Interview H0202: with Taring, Jigme Sumten Wangpo Namgyal ['phreng ring, 'jig med sum rten dbang po rnam rgyal] and Sambo, Tenzin Thondrup [bsam pho, bstan 'dzin don grub], (India, 1992) : Part No. 7 of 7

Taring and Sambo were important aristocratic officials in the Tibetan government. They describe how Sambo's father asked for three years leave of absence and went to Kalimpong. Later he was called back to Yadong when the Dalai Lama was residing there and came back with Sursur and was appointed to be in charge of the Trapchi Legung. Sambo also discusses the Chamdo war and being sent to Beijing as a delegate under Ngabö for the talks leading to the 17-Point Agreement.

(Mrs. Taring) I heard that they did the senriy lottery in front of the statue of the Avalokitesvara in the Potala.
(Mr. Sambo) Yes probably.

Q

I think all the shapes were there?

A

(Mrs. Taring) Probably, I am not sure who was there.

Q

At that time, your father Sambo was a Tsipön, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No. He was already a Theiji. Around that time my father asked for a three year leave.

Q

Why?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably it was in the Iron-Tiger Year.
(Mrs. Taring) Was that the inauspicious year [tib. skag] for him?
(Mr. Sambo) Probably he was granted leave for three years and he went to India in the 7th month of the Iron-Tiger Year. At the beginning of the Iron-Mouse Year, the Kashag sent an edict to all the government officials staying in Kalimpong telling them to come back.
(Mr. Taring) It was sent to us telling us to come back.
(Mr. Sambo) Probably they held a Tsondu and among the officials the oldest was probably Sursur and next was my father and there was also Trendong Samchogla [tib. bsam mchog lags], etc. I heard that nobody was saying that they were going to go back. At that time, my father told Sursur, "If we don't go back at this time, they will feel very disappointed". And the two of them went back up to Gangtok. My father had only one servant and Sursur probably didn't have a servant. They hired horses and came from Gangtok. So the two of them were the first to reach Yadong. After that, my father was appointed to be in charge of the Trapchi Office.

Q

Did they make a report that they had reached Yadong?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. They would have had to do the "arrival report" [tib. 'byor phyag].

Q

Who was there then?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The Dalai Lama was there.
(Mrs. Taring) Was that in 1949 when the Dalai Lama was there?
(Mr. Sambo) This was in 1950.

(Mr. Taring) Wasn't that the winter of 1949? When Chamdo was lost the Dalai Lama was in Lhasa, right?
(Mr. Sambo) No, it was in the Iron-Tiger Year when my father asked for the leave in the 7th month.
(Mr. Taring) Was that the Iron-Tiger Year when the Dalai Lama was there?
(Mr. Sambo) The Dalai Lama came to Yadong in the 11th month of the Iron-Tiger Year. So it must be around the 1st or 2nd month of the Iron-Mouse Year [1951] when all the officials were called back.

Q

So even though he was granted a three year leave, he went back, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. And 1-2 days after he reported his arrival, he was appointed as the dzasa of the Trapchi Office and he was told to seek the "new appointment audience" [tib. gsar mjal] soon. So he sought the audience in Yadong.

Q

What happened when he was appointed dzasa from the theiji?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The uniform was the same, but he had to seek the new appointment audience. Probably, Sursur might have done the same.

Q

What was he [Sursur] appointed to?

A

(Mr. Sambo) He was the dzasa of the Foreign Office as he was before. I didn't know much about his new appointment.
(Mr. Taring) Anyway, the Dalai Lama stayed in Yadong for one year, right?
(Mr. Sambo) He stayed about 8-9 months.
(Mr. Taring) This was in the Iron-Tiger Year right?
(Mr. Sambo) Yes, this was in 1950.

Q

At that time, had you, Sambo, already left for China?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes.

Q

When you were sent to China, the Dalai Lama was in Lhasa, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No.

Q

The Dalai Lama had already arrived in Yadong and there were the 2 sitsab [in Lhasa], right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. We were sent by the sitsab. It was just 2-3 days after the Dalai Lama reached Yadong. We probably received the order before the Dalai Lama left for Yadong.

Q

So at the time, the sitsab were already appointed, right? What was the reason and how did the Dalai Lama get to Yadong?

A

(Mr. Sambo) By that time, Chamdo was liberated and Doji Sawang Ngabö had fled and it was said that they were stopped by the Chinese at Lagong Ngamda [tib. la gong lnga mda'] which was on the route to go through Xining. After they fled from Chamdo, he stayed in Drugugön monastery [tib. gru gu dgon] as they might have heard that Lagong Ngamda was blocked [by the PLA]. They were not sure whether that was true or not and sent people to find out. They heard that many Chinese have arrived there so they said that now we don't have any option but to surrender so he [Ngabö] sent people to surrender.

Q

Please tell us in detail about Chamdo. Didn't Ngabö set the armory on fire?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes.

Q

How did that happen?

A

(Mr. Taring) Mr. Sambo and the Nendrön were sent from Lhasa before the Dalai Lama left for Yadong.

Q

That was to sign the 17-Point Agreement. Before that, tell me about how Chamdo was lost.

A

(Mr. Taring) They were sent after Chamdo was lost.

Q

Actually, we didn't have anything to fight with because we didn't have weapons. So how could we fight? Unless by the grace of the three jewels, the Chinese didn't come, if they came there was no way for us to fight. So tell me how Chamdo was lost. [note: They actually had various kinds of machine guns].

A

(Mr. Sambo) Before that, in the Iron-Tiger Year, the border remained the Yangtse River. On the bank of the Yangtse River, there was Kamthog [tib. skam thog]. I heard that at that time, Karchungwa [tib. dkar byung ba], the Jadang Regiment's Depön, was stationed in Kamthog.

Q

He was the so called, "Silly [tib. byabs chung] Karchung Depön." right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. In Jomda [tib. 'jo mda'] in Derge there was Shagjang Surpa [tib. shag byang zur pa].

Q

This was also on the bank of the Yangtse, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Not really. It was 3-4 day's journey from the Yangtse.

Q

Do you mean from where Karchungwa was? Towards which direction?

A

starthere (Mr. Sambo) Towards Chamdo. There were the guards staying there. Muja [tib. mu bya] [depön] was staying at the places called Gotö and Sinda and he fought several battles and there were quite a lot of casualties from our soldiers and they probably also killed a lot of Chinese. In the Kham area there were many kind of routes. When the Chinese arrived at Kamthog, Karchungwa fled, but the soldiers probably fought for a little bit. However, they would have lost no matter how hard they tried to fight, right?

Q

Where did he flee? Towards where Muja was?

A

(Mr. Sambo) He just fled to wherever he could reach. When we arrived at Chamdo, some wounded soldiers from the Jadang Regiment came to beg because they couldn't manage to go forward [to Lhasa]. At that time, the government also had given them some money. Then in Gotö, Dolado and Sinda, Muja fought a little bit.

Q

What happened to Shagjang Surpa?

A

(Mr. Sambo) He was in Jomda.

Q

Did he flee from Jomda?

A

(Mr. Sambo) When Karchungwa came to Jomda, Shagjang also fled. [laughter]. They had reached a place after about a 4-5 days journey and they said let us relax and sleep tonight. The Chinese won't come to that place. Some were still afraid that the Chinese might catch up, so they set up a sentry to check whether the Chinese are coming or not and they slept. Then probably the Chinese really fired some cannons, but the Chinese were saying that they fired firecrackers and they beat tins and made sounds that were like the sound of gunshots like they did when they perform the opera, They didn't fire real guns. Anyway, they said the Chinese are coming and fled. Karchungwa was wearing a woolen cloak. [laughter --not the normal depön's robe]

Q

He didn't get the time to put on his clothes, did he? He was really silly as people said.

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. After daybreak, a soldier asked him, "Are you Kungö Depön?" He said yes. At that time, the depön could not take his arms out from the cloak. So Karchungwa told the soldier to cut holes in the cloak so that he could pull his arms out. [laughter] and someone gave him boots and he fled like this. Shagjang Surpa was also together and two of them reached Chamdo.

Q

Karchungwa was the depön of which regiment?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The Jadang Regiment.

Q

What about Shagjang Surpa?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably, he was the Chadang Regiment. At that time, the Nyadang Regiment was in Chamdo and its depön was Laya Jarigpa [tib. sla ya bya rig pa].
(Mrs. Taring) He was the son of Jangra [tib. lcang ra].
(Mr. Sambo) He kind of dilly-dallied and couldn't depart from Chamdo. After that, it was the time when they talked about the "Shit Kashag Picnic."

Q

At this time, Ngabö was there, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes.
(Mrs. Taring) Was Tsögo there?
(Mr. Sambo) He was the kadrung of Ngabö. Then they couldn't hold the place any more though Muja stopped the Chinese in Gotö and Sinda and there were quite a lot of casualties before Muja fled to Chamdo. Ngabö had already left and ordered the armory set on fire. When Ngabö left Chamdo at night, they lost their way and they had to sleep using their saddles as pillows. They reached Drugogön monastery the next day. By that time, Muja had also reached the monastery and they discussed what route they should they take. It was said that the only route was through Lagong Ngamda. Somebody reported that the Chinese had already arrived there. Then Ngabö sent the fifth rank official (tib. letsenpa [las tshan pa]) Kogpanzi to find out whether the Chinese had arrived there or not.
Muja told Ngagbö, "I don't think that the Chinese have reached there. And even if they have, there might be only about 2,000-3,000 soldiers, so it doesn't matter. Let's fight and break through."

Q

Muja was quite brave, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes, he was courageous. Then Kogpanzi returned and he said that there were about 2,000 Chinese there. Then they said that we have only 30-40 people. If one is hurt, the others will get hurt. So let's leave it [not try to break through].

Q

They only had a small number of soldiers, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) By that time, the soldiers were already scattered. The Doji had about 100 bodyguards.

Q

Did the depön flee alone, leaving the soldiers behind?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably yes.

Q

This was so stupid! [laughter]

A

(Mr. Sambo) Since the route through Lagong Ngamda was blocked, they decided to surrender and they sent Depön Laya Jarigpa and the personal attendant in charge of clothes, Simpön khenpo [tib. gzim dpon mkhan po] who was then on the staff of the Doji, to surrender and tell the Chinese, "We are the Doji and staff, altogether about 30-40 people. So please give us the permission to surrender and we want to ask you where we should go"

Q

Was this in Lagong Ngamda?

A

(Mr. Sambo) They were sent from Drugugön and they had to go on a downhill road. The Chinese might be on a mountain pass.

Q

So the Chinese had arrived down there, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) They were supposed to go wherever they could meet the Chinese. Then they met a Chinese and the Nyadang Depön had a sword which the Chinese soldier took from him. Then they met the real military officer and Laya Jarigpa spoke some broken Chinese mixed with Tibetan and said, "I have a sword to hand over to you, but the soldiers took it from me." [laughter] There might be an interpreter who asked them why they were there and they told him that they came to surrender. When they were asked where the other people were, the told them they are in Drugugön. So the Chinese officer came up and Ngabö and they saw him coming. The military officer was called Sun Gong, or something like that, and so they called them to Drugugön and they handed over their weapons. Then the officer said, "It is too bad that you have to go through this hardship. Since we are brother nationalities [tib. spun zla mi rigs], we came to serve the people. But you people fled and had a very hard time. You didn't need to do that." And he gave a party for them where some 4-5 kinds of dishes with meat and momo were served.

Q

The Chinese officer might have been an important person who knew about such matters.

A

(Mr. Sambo) As far as the Tibetans were concerned, they lost their property and the only hope was to remain alive and being given a party was out of their imagination. Then they were told that they had to go to Chamdo the next day.

Q

The Chinese officer also came together, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. I heard there were quite a lot of Chinese who wanted to look at Muja and they asked who is Muja? In the beginning, Muja himself was kind of scared thinking

that they might make him suffer [for his killing many Chinese soldiers], but then they asked him about his age and those things.

(Mrs. Taring) They might have seen him as a courageous person.

(Mr. Sambo) Yes, he was quite famous. So they might have thought that Muja Depön was a great person.

(Mrs. Taring) Where was Sir Ford then?

(Mr. Sambo) He didn't come to Drugugön.

(Mrs. Taring) Maybe he was left behind.

(Mr. Sambo) Probably they were together for some time. Then when they lost their way, I heard that Ngabö told him, "I have heard that the Chinese hate people with white eyes very much. So what would be best for you to do? You should better do something. If you come with us, you might not survive [tib. lhag gi ma red]." In the beginning, they might have been together. Later, he was caught. On the next day, they left from Drugugön. The [Chinese] soldiers on this side thought that the Ngabö would go on that side. So the soldiers in Powo [tib. spo bo] went to Chamdo and they had a quite severe internal argument because they could get some good deal [tib. ngo so] to show that they received the surrender They had an internal argument, one saying that they have to take Ngabö this way and the other saying that they are going to take him that way. Then after half an hour, they decided to take him to Chamdo. Then Ngabö rode a horse and went to Chamdo and arrived at Sidogthang where the Doji usually would hold office. Commander Wang [Qimei] Siling was there and he came to receive them.

(Mrs. and Mr. Taring) He was the fat man with the thin voice, right?

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. He said, "It is too bad that you had a hard time. Actually, we came to liberate Tibet from the foreign imperialists. The foreign imperialists instigated the situation so we had such a terrible thing arise among brotherly nationalities." Tsögo told me that Wang Qimei was crying loudly. Then he said, "Please stay relaxed." and they were left in Sidogthang in a relaxed manner. Then the Chinese talked about the peace talks and they want Ngabö to do that. Then Ngabö said, "How shall we hold peace talks. Now Chamdo is lost and I also heard that you are building an airport. So please do not go further forward from the places that you have already reached." Then Ngabö might have sent the petition up (to Lhasa) [to give him permission to hold talks].

Q

They didn't have telephones, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes, everything was cut off. Ngabö sent Samling [tib. bsam gling] and Gyentsen Phüntso [tib. rgyal mtshan phun tshogs] to deliver the petition.
(Mrs. Taring) Was this Samling the husband of the Tsepela [tib. tshe dpal lags]?
(Mr. Sambo) Yes.
(Mrs. Taring) [Horkhang] Pembala [tib. dpal 'bar lags] was also there, right?
(Mr. Sambo) He was in Chamdo then, but he was not with Ngabö.

Q

What did Ngabö write in the petition?

A

(Mr. Sambo) He wrote about the peace talks.

Q

He wrote about the situation of the Doji, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) He wrote about the surrender and what he thought about the peace talks and asked how the peace talks should be held. It was sent to the Kashag.

Q

The Kashag had already left with the Dalai Lama for Yadong.

A

(Mr. Sambo) But there was a Kashag in Lhasa.

Q

There were the two sitsab and the katsab (acting Shape) but there was not a single kalön, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. There was Shasur [tib. bshad zur] and Thubten Ramyang [tib. thub bstan bar dbyangs]. Ramba was in Yadong.

Q

The Trungtsi left were also acting Trungtsi.

A

(Mr. Sambo) Ngabö sent the petition. Could he have sent a telegram? They didn't have wireless, right?
(Mrs. Taring) The wireless there was broken, though they might have one up here. When Mr. Ford was send down, Mr. Fox was called here to Lhasa, but how could we receive a message if there was nobody sending the wireless.

Q

He meant from Lhasa to Yadong

A

(Mr. Sambo) They might have reported to the Dalai Lama.

Q

That's why the sitsab used the wording, "Leaving the Yadong capital in the inner circle." [tib. gro mo rgyal sa phugs su bzhag nas].

A

(Mr. Sambo) Then I think they sent Sursur and the Chönphel Thubten from Yadong to the Chinese Embassy in Delhi. It was probably confirmed to hold talks and then two of us were appointed and then we left for Chamdo. Just before we reached Chamdo, Ngabö sent a servant and when I asked him he said, "Ngabö is in Chamdo and it was not said whether he should go to Lhasa, Chamdo or China, and now it is not confirmed and he is still there." Then the two of us reached Chamdo and we found that what the servant had said was correct.

Q

At that time, how was Ngabö dressed?

A

(Mr. Sambo) He was wearing a chuba, everyone was dressed in chubas.

Q

What were you wearing then? Was it the traveling dress [tib. phyogs chas]?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably we also wore chuba. When we arrived at Chamdo, we had a five point note from Lhasa.

Q

In Lhasa, who gave you the order to go down?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The Kashag gave the order. This was before the Dalai Lama left for Yadong. There was Surkhang and Ramba. Maybe this was on the 8th, 2-3 days before the Dalai Lama left on the 11th.

Q

They knew the Dalai Lama was going to leave, but they were keeping it secret.

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes.

Q

Did the two of you know that?

A

(Mr. Sambo) It was said that the Dalai Lama was going to leave, but we didn't know that he was leaving on the 11th.

Q

Your father was a kalön then, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No.

Q

Oh yes. He was the replacement of Ragashag.

A

(Mr. Sambo) Then we handed over the note to Ngabö.

Q

When they gave you the order, did they say that you have to go to hold talks and that we have sent instructions to Ngabö?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. We were told that Ngabö is the main one to hold the talks and the two of you have to serve him. Since he was the shape, we were indeed the servants.

Q

Was it said, Ngabö, the one who possesses full authority?

A

(Mr. Sambo) It was not like that.

Q

Then you showed the note to Ngabö, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. After reading the note Ngabö said, "According to this note, there is nothing to hold talks about. Do you have any additional instructions? We said no.
(Mrs. Taring) How many days did it take to reach Chamdo?
(Mr. Sambo) Probably it took about 20 to 30 days, though we traveled fast and didn't take rest and stay for a day on the way.

Q

On the way, you met Lhalu in Lharigo [tib. lha ri 'go], right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No. We met him in Giamda.

Q

Did you have to report to Lhalu?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Lhalu knew about that. He was coming up to Lhasa because his term was over and his replacement was Ngabö.

Q

Wasn't there an order telling Lhalu to stay there and work jointly with Ngabö since the situation was tense?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably not. I don't know. When Ngabö was in Drugugön, he sent a letter to the Kashag saying, "You do not need to worry about us (the Doji and the staff). If you make some excessive compromise [tib. zhal thal] thinking about us, it will be harmful in the future."

Q

What were the five points in the note?

A

(Mr. Sambo) I don't remember them because it has been many years and I stayed in jail for some time. Anyway, it was kind of impossible to talk and work it out. When I asked Ngabö where are you going to hold the talks, he said, "Maybe, Lhasa or China and maybe also in Chamdo. I received a telegram probably from the Yadong Kashag, but it was not clear. So we just have to wait." Then it was on the 15th or 16th of the 2nd Tibetan month, from Yadong, they sent a telegram to the Chinese Embassy in Delhi and from

Delhi they sent it to Beijing and from Beijing they sent it to Chamdo. In this telegram it said, "From there Ngabö, the khenjung and the rimshi should go down [to Beijing] and from Yadong, we are sending dzasa Kheme [tib. khe smad] and khenche Thubten Tendar [tib. mkhan che thub bstan bstan dar]." Then we understood that it was Khendrung [tib. mkhan drung] Thubten Tendar, not khenche. It was a mistake because the Chinese telegram was mediocre. We then prepared some food for our departure and on the 21st or the 22nd we left Chamdo.

(Mrs. Taring) At that time were there Chinese in Chamdo?

(Mr. Sambo) Yes, they had reached up to Pembar [tib. dpal 'bar]. Ngabö said with confidence that they will not go beyond Pembar. We then reached Beijing in April on the 25th or the 26th. We heard that the two dzadrung were coming. Probably they arrived on the 28th and we went to receive them at the railway station.

Q

Where did they come from?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably they came from Hong Kong.

Q

The two of you went to receive them and Ngabö didn't go, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Ngabö was also with us. On that day Ngabö told me that we don't need to offer khata scarves and I went to inform them.

Q

How were they dressed?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The two of them wore Tsechuma gowns. They were putting some khata in their pouch and I told them that they don't need that. After that, we stayed in the Beijing Hotel (Beijing Fandian).

Q

Then you exchanged the news with each other, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes.
(Mrs. Taring) When you went down from Chamdo, did you reach Lanzhou?
(Mr. Sambo) No, we went through Ya'an.

Q

You crossed the mountain pass Erlang Shan and went through Dartsedo and Ganzi, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes.

Q

How long did you travel on horseback?

A

(Mr. Sambo) We traveled on horseback until Ganzi.

Q

Did you get horse corvée service?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. We used our own horses.

Q

There wasn't any arrangement from the Chinese side, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) If we told them to make the arrangements, they would have. But the nendrön and we were like passengers [tib. 'grul pa].

(Mrs. Taring) Was Ngabö's wife and other children there?
(Mr. Sambo) Yes. His wife and his son Tsewang [tib. tshe dbang lags] were there.

Q

Ngabö and your people were going down there after losing Chamdo and were using your horses. Usually, when the shape would travel, the miser on the way would treat them greatly, but at that time, how did the miser on the way treat you people?

A

(Mr. Sambo) It was kind of the Chinese job.

Q

I mean when you went through the Tibetan areas beyond Chamdo?

A

(Mr. Sambo) From Chamdo to Ganzi, the main person making the accommodations arrangement was Phünwang.

Q

From that time, the Chinese made the arrangements, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. At that time those areas were already liberated so there wasn't anything like imposing horse corvée tax. From Ganzi downwards, it was Alo Buzhang who took care of the accommodations. When we left from Lhasa, we had the travel document, lamyig, [tib. lamyig] for imposing the horse corvée and the pack animals and we were told that although you have the lamyig, it is not certain whether they will give you the horse corvée so they gave us some money for hiring horses if the people didn't send it as corvée. But the miser up to Chamdo did send the horse corvée for us even though the area was already liberated like in Pembar which belonged to Chamdo. The miser also burnt incense when we arrived there to show a sign of welcoming. The accommodations were mostly done by the Chinese.
(Mrs. Taring) Were the two dzadrung assistants to Ngabö or what?

(Mr. Sambo) Yes, they were the assistants and Ngabö was the one who had the full power. The two of us were the servants. On the 28th, the talks started.

Q

What did you talk about?

A

(Mr. Sambo) First they talked about how to hold the talks and nobody said anything. Then the Chinese asked Ngabö, "Do you have any plan for holding the talks?" Ngabö said no. Then the Chinese said, "If that is so, we will make a plan." And they had already made a 10 point plan. These 10 points were like a proclamation [tib. rtsa tshig] that they had made for sticking on the doors in Chamdo.

Q

In Chamdo did they stick those up?

A

(Mr. Sambo) I heard that they had stuck it on the walls and doors. It was a kind of proclamation written in Tibetan and Chinese. On the first day, they said that we had to talk about that and the meeting was dismissed.

Q

Did you hold the talks in the Beijing Hotel or in a meeting hall?

A

(Mr. Sambo) It was a house a little ways from the hotel. It was a small house that was said to have belonged to the Japanese in the past.

Q

Who were the Chinese representatives who came to hold the talks?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The main one was Li Weihan.

Q

Which Chinese office was he from?

A

(Mr. Sambo) I heard that he was the Secretary General [ch. mi shu zhang] of the Zhongyang People's Government. And there were Zhang Jingwu, Zhang Guohua, and Song Zhiyuan. The interpreter was the Takla.

Q

Where did Takla come from?

A

(Mr. Sambo) The two dzadrung brought him and Sandu Rinchen.

Q

Sandu Rinchen was there from that time, right?

A

(Mrs. Taring) He was also with Kusangtse before that.
(Mr. Taring) He was not in the Trade Mission.
(Mrs. Taring) He was with the Yügyel Tashi Delek mission because he was close to Kusangtse.
(Mr. Sambo) He might have been there, but not on official mission because he was yet to become a lay official. He was like Phala Kundring. Then they started talking about the 10 points and added something. Anyway, it was written in the 10 points that, "The imperialist forces were driven out from Tibet and the Tibet returned to the big family of the motherland." [tib. mes rgyal khyim tshang chen po]. There might have been many meanings to this and it was regarded as an important point. We didn't have any choice but to return to the big family. [laughter]. So we accepted these things.

Q

You didn't have any choice but to accept it.

A

(Mr. Sambo) There was also something about "Not taking even a thread and the needle from the people" in the 2nd point. Of course we couldn't say that you had to take them, so we just accepted this. Then probably the Chinese said how about writing "the Dalai Lama shall have his power as before." And we said that will be good. Then they said that the Panchen Lama shall have his power as before. On this point, there was some trouble.

Q

The Panchen Lama didn't have power, so how could there be something saying "as before"?

A

(Mr. Sambo) At that time, there was also talk about whether we accepted this Panchen Lama or not. The Chinese said that it will not be okay if you do not accept this Panchen candidate. At that time, Lhautara said that we will not accept this, saying that we have to do the senriy lottery for this. Then the Central Committee said, "Please accept this candidate. You have to accept this." [tib. khas mi len par thabs mi 'dug]. Finally, it became kind of clear that it was not okay if we didn't accept it. Because the Central Committee was helping the Panchen a lot they said, "The Central Committee has already accepted this."

Probably when Qinghai was liberated the Panchen Lama sent a telegram at that time. It might be kind of rare to find people [then] accepting them [PRC]. But it was said that the Panchen Lama said that he will accept Chairman Mao. Anyway, the Chinese insisted on that for many days and when we said we would not accept it and then we said we would accept it. [laughter] Later, [Ngabö] might have sent a telegram report saying that it was not okay if we didn't accept the Panchen Lama and it kind of came to the conclusion to accept him. Then it came to the talk about maintaining the power and title [tib. go gnas] when the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Panchen Lama had friendly relations.

Q

Actually, the 9th Panchen Lama didn't have any power.

A

(Mr. Sambo) It was mentioned that the power and the title when they were friendly, but later they became not so friendly, right?

Q

Even when they were friendly, the Panchen Lama didn't have the political power.

A

(Mr. Sambo) But inside the Tashilhunpo, the Panchen Lama had the power.

Q

This was like Sakya [tib. sa skya], Drigung [tib. 'bri gung] and Traya. Only Chamdo was a little bit different.

A

(Mr. Sambo) So the power of the Panchen Lama neither decreased nor increased.
(Mrs. Taring) Wasn't there a point saying that the Tibetan soldiers will be converted to the PLA?
(Mr. Sambo) Yes there was.

Q

This must be in the 17-Points. Anyway, it became the 17-Point Agreement. Did you talk for about a month?

A

(Mr. Sambo) It didn't take a month. It was started on the 28th or the 29th and it was concluded on the 18th or 19th of May. On the 22nd, we made two clean copies in books, one of which was to be left there and one to be taken to Lhasa. There was also a side codicil [tib. zur yig] with 6 or 8 points.

Q

What was in the side agreement?

A

(Mr. Sambo) In this there were points like the Tibetan Army will be converted to the PLA. At that time, we made two clean copies and in that, there were two points. At that time, the Dalai Lama was in Yadong, so if the Dalai Lama did not trust [the Chinese] and went abroad temporarily and stayed in India, it would be okay. The Tibetan wording was like [tib. mkhas par ston], but I don't remember the full context. It implied that he can stay there for a while and we will not use rash methods [tib. tsha gcod 'ur gcod]. On May 23rd, we formally put our seals on the agreement.
(Mrs. Taring) I heard that they made new seals. Is it true?
(Mr. Sambo) Yes.
(Mrs. Taring) How did they make the new seals?
(Mr. Taring) We made the seals, right?
(Mr. Sambo) No, they [Chinese] made them. At that time, they asked whether we had seals to be used on the agreement.

Q

Didn't they send seals from up there [Tibet]?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No. They didn't send seals, but Ngabö had the Doji's seal as he had brought it to Drugugön. So Ngabö probably had that with him, but they made a seal from jade or stone on which it was written Ngabö Ngawang Jigme [tib. ngag dbang 'jigs med].
(Mr. Taring) This was a private seal, right?
(Mr. Sambo) Yes, likewise, the names of the other delegates were carved on the seals. They also took away even the bamboo pens for writing the agreement.
(Mr. Taring) What was the year and month when you signed the agreement?
(Mr. Sambo) It was on May 23, 1951.

Q

Did they carve only the names on the seal?

A

(Mr. Sambo) They didn't carve the titles.

Q

Didn't they carve it like the Kashag Seal [tib. bka' dam] or the Common Seal [tib. spyi dam]?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No, they didn't.

Q

What we heard was that they had made a false Kashag seal.

A

(Mr. Sambo) No, they didn't.

Q

When you held the talks, although the Tibetans were already in bad shape [tib. bzo ta shor], they didn't threaten you by holding weapons in their hands, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Yes. One day, there was talk about setting up the Military Administration Committee in Tibet.

Q

This was written in the 17-Point Agreement, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) At that time, some of us asked what was the Military Administration Committee for? They said, "This is for giving orders. [tib. bkod pa shod mkhan]" Then we said, "If this is for giving orders, then wouldn't it be contradictory to what you said, that there shall be no change to the Dalai Lama's power and the monastery and monastic colleges will be protected? Then they said, "When did we say that we would not set up the Military Administration Committee? Who said that we would not change the power of the monastery and the colleges?" Then we said, "If you set up the Military Administration Committee, it will decline [tib. nyams chag] the income of religious offerings of the monastery and the monastic colleges." Then they said that we can clearly write that there will be no change in the income of the monastery and the monastic colleges. So I

think it was clearly written that there shall be no change in the power of the monastery and monastic colleges. At that time, Phünwang asked, "What do you mean by religious offerings (chögyün)? Doesn't it mean income [tib. yong sgo]? Then we said that the meaning is income. At that time, all were kind of angry and went to the restroom and stopped the meeting for a while. The Chinese gathered together and we also gathered together. I remember doing that.

Q

It was not bad that you could do that. Otherwise, you had lost your territory and you had nothing. At that time, there were two interpreters; the depön from our side and Phünwang from their side, right?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Phünwang was also translating our speeches. In the 17-Point Agreement, mainly we had to accept the Common Program [ch. gong tong gang ling tib. thun mong rtsa tshig]. In this it was written things like we respect the native customs and habits and religious freedom and protection for the monasteries. Later, they also talked about not changing the Dalai Lama's power and those things.

Q

At that time, when you were holding the talks did Geshe Sherab meddle in it?

A

(Mr. Sambo) No.

Q

Didn't he come to some corners and nooks [tib. khug khug kyog kyog] to talk?

A

(Mr. Sambo) When we arrived in Xining from Chengdu by plane, I met geshela.

Q

Do you know him in the past?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Probably Ngabö used to be his student. At that time, geshela gave a party which actually was by the government. Geshela spoke Chinese and probably said that Ngabö was his student. And that during the Taktra reign, people used bribes a lot, but during the 13th Dalai Lama's reign, there was no way to bribe. So you should be good in the future. Maybe he didn't like Taktra.
(Mr. Taring) I heard that when you signed the agreement you added around 3 points like having religious freedom, was that correct?
(Mr. Sambo) The religious freedom was written in the Common Program from the beginning. Wasn't the Common Program confirmed in 1949, right?
(Mr. Taring) Did they have the point in the Common Program regarding leaving the Tibetan soldiers as before? I heard you requested to add 2-3 points, but they probably didn't make any corrections and left it as they had made it.
(Mr. Sambo) They didn't make any corrections. Anyway, no matter whether you signed the 17-Point Agreement or not, we just had to accept the Common Program [a precursor constitution for the PRC]. This is what they threw at us and at that time the 17-Point Agreement was yet to be signed.

Q

Would you please tell me the names of all the Shape and Trungtsi appointed since the Reting Regent even if you can't explain who replaced whom?

A

(Mr. Sambo) Stop the recording. We will have to prepare the list.