Interview H0216: with Thando Rinpoche [tib. dar mdo rin po che], (India, 1983) : Part No. 3 of 3

** The interviewee was a well known Gelug incarnate lama from Drepung monastery. He discusses the arrival of the new Dalai Lama and how he was received by Reting. He also discusses the Tsondu meeting to offer estates to Reting and the Khyungram incident. He also talks about Reting's resignation, his affair with the wife of the lay official Jogtre, and his ultimate death in prison. In addition, he discusses the Lhündrub Dzong incident and a controversy regarding his geshe exam.*

Q

Do you remember when the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama was brought back to Lhasa?

A

Yes, I do remember. At Döguthang, the great peacock tent called 'Ugur maja chenmo' [tib. dbu gur rma bya chen mo] was pitched. Besides this tent, there were different tents made out of tiger and leopard skin as well as felt tents. These tents were actually rooms for the high officials, pitched separately in accordance with their rank. During such occasions, the shape and the officials above the rimshi rank have a hard time because they had to have a tent befitting their rank, and if they did not have one, they have to borrow it from others.

Q

Actually, it was more like a tax on them?

A

Yes, it was.

Q

Did you [the monks coming from different monasteries] have to stay for more than a day?

A

We had to go twice. Others stayed for more days. The whole entourage stayed at Döguthang for a few days and they held a big ceremony there and we had to go when he was brought to Lhasa. I heard that the former Dalai Lama stayed for many days in Rigya [tib. ri brgya] Hermitage, so the present Dalai Lama also went there.

Q

Reting Regent went to Dam Umathang [tib. 'dam dbu ma thang] and then he came with the Dalai Lama, right?

A

Yes.

Q

When the Dalai Lama was enthroned on his golden-throne, at that time he [the Sikkim Political Officer] went there.

A

I see, he must be the Sikkim Political Officer then, right?

Q

Yes.

A

At that time, India was yet to become independent, right?

Q

Yes.

A

One of the strange rumors was that when the infant reincarnation met Reting Rinpoche at Umathang, he showed signs of dislike toward Reting. It was also said that when the Regent Reting bowed his head to touch with the infant Dalai Lama's head, the child refused to touch him. Such strange rumors were current at that time. I thought this was a rumor made by the people in between.

Q

I don't think the infant Dalai Lama could do much instinctively. He might possibly have done what he was taught to do?

A

There was a lot of talk about the child Dalai Lama showing some kind of attitude [tib. rnam 'gyur]. Another rumor said that the child showed gestures of recognition to Bönshö and even talked with him.

Q

I think Bönshö had some sort of connection with Reting Labrang, although he didn't have any misfortune during the Reting trouble.

A

Although he did not reveal anything to others, yet he looked very depressed [tib. rmongs]. And slowly he died in this state.

Q

Then came the Khyungram trouble?

A

Yes, he had to face a very harsh punishment. He was put in Shöl, whipped with switches and finally exiled by riding on an ox. Later, when Reting Rinpoche himself received harsh treatment; there were people in Sendregasum who said that it was retribution for the punishment meted out to Khyungram. Khyungram had established his reputation as a sincere and brave commander while he was a commander in Dokham. He was believed to be not the type of commander who sent the soldiers ahead and issued orders from behind. I heard that the elder soldiers who had known him well shed tears when Khyungram was

punished. The main cause of his fall was his hard opposition to the suggestion to reward Reting Rinpoche.

Q

Did he make those statements directly against Reting Rinpoche like saying, "Not being full even after eating the mountain and not being quenched even after drinking the ocean" [tib. ri bo zos nas ma 'grangs/ rgya mtsho btungs nas ma ngoms]?

A

He definitely made those statements.

Q

Yes, he made those statements, but I am wondering whether he said it directed against Reting Rinpoche or not?

A

It seems he said it against Reting. The issue of discussion in the Tsondu was to reward Reting Rinpoche with many estates as a token of gratitude for his services in the discovery of the reincarnation of Dalai Lama.

Q

It was about offering some dzong and the estates in the north.

A

Wasn't Phenpo Lhündrub Dzong one of them? And later many of them were owned by Reting.

Q

No, it wasn't. Lhündrub Dzong became the salary estate of the Trunyichemmo.

A

One group in the Tsondu suggested giving a few estates to Reting Rinpoche, while another group including people like Lukhangwa said, "We have nothing left to give from the Dalai Lama's treasury, so we the monk and lay officials of the government should

contribute individually whatever each can afford." However, it seems one group was totally against giving any reward. Then the abbots of Sendregasum countered the above group. It was said that they told the Ngagpa Khenpo, "Go ahead and offer the Phodrang [tib. pho brang] Estate which was owned by the Drepung's Ngagpa College" and the Abbot of Drepung cried at the meeting. Some maintain that the reality was that it had already been decided internally what was to be offered as a reward and then these were to be suggested in the Tsondu by them. But the older officials seemed to disagree with this.

Q

What did the abbots say?

A

It seems some of the abbots had been brought in by the Reting Labrang and they supported the suggestion to reward Reting, while the kudrak opposed their view.

Q

But abbots like the Ngagpa Khenpo opposed the Reting side. In any case, Khyungram was the loser finally in this battle of wits.

A

Yes, that's true. At that time, our Loseling Lhopa Abbot voiced the opinion that it may be not necessary to give too much to Reting and it became a little bit dangerous for him. At this meeting, the Ngagpa Khenpo said that it was necessary. When Drepung's Ngagpa Khenpo said that whatever was in the proposal should be given, the kudrak said that if there was really need to give them [to Reting], then why not give away the Ngagpa College's Phodrang Estate. At this suggestion, the Ngagpa Khenpo was said to have wept in the Tsondu. At that time, the Ngagpa's Phodrang estate had just recently been given to them and it was not feasible for them to hand it back so soon. The talk about the Ngagpa Khenpo crying in the Tsondu became very well-known.

Q

Who was that Ngagpa Abbot at that time?

A

I don't remember his name, but he was well respected and famous. He had gone to Mongolia once to collect offerings. He was fat and short-statured, but had a very imposing personality. Prior to his abbotship, he held the post of a Latshab [tib. bla tshab], which is the second highest post under the abbot.

Q

Wasn't he the one who was told by Taktra to go into retreat for the longevity prayer for the Dalai Lama?

A

Probably he was.

Q

He was powerful in the Tsondu, right?

A

The powerful one was the abbot nicknamed, "Nepalese" (Belpo). Lhopa Khenpo was his colleague and was very tough. Belpo looked like a Muslim with red eyes and I heard in the past he was also a very strict shengo. He [Lhopa Khenpo] became well known at the time when the Tsondu debated over the Künphel issue and he and Belpo voiced the opinion that it might be not appropriate to punish Künphel since he was the favorite of the 13th Dalai Lama.

Q

Anyhow, in the end, the government offered enough to Reting Labrang.

A

Yes, quite enough, but not exactly what was in their [original] proposal. Khyungram was whipped with switches and was meted out severe treatment. He was exiled to Garthog [tib. sgar thog] under the custody of Sera Je College. But at Garthog, Sera Je treated him well and he did not face many problems, mainly because it depended on the people of that area.

Q

Then Reting Rinpoche resigned a little after this. What was the main reason?

A

It was said that he had seen many evil omens foreboding the events to come. He called many high lamas and incarnate lamas to do rituals to ward off the evil. This was before his resignation. After completing the ritual prayers at Reting, he invited my teacher from our Labrang to do the rituals in Lhasa. When my tutor returned back after doing the rituals, he told me, "Today we finished Reting Rinpoche's ritual which was necessary to do, but I told Rinpoche openly that he should be on his guard because the protective deity Thamchen Chögyel [tib. dam can chos rgyal] is the one who differentiates the evil from the virtuous, and a few Torma (ritual offerings) cannot appease him. I don't know how he took my words, but I told him sincerely. My tutor told me these things after he returned to our Labrang. People said that many bad omens were manifested in the personality of Reting Rinpoche himself, like mentally feeling insecure and unstable [tib. bzhugs mi spro ba] and nervous [tib. tsha gi tshi gi] in his physical behavior. Some attributed these signs to a black majic curse [tib. byad gtad], while others said that it was due to the influence of some protective deities. There were varied speculations and interpretations. Due to these occurrences, a lot of prayer rituals were performed.

Q

But whatever evil omens might have occurred, there was no real need to resign?

A

Actually there were too many criticisms against him.

Q

What were the criticisms?

A

He was criticized for not being honest and that everything had to be done through money only.

Q

Was it possible to bribe Reting with money?

A

I think it was possible. The talk among the monks and even the geshe monks, was that these days it was not necessary to study the scripture to get higher degrees and positions if one had the money to spend and a good sponsor to give the tonggo [they could be secured].

Q

What was the basis of such talk?

A

It seems all the posts of abbots and so forth were offered on the strength of money. I cannot name any specific abbots who were appointed in this manner, but there was a lot of gossip about these matters. But later the Taktra period put the Reting period in a better light. Comparatively, Taktra's reign was worse. It was like the proverb, "If you don't see hell, you won't believe in the Buddha." [tib. dmyal ba ma mthong na sangs rgya la yid me ches] The criticisms against Taktra were also more vocal.

Q

Is it true that some posters were pasted at Drepung which said that Reting Rinpoche is not pure in maintaining his monastic vows and that such a person is not qualified to give the novice vows of monkhood to the young Dalai Lama?

A

There was such gossip at the time. Some said that he was having an illicit affair with the wife of Jogtre [tib. lcog bkras], while some said that he was having affair with a nun of the Phünkhang [tib. phun khang] family. These were the gossip in Lhasa as well as in Drepung. I was told by certain people that Reting's illicit relations with Jogtre's wife were a fact.

Q

There were letters exchanged between the two to corroborate the fact.

A

I was told that Jogtre's house was near to Reting's Trokhang and that Reting used to go to Jogtre's house through a secret passage from his house.

Q

Was Jogtre present in his house?

A

It must have been during his absence. But the gossip about their relationship was definitely there at that time.

Q

Kungö Talama told me that there were letters sent both by Jogtre's wife and Reting Rinpoche to each other.

A

Also photos of Reting Rinpoche in different poses were found later. These photos were said to be disgustingly obnoxious. People said that according to those photos one cannot call Reting a lama. Because of these, a lot of people criticized Reting. There was one fellow with short stature, who in the beginning served as Taktra's servant and then afterwards became the dechang of Kundeling and finally he became a monk official. I do not remember his name. He was taking lessons on the Jigje Pawo Jigpa [tib. 'jigs byed dpa'o gcig pa] (Yamantaka) from me at that time. When Reting's properties were auctioned by the government, he bought a gown of Reting's with a brocade outer lining and asked me if there it was sinful to wear it. I told him that I am not saying this because I myself am a Lama, but if you wear it thinking of it as a blessing, then there is no sin, but if you wear without any such feelings, than it will only diminish your merit [tib. bsod nams zad]. He was one of the vocal critics of Reting Rinpoche. He told me that Reting had taken such reckless photos, so it might be a sin to wear that. I told him that I am not defending Reting, but basically if you judge by the external appearances only, then the Eighty Great Siddhas [tib. grub chen brgyad bcu] who are much venerated by us all, were all like this in their lifetime. Specially those who had reached the higher levels of tantra did take such appearances. Most of these siddhis were born in the lowest castes. You must know these and analyze the truth. Reting Rinpoche has not changed. It is the same Reting Rinpoche who put the wooden-peg in the rock and it is the same Reting Rinpoche who tied

the neck of a clay pot with a thread and the letter Ra appeared in the snow. And finally it is the same Reting Rinpoche who was recognized by the 13th Dalai Lama. I told him these things.

Q

What did he say?

A

He was stunned. I didn't know what Reting Rinpoche had done, because I had not seen these with my own eyes, but he seemed to be very much surprised by Reting Rinpoche's acts, specially the photos. We human beings can see only the external appearance but cannot fathom the inner mind.

Q

Could the main reason why Reting wanted to hand over the Regency to Taktra be that because it was the time to ordain the young Dalai Lama into monkhood, he wanted Taktra to confer the ordination to the Dalai Lama?

A

In addition, he had received religious teachings from Taktra and respected him as his teacher.

Q

I think it is true that he treated Taktra as his teacher.

A

Reting's deep veneration and faith in Taktra as his teacher led him to believe that Taktra would never betray him. Hence he handed over the Regency to Taktra on the mutual agreement to return the regency after three years?

Q

Kyabje Phabongkha's biography mentions that before he asked Taktra, Reting had approached Phabongkha to take over the regency from him, right?

A

Yes. I too heard about it. At that time the kudrak strongly criticized the system of lamas holding political authority. They said that there is no logic in placing a lama in a high political position since he has no experience and knowledge about political administration. In reality, the tradition of appointing a high religious head during the absence or minority of the Dalai Lamas was to preserve the dual system of chösi sungdrel.

Q

Some people say that if we simply had monk and a lay officials we could call it chösi sungdrel.

A

In that case we could have appointed any monk and layman and have called it chösi sungdrel. This was a strange way of thinking. If we think over these matters seriously, one can understand how backward we had been.

Q

If we look at the social and political conditions of the present times and compare them with the conditions of our country then, it looks too ludicrous. We were too involved and focused within, on our own social and political administration of the country, but when we look at them now, with the benefit of our observations and insights of the present world, they seem too trivial. Then after the resignation of Reting Rinpoche, Taktra took over. The Dalai Lama was ordained with the vows of monkhood. Then two Americans came and another incident that occurred was that Kong Chuzhang, the Chinese official, went to Norbulinga and banged on the main gate at midnight saying that his life was in danger.

A

Yes, I heard about this incident.

Q

What was the cause of the incident? Some say that he [the Chinese] had a quarrel with a policeman who beat him up or that he beat up the policeman. Some sort of trouble had

started between them and the Chinese went to Norbulinga and banged on the gate in the middle of the night, [an act] which was illegal.

A

Yes, I heard that the Chinese man banged on the Norbulinga gate, but I didn't know the real cause of the trouble.

Q

Reting Rinpoche returned to Lhasa again after his resignation. How did he come back?

A

Yes. At that time we, the incarnate lamas were called to receive him. Besides us, the abbots and many of the government officials also were present to receive him at Rigyathang [tib. ri rgya thang].

Q

I heard all the government officials went to receive him.

A

Reting returned with a grand and elaborate retinue. His horses and mules were of high breeding and excellent quality. They were in groups of ten [tib. lag] with identical colors. The people in Lhasa gossiped that even the Dalai Lama does not have such a grand and rich entourage. People implied that Reting was trying to show off his wealth. Actually Reting Rinpoche had come to take back his regency, but Taktra did not return it. Taktra himself may not have refused to return the post of the Regent, but the kudrak below him were stubborn.

Q

I don't think it made any difference to Taktra himself. It was all because of the kudrak below him. What did Taktra tell Reting at that time?

A

I don't know what Taktra told Reting. But Reting was annoyed and returned back to Reting. That was the beginning of the trouble between Reting and Taktra. It seems the

main persons who instigated Reting Rinpoche to fight back against Taktra were Nyungney Lama [tib. snyung gnas bla ma] and Khardo [tib. mkhar rdo]. Reting Rinpoche is believed to have told them repeatedly not to do anything against the government and Taktra because Taktra was his root guru, but their insistence won him over and Reting relented and told them to go ahead with their plans. All these were revealed by the letters which they had exchanged and which were found out by the government later. It was said that he did not act carefully and destroy those letters. Actually, Tsörujenpa, the deity, had advised Reting Rinpoche to go on a pilgrimage to India. It was the most propitious time and he should have heeded the advice.

Q

Yes, the deity had told him that, "On the day when the goat [Reting] reaches the slaughterhouse, then we cannot do anything."

A

The deity had prophesied that through the image of a wheel of weapons on a goat, but at the time of his enthronement he showed a goat ornamented with precious jewels. People in Lhasa said that the prophecy augured something evil, but nobody had imagined that it could be that bad. It appears that Reting might have saved himself if he had gone for the pilgrimage. It is said that preparations of horses and mules for the journey had even been done, but Reting told them that he did not need to leave.

Q

It must be his karma. Could you tell me about the Lhündup Dzong incident?

A

It was between the monks of Sera Je and the brother of Trunyichemmo Chönphel Thupten [tib. chos 'phel thub bstan], who was an ex-shengo. He was the Acting Dzongpön and the Sera Je monks beat him up.

Q

What was the reason?

A

Trunyichemmo Chönphel Thupten's brother was said to be a very strict man and the monks had not been abiding by the law. When he acted strict and told them to obey the law, the monks killed him.

Q

I heard that the monks hit him with a tea kettle with tea in it and the fire pot with the fire in it. Did he really die?

A

I don't know.

Q

What did you heard in Drepung?

A

In Drepung, I just heard that he was killed.

Q

The Sera side says that he was not killed.

A

Oh! I see. Could anyone survive after being hit with a fire pot and kettle on the head?

Q

He may not have died if he had covered his head with his gown. In the beginning, the monks went to see him with scarfs and a leg of mutton and apprised him of their terms and reasons. But when he remained adamant and unrelenting they hit him at first with the meat which they had brought to him as a gift, and then they hit him with everything that was handy, including the fire pot and kettle, etc.

A

What we as outsiders heard was that the monks had killed him.

Q

What did the monks in Drepung do?

A

There wasn't anything to do except talk about it. Nobody took much interest and responsibility and I was also the same. I didn't have any idea what was wrong.

Q

It is said that one of the issues about which Reting Rinpoche had talks with Taktra when he returned to Lhasa was the Lhündup Dzong incident. He had reportedly told Taktra that the treatment meted to the monks involved in the incident was unnecessary. From then on, the relationship between the two deteriorated. The Lhündup Dzong incident occurred in 1945. That same year, Kusangtse and a few others went on the Victory Congratulation (tib. Yugye Tashi [Delek g.yul rgyal bkra shis bde legs]) Mission to congratulate the victors of World War II. It was after this the Reting trouble started. At that time had you already passed your geshe exam?

A

Yes. And there were two geshe from Sendregasum.

Q

That was not to congratulate the victors; there was the Asian Conference at the same time [that the 2 geshe went to].

A

At that time they stayed in Kalimpong and the Nepalese Besakonima entertained them. They also wanted me to give a teaching and the two geshe also debated at the assembly. One of the kungö was Sambo. I was in Kalimpong at that time.

Q

Yes, Sambo Theiji was the main one who attended the Asian Conference. When did you pass the geshe? Was it during Reting or Taktra?

A

It was during Taktra. Probably I was 26 years old.

Q

You got first place in the Geshe Lharampa, right?

A

I got second place. It was said that I would get the first place, but the Mongolian Gomang Shiwalha [tib. sgo mang zhi ba lha] got the first place. I didn't feel bad because he was an elderly monk and had a profound knowledge of the scriptures. I was just smart and kind of bright [tib. har mtshar po]. At that time, the Dalai Lama's debate assistant (tib. Tsenshab, [mtshan zhabs]) who was from Sera Me, Gyelrong, send me an secret message implying that Trijang Rinpoche was doing something to put me in second place although I ought to in first place.

Q

At that time hadn't Trijang Rinpoche already become the Tsenshab?

A

Yes. After Taktra took the regency, Ling Rinpoche was appointed as the senior tutor to the Dalai Lama and Trijang was appointed as the Tsenshab. At that time, my teacher received the secret message regarding the first place and he delivered the message to me and I told my teacher, "I took the debate exam in front of all the monks of Sendregasum, so if they don't feel ashamed, it doesn't make any difference to me whether they give me the first place or not. I took the Geshe Lharampa exam according to the instructions of Phabongka, otherwise I had wished to take the Lingse [tib. gling bse] Exam. My teacher told the tsenshab what I said. Kyabje Khangsar Rinpoche had done divination that said that it was not good to take the Lharampa exam, so I was glad because I would not need to put much effort in studying pecha. Later, when Taktra made the decision, he said it is confirmed that the Mongolian will be the first and Thando will be the second. This was because I didn't bribe Taktra. I think I took the geshe exam in the Monkey Year's Mönlam.

Q

And then you went to the Gyüpa, right?

A

Yes, and I took the tantric debate exam [tib. sngags kyi dam bca'] and I got fifth place. The first place was Migmar Wangdü from Ganden and the second was the Triu Khampa nicknamed, "Tiger with torn up mouth," [tib. stag kha ral]. The third was Tshognyila [tib. tshogs gnyis lags] and the fourth was the ex-abbot of Gomang, Ngawang Legden [tib. ngag dbang legs ldan].

[Note: A section was skipped. Both the interviewer and the interviewee were geshe and they were talking in detail about the content of the dialectic debates]

Q

Did you become the gegö in the Gyüpa?

A

No, I wasn't able to.

Q

Did you become the prayer leader (tib. Trika Kyorpon [? skyor dpon])?

A

No, because I got sick right after that and when I took the Tantric exam, my teacher was sick and there was nobody taking care of him, so I had to take the main responsibility of taking care of him. Therefore, I was depressed because I had a tense feeling of being unable to take the exam and serve my teacher. However, after that, my teacher passed away the day before I took the exam and I went to ask for the dedication to Taktra since he used to treat me very kindly and I burst into tears. Because of being sick every year, I couldn't keep on going to the Gyüpa. My teacher told me before his death not to remain in the Gyüpa after the becoming the gegö, but to stay in the monastery and teach my pupils. And he said do not take any position by bribing people, but you may have to take some position that you do not want. So later I was appointed as the abbot of Bodhgaya and it turned out good for me. Otherwise, I would have been left in Tibet.

Q

Yes and the Chinese would have treated you badly.

A

When I was performing rituals for the teacher Geshe Samdrub [tib. bsam grub] Rinpoche, he asked me whether I worship Shungden [tib. shugs ldan] or not and when I told him no, he told me, "You should worship Shungden because it the time to worship him." I just said yes, but deep down in my mind I didn't dare to worship him because there were lots of troubles in Drepung. When I asked my teacher about this, he told me, "You can just do prayers in the Trodekhangsar [tib. spro bde khang gsar] Shungden temple. So I didn't really worship him and I did what my teacher told me to do. But Geshe Samdrup insisted I depend [tib. srog gtad] on Shungden and he said that Detrug [Rinpoche] also should do it together with me. We did it on the 5th of the 3rd Tibetan month and since then I started worshipping Shungden every month. Actually, my mother told me that my birth deity was Shungden.

Q

What did you hear about the Reting trouble in Kalimpong?

A

I heard in detail how Reting Rinpoche was killed. I think, Tharchin Babu had received the news in full detail.

Q

Did he publish it in his newspaper?

A

I think he did publish it in his newspaper too, but he came to my house and told me everything in detail. He appeared quite stunned by the news.

Q

Were you receiving the news when the Reting trouble was still going on and they were making war in Sera and the soldiers were told to kill all the bald people?

A

Yes, we received the news that the Sera monks were fighting against the government.

Q

How did you know about this?

A

I heard that the Yadong and Phari areas received edicts.

Q

Did the edicts tell people to kill all the bald people?

A

Yes.

Q

Who sent those edicts?

A

The government must have sent them. Possibly by the Kashag or the Shö ga office.

Q

Did it mention how Reting was killed?

A

We heard that Tsidrung Belpo and Porkyog, Lungshar's son, were appointed as guards for Reting Rinpoche. It was said that they placed a stone slab below, on which they placed cotton and on it they placed Reting's penis and then smashed it with a big stone. Literally crushed his penis in between two stones.

Q

If they had smashed it like this, wouldn't it become flat?

A

Who knows? Reting Rinpoche reportedly made a loud cry, which was heard by many.

Q

This was heard by all the people.

A

It was further said that Lhalu Sawangchemmo came down with a kerosene pressure lamp in his hand on the same night.

Q

Where did Lhalu come that night?

A

Lhalu came where Reting Rinpoche was placed under arrest, at Sharchenjog, and he talked with them in a hushed voice. The gossip claims that Lhalu gave the order to kill Reting, however, later Lhalu confessed to the Chinese that he did not give the order to kill Reting. He said that he was sent there to deliver the message saying that you [guards] can treat Reting however you like.

Q

How did Belpo push from behind Reting?

A

Belpo la was said to have pressed his knees against Reting's back and gagged Reting's mouth with his hands, while Porkyog crushed the penis with stones. When Tsidrung Belpo saw the penis being crushed so cruelly with the stones, he lost his concentration and loosened his hands on Reting's mouth and Reting made a loud cry of pain. Otherwise, nobody would have heard Reting's cry since his mouth was gagged.

Q

How is it possible that Reting Rinpoche could not use his hands to defend himself? Was he tied up?

A

His hands too might have been tied. It is just incredibly that they could do such a thing.

Q

What did Tsarong Sawangchemmo tell you?

A

I told Tsarong everything I heard from Tharchin Babu. However, at first he didn't agree to that. He said that the officials above the rank of rimshi were taken to see the deceased's body. When I told him that Tsidrung Belpo lost control of his hands and Reting made a loud cry, he said that he definitely found two red marks on Reting's back. When I told them about his penis being smashed, Tsarong said that the penis was swollen and red, that it was much bigger than the normal size.

Q

If they had hit it with a stone, it should have broken into pieces, but they made it as if it was not damaged, right?

A

They might have placed enough cotton in between.

Q

But if the cotton was thick enough, he would not have died.

A

It could kill him because the penis is the nerve center of the body. If you hit at a point of life [tib. bla gnas] [Tibetan belief that the 'spirit' of human life moves on specific dates from one vital point on our body to another], then a person dies very easily. For example, one of the monks at Drepung while making prostrations before retiring to bed, hit his knees on the button of his lower garment and died instantaneously. Later it was learned that the button had hit at his 'life point.' This is the reason why Tibetans take precautions while taking injections. In Tibet, we seek astrological calculations about the dates and days, before making any surgical operations like drawing blood.

Q

But these days nobody considers these things, mainly because many do not know about them.