

Interview H0215: with Shakabpa, Wangchug Denden [tib. zhwa sgab pa, dbang phyug bde ldan], (India, 1983) : Part No. 3 of 13

W.D. Shakabpa was a very prominent aristocratic government official who held the rank of Tsipön. He is the author of "Tibet: A Political History." On this tape he talks about the Chinese unofficial group that came from Gansu to Tibet and were deported, and how later a Chinese woman also came saying she was sent by the Guomindang. He also discusses in detail the arrival of the Yingön Talama in Tibet and the visit of Huang Musong to present condolences for the Dalai Lama's death and the role that Sendregasum played in securing his permission to come. The subject also tells how the Sikkim Political Officer Williamson came to Lhasa and after becoming sick, requested that a plane be allowed to land in Lhasa but was refused by the Tsondu and died in Lhasa. The subject also discusses the Pandatsang incident and about how the Chinese and the British competed regarding their relations with the Tibetan Government. He also discusses Shen Quzhang and how the Tibetan Government decided to send delegates to attend the Guomindang General Assembly Meeting. The subject also talks about Reting's resignation and how the Tsondu pleaded with Reting not to resign.

We were talking about the Chinese representative who came after the death of the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama passed away in the Bird Year. The Chinese came in the 6th or 7th month of the Dog Year. Probably it was in the 7th month. Our late Trekhang [Sawang](#) was promoted to shape from the [Tseja](#) office. Just after he held the appointment ceremony and had an audience with the Dalai Lama [tib. gsar mjal], the Chinese came. They also attended the Kashag Party [tib. bka' [shag](#) thugs spro]. At that time there was a lot of talk about this.

Q

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During the 13th Dalai Lama all the Chinese were expelled and Tibet's complete independent was proclaimed, was it not? After that there were no Chinese at all in Tibet so this delegation was the first one to enter Tibet since then, right?

A

That is true, but in between, a few Chinese came to Tibet, but they were unofficial. One came from Gansu through the Amban of Xining. After he arrived in Lhasa, he was deported immediately when they found that he was a Chinese upper echelon official [tib. dpon rigs] who was saying he was trader. When he tried to deliver a message to the Kashag, he was sent off. Much later, a Chinese woman also came. I do not know her name. She was called Wang something. It was during the period when Lungshar's popularity was at its zenith.

Q

Was the 13th Dalai Lama alive at that time?

A

Yes, he was living then. It was after he had sent his proclamation. This Chinese woman claimed that her father was Chinese and her mother was a Tibetan and she had come for a pilgrimage. After some time, she said she wanted an audience of the Dalai Lama and the Kashag. She talked a lot, sometimes implying that she had been sent by the Guomindang. Anyway she was also sent out of Tibet very soon because it became kind of uncertain. She could not get a private audience with the Dalai Lama but she might have got a public audience. She also could meet the Kashag. ??? All these were said to have been done through [Lungshar](#).

Q

Isn't there talk that she arrived with Yingön Talama [tib. dbyings mgon ta bla ma]?

A

No. Not together. They came separately. The Chinese woman arrived all by herself.

Q

However, they met in Lhasa?

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A

Maybe they met. When Yingön Talama came, he brought a letter from Chiang Kaishek. He was given an official welcome by a delegation sent to receive him. I do not know if there were any government officials among the delegation, but I saw the personal bodyguards along with a flag had been sent to receive him. After receiving his audience at [Norbulinga](#), he came and stayed sometimes at Tsarong's place. I am definite about this. Talama was wearing his Khenche [tib. mkhan chas] dress. He was wearing a [hat](#) known as Drolug [tib. sgro lug] signifying his rank and he was wearing a vest because it was winter. When he left, he was given the rank of Talama. When he arrived in Lhasa he was not a Talama. He was a Khenche.

Then the Dalai Lama passed away. We were talking about the offering ceremony for the Dalai Lama's death [tib. dgongs rdzogs mchod sprin] and about the Chinese delegation coming to make the offerings for the death of the Dalai Lama. I remember [Trimön](#) and his colleagues talking about their arrival. In the Tsondu it was argued that under no circumstances should the Chinese be granted permission to enter Tibet. Until now, no Chinese with political connections had been allowed to enter Tibet after they had been expelled by the late 13th Dalai Lama. Now the Chinese Government is sending someone called Huang Musong who was supposed to be a committee member [ch. wei yuan] of the Tibetan-Mongolian Office [tib. bod sog las khungs]. There was a heated discussion, but finally the Tsondu decided that since they were coming to make offerings for the late Dalai Lama, they could not be turned away.

They came by the land route since they could not get the travel document [tib. lam yig] to come through India. The British were ruling India. I think they came at the end of August via the land route [tib. skam thog]. They had lots of people with them. They stayed at [Kytöpa](#) [tib. skyid stod pa]. The officers were in palanquins. They distributed gifts like tea and silk among the Regent and the [Kalön](#). Even the [tsidrung](#) and the lay officials were given brocade and silk rolls and I heard that they also gave each of them a badge [tib. rtags ma]. There were about 8-9 soldiers with full military uniforms and they were on horseback. All the officers [tib. dpon po] were in palanquins. There were about 12 palanquins. The palanquin bearers were all Chinese. They were very poor and simple. These coolies left very soon. The palanquins were of very poor quality. All of the officers were riding in Lhasa on horseback. The horses were decorated with double red tassels (tib. Domdom [dom dom]) regardless of whether their ranks were high or low.

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Later on, I found out that the soldiers were local Muslims who knew Tibetan. After that I do not know where they went. I knew one of them. When I was small and attending school, there was one boy called Dela Bahadur. We used to beat him up all the time. His father was Nepalese and mother was Tibetan. He was a very naughty and a bold boy. I was told that he had left for Nepal, but I think he went to Beijing. He was one of the Chinese soldiers. He came to me. He could speak fluent Lhasa dialect. He told me that among them there were many who could speak fluent Tibetan. It seemed that they come to Tibet well prepared. Later, I heard that the Chinese representatives made offering in front of the remains of the Dalai Lama and they also prostrated and prayed to the remains according to Chinese tradition.

Q

At that time, were you yet to join the government service?

A

Yes, I was yet to join the government. I was a [tsidrung](#) in the Tsikhang which also served as the lay official training center. Before returning, the Chinese did not present the kind of board called Pen to the Potala, but they presented a Pen to the [Jokhang](#) [Pen was a board on which a short composition or verse written on cloth, bordered with brocade was fastened and hung at the gate]. They again distributed various gifts like badges to every one - from the Regent to the smaller officers. They were given audiences in return and whatever they had to say were very politely heard and answered. The leader, Huang Musong, was presented with a full dress set of a dzasa's rank, along with the brocade chuba with the four designs: cloud, dragon, rock and water (tib. gyenshi [rgyan bzhi]), a black fox fur [hat](#) called Wakil [tib. wa 'khyil] and rainbow designed boots (tib. jachen ['ja' chen]).

Next in rank were 4 military officers. They were presented with the full dress of a Rimshi. Finally, the rest of them were given a costume like the Senampa and they were given the yellow [hat](#) Boktho [tib. 'bog tho] and the knife and bowl case [tib. rgya gri phor shubs] to hang on their backside. I thought it was rather well done. I heard many people talking together like Tsarong and the Kashag saying that they treated them in a good way by giving them some kind of ranks [tib. go thob] and talking with them, but they did not make any commitments. When the Tibetan [Kalön](#) were arguing that the Chinese should not be allowed to enter Tibet since it was not right and proper to let them come so soon

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after the 13th Dalai Lama's death, the great monastic seats [tib. gdan sa] exerted their influence by saying that from the religious point of view they cannot be denied from making offering for the late Dalai Lama. Moreover, their visit is purely religious and there is no politics involved. However, actually the Chinese delegation wanted to talk about China and Tibet's relationship as it existed before. They couldn't reach a conclusion in the talks. Our [Kalön](#) referred to the Simla convention and said that if the Chinese wanted to talk or make any settlements according to the Simla convention, there should be a third party present, the British. They refused to have direct talk with China. At that time, the Kashag was having the Kashag picnic [tib. bka' [shag](#) thugs spro] - the Chinese were also invited. When the shapes were alone we would also stay near them. At that time, they had a lot of discussions.

Q

Was it the Kashag who had these talks?

A

Yes, the Kashag did so.

Q

What did the Chinese want?

A

They wanted to continue the Chinese-Tibetan dialogue and come to a conclusion. When they were asked what should be brought to a conclusion, they said that they wanted to talk about stationing an Amban in Tibet and so on. The Kashag replied that if they wanted to talk, it should be based on the Simla Convention and a foreign country should be present as an observer or mediator. They refused to have direct talks with China. When they [the Chinese] left, they left a representative behind to wind up the talks through a wireless set. The Chinese again fooled and cheated us.

Q

Meanwhile what were the great monasteries doing?

A

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When the Chinese were not being permitted to enter Tibet, the great monasteries said that they should be allowed to enter on religious grounds.

Q

In the beginning there were talks about denying the Chinese entry into Tibet, right?

A

Yes. When talks were going on about not granting the Chinese entry - the monasteries exerted their influence saying that they should be allowed to come. They have come to make religious offerings not for a political mission. This seemed quite plausible because the Chinese were very well behaved and seemed very pious. All were dressed in kind of chuba called Tsechuma with openings on both sides and the garment called jaja [ch. jia jia] with hats called Mogril [ch. mao tib. ril]. None were in military uniforms. It was only after they had reached Lhasa that they start talking about politics and wearing military uniforms. Among them there was one fellow called Cheng who was slightly cross eyed. He stayed behind. I think he was one of their high dignitaries. He was left behind to operate the wireless machine. They said that the wireless machine was a gift from their government.

They said that for the time being it would be used to relay comments regarding the talks between Tibet and China, but later the [Tibetan] government could enroll some students who would be taught how to operate it. It would be very useful for the government. The Chinese were then given a banquet and four young [tsidrung](#) from the Tsikhang were selected to be trained as wireless operators. Like this, they duped us Tibetans. Shortly after the Chinese left, the British delegation came to make offerings for the deceased Dalai. They set up their place at [Dekyilingka](#). They said if the Chinese were allowed to set up a wireless base, they should also be allowed to do so. They also set up a wireless base. Till that period, there were no British in Tibet. That was one of the first wrong decisions. Lots of discussion took place about this decision. We were yet to be involved in politics so we were not present at the talks, but we heard about them from our relatives.

Q

At that time, when the Chinese came on the pretense of making offerings, they could not be easily denied since we don't have such a tradition.

A

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It was a good opportunity and the Chinese were clever enough to use it.

Q

The Chinese got an audience and they made lots of offerings to the various religious institutions and gifts to the dignitaries. They made it look very proper and nice. Then they left Tibet.

A

Yes, they left, leaving 2 of them behind. They returned straight to China.

Q

After that the Sikkim Political Officer [tib. 'bras spyi blon chen] arrived.

A

The first one to come was Williamson.

Q

When Williamson arrived, the 13th Dalai Lama was still alive. I heard that his wife sat on a chair with the Dalai Lama and she was served apples and when she looked at the ears of the Dalai Lama, she said that she found that the Dalai Lama had extraordinary ears.

A

Williamson came later on. Previously, when he had come during the 13th Dalai Lama's time, they had a lot of talks. We do not know what they talked about. Anyway, I was sent to live with one of their doctors. To the public eye, I was being sent to learn medicine from him. They were in [Dekyilingka](#). There was a good doctor who was said to be in love with Williamson's daughter. I stayed at [Dekyilingka](#) with him for some time and then I was sent to Kham. Williamson had his wife, daughter and the doctor with him. I went to [Trapchi](#) before I went to Kham area. They did all kinds of cannon target shooting in [Trapchi](#). Lhalu [Sawangchemmo](#) came in his uniform.

Q

Probably, he was a [tsidrung](#), right?

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A

No. He was wearing a kind of military uniform. I think he was a [rupön](#) of one of the regiments.

Q

Was he in the [Drongdrag](#)?

A

He was not one of the [Drongdrag](#). Later when Williamson arrived, it was the time when the Regent Reting had returned from Chökhorgye [tib. chos 'khor rgyal]. At that time, I was already serving as a lay official and also was a Kadrung. Then he died in Lhasa. But before he died he invited the Regent to [Dekyilingka](#) where a fireworks display was organized and was shown to him at night. We also went because we were among the retinue, Chibshab [tib. chibs zhabs] (accompanying the Regent on horseback as a retinue). Then he died a few days later. I don't know what was said in the meeting because I was [only] a Kadrung.

Q

At that time a Tsondu [hragdu gyepa](#) was held. The meeting was held in the hall called Sun's Ray (tib. Nyiwü [nyi 'od]) located on the top of the [Jokhang](#). The British did not come to the meeting itself but they stayed next to the room where the meeting was in session. The doctor was there and so was a military officer. The doctor looked very sad. He asked permission to bring in a plane for their transportation out. An immediate negative answer was given saying that if we give you permission, other nations will follow this example [tib. dmigs 'dran]. Until now, no airplane has been permitted to come to Tibet so it would be very bad if a plane came now. However, in order to make it convenient for you we will volunteer to put at your disposal any means of transportation which is needed like a fast palanquin carried by mules [tib. 'gyogs drel] or whatever kind of palanquins needed. The decision was reached on the same day. They [the British] left saying that they understand the government's problem and do not blame them. It was settled in a friendly way, but Williamson died a few days later. Otherwise, they were wanted to take him by plane.

Q

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Where was the airplane supposed to land?

A

It was said that they are going to land it on the Kyangthang Naga [tib. rkyang thang na ga] field. I do not know how it was supposed to land. Oh no, they said that they are going to land on the Tsesumthang [tib. tshes gsum thang]. We do not know what inside discussions they had but they [Tibetan government] told Williamson that they had asked the Tsondu and they had refused to give permission to bring in an airplane. The government apologized for the inconvenience and said that the British has been very kind to us and we shall do whatever you require to make your return journey comfortable. Palanquins carried by men and mules were put at their disposal. Then he died a few days later.

Q

When he died, what was done?

A

Probably, the alön sent somebody or something to them.

Q

Did the Regent go?

A

When the Regent went, it was to watch the fireworks display arranged for him. It was shown in [Dekyilingka](#). I was also with him because I was accompanying the Regent on horseback as his retinue. At that time, [Sawang](#) Trimön had gone to visit Chönkhorgye.

Q

I think this event was recorded by a cinema camera. Though they didn't have a movie to show, in the cinema they explained what they did at that time.

A

Yes, they did. I was there. Then after a few days, maybe a week or two later, he died. When the Regent arrived, he went to see him. They sat on chairs. There was some

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anxiety, fearing that the places above the garden might catch fire. The firecrackers were quite harmless and there were many varieties, some would spin and some of them were like umbrellas. There wasn't any danger and they arranged the cushions in the open space of the park.

Q

At that time, what did the British talk about?

A

During that period there were a lot of problems about border disputes and so on. When Williamson came, the fighting with China took place and we lost Nyarong and Jyekundo [tib. skye rgu mdo] to China and besides that, there were a lot of skirmishes.

Q

Was it during the time of the previous Dalai Lama?

A

Yes. During that period the British would come frequently and insist that the Tibet Government should talk with China. When we lost Nyarong, I was not in the government service but I had gone down with the [Trunyichemmo](#) as a photographer and a reporter going to listen for news and information.

Q

I think the British advised and offered a lot of suggestions at that time.

A

I guess so, but we did not know much. The internal important talks were not available to us.

Q

Then when the 13th Dalai Lama passed away and various delegations came to make the offerings, had the troublesome talk about the war subsided?

A

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Yes. At that time it seemed that there were no further talks about war. It was during the time when Trenthong [tib. bkraś mthong] was the Doji.

Q

Wasn't Trenthong a shape that time?

A

No, he was a [katsab](#) when he went down, but when he returned he was made a shape and held his ceremony for being appointed as a kalön.

Q

Down there he received the news through the Doji?

A

Yes, that is correct. Then after that the [Panda](#) [tib. spom mda'] trouble started. It was after Huang Musong had gone back to China. I am definite about this.

Q

What started the [Panda](#) trouble?

A

There was talk that this matter was reported to Kujar.

Q

At that time were Kujar and [Lungshar](#) both finished?

A

Yes, [Lungshar](#) was finished. He was no longer in power. But when [Panda](#) was arrested I do not remember clearly if [Lungshar](#) was in office or not, and I can't recollect the dates either. But the way I see it is that Lungshar was finished at that time.

Q

In that case, maybe the [Panda](#) trouble started later on. Didn't people say that he [Panda Tobgye] [tib. stobs rgyas] thought that some kind of harm might have come to [his brother]

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[Panda](#) Yamphel [tib. yar 'phel] or something like that and he didn't know for sure so they went to consult the oracle [Nechung](#) by rolling [senriy](#). Then [Nechung](#) predicted that there was a certain possibility of harm coming their way and so they performed a religious rite for one week to dispel this. Didn't some people claim that this was the reason why [Pandatsang](#) rebelled?

A

The main reason why [Panda](#) Topgye rebelled was because of Kujar's banishment. He did not like that. However, during that period, when the 13th Dalai Lama was alive, Panda's son Nyima was given a large amount of capital to finance his business and it was the time when his accounts were checked. There was some talk saying that this was used as an excuse and they started trouble. This was the rumor in Lhasa. I do not know whether it was true or not.

When the Government got the report about this trouble, [Panda](#) [Yamphel] was ordered to be arrested at once. However he could not be arrested, so the military was called in. [Sendregasum](#) tried to intervene and act as a mediator. [Panda](#) would not open his gate. Then the government posted armed soldiers on all the roofs of the houses located near Surkhang's house and there were also a lot of talk saying that [Panda](#) had also posted guns ready to fight from the windows [of his house].

Later the abbots of [Sendregasum](#), Tsatrütsang [tib. tsha sprul tshang] and the traders of Lhasa went through the doors of the shop and acted as mediators trying to settle the matter peacefully. Phabongka [tib. pha bong kha] was once the main mediator. Then they went to see the Regent and the trouble was settled. [Sendregasum](#) took the responsibility that in the future there will be no conspiracies hatched in Kham area. Also [Pandatsang](#) handed over 2 cannons and about 200 rifles which they had seized [from the Tibetan government] when the trouble broke out in Kham. Also they had robbed Norgye Nangpa's [tib. nor rgyas nang pa] house. His belongings were returned with some one thousand [dotse](#).

Q

When Huang Musong arrived, was [Lungshar](#) there?

A

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I do not remember if [Lungshar](#) was present. I have some photographs and he is not in any of them.

Q

Did they say that the talks about the agreement will be discussed further?

A

Yes, that is true. I think that I have written it clearly in my book.

Q

Then after that, Rai Bahadur and Richardson arrived from India, right?

A

Correct. They came. Also a person called Fox came along with them as wireless operator.

Q

Wasn't Fox working for the government?

A

No, it was Ford who was working for our government. He was the British wireless operator.

Q

At that time what were the British doing and what were the Chinese doing?

A

I wonder what they were up to? The British were very clever [tib. mkhas pa]. They would invite the [Sawang](#) and all the other government officials for meals and movies. They also gave them licenses to buy things from India. The Chinese did not invite anyone for meals. At that time, the Chinese were not in a position to do much. They were living at a place called [Kytöpa](#) and it was a very small place. Later when Shen came, their office was enlarged. Before that it was nothing. The first Chinese officer called Chen died a year or two later. His replacement came very soon from the Sichuan side. He had a face like

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a nun. He was called Can Mou [Kong Chuzhang?]. Samchog la [tib. bsam mchog lags] was the liaison officer [tib. sne shan]. When we asked the children who they liked better, they preferred the British because they would give them sweets, show them movies and during Christmas, distribute toys to them. They would also send flowers and fruits trees to the [kudrak](#) and invite them for meals and cinema shows. The British were very polite and diplomatic.

Q

The giving of license was prevalent till much later. We also got licenses for a few loads of cloth.

A

Yes, giving free license like a cloth license was continued until much later. It was very beneficial.

Q

Was there any practical use for the licenses given?

A

Yes, there was. If you had a license and went to buy things from the 'Syndicate' it was much cheaper than buying from the market. If you did not have a license, you did not get to buy from the Syndicate. This was one way the British used to make close relations with people.

Q

There were also licenses for buying gold and silver and guns, right?

A

Not for gold, but for guns.

Q

Was the Syndicate located in Kalimpong? And could they get the things right away from there?

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A

That is correct. It was located in Kalimpong. In the Syndicate there were the Rapomsasum [abbr. of Reting, [Panda](#) and [Sandu](#) [tib. sa 'du] [tib. ra spom mda' gsum]) and a representative of the Sikkim Political Officer and a Marwari businessman. They would order things from other cities and then distribute license to those who they liked. Otherwise they would distribute these things to the traders to be displayed. They would give special licenses to a few to buy 100-200 loads or rolls of clothing material or food grains. You did not have to go to Mumbai or Kolcutta. It was very convenient. You could get most of the articles in Kalimpong. It was also very easy to change currency. The things bought at the Syndicate were much cheaper and of superior quality. You could also sell these to the Chinese. It was a well thought out move.

Q

This was a kind of economic move from the British, right?

A

Yes.

Q

I doubt if the Chinese did anything like that?

A

I don't think the Chinese did anything like that. The Chinese to whom Samchog la acted as liaison officer stayed for about 2 or 3 years only. He was called Director Kong [ch. kong [qu](#) zhang] and he had a reddish face. One night he went to the [Norbulinga](#) palace, banged at the gate and shouted something. Samchog la was demoted due to this. That was the pretense for doing that. Samchog la knows all the details and facts about that incident.

The Chinese Kong was expelled and the Government hesitated to accept another representative. However, the replacement arrived and he was a very intelligent and an educated person. He had a powerful personality. His name was Shen. He came through India. It was said that he knew English and French. He became Yaba Sonam Topgye's [tib. ya pa bsod nams stobs rgyas] wife Nordzin La's [tib. nor 'dzin lags] lover.

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He gave a lot of parties and he had a full set of costumes worn by the medium of the deity Tenma [tib. bstan ma] in his house and he would ask Tenma to go into trance. He would also go to ask the [Nechung](#) and Gadong [tib. dga' gdong] mediums to into trance and he would also visit the [Jokhang](#). He was a very smooth diplomat and probably he was a very intelligent person. He would also throw parties for the abbots of [Sendregasum](#) calling it a monk's party. The Chinese and the British would compete with each other, trying to outdo what the other has done. The Chinese took over Panda's house, renovated and improved it. He acted very imposing [tib. nyams zhe drag byed].

Before he left, he had already invited the Tibetan representatives to the Guomindang General Assembly [ch. guo min da hui]. He had achieved all this so smoothly. Then he left. That man had real ability. Nowadays, he is in America. I think he was one of Chiang Kaishek's favorites. He was really something. The Chinese had sent an exceptionally capable person. When he first entered Tibet, he was very gentle and polite. He handled the situation admirably. He regretted his comrade Kong Chuzhang's irresponsible action and apologized sincerely for this break of etiquette. He said how can anyone knock at the palace's gate. It is unheard of. He was a real smooth operator. Tactfully, he expanded their influence. I was serving the government as a Tsipön. I went 2 or 3 times to his house to attend parties. You could see the costume of Tenma displayed prominently at his house.

Q

At the time, I think you and your colleagues knew what he was up to? Most people won't know that he was pulling a fast one, especially the monks, right?

A

I do not know whether [Sendregasum](#) knew what he was up to but Chömphe! Thubtenla and Ngawang Dragpala [tib. ngag dbang grags pa lags] the [Trunyichemmo](#), knew exactly what he was up to. They would say "Now, he is pulling a fast one [tib. sa gyo]; by asking the protective deities [tib. chos skyong] to go into trance and talk." Chömphe! Thubtenla and Ngawang Drakpala had visited China and they knew his act to be a sham.

Also the Chinese would try to compete with the British. When the British were arranging to screen a film and invite the [kudrak](#) for the show and dinner, the Chinese would arrange to perform a Chinese Opera at the same time. During most of the Kashag's parties and the summer picnic for the lay officials [tib. drung spyi dbyar skyid] and the summer picnic for the [tsidrun](#) [tib. rtse drung dbyar skyid], both the British and the Chinese would be invited.

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[Lukhangwa](#) would say that they should not be invited separately; they should be invited on the same occasion. If we invite them separately on different occasions, it would be a bad policy. So they were always invited for the same occasions. They would also attend these occasions and they would also go through the motions of enjoying themselves.

Q

Would he speak in English?

A

Yes, he would. Besides him, there was another fellow called Li and Zhang who could speak fluent English. This fellow called Zhang had also written a book called 'Tibet History' or something like that and I heard that Li was also writing something nowadays. The [depön](#) of the Gusung Regiment told me that he had met Li in China and he was also writing a historical book about Tibet.

Q

Are they still alive? I mean the fellows called Zhang and Li

A

Zhang was a Guomindang (official). Li was another fellow working among the staff.

Q

What was the name of main officer?

A

He was called the Shen Chuzhang (Director Shen). I think this name denotes his positions. When he came to China, he was called General Secretary [ch. mi shu zhang] of Shanghai. I think he was someone important from Shanghai. He came to receive us at the airfield when we went to China and USA. It was in the year 1948 and the Guomindang was in power. Yes, he came to receive us at the airfield with the Tibetan Representatives, [Khendrönlosum](#) [tib. mkhan mgron lo gsum] and the Chairman of Tibet-Mongolia office [tib. bod sog las khungs]. He was a real smooth operator. He would call us for parties. And he would invite us at his residence for a small party.

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Q

While he was in Lhasa?

A

No, not in Lhasa, while he was in China. He was such a suave and smooth operator, he was [extremely smart] like a ghost.

Q

When he invited you to his residence for a party, was it a real private invitation?

A

It was supposed to be but actually it couldn't be private. He would act very intimately and treat us like a good friend because of our acquaintance in Lhasa. It was during the Guomindang regime and he was their puppet.

Q

What was his main duty at that time? Was it to make Tibet a part of China and call the representatives like Kusangtse to the Guomindang General Assembly Meeting?

A

Yes.

Q

Didn't Kusangtse and his associate say that they did not go to meet the Guomindang?

A

No. He said that they went to attend the Guomindang General Assembly meeting.

Q

The reason why they went was about something concerning offering "Congratulation on the Military Victory," (tib. [Yügye Tashi Delek](#) [g.yul rgyal bkra shis bde legs]), right?

A

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Yes, the talk about [Yügye Tashi Delek](#) came up and as soon as it cropped up, the British warned our government.

Q

Yes, I also heard about this warning.

A

They sent us a warning. I was one of the Tsipön and at the same time I was in the Foreign Ministry because at that time Surkhang Dzasa was ill and he had gone to Darjeeling for many years. The late Changnö Kungö [tib. bya dngos sku ngo] and Rimshi Kyibuk [tib. skyid sbug] were working under me. However we were of the same rank. Kyibuk and Changnö were both [rimshi](#) like me, but since I was a Tsipön, I was also the acting [dzasa](#), the Head of the Foreign Office. When the British sent a warning, there was an old Indian man. His name was Gokhale. Much later he was in Delhi University teaching as a Professor. He came and told us that they had heard about [Yügye Tashi Delek](#) mission going to China. [Yügye Tashi Delek](#) is a good thing, however we have heard that there is going to be a large meeting held in China. Were those people going as delegates to this meeting? If this so, then you must realize that if they attend this meeting, it will be against the Simla Agreement signed in the Wood-Tiger Year. He gave us this warning many days before the meeting was to take place.

He pointed out one of the clauses in the Agreement which states that no representative of the citizens of Tibet shall be allowed to attend the general assembly meeting of China. I was the one who reported this to the Kashag. I mean they must report such matters to the foreign ministry and we in turn must report it to the Kashag. The Kashag assured me that there is no need to worry. But when they reached China, they attended this meeting. Besides attending the meeting, they had signed in on their arrival too. There was some trouble about this.

Later there was much inquiry about it. The members of the Committee of Judges [tib. khirms dpon tshogs pa] like Lashung Dars [unclear] invited Kusangtse and asked him a lot of questions. Kusangtse replied that they attended the meeting. The reason why they went to this meeting was because there were representatives from [Tashilhunpo](#) and Kham. So they went to observe what the selected representatives of Tibet were saying in this meeting. They said, "We attended this meeting but when the meeting was concluded, we were not there to sign the resolutions." Now this is definitely true. They were not present

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when the meeting was concluded. I find that this was slightly a mistake. This is definitely Shen's work. He invited them altogether. Phala Wangchuk [tib. pha lha dbang phyug] also went. He had no work and Kusangtse took him along with him.

Q

At that time, Surkhang [Sawangchemmo](#) was a shape, was not he?

A

Yes, he was a shape. He was Kusangtse's nephew. I was a Tsipön at that time. That time, this was definitely...a little [answer not finished]

Q

Sometimes it happens like that. During Reting's Regency wasn't there was a danger that China might make war against Tibet?

A

Yes, during Reting's regency there was talk about a severe danger of war - but it was not the Guomindang but the Communists. There was certainly a big possibility of invasion from the communists. There was also a rumor that the communist soldiers were advancing and many meetings were held and a lot of edicts were issued.

Q

That was the so called the Long March, right?

A

Yes.

Q

What did they write in the edicts?

A

The orders decreed that the soldiers at all the military posts must make sure that they do not lose any territory. At that time, I do not think it was [Shape](#) Menkhab Töpa [tib. sman

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khab stod pa]. I think it was [Shape](#) Langchungwa's [tib. gnang byung ba] time or someone like him. There were a lot of edicts and decrees. I have seen them.

Q

At that time, Langchungwa was in Chamdo and Trekhang was yet to be transferred there, right?

A

Yes, that is true.

Q

In between there was no Doji in Chamdo?

A

That's right. When Langchungwa returned to Lhasa, there was no [Kalön](#) Doji in Chamdo. Chamdo had two temporary Doji, one a [tsidrung](#) and one a lay official. One was the father of the Surkhang who used to be the [Jadang](#) Depön. The other was Dzasa Lobsang Palden [tib. blo bzang dpal ldan] who used to reside near the main gate of [Shöl](#). These two [dzasa](#) jointly acted as the Joint Dzasa Governor of Kham, Doji Dzasa Drelpo [tib. mdo spyi dza sag sbrel po].

Q

At that time, the abbots of [Sendregasum](#) held a meeting and said something about Reting facing some problem on handling matters [tib. mdzad dka']. Then there was something about the selection of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. I think it was done later on. Is it during that time?

A

It was much later. This time something had happened. It was during the [Tsongjö](#) [tib. tshogs mchod] prayer festival in the 2nd month.

Q

Wasn't it during the evening tea prayer chanting session when all the abbots met separately?

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A

The abbots did not meet. The Kashag said that a Tsondu [hragdu gyepa](#) should be held. At that time, I was in charge of the documents and reports in the Tsondu's archives (tib. Yigtsak [yig tshags]). So the meeting was held on the Labrangdeng [tib. bla brang steng] on top of the [Jokhang](#). In the Tsondu it was declared that the Regent was resigning. They said, "If he resigns, it will not do. The Kashag had pleaded and asked him not to resign but he would not listen. So what should be done? The Tsondu said that they would personally go and ask him to reconsider. So, we went. We all went on foot on the dusty road. There were so many of us - right from the Dzasa to the Theiji were present. All of us went to [Shide](#) [tib. bzhi sde] where Reting Labrang's new summer cottage, Trokhang [tib. spro khang] was already built. Reting was staying in the summer cottage. The [nendrön](#) was Ngagpala [tib. sngags pa lags]. He was near the door and he received us.

When the Tsondu received the audience [with Reting], we prostrated and stood bowing down. Since I was the archive officer, I did not have to do any active role, just be a part of the crowd and prostrate together with other people. The Regent gave a lengthy talk about the problems he was facing in handling matters. The gist of the talk was that whatever work he does, he is facing some problems and it is not convenient to handle them. Therefore, he wanted to resign with their permission. Then [Khyungram](#) [tib. khyung ram] prostrated many times and urged him not to resign. He was the main character who persuaded the Regent not to resign. I think he pleaded with his voice trembling with emotion and as if he was crying.

Q

Khyungram and there was also Song Rinpoche [tib. zong rin po che] among the abbots of [Sendregasum](#) who persuaded him standing close by to [Khyungram](#), although he just said something brief and [Khyungram](#) pleaded a lot.

A

I don't remember which Lamas were there. When we entered the audience room, I was in the back row. [Khyungram](#) was the most insistent pleader. His rank was the third rank that of a 'Theiji'. When the Regent did not accept the pleas not to resign, he was finally asked what his problems were.

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Q

He never did listen do their pleas, did he?

A

Yes, he insisted on resigning. When he was asked the reason for his problems, he pointed out that it is not convenient for him [tib. 'grig gi mi 'dug] to work jointly together [tib. lhan rgyas] with the Prime Minister who was from the 13th Dalai Lama's family. The Tsondu discussed this problem among themselves and sent a report to the Kashag through the Trungtsi. The Trungtsi reported whatever was discussed in the Tsondu to the Kashag and requested them to talk to [Langdün](#) diplomatically.

This was the day that the exorcism [tib. gtor rgyag] was held after the Mönlam Prayer Festival when the two scapegoats bearing the ransom of the rulers [tib. glud 'gong] were expelled. I watched the exorcism from the window of the Surchong [tib. zur 'phyongs] where the meeting was held. They wanted the Prime Minister to resign from active service. However, he would still be the Prime Minister in name and receive his salary as an Ex-Prime Minister [tib. srid zur]. He would still attend all the official ceremonies but he will have no say in politics. They were quite apprehensive saying if we did that what would happen, but it was said that it would be better to do that and they kind of rushed [tib. 'ur] ahead and they went to Kashag to report their decision.

At that time, we were watching the annual exorcism. The next morning at the time of the procession of monks carrying various religious objects, the Serdreng [tib. ser sbreng], the Kashag went to the prime minister and told him about the Tsondu's decision. The prime minister at once agreed to do that and he said, "Oh! Yes, yes, that is very good" [tib. lo le si lo le si/ yag po zhed drag 'dug].

Q

At that time, according to what I have heard (which can be either true or false), initially, the idea originated from Reting Labrang which influences [Sendregasum](#) like a ray coming down [tib. 'od zer 'phros]. Then the abbots of [Sendregasum](#) decided that they must ask the government to hold a Tsondu gyendzom. They wanted to present 3 points to the Tsondu: First, the process of finding the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should be carried out as soon as possible. For doing this, do you have any problem regarding putting it into action? If you have, we will discuss them. Second, Chamdo being an important strategic area, it

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is necessary to have a [doji](#) who is a shape rather than a Joint Doji who are [dzasa](#). Third, regarding, inviting the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the State Oracle [Nechung](#) has said repeatedly that it would be good for a shape to go to China for the finalization of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. However, no one has dared to go to go to China the year before last year and last year for the above purpose. Please dare to go to China in this year for this purpose. The abbots wrote these three points in a note and submitted it.

A

Probably, they submitted it to the Kashag, right?

Q

No. They just told them please hold the meeting and then the Tsondu [hragdu gyepa](#) was held. So, the Kashag accordingly informed the Trungtsi to convene a meeting where the abbots of the monastery will present the agenda rather than the usual system of the Trungtsi presenting the agenda. Then the abbots told the meeting that they had some things to report but we don't know how to say it. Therefore, we have prepared a list of what we want to present to the Tsondu and then they submitted the list to the meeting.

A

I don't have any idea about this.

Q

I heard the meeting was held and the Kashag told the abbots, "There wasn't any such thing as the [Kalön](#) didn't dare to go to China. We communicated through cables and they produced a bunch of cables on which it was just written, "From the Kashag to the Joint Ketsang [tib. [ke](#) tshang sbrel po] [he was the head of the search party] and "From Ketsang to the Kashag." They kept the abbots busy reading the cables exchanged between the search parties looking for the Dalai Lama reincarnation for two days. It was written in the cables about 100,000 [dayan](#) and that stuffs also.

Q

Concerning the second point, regarding the Doji, they said that the government is considering sending one of the Kashag members to Chamdo as the [doji](#) very soon. The Trungtsi asked them what problems were they referring to which require a little more

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explanation because as far as the Trungtsi and Kashag were concerned, there were no problems. Also concerning the Prime Minister and the Regent, there are no problems." In reply the abbots said, "Please give us permission to see the Regent." When they eventually reached the Regent, he finally admitted that he has problems. He said that during the reign of the previous Regents like Demo, [tib. de mo], Kündeling [tib. kun bde gling] and Tsomönlung [tib. tshe smon gling], there was only one Regent, but during my term, I am like two Buddhas with only one Buddhism. [tib. bstan pa gcig la ston pa gnyis].

A

Oh, my god. At that time, I was there. I was the official in charge of keeping the documents, and I don't remember so many details.

Q

He said, "It was like the proverb of 2 Buddhas with only one Buddhism and [Langdün](#) is making him have problems handling matters. For instance, on matters like demoting officials, there are some problems. When some agreement is reached to demote somebody, on the day before this was to happen, when the person used all his methods through different channels and he cried, laughed or prostrated, [Langdün](#) would try to get this demotion changed although there was no other choice but to demote him. Anyway, we couldn't put the work into action.

A

I think that is very likely. However, I don't remember all the abbots' names. [Khyungram](#) I remember because he pleaded most strongly.

Q

I still have to ask Song Rinpoche. At that time, he was the Shartse Khenpo [tib. shar rtse mkhan po] He said that [Khyungram](#) bowed and pleaded for so long that his waist must have pained. After that they went to the [Jokhang](#) for another session of the Tsondu.

A

On the same evening, the meeting was held.

Q

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In the meeting, before the delegates were properly settled and could relax for a moment, the abbot of Sera, the Töpa Khenpo, Dromtö Chöndze [tib. se ra stod pa mkhan po 'brom stod chos mdzad] said that now we know what problems the Regent is facing. He has told us that he doesn't want the Prime Minister and he is the main source of his problems. Haven't we decided that we shall remove his problems? Now we must request the Prime Minister to tender his resignation. Isn't that right?

A

Is it? I don't know about this because we were sitting behind the abbots.

Q

I also heard that when such a discussion was going on about the Prime Minister's resignation, the head of the payroll office, [Langdün](#) Phogpön [tib. glang mdun phogs dpon] stood up and said that if the prime minister is made to resign, he will do that. But then it should be made easy for him to live [tib. sdod bde ba]. Is that true?

A

I don't remember [Langdün](#) Phogpön coming to the meeting. The meeting had started in the morning in Reting. They returned to the [Jokhang](#) where lunch was served. The meeting was resumed and then the Trungtsi went to Kashag for consultation. They took a long time to return and the Tsondu had to wait patiently. By that time all the shows of the scapegoat Lügong, etc. were finished at the gateway to the [Jokhang](#) temple. Even then the meeting was not over. Finally, I do remember hearing vaguely that the Kashag had gone to the prime minister's house to request him to resign. They might have been discussing the rank, position and the reassignment of the prime minister but I do not remember very clearly so I can't really say whether it is true or not. But it seemed to me that it was an internal talk of high positioned people.

Q

The reason I put this question was that I had doubt about something that I heard at that time. Tsarong said, "As soon as the 13th Dalai Lama passed away, [kujar](#) was banished. How would it be if we make the prime minister resign right after this? We should do like the proverb, "Treat the horse kindly and use the saddle carefully [tib. rta la byams pa sga la zo

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ba] and the proverb, "Try to get the egg without startling the hen." [tib. bya ma 'dregs pa'i 'og nas sgo nga lon thabs].