.

Q

They [the Sera monks] couldn't do anything, right? Was that during the [Tsongjö](#) [tib. tshogs mchod] Prayer Festival?

A

Yes. That was in the 2nd month. When Reting Labrang was sealed the [Shengo](#) also went there. While the investigation was going on, the Sera War was taking place continuously, and the monks fired a kind of cannon against the [Trapchi](#) Regiment. I heard that the shells of the cannon fell on the regiment. At that time, many people such as traders and the [Ganden Tripa](#) [tib. dga' ldan khri pa] went to Tsesumthang to talk and they sent messages calling for the [Sera Je](#) monks to come down. Some of the eloquent monks like Geshe Phulama [tib. dge bshes bu bla ma] and the Chandzö Dragpa [tib. phyag mdzod grags pa] came down. They said, "Until the two lamas get back their titles and properties as before, we won't listen to talk even if it results in [Sera Je](#) being made into a condition wherein we have to put up tents [i.e., destroyed]. You came here to talk with a kind heart, but we have made our determination. We don't have anything to talk about." The Geshe banged his boots and said that.

Q

Who did they mean by the two lamas?

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A

Reting and Khardo [tib. mkhar rdo].

Q

Was the [geshe](#) the most senior monk in Sera [tib. mtsan [tho](#) dang po]?

A

No, but he was a first level [geshe](#). Then he said, "You are telling us to prostrate and surrender [tib. mgo sgur phyag 'tshal]. In the past, during the Lhundrub Dzong event, the monks were told to surrender and prostrate and they did, but what consequence did they get? We also won't get anything other than that." I heard that the monks didn't listen at the talks.

Q

When they talked, they told [Sera Je](#) to keep quiet. What kind of the compromise [tib. 'grigs 'jags] did they [Takra] make and what did they tell the monks that they will do for them?

A

They told the monks that they should confess that they caused the disturbances.

Q

When you hold talks, there should be some compromise, right?

A

The monks were told to hand over their guns and confess to what they did, then we will make the punishment as lenient as possible. If you don't do that, the government won't leave you like this. Reting is already brought here and it is uncertain what kind of destruction would take place in the monastery, even if we don't wish to do that. Before such a disaster happens, you should think carefully and we will also request the government not to make the matter big. If you don't do that, you won't get anything and it would be like the proverb, "if you hit butter on the stone, the butter will lose and if you hit the stone on the butter, the butter will lose" [tib. rdo mar la gzhus na mar pham/ mar

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rdo la gzhus na mar pham]. No matter what [Sera Je](#) would do, they could not handle the government. Like this they explained to them the advantages and the disadvantages, like telling them what is virtuous and what is non-virtuous [tib dge bshad sdig bkrol].

Q

Who was the [Ganden Tripa](#) then? Was he the one from Minyag?

A

His name was Lhundrub Chönyi [tib. lhun grub chos nyid].

Q

He was from [Sera Je](#), right?

A

Yes. There were all the traders and probably there were representatives of Ganden Shartse [tib. shar rtse] and Drepung.

Q

At that time, did they put tents in Tsesumthang when they held the talks?

A

No, they just met in the open field. At that time the war had started and the monks were firing Tibetan cannons against the [Trapchi](#) Regiment from the top of the mountain behind the Sera. So they were told to stop firing the cannon. The monks didn't listen to what the government told them. Therefore, it was decided to attack Sera. Then [Shape](#) Kapshöba and the Trungtsi and the Commander-in-Chief and his staff were sent to Sera. At that time I could hear the gun shots and cannons fired from Sera when I was in the Potala. We also used binoculars and watched.

Q

Actually, the monks didn't rush down, right?

A

Yes.

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Q

If they had rushed down [tib. lug], the situation would have become strange, right?

A

At that time, the government was on the alert that the monks would rush down and they had given guns to the police stations in Lhasa. But the monks were unable to rush down. However, the monks went to break the seal on Sandutshang's [tib sa 'du tshang] house and took out all the guns and ammunitions [he kept there]. At that time, 5-6 monks were killed.

Q

Why did they seal Sandutshang's house?

A

It was said that they were followers of Reting. Sandutshang's son was imprisoned and Sandutshang's house was sealed.

Q

Where did they imprison him?

A

He was imprisoned in [Sharchenjog](#).

Q

When did they imprison him?

A

He was imprisoned at the same time that Reting, Phünkhang, and Khardo were imprisoned. The monks came to break the seals of Sandutshang even though there were police guarding the house. The police couldn't stop them and the monks entered the house and took out the guns and ammunitions, but when they came out, the police shot and killed 5-6 monks. After that, the monks made up their mind to make the war and the leader was the incarnate lama called Tsenya Trulku [tib. rtse nya sprul sku]. He took

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the dagger [tib. phur pa] of Sera which the people would go to seek the blessing [from the phurpa] in Sera once in a year [tib. phur mjal]. He took this dagger for his protective talisman [tib. mtshon srung]. He was going up and down and encouraging the monks. When they made the war, Reting was still in the prison. At that time I saw Reting when they brought him to the interrogation.

Q

Was he wearing his lama's robe then?

A

Yes, he was, but he was not wearing the yellow brocade dagotse gown. He was wearing a monk's robe with the stylized water bottle (tib. [chablug](#) [chab blug]) and yellow rainbow design boots. In the Assembly, they put a double brocade cushion for him [tib. gos kha nyis rtseg].

Q

Was his double brocade cushion lower than the others?

A

It was like the cushions for the third rank, Dzasa and Theiji. I heard that when he was interrogated, he didn't say anything harsh and said, "Regarding these matters, whatever has happened, I want to express my regret and repentance [tib. 'gyod bshags] in front of the Regent [Taktra](#). So please give me permission to go to see the Regent." He insisted on saying that. But since he had been arrested, probably they couldn't let him go to see the Regent. Then the Assembly said, "There is no hope for this. If you tell us what happened, this will be reported to the regent. Anyway, Reting confessed clearly about the attempt to harm the safety of the Regent and about sending letters to the Guomindang. He said that everything was his fault. I heard that he took all the responsibility and requested them not to punish the Dzasa much saying that they are not to be blamed. So the interrogation ended quickly and the work was assigned for making the plan [for the verdict].

Q

What do you mean by the interrogation ended?

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A

Reting confessed on all the matters and this was proved by the documents. He even confessed that he sent people to shoot Lhalu, though they didn't ask him about this. So they didn't have any trouble to prove [tib. ra 'phrod] the matters. When they divided the work for making the plan, [Lukhangwa](#) [tib. klu khang ba] was assigned to make the plan for the verdict to be issued to Reting, which was the most complicated. The Trungtsi were also assigned to make the plan for the Dzasa and also for Khardo Lama.

When they discussed how to make the plan, some people said, "Planning to harm the life and the politics and the religion [tib. rgyal bstan chab srid] of the country is a serious matter. Therefore, it is not okay if we don't punish them according to the 13-Point legal code [tib. khirms yig zhal lce bcu gsum]." Then they brought up [a copy of] the 13-Point legal code from the criminal court (tib. sherkhang [bsher khang]). When they read the code, it said, "If someone opposes the king, the principal criminal should be thrown from a cliff [tib. rgyal po la ngo rgol byas na gte po g.yang la skyur] or some other very severe blood-shedding punishment."

Some people said, "Probably it would not be okay to do such things because both sides are lamas. If we do it too severely, [the Regent] might get a bad reputation. So we should refrain from doing that and instead should issue a verdict like we did for the Tengyeling's Demo Lama [tib. bstan rgyas gling de mo bla ma]. At that time, Demo was accused of making curses to end the life of the Dalai Lama, and now Reting also did the same thing to the Regent. So there is nothing wrong if we do like we did to Tengyeling."

Some other members said, "This matter is different from the Tengyeling incident. Tengyeling was just acting against the life of the Dalai Lama and there was nothing else. This time, the matter involves plotting to give away many dzongs and estates to the Guomindang [China]. So we cannot bear this responsibility. This is much more serious than Tengyeling. Therefore, we should do according to the 13-Point legal code."

Q

Who said that?

A

There was one group of people who said that. Then there was some disagreement and finally, they said, "Anyway, we should make a plan and submit it to the Regent. Since

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both the issuer of the verdict and the receiver of the verdict are lamas, he would make the appropriate decision. When they were trying to make the plan, the two prison guards reported that Reting was sick. They sent Lamden Khyenrab Norbu [tib. bla sman khyen rab nor bu], the Monk Official Physician to the Dalai Lama, to check Reting's pulse. The physician came and said, "There is nothing that is dangerous for his life. Probably, he has a sinus problem. He used to take the medicine called Samphel Norbu [tib. bsam 'phel nor bu], so if we offer him this medicine he will be okay." On that night it was reported that at around 3-4 a.m. Reting passed away.

After that, the representatives of the Tsega [tib. rtse 'ag] which was the Dalai Lama's Secretariat and the Shöga [tib. [Shol](#) 'gag] which was the Regent's Secretariat, and the Kashag, the representative of the Assembly, and all the treasurers and officials [tib. Ide zhabs] of Reting Labrang were sent to check up on the dead body of Reting. They stripped off his clothes and checked his body and found that there was a bruise on his buttocks. Otherwise, they didn't see any trace of a beating like swelling and blood and wounds [tib. rma kha khrag shor] and his eyes were slightly opened. The prison guards said, "Please check carefully." They were very very careful about this.

Q

Were you there at that time?

A

Yes.

Q

Were you the representative of the Kashag?

A

Yes.

Q

Tsarong was the representative of the Assembly, right?

A

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Yes. And there was also the [Tseja](#) [tib. rtse phyag] official named Mindrugbug [tib. smin drug sbug]. All the officials of Reting Labrang were crying. Then they said that they will hand over Reting's dead body to Reting Labrang and you should perform whatever funeral ritual you want to perform and the government will provide all the expenditures. On that day, his body was brought to Reting Labrang in [Shide](#) [tib. bzhi sde] [in Lhasa].

This was the time when they were performing the ritual Varjra Pani [tib. phyag rdor sgrub mchod] in Reting Labrang. So they said that it is a good coincidence and they performed the funeral ritual offering at the same time. Then they brought the body to his room called Nyiwö [tib. nyi 'od] and they covered his face with red silk. There were people in Lhasa coming to see his body and they were clasping the palms of their hands and crying and they were saying, "This holy lama was looking good and healthy when he was brought from Reting, but they already made him into such a terrible condition. This is terrible!" At that time, his nose was bleeding a lot and red silk was soaked with blood and the blood was dripping onto his lap.

The lay official Chape [tib chab spel] and Trenthong Khenjung [tib. bkras mthong mkhan chung] were appointed to be in charge of the funeral ritual offering. At that time, Shasur [Sawangchemmo](#) [tib. bshad zur sa dbang chen mo] and [Trunyichemmo](#) Lheding [tib. lha lding] and I were in charge of supplying the necessities for it. After that, the body was cremated in Phabongkha [tib. pha bong kha]. Later I heard that his heart, tongue, and eyeballs [tib. thugs ljags spyang gsum] were left un-burned. When Reting died, the Sera War was still going on and they were firing cannons that made a sound "deng deng." After Reting's death the ringleaders at Sera were arrested.

Q

So Reting didn't stay for long in [Sharchenjog](#), right?

A

Yes. Probably he stayed for 8-9 days. When Reting died, some people were saying, "He is really a holy person. He purposely passed away for the benefit of others [tib. dgongs pa gzhan du gshegs]." Some people were saying, "He was killed." There were many different kinds of talks.

Q

So [Lukhangwa](#) didn't need to make the verdict, right?

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A

Yes. If he had to make the verdict and if he had made it a lenient one, the Regent won't have liked it and there would also be problems coming from the Assembly. If he would have made a severe verdict, since Reting was a Lama, probably [Lukhangwa](#) had a little bit of loyalty towards Reting. So I heard that he had a very hard time. They made a verdict for gouging the eyeballs of Khardo and the two Dzasa and sentenced them to life imprisonment.

Q

Who made this verdict?

A

The Trungtsi made it. They also removed the title of Huthogthu for Reting and left him the title of the Tshogchen Trulku [tib. tshogs chen sprul sku]. And they made the manager [of his Labrang] not be allowed to be a Dzasa. All the estates that had been obtained newly by this Reting incarnation during his regency were confiscated, but they left the estates that they had before his Regency. Phünkhang and his son were proven innocent and were released and it was their choice whether to become lay officials or not. So the Gung became the Gung and his son took the Senampa rank. Sandutsang's son was also released.

When the Lhasa Mipön ("mayor") went to arrest Nyungne [tib. snyung gnas] Lama, he [Nyungne] shot himself in the toilet of the house of the khatsara named Kalden Yügyal [tib. kha tsha ra skal ldan g.yul rgyal] which was in Numa. When they investigated about the person who went to deliver the bomb, there was a horse trader called Loro Tsegye [tib. lo ro tshes bryad] who had sold the bomb to Reting Labrang. When they asked Tsegye where he got the bomb [hand grenade] from, he said that the head of the Dalai Lama's stable, Chipön Chenmo Jingpa [tib. chibs dpon chen mo bying pa], sold it to him. So Jingpa's house was also sealed and he was imprisoned. Later he was demoted both from the position he held and from the ranks of lay officials, and he also got whipped.

Q

How did he get the bomb?

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A

Jingpa used to be a Depön so he didn't hand back some bombs [grenades after his term]. When he was short of money, he sold them to the horse trader who then sold them to Reting Labrang to make a profit.

When the plan for gouging out the eyeballs was submitted to the Kashag, [Ramba](#), the Senior [Kalön](#) (tib. kalön tripa [tib. bka' blon khri pa]) approved it and it was decided to gouge out their eyeballs. However, the Regent's Nendrön (aide) Thubten Legmon [tib. sne mgron thub bstan legs smon] came to the Kashag and said the Regent wants see the plans for the verdict to be issued against the followers of Reting. The Nendrön brought the plans to the Regent's room. Then the regent said, "The other verdicts are correct, but regarding the verdict of gouging out the eyeballs of Khardo (Lama) and the two Dzasa, please exempt them from that." So the Shapes said, "Oh! He is really a Bodhisattva. This is inconceivable [to be so compassionate]. So we will do as he ordered." Then the Kashag told the two Dzasa that the regent has given an order that you are exempted from having your eyeballs gouged out, but you are sentenced to life imprisonment in the prison in the Bodyguard Regiment. Your food should be served from Reting Labrang through the Depön. You are not allowed to bring the food through the prison guards themselves and it is also not allowed for you to meet family members. If any powerful or high-ranking people try to request your release, let alone releasing them, the property of those people will be confiscated. This was discussed by the Kashag and the Assembly approved it. Then the two Reting Dzasa were whipped and made to wear white [chupa](#) and imprisoned in the [Shöl](#) Panding prison. They were shackled with the shackles that consist of an iron bar between the legs [rather than the loose chain type of shackles] [tib. gdung lcags] and they were shut up in there until the prison was built in the Bodyguard Regiment. After the prison was built, they were shut in there until the (14th) Dalai Lama took temporal and spiritual power. Then they were released when a general amnesty was announced.

Q

Kapshöba was also released at that time, right?

A

Yes.

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Q

How did the Sera War take place? Though it was related to Reting incident, tell me in detail about the war. Did the war start right away when the Reting incident started?

A

When Reting was brought to Lhasa, the Sera monks were spread out along the way and they tried [wanted to] to grab Reting.

Q

Was this the cause of the war? In that year, the Sera monks didn't come to the [Tsongjö](#), right?

A

That was the time when Repe gyau and those [Sera] monks were banished.

Q

Wasn't it because of the Lhundrub Dzong incident that the Sera monks refused to come to the [Tsongjö](#)?

A

Yes. [tib. gral 'dzin]

Q

When the Sera monks didn't come for the [Tsongjö](#), I was in Chusang [tib. [chu](#) bzang].

A

In that year, they didn't perform the [Tsongjö](#) Serbang [tib. tshogs mchod ser sbreng] religious procession on the 30th of the 2nd Lunar month. When Reting was arrested, Tsenya Trulku led the Sera monks and gathered them together to prepare to oppose the government. They broke [the door] of the ammunition storage room which was there during the Water-Mouse Year Chinese war [tib. [chu](#) byi rgya dmag] and took out the weapons and the cannons. They seized the mountain top above Sera (tib. tseri [tib. rtse ri])

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and fired the rifles called Pamali and cannons at the [Trapchi](#) Regiment [which was located below the monastery].

When the monks didn't listen to the discussion, the government officials led by [Shape](#) Kapshöba and the Trungtsi went there wearing traveling dresses [tib. phyogs chas]. They divided the Bodyguard Regiment, the Gyantse Regiment, and the [Trapchi](#) Regiment. Probably there were three regiments and they were given the order to surround Sera and arrest the monks. The monks were opposing the government by firing cannons though they couldn't do much damage. Therefore, the three regiments were sent to Sera and divided into three fighting units, a right, a left, and a middle one. Also some of the soldiers were climbing up from the back side of the mountain [behind Sera] to seize the mountain top. They saw the Sera monks were lower than them and shot the monks. I heard that probably 60-70 monks were killed in that place. Then the remaining monks went down into the monastery.

After that, the Sera monks surrendered and the ringleaders were arrested and brought to the [Shöl](#) Lekhung. Among them were Phu lama and Tsenya. The two of them were whipped and sentenced to life imprisonment in [Shöl](#). The others were also sentenced according to their crimes.

Q

Tsenya didn't run away, right?

A

No, he was arrested. I saw from the Potala that they had tied him on a cross and brought him down. When they settled the Reting incident, many of the Sera monks were lashed and then handed over to the highest aristocratic families [tib. mi drag] like Doring [tib. rdo ring], Thönpa [tib. thon pa], [Ragashag](#) [tib. rag kha shag], and also to the Shapes and the Labrang. All of them who committed serious crime were shackled and had cangues [tib. tshe sgo tshe lcags] put on them, and the aristocrats and Labrang were told that they were not allowed to let them flee. In the beginning, they were in quite strict custody, but later they became kind of acquainted and the custody became not that strict. For whatever reason, they gradually ran away.

Q

Did you have a monk handed over to you?

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A

Yes. We had one young monk called Jama Nyidar who was said to be one of the monks who fired the cannons from Sera. He wore shackles and the cangue. He was lashed very severely and when we sent people to the [Shöl](#) Lekhung, probably it took about 5-6 hours. Then he came to our house after sunset. He was whipped very severely so he had to walk very slowly. We kept him in a room where we used to keep hay. On the next day, we kept him in a room on the second floor.

One day, a monk came from Sera's [Samlo Khamtsen](#) [tib. bsam lho khang tshan] and said, "Probably Jama Nyidar was handed over to you. The Khamtsen will be the guarantor for him and we will advise him not to run away, so please treat him with kindness." I told him, "You have to guarantee that he won't run away because we are responsible for him. We won't treat him badly, and there is nothing that we can't afford to feed him, but if he runs away, there would be problems for all of us. You have to tell him that strongly." Until his wounds are healed, we left a person to help him. After his wounds healed, he could go to get his own food from the kitchen and he could eat as much as he wanted. He didn't have any work. He was good in tailoring, so he got many orders to do tailoring and he didn't have to spend money because we gave him food. So he was able to accumulate quite a good amount of money and he also got cushions, a table and a cupboard, so he lived at ease [tib. blo chags po].

Q

Didn't he have shackles on?

A

When he went outside, he would go wearing the shackles and cangue. He would go to do circumambulation. But inside the house he would remove his shackles and cangue and we would pretend that we didn't know that. We thought that he didn't have any plans to escape. He would also tell us, "I am very grateful to you. There are so many prisoners, but there isn't any prisoner happier than me." But one day he left the shackles and cangue and ran away. So we made a report to the Kashag saying that he had fled. However there wasn't any inquiry and punishment for that.

Q

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Didn't he come back again?

A

No, he probably he went to his homeland.

Q

Where was he from?

A

Probably he was from [Amdo](#). Probably he was not involved in the [plotter] meetings, but he just fired the cannon.

Q

During the Sera War, what did the monks of Drepung do?

A

Probably there were Lamas from Drepung among the monks who [tried to] talk with the Sera monks.

Q

At that time, was Lhatsun Rimpoche [tib. lha btsun rin po che] among them?

A

Probably there were some Lamas.

Q

I heard that Lhatsun Rimpoche went to make a request to [Kapshöba](#), but he didn't let him in, so Rimpoche prostrated to him from under the window and shouted to him.

A

At that time the government tried their best not to have to fire cannons. Later, they had to fire a little bit, but there wasn't much destruction.

Q

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Probably the Kashag and [Kapshöba](#) didn't have the idea of not firing cannons, right?

A

Yes. In the beginning, they might have planned to take over Sera all of a sudden, but [Kapshöba](#) tried his best not to fire cannons.

Q

Kapshöba was a sponsor of [Sera Je](#), right?

A

Probably he was. At that time, all of the verdicts for the monks were announced in the [Shöl](#) Lekhung.

Q

When they interrogated the Dzasa, what did they say?

A

The [two] Dzasa confessed to whatever happened so they didn't have to whip them when interrogating them.

Q

Khardo was also the same, right?

A

Yes, he kind of confessed too much. Phünkhang and [Sandutsang](#) were proved to be not guilty. Before that, they had a suspicion because Yengogla was close to Reting. So they were suspected, but [Sandu](#) was proved innocent. [Sandutsang](#) was smoking opium, so they gave him permission to use opium in jail because it was said he wouldn't survive without opium. At that time, Phünkhang probably had to bribe the officials when they went to visit [them at their] home. I heard they bribed them with some antique brocade dresses and they also lost quite a lot other things. But their property was not confiscated.

After the soldiers who were left in Reting to guard the seals were killed, the government sent two fifth rank officials, the monk official Lobsang Chönden [tib. blo bzang chos ldan] and the lay official Netöpa [tib. sne stod pa] to investigate what happened there. They

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came back saying that they couldn't get through because there were many Reting soldiers. Therefore, the two of them were demoted to the rank of ordinary officials because they didn't accomplish their task.

Q

Were they really unable to get through to Reting?

A

Yes.

Q

Why?

A

Because it was said that there were many militia in Reting, and the government assumed that many people had become a [gang](#) [tib. mi dmangs dpung sgrig] so they sent the Commander-in-Chief (Magji) Dzasa Ketsulla [tib. dmag spyi skal tshul lags] and the Governor of the North, Rimshi [Shakabpa](#) [tib. rim bzhi zhwa sgab pa] via the main road, while sending the Commander of the [Trapchi](#) Regiment, Shükhüpa [tib. dbus mda' shud khud pa], with his regiment via [Drigung](#) [tib. 'bri gung]. They arranged to reach Reting at the same time and attack Reting together. However, before the Commander-in-chief arrived there, Shükhüpa and his regiment arrived at Reting and attacked Reting [alone]. Many things that belonged to the [Reeting] Labrang were robbed and scattered.

Consequently, later the Magji, [Shakabpa](#), and Shükhüpa were interrogated in the Shögaà [tib. zhol 'gag] (the Regent's Secretariat). The [magji](#) didn't confess to anything and said that we had made an arrangement to meet, but it didn't work out because Shükhüpa went ahead and destroyed and robbed things. He didn't act according to his orders. The Magji was not punished, but Shükhüpa was demoted to the rank of ordinary lay official. In addition, many Rupön and Gyapön of the [Trapchi](#) Regiment were also demoted. The soldiers robbed many things from Reting and sold them in Lhasa. All of those things were collected together and given to the regiment in common [tib. spyi thog] because the soldiers had worked hard. That's how they settled this matter.

Q

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Had Reting prepared by organizing some soldiers [armed followers]?

A

Probably they had quite a lot of soldiers.

Q

Did they confront each other and fight?

A

Yes. They exchanged fire. The Reting soldiers shot from amidst the juniper trees where the government forces couldn't see them. They fought for quite a long time, but because of the difference in the quality of the weapons, they couldn't handle the government soldiers and finally they lost. At that time, quite a lot of government soldiers like shelngo and trumpeters were killed and wounded. The soldiers also fired cannons against the monastery and fired shots from all directions. The Reting soldiers, therefore, had no choice but to withdraw. Before that, however, they had killed at night all of the 17 soldiers who had been left guarding the seals. Then they broke the seals and took out things and threw a load of gold into the toilet. Later the gold was taken out and the government got the gold.

There were many other precious things piled like heaps of precious stones [tib. rin chen thang spungs] that were robbed by the soldiers recklessly. They then sold them everywhere like to the Nepalese traders.

Q

They could take them, right?

A

Yes, quite a lot of things were taken and the money they got from selling the things was given to the regiment in common.

Q

After that didn't many monk officials like Samchogla [tib. bsam mchog la] also go to Reting ?

A

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He went with the Magji. After the situation was calmed in Reting, all of them went to Reting and sent all of the remaining things to Lhasa.

Q

Did they take all the things that belonged to Reting?

A

Yes.

Q

That was too bad.

A

There were a large number of loads of tea wrapped in leather.

Q

Where did they take these loads of tea?

A

They brought them to the Potala.

Q

Did the government get them or did [Taktra](#)?

A

The government got them. They sealed all the houses in Reting and they sent all the things to Lhasa along with a list of the loads. They also demolished the summer cottage of Reting.

Q

Why?

A

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They had malicious thoughts, so they completely demolished the summer cottage and took away everything to Lhasa. They also gave away some of the things. They even threw away the big stones [of the building after demolition] into the river so that people would not get them. But they didn't destroy the main monastery. The summer cottage was built during the Reting regency and the cottage was very wide and very good quality.

Reting had left his brother Thubten Gyentsen [tib. thub bstan rgyal mtshan] on the Nesar [tib. gnas gsar] Estate. He was also imprisoned and then they issued a verdict that he and his wife Tseyang [tib. tshe g.yang], who was from the Dele Rabten [tib. bde legs rab brtan] family, were sent to Samye as "additional workers/servants for taxpayer families" [tib. khral snon]. Long after that, they were able to leave a replacement for themselves as "additional workers" and return back.

Q

What happened to the [Reting's managers] dzasas?

A

The old Dzasa was not that guilty, so he was left in the Labrang without having his title.

Q

Why?

A

It was because at that time he was not working as a Chandzö (manager) so he was not involved in the incident. He was told to serve as the Chandzö of Reting Labrang, but he lost his title of [dzasa](#).

Q

How long did he [Reting] stay in prison?

A

Surkhang and Lhalu went to bring Reting on the 23rd of the 2nd Tibetan month. On the 27th, Reting was locked up in [Sharchenjog](#). On the 17th of the 3rd month, Reting died.

Q

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How long did the Dzasa stay in prison?

A

He stayed in the prison until they issued the verdict. At that time they announced that some people were not guilty and issued the guilty verdicts to others.

Q

Who went to seal the house of Sandutshang?

A

I don't know who went to seal that house. We were sent to reseal the house again after the monks had caused the disturbance in Sandutshang. At that time I saw the corpses of the monks. We sealed the house where the seals had been broken and made a list of seals.

Q

What do you mean by the seal list?

A

This was the list in which the number of seals put on the doors were listed. The seals were brought from Tsegaà [tib. rtse 'gag] (Dalai Lama's Secretariat).

Q

Whenever you sealed a house, would you bring the seal from Tsegaà?

A

No, but that time it was brought from Tsegaà. It was not definite that the seal would be brought from the Tse gaà. The Kashag also had a seal called the "seal with the mustache" (tib. damtrug ara jenpa [dam phrug a ra can pa]) which was used for sealing houses.

Q

Why did they call it ara jenpa?

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A

It was because there was a design like a mustache around the seal. At that time, a representative of the Tsegaà came and put on the seals.

Q

Why did they use the seal of Tsegaà?

A

I am not sure. Probably it was in order to do it more strictly.

Q

At that time, [Kapshöba](#) was the Commander-in-Chief and he made a great accomplishment and got a reward, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Then how did he get demoted?

A

When the Reting incident was settled, he got involved in a kind of controversy [tib. klan ka] regarding Reting. Before that, when Reting was in prison, he sent a letter to [Kapshöba](#) saying, "Now I am in prison and I am having a very hard time because a person who used to be Regent now has to be a prisoner. You got to this position [of power], so please help and support me however you can. Now I am tolerating this and staying here and I am not saying anything." I heard that he implied that he might be able to get out from there. The prison guards took the letter and delivered it to the Shögaà. The Shögaà gave the letter to the Kashag, but [Kapshöba](#) didn't make any comment there, implying that this was just the talk of a prisoner. This matter was left like this, like the proverb, "covering the odor with earth" [tib. [dri](#) ngan sa g.yogs]. Later, when [Kapshöba](#) had a controversy regarding Reting, the ministers among themselves were not that friendly and Surkhang and [Kapshöba](#) obviously didn't get along well.

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Q

What happened to him?

A

Probably, [Kapshöba](#) was kind of show-offish and did not show respect to the senior ministers. Therefore they didn't like him, They also showed a kind of crude attitude to each other.

Q

How did they do that?

A

For example, when they talked, the senior one must talk first and then the junior ones would made additions or some clarifications. Normally, the junior would never talk before the senior, but [Kapshöba](#) had a kind of sharp tongue [tib. zhal tsha po] and he was also show-offish. He would do a little bit like talking first though he was more junior than Surkhang and also when someone was talking, he would interrupt and talk. Therefore the other Shapes didn't like him.

Q

What was one of the conspicuous ones?

A

One day, when the Head of the Agriculture Office [tib. so nam las khungs] came, [Kapshöba](#) was talking and while he was talking Surkhang stood up and left the Kashag and went home. This was kind of conspicuous. Not long after that, probably about 10 days, the [Kapshöba](#) incident occurred.

Q

What happened?

A

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The cause of the matter was that it was said that he provoked [tib. dkrog] the marketplace in Wontö Shinga [tib. 'ong stod zhing ga]. At that time, he had some problem in the Kashag. Probably, Surkhang was very close to [Taktra](#). Although [Kapshöba](#) was appointed by [Taktra](#), he was incompatible with Surkhang, and [Taktra](#) was trusted by Surkhang. So probably Surkhang might have told [Taktra](#) something. This is my suspicion. Soon after that, [Kapshöba](#) got into trouble. At that time, [Kapshöba](#) had a person who was a servant of a servant. He was went to the Wongtö Shinga market and he told the people there that a war is taking place. It became like the story where all the animals were frightened when the rabbit said that there is an animals call Jal coming [tib. ri bong cal 'dregs]. The marketplace got agitated and people rushed out and they had to close the market.

Q

Did somebody purposely do that?

A

It became like Kapshöba's servant said that. When the Administrative Headquarter of the Lhasa Mayor (tib. nangtseshag [snang rtse shag]) inquired about this, they knew that the boy who said this was living in Kapshöba's house and it was also said that [Kapshöba](#) sent him to do that. After that, it was said that they are going to seal the Kapshöba's house. Actually, nobody was sealing his house and [Kapshöba](#) was a [Shape](#) then. When people crowded near Kapshöba's house and were looking upwards, they poured cold water down onto the people. After that, the mayor (TIB. [mipön](#) [mi dpon]) reported to the Kashag about inciting the market and that they had heard that this was caused by the servant of [Kapshöba](#).

Q

At that time, [Kapshöba](#) was a [Shape](#), right?

A

Yes.

Q

What did he say?

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A

He just said that his servant did something thoughtlessly. Probably he didn't take any responsibility for sending the servant. People were saying that [Kapshöba](#) deliberately sent his servant and provoked the market, shouting that the monk soldiers [tib. ser dmag] are coming. This was the controversy. Then one day, all of a sudden, [answer not finished].

Q

Nothing happened on that day, right?

A

Yes.

After that the Mipön (mayor) reported this matter to the Shögaà. Anyway, this was the controversy that resulted in the expelling of [Kapshöba](#). [Taktra](#) gave instructions to Surkhang and [Rampa](#) and one day when we went to [Norbulinga](#) at 9 a.m. as usual before the Shapes arrived, the Kashag had already met and the Trungtsi were also there, but [Kapshöba](#) was not there. So I thought this was strange and even the Kadrung was also not there. After a while, at around 10 a.m., [Kapshöba](#) arrived as usual and stayed there. At that time, when he saw that the seats of the Trungtsi were set up over there, he might have had some doubts. But he was still inattentive. Just 5-6 minutes after he sat there, a Shöndrön came and said that he has been sent for [Sawang](#) Kapshöba who should come to the room of the Regent to make a report.

Q

By that time, he knew, right?

A

Yes, usually, they would never call 1 or 2 Shapes to make a report. He might have been suspicious and he went down there with a slightly long face. Then he was called into the Regent's room and the Nendrön passed down the order. At that time, Kalsang Ngawang [tib. skal bzang ngag dbang] was a Shöndrön. He told me, "at that time, the Nendrön told the monk bodyguard of the Regent, the Simgag [tib. gzim gag], 'Kapshöba is kind of tricky person so if he touches his pouch [in his robe], you just go ahead and hit him on his arms.' " So the Simgag had kept a stick in his sleeves and they were well prepared.

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Then the order was passed down as follows; "You are a [Shape](#), but your servant said that you sent your servant to incite the marketplace and make a commotion [tib. 'ur lang]. Not only that, there are some other matters that should be inquired about. Therefore, until these matters are settled, do not come to Kashag. You have to stay with the on duty head of the [Tseja](#) Treasury." They didn't completely demote him.

Q

He was told to wear the Shape's uniform and go to the [Tseja](#), right?

A

Yes. The prison guard was the lay official Khanden [tib. mkha' ldan]. He was told to check the foods. It would not be okay if they sent something recklessly back and forth. Mainly, the [Tseja](#) head person on duty would have to supervise him. At that time, he was not allowed to go outside the courtyard. After that, the Trungtsi talked with the Kashag.

Q

If he stayed with the on duty [Tseja](#), the [Tseja](#) was also there, right?

A

He stayed in a separate room where the [Tseja](#) stayed.

Q

He didn't have the chance to come back to the Kashag, right?

A

Yes. He was taken out of the Kashag like pulling hair from a lump of butter [tib. mar gyi dkyil nas spu bton pa] and handed over to the [Tseja](#). About 10 days after that, the verdict was issued.

Q

Did they do an investigation?

A

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No, they didn't. They just arrested him and gave him an order. [Kapshöba](#) was saying that they didn't interrogate him. There was nobody other than me who got a verdict issued without an interrogation. He said that he had many things to report and explain, but he didn't get the chance to do that. When they issued the verdict, it read, "It is against the law for a servant of a [Kalön](#) to incite the marketplace. This was a serious matter. Reting had sent a letter from the prison to [Kapshöba](#). At that time he was a [Shape](#) and he knew about that, but he didn't testify to clear up the truth of that [tib. dag sel] and left it like covering an odor with earth [tib. dri ngan sa g.yog]. According to this, [Kapshöba](#) should be punished similar to Reting. However, this time we will treat him leniently and we will not inquire into the matter and he will be banished to prison in Nedong district [tib. sne gdong]. As for the loans that [Kapshöba](#) owed, they should be repaid by his son and his brother Drangtöpa [tib. 'brang stod pa]." Like this he was banished to Nedong for life imprisonment in a prison that was newly built for this. When the Dalai Lama took political and spiritual power, he was released.

Q

Was he sent from [Norbulinga](#)?

A

After the verdict was read and his hair knot was untied, he was sent to the Bodyguard Regiment of the Dalai Lama and shut in there for a few days. Then he was sent to Nedong escorted by a [Shengo](#) with probably a squad of soldiers from the [Trapchi](#) Regiment.

Q

Was that the time when [Kapshöba](#) faced north and prayed?

A

Yes. When he was brought to the south gate of [Norbulinga](#), the [trungja](#) [tib. drung ja] was in session and he met the cooks taking the tea pots inside. So he faced that direction and prayed and said this is a very good omen that he will be able to return and said, "Please have it" [tib. mchod cig].

Q

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Why did they send him to Nedong? Had he treated the people badly in the past or what? Probably, he didn't stay there for long because it was after the fall of Reting and the Dalai Lama took power soon.

A

Yes. It was soon after that he was released. He stayed there for 2-3 years. In the beginning, nobody was allowed to meet him and they left an important [tsodrag](#) [tib. gtso drag] family as the prison guard by turns every month. The Governor of the South, the Lhoji [tib. lho spyi], also frequently inspected him.

Q

Was this the order from the Kashag?

A

It was from both the Regent and Kashag. Later, I am not sure why, I heard he was only very loosely watched and he also was able to call women to the prison.

Q

Yes, I also heard he played majong in prison. How did that happen? Probably, he became friendly with the prison guards, right?

A

Yes, probably, they were not that attentive.

Q

Probably, he also came to Lhasa?

A

I didn't hear about that. Probably it was okay if he would come to Lhasa. At that time, he was suspicious that he was going to be killed. He could have had that suspicion.

At that time, Chandzö Chenmo [Taktra's manager] asked the Governor General of the South, the Lhoji, Khenjung Thubten Sherab [tib. mkhan chung thub bstan shes rab] to do his duty vigorously according to the verdict. And in case he would not stay still [in case he

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tried to escape], then you can decide according to your wish." This was said to mean that the Lhoji could even kill him. I heard that from Khenjung when we worked as colleagues.

Q

This was terrible, right? I heard that the prison built in Nedong was the size of the width of an outstretched arm of a person, was that correct?

A

Probably. They built a two story house where [Kapshöba](#) was locked on the second floor and the prison guards stayed on the lower floor. They pulled down the entrance door to the roof.

Q

Was that a small room?

A

Probably it was one pillar in size and not just the size of an outstretched arms of a person. At that time, things were very strict and he was not allowed to send and receive letters and the Nedong district head also frequently inspected him. Thubten Khyenrab told me, "Once when I went to visit Chandzö Chenmo [Taktra's manager] he said to me, 'I am sure you are doing well in guarding [Kapshöba](#) according to the order. In case he will not stay still and if you can't handle him, then you decide according to your own wish.' " But he didn't have to kill him. [Kapshöba](#), however, probably was worried about being killed. When he came out he told people, "I have returned from death."

Q

This was because he knew that Reting was killed, right?

A

Yes, but things became very lenient in prison. Normally, prisoners who were banished were first treated strictly, but later it would become more and more lenient.

Q

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If they were not killed during the first 1-2 years, it would happen like this in our country, but not here. After that he was released when all the prisoners were released when the Dalai Lama took power [and gave amnesty to all prisoners].

A

It was the time when the Dalai Lama went to [Yadong](#).

Q

Was it a custom that all prisoners would be released whenever the Dalai Lama took the power, or did the Dalai Lama give the order to do that, or did the Kashag submit a plan for that?

A

I think there wasn't a traditional custom for doing that but probably that was mentioned in the biography of the Dalai Lamas. At that time, the situation was also not that good and the Dalai Lama himself probably thought about that and gave the order for the amnesty.

Q

At that time, did they release all the prisoners not leaving a single one?

A

Yes.

Q

Did they grant the prisoners full rights in the society?

A

Yes.

Q

What did they do with the thieves?

A

They were also released, and allowed to go wherever they wanted to.

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Q

They didn't even hand them over to the people, right?

A

At that time, all people belonged to somewhere [tib. mi khungs] [some lord], so after they were released, they went to the place where they belonged. If they belonged to an aristocrat, they would go to the aristocrat.

Q

When [Kapshöba](#) was released, he might have come back with many horses, right? And before he left, he might have gone for a pilgrimage to Nedong, right?

A

Probably he did that because his family members send people to bring him back. I also heard that the monks of Ganden Nyare [tib. dga' ldan nyag dbre] went to receive him.

Q

Why did the monks go?

A

It was because they had a special priest-patron relationship.

Q

Why?

A

Probably [Kapshöba](#) belonged to Nyare [tib. thob khungs] and helped them with their rites.

Q

Oh! I see, I also remember [Kapshöba](#) coming to me.

A

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I am not sure where [Kapshöba](#) belonged to in Sera and Drepung, but he belonged to Ganden Nyare. When Reting Dzasa [and the others] were released, people didn't believe it because they had heard they were to be executed and didn't have any hope to see them again. When the family members heard that they were going to be released the next day, they said, "They won't release them at all. This is a sign that they are not going to do anything good to them." Later, when they were really released due to the amnesty, they cried with joy and prayed for their longevity. When the shackles were removed, I heard that they couldn't walk.

Q

They had been left there with the shackle all this time, right?

A

Yes. I heard from the soldiers of the Bodyguard Regiment that when the shackles were removed, they couldn't walk and were staggering. At that time, all of the prisons were emptied. It was really well done.

Q

On the next day, there will be new prisoners, right?

A

The new criminals would come to the prison later on.

Q

What did they do with the people who had filed law cases at that time and the verdict had not yet been issued?

A

Those people were not prisoners.

Q

Even those people who were sentenced to life imprisonment just a few months before were also released, right?

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A

Yes.

Q

After that, what happened to [Kapshöba](#)?

A

After he came back to Lhasa, he went to India for a pilgrimage. At that time, the Dalai Lama was in [Yadong](#).

Q

Probably he sought an audience with the Dalai Lama in [Yadong](#)?

A

I don't know about that. I heard that when [Kapshöba](#) was going to India, [Taktra](#) was staying in the place called Jema [tib. bye ma] in [Yadong](#) and [Taktra](#) came to offer the ceremonial [khata](#) to the Dalai Lama in Dungkar [tib. dung dkar] Monastery in a palanquin. Right at that time, Kapshöba's line of horses was coming down and they met on the way. He just avoided [Taktra](#) and rode along the stream and he didn't dismount his horse even when his soldiers told him the Regent was coming. The servants almost dismounted their horses, but he told them not to dismount.

Q

At that time, the Regent's Nendrön [tib. sne mgron] was not there, right?

A

Yes.

Q

The Dzasa was there, right?

A

Probably he was there.

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Q

He might have looked and knew that it was [Kapshöba](#), right?

A

Yes. Later [Kapshöba](#) became a lay official again and was appointed one of officials in charge of the Granary [tib. 'bru khang].

Q

Did he request this position or was he just appointed?

A

He was appointed without a request, and he was given the third rank of Theiji. He was just sentenced to life imprisonment, but it was not like [Lungshar](#) where his sons were also not allowed to become lay officials. I heard at that time that some people said that we should seal Kapshöba's house and some people said, "it would be profitable for [Kapshöba](#) if you sealed his house because he had a lot of debts. So it would be more of a punishment if you don't seal his house." So his house was not sealed and his son and his brother Drangtöpa were made to pay his loans. The two of them paid the loans with the things that [Kapshöba](#) had. They received high prices for these things. If [Kapshöba](#) didn't have many loans, probably his property would have been sealed.

Q

After that, he just remained as a Theiji, right?

A

Yes. Even at the time of the revolt, he was still a Theiji.

Q

After that, the Kashag might have criticized [tib. dgag pa rgyag] [Kapshöba](#), right?

A

Probably not, because he was under the Kashag and the rank of Theiji was not an important position. Even in the granary, he was not the main one in charge. The main one

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in charge was [Sawang](#) Surkhang. [Kapshöba](#) was one of the junior officers in charge. The Ex-Prime Minister Langdön [tib. glang mdun srid zur] was also in the Granary Office.

Q

If Langdön was there, he might have been seated at the head, right?

A

Yes, he was seated at the head, but the main official in charge was Surkhang.

Q

So he just had to give his opinion sometimes, but he didn't have any responsibility, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Kunphel La [tib. kun 'phel lags] was also in the Granary Office, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Later, [Kapshöba](#) was also in charge of road building, right?

A

Yes. He was in charge of building the airport in Dam [tib. 'dam] and he was also in charge of the road building in Lhoka.

Q

At that time, I heard that Surkhang scolded him, right?

A

Yes.

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Q

They were holding a grudge before that, right?

A

Yes. At that time, the Chinese Officers were with him, so [Kapshöba](#) kind of reported about the Kashag strongly and he and Surkhang had quite a serious verbal argument. Later they would stay together in their own homes. Probably [Kapshöba](#) apologized to Surkhang.

Q

I heard that [Kapshöba](#) presented a gift to Surkhang and told him, "Your instruction were very helpful to me."