

Interview H0214: Urgyen [tib. o rgyan], (India, 1983) : Part No. 2 of 9

The interviewee was a well-known Drepung Loseling monk who at one time held the powerful position of Chagdampa. He talks about his various jobs running estates for monasteries and how he revived a dance tradition at the Gadong monastery in Penam county and then invited the Dalai Lama to visit the monastery on his way from India in 1957. He also discusses an important incident that involved the Panchen Lama at the same time that the Dalai Lama was giving teachings in Shigatse on his way back from India. He talks about the the Riji office in Drepung and famous Loseling abbot Jungne and then how he escaped to India in 1959.

Q

Then they would weigh the butter in bags made of skin, right?

A

Yes. And then the [gempo](#) and the [dingpön](#) of the groups would come and check the scale and make the notes. I would sit there and the person who weighed the butter was my person (working for him). Therefore, usually, when they had to bring about 10-15 [khe](#), they had to bring about 18 [khe](#) of butter. And the ones who had to bring about 3 [khe](#), they had to bring about 5 [khe](#) of butter.

Q

It was almost double, right?

A

Yes. Usually they [the person who weighed the butter] would get about 3 skin loads of the butter [as a gift], but since then [Urgyen made a new rule], they didn't get any [extra for themselves]. They did the packing of butter in skin bags and when they didn't have

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

enough butter [to meet the tax], they would give me some gift (tib. jeshu [mjal zhu]) and ask to be allowed to have a deficit (tib. che [chad]) that year. Before that, some people had left [not repaid] the deficit payment for 6 years and some even left it for 12 years, so I told them that they had to pay as much they could. They said they will try their best and on the next evening they came and brought a [khata](#) scarf and said, "Now we have discussed this and since the [lord](#) (pön) is treating us so nicely, it will not be okay if we don't pay the deficit." Some cleared all the deficits they had, and some paid as much they could. I also gave them some exemptions amounting to roughly half of the deficit. The [Laji](#) had told me to make decisions about giving exemptions myself. The [miser](#) were very glad to get the exemptions. They also gave me a good amount of rewards (tib. legkye [legs skyes]) like skins of brown bears and two loads (skin bags) of butter. Each of them also gave me some things like dried cheese.

Q

How many [miser](#) households were there?

A

There were almost 100. About 80-90 households.

Q

How many days would it take to weigh the butter?

A

It took about 28 days. According to the nomad's custom, they gave me one [khe](#) of butter per day.

Q

What was that for?

A

It was for making tea. They also brought meat and milk was more abundant than water.

Q

How much meat did they bring?

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

They brought a mutton carcass once every two or three days. In the beginning, they brought tea leaves and rice.

Q

What kind of tea leaves did they bring?

A

They brought brick tea (tib. bagchung [sbaḡ chung]) and tea balls (tib. charil [ja ril]). They also brought black fungus [tib. mog ro] and vermicelli.

Q

And of course they brought mushrooms, right?

A

Yes. They said they had to bring these whether I stayed there or not. And they also brought the butter-cheese cakes (tib. [thü](#) [thud]). They ate sweet potatoes with melted butter and they would also give me my share. Before concluding the tax collection, I told them that you [miser](#) have to prepare 3 representatives and come with me to the [Laji](#) and show the documents [regarding the exemptions] to the [Laji](#) and ask for their endorsement (tib. gomchen ['go mchan]). Otherwise, I said, in the future I will not come and the new person will not honor my documents. Then one person from each group came with me and they stayed in [Drepung] monastery. Their food was supplied and they went to Lhasa from the monastery for pilgrimage. Then the [Laji](#) told me, "You have done everything very well and we will also give you the endorsement in a document." The [Laji](#) also told them that they had to get an endorsement from the Kashag which will make your document very firm [tib. btsan po]. However, they said, "We don't dare to ask the Kashag for an endorsement." Then the [Laji](#) told them, "You are indeed damn fool nomads! Don't talk foolishly [tib. lkugs pa'i skad cha ma shod/ skyag lkugs 'brog pa rang red]. You don't need to ask the Kashag, we will ask for you." Then they said, "Thank you so much." After that, the [Laji](#) went to the Kashag and we got the endorsement from the Kashag on that very day.

Q

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

The Kashag usually would grant this kind of endorsement [document].

A

They made a cover for it and the [Laji](#) also put its seal on it and they returned. Before they left, they came to my [shag](#) and gave me some of their leftover butter and cheese, and they touched their foreheads to mine and said, "We are very grateful to you." After that, they would come to me every year.

Q

Wouldn't the [Laji](#) and the people going there give something to the nomads?

A

There was a custom to give them things like tea bricks, dyes from India (tib. gyatsö [rgya tshos]), brown sugar, etc. which were written (specified) in a document. They would come to get them. There were about 30 households and they also offered something to us. It was up to the nomads whether they wanted to give some additional things to the person who came there. I and my servants also got a good amount of additional gifts.

Q

Actually, they didn't suffer a loss, right?

A

Yes.

Q

How many servants did you have?

A

I had three. I couldn't eat much of the butter, meat and yogurt.

Q

You were grateful to them, right?

A

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Yes. Later, they [miser] also requested to have me sent again, but my term had ended.

Q

What did you do after that?

A

Then I went to Gadong [tib. dga' gdong][monastery] in Penam [tib. pa snam] county. At the end of the 8th lunar month, I came back to the monastery (Drepung) after almost a year [spent collecting the taxes], and then I was told to go to [Tsang](#) [Penam dzong]. I stayed there also for 4 years.

Q

Tell me in detail about Gadong monastery.

A

It was probably decided by my [karma](#) [tib. las] (to be sent there).

Q

What did you do in Gadong? Were you the representative?

A

I was the person in charge of the abbot's [labrang](#) (tib. khendzin [tib. mkhan 'dzin]).

Q

There was a separate abbot, right?

A

Yes. I was the person in charge of the [labrang](#). The Tratsang was separate. I was the one in charge and there were two estates, an upper and a lower one. I had to give a lot of [tonggo](#). I was the one in charge of all the income and all the [tonggo](#). If the Gegö [of the Tratsang] couldn't apply the law (tib. trimnön [khrims gnon]), he would tell me and I would call the monks and apply the law. The Nyertsang would apply the law to the [miser](#) but if they couldn't do it successfully, the Nyertsang would tell me and I would call the [miser](#) and apply the law. Actually, I was the person in charge of both the monks and the

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

laymen in Gadong. When there was something important, I would attend the Tratsang [tsondu](#) (assembly). They would come to ask me if there were important things to settle and I would discuss it with them.

Q

The [labrang](#) was separate [from the monadstery (Tratsang)], right?

A

Yes.

Q

How about the abbot?

A

From the beginning, the abbot was a lama from Gadong Tratsang.

Q

He had been doing that permanently, right?

A

Yes. They would serve him food and things regularly. The abbot never meddled in things other than religious matters like the gelong's confessional assembly (tib. [sojong](#) [gso sbyong]). In the second year, I came to Lhasa at the end of 3rd lunar month. I heard from conversations that in the past Gadong had had a kind of dance group (tib. tropa [bro pa]) the practice of which had been lost about 60 years earlier. Only some old households, about 5 people, knew the dance. Most of the people [who knew] it had died. The oldest person alive was called Kyentsel Lhagpa Thöndrub [tib. skyed tshal lhag pa don grub]. I said if I don't do something about this, one day if it comes out from the dzong's documents about doing this, that will be too bad [because no one knew it], so one day I called this person. He was afraid of what would happen to him and he was even taking out a [khata](#) scarf to give me. I told him, "You don't need to take out the [khata](#). Just sit down on this round cushion. I have something to tell you." He said, "Okay, I will tell you whatever I know." Then I asked him, "Was there a kind of dance group here in the past?" Then he told me a lot about the dance." At that time, I was about 20-30 years old.

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

The old man must have been in his 70s, right?

A

Yes. He said he was 68 years old and all the other people had died and nobody was alive except him. Then I asked him, "Can you teach us the dance?" He said, "I can't dance because my limbs are not well, but I can verbally teach it." Then I talked with the Tratsang and the Nyertsang about [starting] the dance and they said that it would be good and then I called all the people in that area and made a list of the people.

Q

When you called the [miser](#), did all of them come?

A

Yes. There were about 100 households.

Q

Did one person come from each of the households?

A

Some fathers and some mothers came from each household. The various Gempo also came when the Nyertsang called them. Then I told them, "It will not be okay if we don't set up the dance group because the Dalia Lama is holding his enthronement ceremony (tib. setri ngasö [gser khri mnga' gsol]). Although there is no custom that the Dalai Lama would come to [Tsang](#) for the enthronement ceremony, he may come through this place when he goes to India. By that time, if the [dzong](#) heads found in their record books that Gadong monastery had a dance group and they inform us to do it, what would we do? That would be too bad. So all the households who used to be obliged to send a dancer must send your father, son or the [magpa](#) to practice the dance. As for the expenses, the Tratsang will take care of it.

Gadong monastery held [tsog](#) (prayer assembly) 5 times every day where the tea that is served was like [thukpa](#) [best quality tea with lots of butter]. Then I set up 20 dancers who were given tea and [thukpa](#) the same as the monks got when there was [tsog](#). And I

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

made the following rules: this [tonggo](#) shall be given by the [labrang](#). Since the sun is hot, the dancers need [chang](#) and this shall be served by the Nyertsang and the Tratsang and the [labrang](#) shall give 10 [khe](#) of barley from each to the Nyertsang for making [chang](#). The [chang](#) should not be too weak but also not too strong so that it makes the dancers drunk. And one [daso](#) [tib. zla zo] of [tsamba](#) will be given to each of the dancers by the Tratsang. The [labrang](#) will give one sowa [tib. zo ba] of mustard oil to each dancer, and when they need meat, the Nyertsang shall give it.

Occasionally, special teas (tib. tabcha [stabs ja]) shall be served by the Tratsang and the Nyertsang. In the 4th month, they were told to practice the dance and practice it using drums. In the 5th month, they told us they would have a rehearsal dance performance (tib. trophü [bro phud]). Then I told them, "You should get well prepared and we will have the rehearsal dance performance on the bathing picnic festival day (tib. chabshug [chab zhugs] after the summer retreat (tib. [yarne](#) [dbyar gnas]) is over. The rehearsal dance performance was wonderful. They danced very nicely and they also [sang](#) well.

10-15 days after the bathing picnic, we received an edict from the Penam Dzong heads saying that the monastic officials of the Penam Monastery should come to the [dzong](#). So the Gegö went there and they gave the order that the Dalai Lama is going to India so you should prepare the dancers and singers (tib. tropha shema [bro pa gzhas ma]. Then the [miser](#) were saying in the [Tsang](#) dialect, "It was well done." (tib. [ke](#) tangsong [skad btang song]) and they were saying that I knew that the Dalai Lama was coming so told them to practice. Actually, how could I know that? I didn't even dream it.

After that, when the Dalai Lama was coming, our dancers and singers stood on the road and danced and [sang](#) along with the religious procession, the serbang, and the Dalai Lama saw them dancing though he couldn't see it in detail. While the Dalai Lama went to India, I changed my thoughts in my bed and thought it would be good if I could invite the Dalai Lama to the Gadong Monastery. The next day I told my idea to the Chandzö and he said that it would be wonderful and the [miser](#) also said the same thing. Then I send a petition to Kolkata through the Chemmo, and send a person to tell the Chandzö Thabke la [tib. thabs mkhas lags] who was the representative of Drepung among the retinue, to remind (tib. shabkü [zhabs skul]) the Chemmo. I also planned to go to India, but Chemmo told me not to come. Then we also reported in Kalimpong and the first reminder was done in the Dungkar [tib. dung dkar] Monastery. The second was done in Phari, and for the third I went to Gyantse to receive him. I went to see Phala Chemmo.

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

At that time, where did Chemmo stay?

A

He stayed on his estate.

Q

At that time, the Dalai Lama was yet to come, right?

A

Yes. He said the Dalai Lama will come after two days and then I will be in Penkhor Chöde [tib. dpal 'khor chos sde] [monastery]. When I went there, Chemmo was there. The Pechö [tib. dpal chos] was the late Pema la [tib. pad ma lags] and Thubten Nyima [tib. thub bstan nyi ma] was the Shigatse Dzong head. The [Gyantse] [dzongpön](#) was Jorgye [tib. 'byor rgyas]. I reported to the Chemmo and he said he will make the report. I stayed for 3 days in Gyantse. One day, the Chemmo told me, "Now, it is well done. The Dalai Lama has accepted it and it is confirmed." Now go back and get prepared. It was in the afternoon when I went to see the two tutors of the Dalai Lama and they said, "You should get things prepared well. If you don't get them prepared well, it will be too bad [tib. dpe bzo gi red]." He asked me how I was preparing the kerosene pressure lamps [tib. sa zhu]. I said I have prepared 33 kerosene pressure lamps. Then he said, "That's great. Otherwise, I was worried about the kerosene pressure lamps."

I also asked Chemmo for a private audience with the Dalai Lama and Chemmo told me to register the request at the [gag](#). When I went back, it was so windy that I almost fell off my horse. We had already prepared everything and posted the notice for the accommodations (tib. tserjar [mtsher sbyar] for the officials.

Q

How many partners did you have?

A

I had the two Chandzö of Gadong. Altogether there were 6 riders and we went to the [gag](#) to report. Kungö Tara la [tib. rta ta lags] was a [Tsendrön](#) and Tenpa la [tib. bstan la lags]

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

was also a [Tsendrön](#). They told me, "Whether they sent you or you came here in person, if you don't get well prepared, you will be responsible." So I was extremely frightened and thought of checking the bridge. When we walked on the bridge [near Gadong], we found that the bridge was moving [tib. *Idem rgyag*] and the bridge was also quite narrow.

Q

How wide was the bridge?

A

It was like the length from here to the bed over there.

Q

Were there arches on the bridge?

A

There were 3 arches. Then I saw there were 2 cars on the other side of the bridge and I told two monks to measure the car with a rope and I found the cars couldn't pass on the bridge. I felt like my heart had turned upside down. We tried to report it to the [dzongpön](#), but he was a drunk who always drank [chang](#).

In Gadong, the storerooms were filled with wooden materials as we could cut trees because there were many orchards around the monastery. So I called all the monks to a [tsondu](#) assembly and organized 50 strong monks and 50-60 strong men from the [miser](#). There was a total of 130 people. I called them to a meeting and told them about building the bridge. They all said, "Sure. We don't have any choice, but to do this meritorious work. I told them to bring their implements and divide up the places to work.

Q

How many [miser](#) were there?

A

I made the number of [miser](#) the same as the number of monks. Then I called 2 blacksmiths, two masons, two carpenters and there were some monks who knew masonry. We used the wood materials we had stored in the five pillar store room and brought the wood by carrying it on the shoulders of 4 or 6 people. Then we took [tsampa](#),

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

tea leaves and butter. I sent a monk riding a horse to deliver a message to the households located near the bridge saying "Tonight around midnight about 100 people are coming there carrying wood so please make a good amount of [chang](#) for the [miser](#) and good tea for the monks and also a good [thukpa](#) made from flattened barley (tib. nechag [nas chag]). Maybe this will help make it a little bit easier to carry the wood. I will pay for all this afterwards.

We left when it became dark and the messenger was coming back saying the households said that they will do as you said. When we got there, they had everything ready, even the buckets were full of [chang](#) and loads of [tsampa](#) were ready and they served us [pag](#) and boiled meat.

Q

Did you go with them?

A

Yes, I had to go there and make them do the work well. Otherwise, they wouldn't. The Gegö was also there and altogether there were ten riders. We arrived there around 2 a.m. and then at dawn all of the workers had to get into the icy water and they were all shivering. Then they set up 4 big beams on the pillars in the water and the blacksmith started the bellows and attached the pillars with iron nails. Then the bridge became very wide, even wider than the rope measurement. At around sunrise, the work was finished and then we drew yellow lines on both sides and also put stone lines (tib. dotar [rdo star]) and we also built two incense burners that were cone shaped (tib. sangkhung [bsangs khung]). Around 8 a.m everything was finished. Then all the people drank tea and ate food.

Q

You did it very fast, right?

A

Yes because there were many people and a lot of wood. The materials were almost used up. There was just a little bit left.

Q

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

How much wood did you haul?

A

We hauled about 20 some pieces of wood. The bridge was built so strong that it was not carried away even in the summer when the water was in spate. And then the two [dzong](#) heads came and I scolded them in a sarcastic manner, saying, "You have really done a good job. That bridge was so bad that we would not dare to show our face." I asked some monks to yell when the vehicles passed the bridge and they yelled, "Two vehicles have crossed the bridge and then they passed the sandy area." On the day after tomorrow, the Dalai Lama was to come and the monk official cooks [tib. gsol thab pa] arrived near the main gate and [Tsendrön](#) Tenpa la was with them. Later, Chemmo said, "I have sent exclusively the [tsidrung](#) who are from Drepung." All of their ears were blocked with the dust and we served them tea and told them to check the accommodations and the seating arrangements. [Tsendrön](#) Tenpa la said, "It is well done. I swear by the Shri Devi that there is nothing to suggest except some directions where the cushions should be placed." On the next day, the Dalai Lama came and we also received the teachings and it was a very meritorious occasion (tib. kelpa sangpo [bskal pa bzang po]). The monks of the Namgyal Tratsang and the [kudrak](#) were there and they held the ceremonies and went for pilgrimage in the monastery. Then we sought a private audience with the Dalai Lama and he said, "I enjoyed myself and the food was also good. Thank you."

To tell only you [kungö](#), "I swear by the Buddha's statue in the [Jokhang](#) [tib. jo [bo](#) rin po] that I would have got the [Shengo](#) position if I wanted it." The Dalai Lama told me, "Didn't you become a [Shengo](#)?" Then the late Simpön Khempo [tib. gzim dpon mkhan po] said, "He didn't become a [Shengo](#)." And Chemmo said, "He was among the candidates, but he was among the ones who fell on their ass (tib. kubdab [rkub brdab])." So the Dalai Lama laughed and said, "Oh! He was among those who stuck adhesive tape on their buttocks, right? Was the sore big? [tib. a le/ rkub la ko yol sbyar mkhan gras red pas/ rma chen po bzos 'dug gas]. And then he said, "You must come down and become a [Shengo](#). If you want to stay here, you can stay. Otherwise you come down [to Lhasa] and become a [Shengo](#) and have your shoulders padded [tib. o bog] [the special dress of the [Shengo](#) has padded shoulders]. You are eloquent, right? [unclear]." Before the Dalai Lama left he said that he will pray for us and he said the monastery seems to be too small for the monks. We performed the dance when the Dalai Lama was coming from India [in 1957] and he came to our monastery. The dance was performed on the stone floor [courtyard].

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

How many days did the Dalai Lama stay in your monastery?

A

He stayed 2 days and left on the third day.

Q

Did the dancers do well?

A

Yes. And the dancers also got an audience with the Dalai Lama after their performance. The [dzong](#) head came and on that day Gadong monastery was packed with people. The Dalai Lama left on the morning of 29th. And he arrived Shigatse on the 3rd.

Q

So he purposely came to Gadong, right?

A

Yes, he came purposely. His route was on the other side of the river and Gadong was located on the opposite side, so he had to make a detour to come to Gadong. It was really a joyful event for us and my work on that had been useful [tib. gos chod pa]. On the evening of 2nd, we crossed the river carrying [khata](#) scarves and transported the things with our animals and prepared for the religious possession, the serbang.

Q

How many monks were there?

A

There were about 500. On that day, a vehicle stopped there on the way and it was the Chemmo who asked me, "How much work do you have here?" I said, "I have to give the [tonggo](#) here." He said, "That is good" [unclear]. After the Dalai Lama left, we concluded the serbang and we ate food and returned to the monastery.

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

On the 4th day, 20 some of the dancers and the singers (tib. tropa shema [bro pa gzhas ma]) came to Gadong to perform. After that, the Gyangkbara [tib. rgyang mkhar ba?] opera group came since we had said that if the ceremony was successful, we would take [hire] the opera. So Gyangkbara did the rehearsal performance in the evening and on the next day, they performed the opera story "Princess Wenchang" [tib. rgya bza'] and on the next day, they performed the opera story called Norsang [tib. nor bzang]. At that time, the two Dzong heads and I were sitting in the front with the big windows (tib. rabse [rab gsal]). Then the Nyerpa of the [dzong](#) came and said that the government's [adrung](#) (messenger) has come and he is calling you. I was extremely frightened (tib. nying tsalong [snying tsha long]). The [adrung](#) delivered an edict sent from the [gag](#). I opened it and it said that I must come to Shigatse's Dechen Phodrang [tib. bde chen pho brang] Palace [of the Panchen Lama] at the time of the [drungja](#). After this I wasn't in the mood to watch the opera. I gave some food to the messenger.

I asked a lama to do a divination about this and he said, "The divination is good. There will be no problem. You don't need to worry about that. The divination shows that you will get something good [tib. grogs sa chen po 'dug]." So I relaxed a little bit. After that, I gave the opera performers the gifts and I took my saddle [bag](#) and the prepared [tsampa](#), tea leaves and the butter and left the next day at dawn with two monk servants.

I also told them to send some fuel [to Shigatse] in case I have to stay there for some time. I didn't need to go to the [dzong](#) because the Chemmo was not there. At that time, the Panchen Lama was riding with his band of horsemen and was going for a pilgrimage [outside the city].

Q

When the Dalai Lama came, was the Panchen Lama going for pilgrimage with his attendants?

A

Yes, there were about 50-60 [kudrak](#) with him. Then they said that Chemmo is going to attend a party in the [Tashilunpo] [labrang](#), so you go back and come at sunrise the next morning. Then the servant, [söpön](#) la [tib. gsol dpon lags], said he met Chemmo and Chemmo said you should stay there relaxing and come to his house at sunrise. When I went to Chemmo's house at sunrise, there were many people packed in there to see him.

Library of Congress Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Altogether, there were about 20 monks and laymen. At that time, Chemmo had been to the toilet.

I bowed when Chemmo was coming back from the toilet and Chemmo told me, "Urgyen La, come in." Then he told me to come to the [gag](#) at around 8-9 a.m. When I went back, I met the Dūwa [tib. 'dul ba] [abbot] who asked me what Chemmo said. I told him that he told me to come to [gag](#) and I asked him what could it be for? He said, "You are going to get whipped with switches." I said, "I didn't do anything for which I should get beaten." The next day when I went to the [gag](#), Tenpa la [a tsendrön] was there and he told me, "You were told to come at 10, but you are too late, so you might get beaten." He told me to stay at the [drungja](#) for awhile. [unclear]. Then someone told me to come to the back door to see Chemmo.

That was two days before [Ragashag](#) was going to die. At that time, [Ragashag](#) and Surkhang were talking with Chemmo. Surkhang and I were in the same Tibetan school in Yülhagang [tib. g.yul lha gang] and he was fond of me and usually would tell me about how we did ice skating when we were small. After that, Surkhang and Chemmo went to the Dalai Lama's room and I also followed Chemmo. [Tsendrön](#) Thubten Nyima and the "cushion keeper" (tib. denyer [gdan gnyer] were there carrying a square yellow cloth in which something was wrapped. Then there was a lame Tashilunpo official carrying a cane called Kungö Khenchen [tib. mkhan chen]. I met him and he said, "It is good that Kungö Chemmo has come.

It was in the Dechen Phodrang Palace, in a dilapidated room [tib. khang pa gog to] that they had placed an inferior old throne [tib. rnying pa thabs chag] [for the Dalai Lama] which looked like the throne placed for the [Ganden Tripa](#) in the teaching grove [tib. gsung chos ra ba] in Lhasa. Also, the religious decorations were like the religious decorations used when they brought the Matriya Buddha in the [Barkor](#) after the Mönlam [tib. byams pa gdan 'dren] and the cushions for the [drungja](#) were also torn and inferior ones. At that time, there were about 7 [tsidrung](#) like the late Lobsang Yeshe [tib. blo bzang ye she] and Ngawang Namgyal [tib. ngag dbang rnam rgyal] and the Tsedrön was Gendün Geleg [tib. dge 'dun dge legs] who had made the arrangements which I didn't like and Chemmo also showed an angry face (tib. shere nagpo nangsang [zhal ras nag po ghang song]). So I told them [the Tashilunpo officials], how about putting the throne in that new room, but they said that it is not okay because [unclear]. Then I was angry and I told Chemmo, "In the eighth lunar month I came here to watch the opera show when Tashilinpo showed the Sigo Chemo [tib. gzigs mo chen mo] opera festival and they had pitched tents on that roof and the

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

lower floors were filled with Tashilunpo [kudrak](#) and three stories were all full. It is just a few months since then so why did they [Tashilunpo officials] say that it is not okay to put the throne there?" Chemmo said, "Yes, you are right, but they just put the throne right here"

When we told them [the Tashilunpo officials], "How about lending us a better throne" [tib. *bzhugs khri drag pa zhig g.yar po zhus na*], they said, "We have to report this to the Panchen Lama, so we can't make a decision until we get approval from the Panchen Lama." At that time, it was 9-10 a.m. and the Dalai Lama was going to arrive at 12, So we told them that you don't need to report to the Panchen Lama, [unclear] Then it was said that the soldiers of the [Gadang](#) Regiment will bring a throne and religious decorations and cushions, etc. from the Governor's Headquarters (tib. [Jidzong](#) [tib. *spyi rdzong*]) to the Dechen Phodrang. He [Chemmo] told me that I have to be the main one in charge of arranging the throne, etc. like I did for the ceremony in the Mönlam when the Dalai Lama came to the [tsog](#). He said that some [tsidrun](#) will help me. The [tsidrun](#) also told me, "You tell us what to do. We have been told to help you and we will help you." I told them please don't say that. Anyway, we were able to finish arranging these things before 12 p.m. Then the Dalai Lama arrived.

Q

Was that Tashilunpo Khenche there?

A

He returned with a angry face because no one paid attention to him. Later, there was not a single Tashilunpo monk there because Tashilunpo stopped them from coming to see the Dalai Lama by paying them their grain salary on that same day, saying that today is the day for paying [the monk's] grain salary. They gave orders to the monks saying [that if they went to see the Dalai Lama], "They will not get the grain salary and will be expelled from the [Tashilhunpo](#) community (kyidu)." However, there were about 1,000 monks who came from other monasteries around Shigatse like Shang Ganden Chönkhor and Gadong, and Chemmo told me to arrange for those monks to come to seek the audience like we did during the Mönlam. He said that I should stay there all the time and he [Chemmo] will come soon. The palace was packed with monks.

When the Dalai Lama came and was about to start his dharma teaching, the monks from Tashilunpo didn't take the grain salary and rushed in like the serbang religious possession. They were saying, "We don't care what will happen to us, even getting expelled from the

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

monastic community" (kyidu [tib. skyid sdug mi dgos ga re phud na'i phud]. So about 1,000 Tashilunpo monks rushed in and the whole place was packed and even the stables were packed with monks. [unclear]

Q

What dharma teaching did the Dalai Lama give?

A

I don't know for sure. He gave the teaching for two days and on the evening of the second day, the Dalai Lama went to Ngor [tib. ngor] Monastery. I went to see Chemmo because he called me. [unclear]. Thubten Nyima and Trekhang Samchog La [tib. bkras khang bsam mchog lags] were also there. I gave a [khata](#) scarf and asked Chemmo, "May I leave after the teaching is over." He said, "What the hell are you doing talking like a crazy person. You are provoking me." [tib. mi smyon pa'i bzo 'dra po 'dis nga la bsnyad brko gi 'dug]. This was not done by me. This was done in accordance with the [Dalai Lama's] order (tib. kandre [bka' 'brel])." [unclear] Then I said, "If so, I am sorry." Then Chemmo said, "You go back tomorrow morning and come down on the day after tomorrow to the gag"

On the third day when I was coming down through the east bridge (tib. sampa shar [zam pa shar]), the drum was being beaten by the Dalai Lama's dance group (tib. dama [brda ma]) which indicated that the Dalai Lama was coming. Then I went to the [gag](#) after having my breakfast. Then someone was coming and asking where is the Gadong monk, so I reported my arrival and I was told to make a list of the people coming to seek an audience with the Dalai Lama. So I made the list and gave it to Chemmo. Gadong sent me foodstuffs and also I got tea in the [drungja](#).

Q

So Chemmo called you to work there when the Dalai Lama was in Shigatse and you worked until the Dalai Lama went to Ngor Monastery, right? Tell me what you did after that?

A

After that, I would go to the [drungja](#) in the morning and when someone wanted to seek an audience with the Dalai Lama, I reported that to the [gag](#) and the Chemmo would consult

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

about that and then I would come back home after the [drungja](#). I served like this until the Dalai Lama went to Shang Ganden Chökhör [tib. shangs dga' ldan chos 'khor] and then I came back to Gadong on the day that the Dalai Lama went through the Shugula [tib. shog bu la] Mountain Pass [to Yangpachen and then to Lhasa].

Q

What did you do after coming back to Gadong?

A

After a month, I came to Lhasa and then went back [to Gadong] in the 6th lunar month.

Q

When you went back to Gadong, did the Nyertsang and those people ask you what you had done?

A

They wouldn't ask these things.

Q

Was that because you were the highest authority?

A

Yes. They wouldn't dare to ask me. They would always say you have done very well [tib. [gang](#) min tshad byung bzhang].

Q

However, did you report to the abbot?

A

I informed the abbot and he said, "We have heard that. It is well known to everyone."

Q

Did you stay in Lhasa between the Mönlam and [Tsongjö](#) [Prayer Festivals]?

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

Yes. Then I sought an audience with the Dalai Lama and returned in the 5th month.

Q

What did you do in Lhasa between that time?

A

I just stayed in the monastery [Drepung, Loseling]. The Tratsang made me do some miscellaneous work. Sometimes I had to go to the [Laji](#) and sometimes to the Kashag. [Sawang](#) Surkhang would ask me, "Today, who you are coming to represent?" [tib. de ring khyed rang su'i yin pa]. Sometime, I said I am coming on behalf of the Tratsang and sometimes I said it was on behalf of the Jiso and sometimes I said it was for the [Riji](#) [tib. rigs spyi].

Q

The last time we met we talked about the Tratsang and such things, but we didn't talk about the [Riji](#), right?

A

Yes. We didn't.

Q

What is the [Riji](#)?

A

The [Riji](#) [was an office that] consisted of the 6 abbots: [Gomang](#), [Loseling](#), Shagor [tib. [shag](#) sgor], Gyepa [tib. rgyas pa], Düwa, and [Deyang](#). The Ngagpa abbot did not attend.

Q

Why wasn't the Ngagpa abbot there?

A

There was no custom of the Ngagpa abbot being there.

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

Why did they call it [Riji](#)?

A

It was because they had to give 18 [tonggo](#) called [rigdra](#) [tib. rigs grwa].

Q

What is the [rigdra](#)?

A

This ceremony was originated by Jayang Chöje [tib. 'jam dbyangs chos rje]. They had to collect barley, butter, etc. for doing these.

Q

Was that ceremony for the founding of Drepung Monastery?

A

I don't know what the ceremony was for. The abbots would say, "We are the Söpön and Chandzö of Jayang Chöje and we are collecting the income and giving the [tonggo](#) according to what was written in the book, and we do the pökor [tib. spos skor][walk around the [tsog](#) prayer assembly carrying incense]. ..."

Q

Would the abbots [themselves] do the pökor?

A

Yes. They went for the pökor and also we had the serbang (religious procession). On the 3rd of the 7th lunar month, the [kudrak](#) and people from Lhasa would come to offer [khata](#) scarves to the abbots and the place would be packed with people. The abbots would get dressed up and come in line led by the incense carrier (tib. pöna [spos sna]).

Q

Would all the 6 abbots come?

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

No. The abbot whose turn it was to give the [rigdra](#) would come. [Only] The incumbent abbot who gave the [tonggo](#) would come in person. At the time of the late Jungne [tib. 'byung gnas] abbot, he would come to the cauldron in the [rungskhang](#) [kitchen] and give the orders like putting in the butter, etc., and he also looked in the [tsogchen](#) dukhang [main prayer assembly hall] when the tea was served. He would also bring all of his Söpön and [gidru](#) disciples to work on that. He would not get specially dressed up and would say, "I am glad to see the ordinary monks get served good tea and good [thukpa](#) and get [gye](#) [alms]. There is no need to call a cook for Chinese food or to call many people and receive [khata](#) scarves. We are the Chandzö who collect the income by measuring in [dre](#) and weighing by the [nyaga](#) according to what is written in the text and we give the [tonggo](#). We didn't spend even one [trangga](#) from our [shag](#). [unclear] What is there to make a big deal of? It is like the proverb, "The sheep made a big deal over the goat's droppings." [tib. ra'i ril ma la lug gis ngo so btang]. This is a crazy work and idiot's talk [tib. smyon pa'i las ka dang lkugs pa'i skad cha]." He would make all the abbots feel ashamed. Jungne was the senior abbot (tib. [khempo](#) tripa [mkhan po khri pa]) and the [Loseling](#) abbot.

Q

When did this happen?

A

This happened 8-9 years before the revolt. When people came to offer [khata](#) scarves, he was staying in his [shag](#) and he said, "Make a kettle of good butter tea and good meat [momo](#) and a raddish dish. This is enough because we are not [kudrak](#). In the evening make a [tsampa](#) soup and eat it before going to bed." He was really like a [dobdo](#). He would give the monks whatever he got from the [Laji](#). In the [Laji](#), he would also make the other abbots do work like counting money and folding [khata](#) scarves, etc. He would not make the [Shengo](#) do work like this. He regarded the [Shengo](#) very highly and asked them, "Don't the two of you feel cold?" [tib. sku zhabs rnam pa gnyis sku bsil gyi mi 'dug gam] and he would tell the Lama [chandzö](#) to serve them tea. He regarded the other abbots as his [gidru](#) (disciples).

Q

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

How old was he then?

A

He was a little over 60. He would manage the funds very economically (tib. jagpo [lcags po]). After counting the money, he would ask whether there were people taking loans and if there was no one taking loans, he would consult the other abbots about what they should do with the money. If no one answered, he would say, "Let us, the 11 abbots and ex-abbots, the [tsogchen](#) chemmo, the two [jiso](#), and the [phodrang](#) depa, all together 15 people, divide the money [to give as loans and collect the interest]. Leave out the two [Shengo](#) for doing this because they have to give [tonggo](#)." And he would note down the date.

Q

Did he charge interest for the money that was divided up?

A

Yes. He fixed the interest from the beginning and he also paid it like all the others. He also divided the [khata](#) scarves and the rice offerings they got in the Mönlam and fixed the cost of the [khata](#) scarves and the rice.

Q

Did they have to buy it whether they wanted it or not?

A

Yes. He was forcing them to buy (tib. bamtsong ['bam tshong]) [at a loss]. He would tell them to bring the money on a fixed date and he also paid first. Then he would seek permission from the two [Shengo](#) to give a [mangja](#) and he would distribute the money to the monks and he would make all the Chabu come to give [gye](#) (alms).

Q

This was the [gye](#) from the [Laji](#), right?

A

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Yes. When the [Laji](#) had to work a little longer, he would tell the Lama [chandzö](#) to make a kettle of tea and dumplings [ch. shui jiao zi] or the [thukpa](#) called Gutsi Rithug [ch. hou [zi](#) er do]. The Lama [chandzö](#) would make a big kettle of tea because he could take the left over tea and food [for himself]. But when Jungne saw that the Lama [chandzö](#) taking some more butter, he would ask, "What is that for?" and when the Lama [chandzö](#) said that he wanted to make more tea, Jungne la would say, "You don't need to make it because it is almost time to close the office (tib. lhengye trö [lhan rgyas grol])." He would shake the kettle and say you don't need to make more tea. He also would go to the kitchen and tell the Lama [chandzö](#), "You leave this leftover food and warm it and serve it tomorrow."

Q

Where was he born?

A

He was born in Tölung [tib. stod lung] and he died in Tibet.

Q

Did he die in Tibet before the revolt?

A

Yes, the revolt happened 5 years after he died. He came to the Mönlam for two days and did his prayers and went back to the monastery and on his way back to Drepung he went to [Norbulinga](#) and [Tse](#) (Potala) for pilgrimage and then on the next day he died. His body remained in a meditative state without decomposing for 5-6 days (tib. thudam lashug [thugs dam la bzhugs] so he became famous.

Later, people were saying that we don't regret whatever we spend for the [Laji](#) because it is used in a good way and he would not let people do something tricky [tib. ra bi ri bi] even with regard to 5 [karma](#) [a tiny amount]. Usually our Tratsang abbot [Jungne] would make a speech saying, "The main persons in charge of the [Laji](#) is the incumbent abbots and the ex-abbots will assist them. You just drink good tea and chitchat and pretend that you don't know anything. You shouldn't behave like this. It is shameful." [tib. de 'dra ma gnang/ ngo tsha]. Anyway, Jungne didn't regard the other abbots as colleagues, but as his [gidru](#) and he made them work.

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

So the Rigdra was held once a year and the abbots [in the Riji] would do it by turns, right?

A

Yes. It was held in the 7th lunar month. Later, the Jiso was managed by the monastery itself (tib. shungdzin [gzhung 'dzin]) [due to a new government reform rule] and we didn't need to send the abbot. All six abbots met and collected the income jointly and gave the [tonggo](#) jointly. They set up in the [rungskhang](#) and made it like permanent. The 6 [khempo](#) set up 6 [chandzö](#) and let them work. Whoever comes to the pay taxes or something, they called him into the [rungskhang](#) and served them tea and [tsampa](#).

Q

Did the [Riji](#) have separate estates (chöshi) for giving the [tonggo](#)?

A

Yes. In the Kyarpo [tib. skyar po] area, and in Tölung and in Ngodrubding [tib. dngos grub lding] they had estates and they collected a lot of grain.

Q

Did they have those estates from the time of Jayang Chöje?

A

Probably they did. They had hay, fodder, wheat, peas to collect and they didn't need to pay the water mill when milling [tsampa](#). They would give [tsampa](#) in the [tsog](#) during the [rigdra](#).

Q

Did they give the [tsampa](#) once?

A

They give one [daso](#) of [tsampa](#) per day.

Q

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

How many days would they hold the [rigdra](#)?

A

For 18 days. They also received salt and soda [tib. bul tog] from Northern Tibet which they would hand out during the [rigdra](#). They also had to give [gye](#) as well as peaches and walnuts.

Q

Let's go back a little bit. After you returned to Gadong in the 5th month, what did you do?

A

I had to conclude my work, e.g., giving [tonggo](#), etc. At the end of the 12th month, the Tsaja and Phuja officials [from Loseling] came there and took over the Phende [tib. phan bde] Estate from me.

Q

Did [Loseling](#) own Phende as their estate?

A

Yes. They took it from [Kapshöba](#) as repayment for his outstanding loans and they had to return about 11 thousand [dotse](#) after calculating the cost of the estate. The land, house and the [miser](#) (tib. sakhang misum [sa khang mi gsum]) belonged to the Tratsang and they had also asked for the endorsement (tib. gomchen ['go mchan]) [on the agreement from the Kashag to officially endorse the [new] ownership of the estate].

I was also told to go as the witness (tib. tsipang [rtsis dpang]) when they handed over Phende estate to the Chabu. The Tratsang also told them to call me [from Gadong] when there were important things to be done in Phende. [Loseling](#) also had the Mesong Estate which belonged to the Bungdzö [tib. sbug mdzod] who were the in charge of the estates of the Tratsang and they [Tratsang] also appointed me to take care of the important things in Mesong. There were three Chandzö in Mesong and they would send letters to me in Gadong when there were important things to do and I had to go there. When they said that I had to be there for about 8-9 days, I had to stay for 15-16 days.

Although Gadong was quite good in that it had two estates, compared to Mesong, it was like a peddler selling small things and a humble household washing clothes. When they

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

did the accounting by [diu](#) in a big room, there were so many items to account for like grain, butter, sheep, goat, lentils, wheat, yaks, etc, two people had to stand there to put the labels on different items. I would be seated at the head and there were two clerks and the numbers were all like 10,000 and 1,000.

Q

Do you mean the number of [khe](#) of grain?

A

For grain, probably, there were almost 100,000 [khe](#) of grain like 80,000-90,000. And there were 1,000 yaks, 10,000 sheep or goats and tens of thousands of sheared wool. They were talking about several thousands of [khe](#) of grain from each estate.

Q

Were there branch estates?

A

There were 5-6 branch estates.

Q

Were those all in Gyantse area ?

A

Yes.

Q

Where is Mesong located?

A

It was located near Gabshi [tib. dga' bzhi ba]. The estate managers (shidü) were called the "senior kungö" [tib. sku ngo sku bdres pa] and the "junior kungö" [tib. sku gzhon pa]. They stayed in the rooms at the east and the west. Their rooms were also simchung [tib. gzim chung] and they had three servants as well as [nangsen](#) [servants]. There were 15-16

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

servants called shabdre [tib. zhabs gras] who wore long earrings and the [chupa](#) made from dyed [nambu](#).

Q

Did they build new houses or were there old houses from early times?

A

The houses were like brand new. Probably, it had been built 20-30 years earlier.

Q

Were those built during Tsarong's time?

A

Yes. There was also a factory where they did wool work, such as dying wool and weaving [nambu](#), rugs, aprons, the best quality [nambu](#) called shema [tib. shad ma], Tibetan woolen boots with leather soles (tib. sompa [zon pa]), monk's boots made from cotton that were worn by lamas and [tsidrung](#) (tib. resom [ras zon]). Altogether, there were at least 70-80 people working in a house the size of Shatra's House in Lhasa. When you went through the back door of the estate, you reached the factory. Otherwise, you wouldn't know that there was a factory there.

Q

How many stories did the house have?

A

It had three stories. The three estate stewards would stay in their rooms and come together when they met in the office (tib. lhengye [lhan rgyas]). We drink tea in our [shag](#) in the morning and the eat [pag](#) in the office. It was the size of four pillars and had big windows. We ate in the office together and went to one's [shag](#) after work. When we look at Phende, Mesong seems to be a small and humble one (tib. nyomchung [snyom chung]).

Q

Where is Phende located?

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

It is located on the left side of the Gyantse Serjog [tib. ser lcog] Monastery. Serjog belonged to [Taktra](#). At that time, Serjog's house was better than Phende's because Phende had yet to build the house. Phende had a good income and those Chabu became very rich. Gadong was really small compared to them.

Q

How many [khe](#) of grain income did Gadong get?

A

When I handed over the grain including the grain loans, there was a little more than 70,000 [khe](#) of grain after excluding all the expenses for building the two estate's houses and doing all the [tonggo](#) for three years in the monastery. The house had been swept away by the [1954] flood so I built the new house along with a sheep and goat holding building and a dog house.

At that time, the Chabu were astonished saying, "We have the loan pledges [tib. gan rgya] of Phenpo and Central Tibet and Western Tibet (tib. ütö [dbus stod]) which were over 20,000-30,000 [khe](#) of grain. However, we don't have the documents of [Tsang](#). We don't know how much because Gadong's documents were in your hands and we don't know about the income. At that time, I showed the grain and those things to the Tsaja and Phuja when they stayed in Gadong and settled some disputes. At that time, the food was served by the [labrang](#) and we ate together. The Chabu told me, "You already have the title of ex-gegö, [thön](#) [tib. thon] and you sit at the head [of the rows of monks], and you have some [gidru](#). Therefore, when we go back, we will call a [tsondu](#) gyenzom and give you an award like we usually do to the abbot who went to [Tö](#) and they would give each monk like 30-40 [sang](#) as the [gye](#) and we would put a [khata](#) nangdzö on his neck. We will also give you a [khata](#) and the title of jatsü thon [tib. bya tshul thon] for your [gidru](#) which will cost about 150-160 [dotse](#) for the [tonggo](#). This will be enough." And you must go and watch over Phende and Mesong and also watch Gadong and sometimes also watch the Pen Gyawog [tib. span rgya 'og] estate. They wanted me to be like the governor (jigyab) of all these estates.

Q

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Pen Gyawog also belonged to [Loseling](#), right?

A

We got this also from [Kapshöba](#). After that I was sent as the representative to the Legjö Office as the replacement of the ex-shengo because his eyesight was not good. They told me, "If you don't want to go to Gadong, then you must go to the Legjö Office because we have talked with the abbot." Then I said, "You can't say that." Then I got the chance to come to India when the Chabu were busy. I was left in Gadong because there were many troubles and they told me to be the witness when they were handing it over to the Chabu and the monks also requested me to stay in Gadong. So when I left after the Mönlam and went to Tashilunpo for a pilgrimage, the revolt took place and all of my horses and the mules were robbed at the Jagsam Chuwori [tib. lcahs zam [chu](#) bo ri] ferry site and I couldn't go back to the monastery. That's how I came to India.

Q

How did you leave Gadong when you came to India?

A

When I left Gadong, I had 36 horses and mules. They send one [lag](#) [10 animals] of horses and mules from Lhasa and there was one [lag](#) in Mesong and I had one [lag](#) and I had 6 muleteers and there were also four of us. When we left Gadong, it was the morning when Phagpala Khenjung was killed [in Lhasa]. The [lene](#) (monastic officials) and I gave [khata](#) to each other and left with the sound of horse bells going "sang [sang](#)." We reached Gyantse Phende at sunset and I stayed there for a few days. While there, I heard that the uprising had taken place in Lhasa, near [Norbulinga](#).

On the next day, when I watched from the big windows of Phende, I saw that they [Chinese] had set up cannons on the [dzong](#) targeting the monastery and they had hoisted about 4 flags. It was the time when the revolt was about to break out and all the people were planning to leave saying now the situation will not be good. Many of the servants of Phende were saying that first we must destroy the few pro-Chinese new lay officials [tib. drung 'khor zhabs gsar ba]. So I didn't have any choice about what to do [tib. ga byed 'di byed mi 'dug], because if I went through Dzara and Ralung, in Nangkartse there were Khambas, so I was [afraid] wondering what would happen [tib. ga 'dra byas yong bsam] to me. In the Tratsang of the Shine [tib. gzhi gnas] Monastery, there was a Shungden [tib.

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

shugs ldan] [statue]. Someone told me to do [senriy](#) in front of that and I did and it favored going through Ralung.

When I went through Ralung, I had to cross a mountain pass in the upper part of the valley of Khaka [tib. mkhar kha] and I stayed over night in Khaka which is the area where the aristocrats [Kapshöba](#), Drangtöpa [tib. 'brang stod pa] Samding [tib. bsam lding], Maya, [tib. rma bya], Tara [tib. rta ra] and Thangmey [tib. thang smad] were located and their [miser](#) had to work for the [nangtre](#) (inner tax to one's [lord](#)) to [Loseling](#) and these aristocrats had their [gempo](#) [for calling the [miser](#) to work for the tax].

Q

Did that belong to Mesong?

A

That area belonged to Phende. Phende had a room, a storeroom and a kitchen in the [dzong](#), so I went there and stayed overnight. On the next day, I passed the mountain pass and reached the place just before we reached the estate of Nara Kyishong [tib. rna ra skyid gshong].

Q

There was a very big house there, right?

A

Yes. There were some travelers who went to Lhasa to see the Mönlam and came back and among them there was an old man with a cane. I had put the letters Dre Loling [tib. 'bras blo ling](Abbr. of Drepung [Loseling](#)) on my leading mule (tib. shotre [sho drel]. So the man, after reading the letters, took off his [hat](#) and told me, "You seem to be from a big Tratsang. So you had better be careful because there were people stopping the travelers and searching their things at the place where there is a big carved statue [tib. gnyes thang lha chen po] and there is the same thing in Nyero and Chutsen [tib. [chu](#) tshan]. So I hesitated whether to go or not and I said, "Let's stay overnight at Dekyiling [tib. bde skyid gling] .

I heard that the Drepung Jiso or a Geshe from [Gomang](#) or someone had arrived at Rong Chamchen [tib. rong byams chen], so I send a servant and a muleteer to go to ask the [geshe](#) for a divination. The [geshe](#) said, "It has been several days since my divination

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

became bad [tib. mo log]. [Loseling](#) Tratsang is famous and with high esteem (tib. unphang thonpo [dbu 'phangs mthon po]) and Chagdampa Ugyen is also famous. Anyway, I will do a divination and he did the divination and said, "I will guarantee that nothing will happen up to the Jagsam Ferry site [tib. lcags zam gru kha] but I don't know what will happen after that."

So we then went through Rong and when we reached Pedi [tib. dpal di], [Chushigandru](#) was there. Some were reading the Gesar Story and some were playing majong making the sound "ta ta ta." I heard that they had tied two Bodyguard Regiment soldiers to pillars because they had said that [Norbulinga](#) had been lost. Then they [Chushigandru] said, "Norbulinga was not lost. The two soldiers are Chinese spies so we must kill them." The soldiers had told them the truth. I heard that they were about to whip them [tib. rta lcag gzhu grabs 'dug], but I didn't see them doing the whipping." When I went to get a pass, they said that they have to ask their commander and there were two guards carrying guns. They said that they will make a report. I had taken a [khata](#) scarf and I was going to give it to him. I was wondering what kind of commander he would be, but I found that he was the Phara [Khampa](#) who had a goiter. He himself was frightened. He was sitting on a chair wearing satin trousers and a chuba made from lynx skins and he said, "Oh! It's you, mister [gegö](#) la. Please come in." He was like embarrassed and I was too. The servants were looking at us with surprise. Then he insisted that I sit at the head and he served me tea.

He said, "Are you going up tomorrow? I said yes and in the morning when I climbed up the mountain, there were many monks coming also and among them there was Panglung Rinpoche [tib. spang lung rin po che] and his relative, Lady Drekhong. She was telling the others, "Isn't that Ugyen." They said the Dalai Lama had left for India and the revolt had taken place and [Norbulinga](#) was lost, and many thousands of monks are coming from Drepung like a religious procession (serbang)." She was crying and I also burst into tears. When we started to climb up the mountain, the horses and mules had already reached half way up the pass, so when I got to the top, the horses and the mules had descended from the pass. Then we boiled tea and drank one or two of cups of tea.

Then a lot of Khampas came saying, "aro aro" [tib. a rogs] [the way Khampas call people in an impolite way] and they took all of my horses and the mules and they also tore open the loads and even came to shoot me saying, "You! We have come serving the Dalai Lama" [tib. kho re/ nga [tsho](#) rgyal ba rin po che zhabs phyi zhus nas yong ba yin] and they were also trying to whip us and hit us with their swords, but they didn't. They took my good black mule with white around it's eyes [tib. drel rgya mo]. They left only two worse ones;

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

a small grey mule and a small red horse and they also beat the muleteer when he didn't let them take the horse and mules. That's it. On that day, we remained there feeling sad and the next morning I told them to hire two horses. I sent my servant and the muleteer to Gongkar [tib. gong dkar] and told them that the Gadong abbot might come there, so tell him what happened here and also see whether or not someone has come from my [shag](#).

After those two left, the next morning, they came back and said that it has been about 1 day since the abbot and all of them had left. The monastery was packed with monks, but there was nobody from my [shag](#). They met Nyagre Khentrü and the ex-shengo on the back side of the mountain pass and they asked where I was and Nyagre Khentrü said that he was going to wait for me.

On the next day, I loaded up the horse and the mule with the things and I went walking. After sunset, when it was almost dark, again someone was saying, "aro aro" and he cursed me saying, "Your parent's corpse [tib. pha ro ma ro] your mule is here." The mule was a very tranquil one, but she became like mad and bit the pillar and climbed up the trough. So she got beaten and there were lot of sores on her body and the bell was also smashed." At that time, the mule was crying and saying "ö ö." From the next morning, I rode the mule and she brought me up to Bomdila in India where I sold the mule with the saddlery for 200 [trangga](#) garpo. I gave the grey horse to a household. Nyagre Khentrü and I were together when we came from Tibet. Then when we reached Misumarri and I met you [kungö](#), right?

Q

Yes.

A

I stayed 25 days in Misumarri and then I was sent to the Old People Home in Dalhousie. And then the Dalai Lama, Chemmo and Liushar [tib. sneu shar] came and I was called and I went to Simla. That's all.

Q

What did you do in Misumarri?

A

Library of Congress

Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

I just stayed idle. On the day we reached Dalhousie, there were two vehicles and there was a staff person from Kündeling and there was one person called Trago Sahib who spoke some Tibetan who asked my name. I told him my names and he made a note and he said I need only one name. Then they took us to the hotel and we ate food until we were full and then they took us to the house called Ramasha. On the next day, many Indians came and gave mugs and cooking utensils and rice and Trago Sahib handed all the cooking utensils over to me. There were about 60 people and they gave us all salary and things like meat and fuel also. Then I became the [gyagpön](#). When the Dalai Lama came, you [kungö](#) were there, right?

Q

Yes.

A

And then we all reported to the Kashag to appoint a government official to watch over the salary. Liushar said. "Do you need a government official on top of a government official? Anyway, the Kashag will consult on this because it is your request." I was the one who first put forward that suggestion and it became like the proverb, "Catch me and pull off my hairs." [tib. nga zin nas spu thogs]. Later, Tsidrung Chönphel Dönden [tib. chos 'phel don ldan] and I were appointed to watch over the salary.

[talks in detail about getting appointed as the head of the settlements in Simla and Bumdela and how finally he got retirement salary from the exile government and got admitted into the Old People's Home in Kalimpong]

When I was in Penam Gadong, I asked for leave from being in charge of Gadong, but it was not granted. The protective deity of Gadong was Shri Devi [tib. lha mo] and I did a [senriy](#) in front of Lhamo, but the [senriy](#) didn't come out in favor of asking for leave. Then I did a [senriy](#) in front of protective deity Mahakala [tib. mgon po] and still it didn't come favor of asking leave and I then I did a [senriy](#) in front of protective deity Jamsing [tib. lcam sring] and still it didn't come favor of my asking leave. The abbot told me that if I am going to ask for leave, I have to ask [Nechung](#) and Gadong for their prophecies and if they tell you to ask for leave, then we will consult. Even if we grant your leave, you have to take the responsibility. Then I asked Tenma [tib. bstan ma] for the prophecy and Tenma said, "It is good for you to stay".

Library of Congress
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

If you had gone back to Drepung, you might not have been able to come to India, right?

A

Yes. I also asked Gadong deity for a prophecy and he also said, "It is good for you to stay." At that time, [Nechung](#) oracle had been to India and had not come back. Later I heard that they were summoning [Nechung](#) to come into trance and when I went there the place was packed with monks. I had brought the request for a prophecy but I couldn't deliver it right way because it was my turn to go for the [Shengo](#) candidate. If I had become a shengo, it would have been in 1959. So I thought the monks would think that I want to be one of the [Shengo](#) candidates.

Then I asked the clerk to deliver my request for a prophecy and the prophecy was given. When I went to get the answer, it also said, "It is good for you to stay." Therefore, I had to go back to Gadong so because of that I could come to India. Otherwise, if a leave was granted and I came back to Drepung, they wouldn't let me go and they would have appointed me as representative in [Norbulinga](#), the Potala or [Shöl](#) Parkhang [tib. zhol par khang] and then I would have been caught. But I didn't need to suffer that. So this is my story.