

**Transcript for Oral History Interview**

**Conducted for University of Maryland Course IMMR400 – Spring 2018**

**Instructor:** Esther Lee

**Interviewer's (Student's) Name:** Dolma Gazan

**Interviewee's Name:** Tenzin Dolma (pseudonym)

**Interviewee's Country of Origin:** Tibet

**Interviewee's Current Residence:** Silver Spring, MD, USA

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**Place of Interview:** Silver Spring, MD, USA

BEGIN Audio "1 Dolma"

Dolma: So, let's start with the first question...when were you born?

Tenzin: I was born in 1963.

Dolma: What country and specifically what city were you born in?

Tenzin: I was born in Repkong, Tibet. Repkong is in um...Amdo area.

Dolma: What is Amdo?

Tenzin: Amdo is...In Tibet, we have three big regions. Amdo is one of them. The three regions are Amdo, Kham, and U-Tsang.

Dolma: Okay. So when you tell people you're from Tibet, do they know where or what that is?

Tenzin: Uh...when I came here first...time...not many people know about Tibet. Now, most people know.

Dolma: Okay, what was the city of Repkong like?

Tenzin: Repkong is a famous place. In uh...Tibet...eh....in Tibetan we say Repkong is the place of the art...uh...there are many people that make thankas and statues so this is a very famous place and also in history there are so many scholars like lay people and also monks.

Dolma: Can you explain what a thanka is?

Tenzin: Thangka is...I think most people know that...thangka actually is made with silk thread mostly. Old ways...two kinds (speaks Tibetan to ask for unknown word)

Dolma: Threading?

Tenzin: Yea, and the other kind is paint. Paint like god, like Buddha...

Dolma: So religious? Is it always religious?

Tenzin: Yea, in old days but now people also put...like regular people. Some people like a lot.

Dolma: So is Repkong an urban area or rural area?

Tenzin: Sort of urban area.

Dolma: How has it changed since um...compared to now?

Tenzin: (repeating) Compared to now...

Dolma: And when you were living there as a child?

Tenzin: I don't know about now but when I talk with my family it sound like very big change. When I was young, I went to uh...high school and middle school in Repkong city and right now...it sound like change a lot. There are tall buildings and lot of uh....residents. Many people move into the city. The population may be triple...maybe more but in the city...maybe fifty percent are Chinese or Chinese Muslims.

Dolma: (repeating) Chinese Muslims or Chinese...So since China occupied Tibet, how has the rate of Chinese migrants coming into the country changed? Has that increased significantly?

Tenzin: Of course, of course eh...uh...actually uh...Amdo and Qinghai, now in Chinese it's called Qinghai. Uh...we...in Tibetan we say Tsorhung. Tsorhung is a part of Amdo area and it's a little different than other part of Tibet. In 1940's...started uh...occupy some sort of...occupied by one...uh...general of China. Came to control...not fully control but they bring army and killings. They're not really officially occupy. This is a very complicated situation at that time and they sometimes come to villages to uh...trying to get...uh...tax. At that time, tax is like grain, animals, and uh...like those things...animal skins. They collect those but some villages...they protest against those army fights and killings all the time. From...I think 50 years they...in Tsorhung, they...almost 50 years...did that way.

Dolma: From what year?

Tenzin: 1949 is when Chinese Communists came.

Dolma: That's when it started?

Tenzin: Before that, Ma Pu Fang...they call him. Ma Pu Fang is a general.

Dolma: He was doing that?

Tenzin: Yea, he control...Tsorhung...for almost 50 years before that

Dolma: And...

Tenzin: (interjects) This general really couldn't control completely. They um...come to the villages like sometimes but they gone, then nothing. Not like now. This situation is really complicated at that time.

Dolma: Hmm..

Tenzin: (continues) They more like robberies.

Dolma: (thinking) So was it kind of like terror attacks?

Tenzin: Yea, sort of. They come to the village and they um...killing people, fire houses, rape cases, every bad things. Anything happens. So when the army come to the villages, villagers usually don't have weapons, good weapons...cannot fight so they take valuable stuff to run to the mountains.

Dolma: They take it and run into the mountains?

Tenzin: The Tibetan villagers.

Dolma: Oh...they take their valuables.

Tenzin: (at same time) They take their valuable stuff and go to the mountains.

Dolma: Do they hide it?

Tenzin: Yea, hide until...

Dolma: How do they hide it?

Tenzin: On the mountains in the forest...

Dolma: But their valuables...did they bury it?

Tenzin: Carry, carry them. And my grandma once...they always...when they notice they're coming, they run to the mountains.

Dolma: So did your grandma tell you these stories?

Tenzin: Yea, my grandma once...she forgot her um...dress...very expensive dress and jewelries. She forgot to take that...no...there's no time to get those from her closet so they took all jewelries...very expensive at that time.

Dolma: So what happened to this group of terrorizers?

Tenzin: They...after Communists came, they...I don't know what happened.

Dolma: Did they join the Communist party?

Tenzin: No, they're against. Ma Pu Fang is part of Guo Mei Tang. Guo Mei Tang, before Communist, Guo Mei Tang (looks at Dolma for comprehension)

Dolma: Do you know the English...?

Tenzin: Qinghai Shek...

Dolma: (puzzled look)

Tenzin: Uh...(thinking)...Qinghai Shek...in English they...(speaks Tibetan) They are called Jang Jei Shi in Chinese...(back to English) something like that in English. Who is the leader of Guo

Mei Tang?

Dolma: I don't know.

Tenzin: (clarifies) Before Communist, it was Guo Mei Tang. They were the...control the Chinese...(softly) country.

Dolma: Okay...now that we have a little historical background of Tibet-China relations, let's talk about your childhood.

Tenzin: Yea, that's from until 49 (1949). Right before Communists came to Tibet then after 49, Communists control the Chinese. Amdo, most Amdo area is close to Chinese border so uh...they took most of the Amdo in 19....after 1949...50 but uh...U-Tsang and Lhasa, they couldn't take right away. Kham, some part of Kham they took...right after 1949 so uh...

Dolma: So I read that the Kham and the U-Tsang didn't get along too well?

Tenzin: Before Communist came?

Dolma: During the time that China...during the 1950 uh...Chinese invasion. People's Liberation Army?

Tenzin: No, not like that.

Dolma: No?

Tenzin: Communist came to Amdo and some part of Kham area right away because it's close to Chinese.

Dolma: Kham is closer to Chinese border?

Tenzin: No, Amdo. Also some part of Kham.

Dolma: Okay, so looking at a map of Tibet...Amdo is on the northeast...region? Closest to China? Is that where it is?

Tenzin: Yea. Like Dalai Lama's birthplace, right—very close to border.

Dolma: Where is U-tsang?

Tenzin: U-tsang is in the west.

Dolma: In the west. Oh, so Kham is second closest to

Chinese border? Tenzin: East.

Dolma: Kham is East...under Amdo?

Tenzin: Yea (uses fingers to show location)...U-tsang...Kham...Amdo.

Dolma: Kham is above Amdo?

Tenzin (speaking Tibetan): can you really say above? U-tsang...Kham...Amdo (points finger again but this time on the table instead of in air)

Dolma: Kham is (using hands to orient direction) ...

Tenzin: Yea, Kham is east.

Dolma: ...above Amdo...okay.

Tenzin: So yea, then in Amdo, like 1958...started take control badly. My grandma told me that one morning she woke up...early morning...uh...(speaks Tibetan) How do you say (unknown word)?...(speaking English again) About 5 o'clock there's a light that comes from east. What do you call it in English?

Dolma: (thinking) the sun rising?

Tenzin: Sun is not...before sun rising there is a light...

Dolma: Oh, dusk?

Tenzin: (speaks Tibetan) That's what it's called?

Dolma: Or dawn?

Tenzin: (speaks Tibetan) We call it (unknown word). (speaking English again) ...In Tibetan words, before sun rises.

Dolma: The light before the sun rises...

Tenzin: Yea, it's not clear. You can't see clearly but she (referring to her grandmother) woke up in the morning, early morning. And she made a fire, wood fire, and went outside and realized around the village...whole army...there.

Dolma: How old was she?

Tenzin: She...I don't uh...know exactly...maybe around 40?

Dolma: And this was after 1950?

Tenzin: That's 1958.

Dolma: 1958...oh okay.

Tenzin: Yea, 1958 and when she saw the armies around the village...run into the house and she told my grandpa and my mom so at that time my mom is about um...around 10, 11...something like that.

Tenzin: So then...nobody can escape in the village because (uses arms to gesture surrounded village) surrounded by army. Then, that day they let everybody into the temple. There's a temple...and everybody got in and the army um...uh...the gate closed...locked and then they...some sort of conference? Like a (says meeting in Tibetan).

Dolma: Mmhmm.

Tenzin: Meeting, some kind of meeting and the Chinese um...

Dolma: There was...they were making an announcement?

Tenzin: There was a Chinese official...announcement and then they call all men out...they took outside...only women and children left.

Dolma: Inside the temple?

Tenzin: Yea, in the temple (uses arms to show building and seclusion)...and then after everybody gone, my grandma thought the men is outside somewhere...they doing something. She didn't know...anything.

Dolma: She didn't realize what was going on.

Tenzin: And then all gone...nobody there.

Dolma: They just disappeared?

Tenzin: Disappear.

Dolma: So they never...

Tenzin: They...later realized that they took to the prison...all men...

Dolma: How many men was that?

Tenzin: I don't know. At that time, there's no number. My grandma... (shakes head) ...I don't know...maybe...At that time, our village uh...(thinking)...how many men...maybe a hundred?

Dolma: And this is just your village? And this is happening all over Tibet?

Tenzin: All over...So when women and children get out from temple...then all men was not there.

Dolma: So, then what happened to the women and children?

Tenzin: Then, later my grandpa told me that told us that uh, on that day, Chinese officials ride on horse and Tibetan men tied by rope...

Dolma: ...and dragged?

Tenzin: Yea, you have to run after the horse.

Dolma: ...run after the horse?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: For how long?

Tenzin: Because they took...

Dolma: This is a form of torture?

Tenzin: They took...[to] the prison.

Dolma: That was their way to taking...?

Tenzin: Taking men...all men and then they could control the country. They trying to...that's the way...otherwise, every village together protest or fight against and then they cannot control.

Dolma: Right...so why didn't Tibet have a united army...to fight against...

Tenzin: Because Tibet become like Buddhist country...so uh Buddhist method is no killing.

Dolma: No killing...right...but there was...during the Chinese invasion, I read that the Tibetan government sent out...sought out help from foreign countries and the CIA...they did ship some weapons, or they airdropped..

Tenzin: Yea, that's later. At that time, Amdo and Kham already took...by Communist. Only U-tsang...is uh...also took. That's 1960s but it's too late at that time but if America support strong way then they could but middle of trying to help, they stopped...dropped.

Dolma: You said this was 1960s?

Tenzin: 60s.

Dolma: Was that because of the Vietnam War that was happening in 1970s?

Tenzin: Not 1970s... (misunderstanding question) ...1960s.

Dolma: I know but the U.S. stopped...

Tenzin: I don't know the reason. I remember, I read this but I don't remember now.

Dolma: So, let's talk about your childhood. Tell me about your family.

Tenzin: (thinking)...My childhood.

Dolma: How many siblings do you have? Let's start off with that.

Tenzin: (laughs) I have...you know...

Dolma: (laughs also) Yea, I know but the...

Tenzin: I have fourteen siblings including me. We have three girls.

Dolma: And you're the...

Both: (same time) oldest.

Dolma: So that...

Tenzin: so...

Dolma: How old was your mother when she had you?

Tenzin: It's...in Tibetan, they say 20 years old but I think she's a little more than 18 years...old when I was born.

Dolma: Yea, you said 1958 she was about 10 years old and you were born 1963.

Tenzin: She was born in 1944.

Dolma: 1944...

Tenzin: Yea, she's maybe 19 years old.

Dolma: Oh yea, she's pretty young.

Tenzin: Yea, 19 years old.

Dolma: So how was it like being the oldest of 13 kids? What was that like?

Tenzin: It's uh.... It's good. Everybody respect...all my brothers and sisters uh...call me Ajie (older sister in Tibetan) and not only call me that and respect me but I also take responsibility and to take care of all my younger siblings when I go to uh...elementary school at that time...

Dolma: How old were you?

Tenzin: I was uh...6 years old I started to go to school. At that time in school there's no textbook...school textbook, the book is Mao Zedong's thoughts. There's small books– little small books and bigger ones – in elementary schools we have to memorize of his uh...method.

Dolma: His beliefs?

Tenzin: Yea, in small booklets.

Dolma: What were some of his beliefs? Do you remember?

Tenzin: I don't remember. I don't remember.

Dolma: They were his political opinions?

Tenzin: Yea, every morning when we started class, we have to say "long life Mao Zedong."

Dolma: Oh (laughs lightly).

Tenzin: and lift up the booklet (raises right arm into the air up and down as if holding the small



booklet) ...long life...

Both: (begin laughing)

Dolma: long live?

Tenzin: (laughing)...yea... (repeats the Chinese pledge and translates to Tibetan) ...

Dolma: 10,000 years to Mao Zedong? That's what it means?

Tenzin: Yea, to live 10,000 years something like that and you have to lift the small booklet and you have to say loudly.

Both: (laughing)

END Audio "1 Dolma"  
BEGIN Audio "2 Dolma"

Dolma: So...what was the most difficult time of your childhood?

Tenzin: (thinking) difficult...difficult...is when I was little...not only my family, whole village same, almost same situation. There's no rich and poor and all families almost same at that time and uh...we uh...like when we go to the town, we have to walk...walk like 4 or 5 hours.

Dolma: how many miles is that? Maybe like 10?

Tenzin: Maybe more, 15 miles. Yea, you have to walk like 4-5 and most difficult is uh...we are poor. We were poor and uh...um...food and clothing and everything is very poor situation. When I was little, we didn't have the Tibetan chupa belt. Sometimes, we don't have a belt and I remember one day I use a rope.

Dolma: How old were you?

Tenzin: At that time, uh...maybe 10 or...9 and uh...difficult at that time I didn't realize...

Dolma: Yea, of course until you see that there's so much more then you look back and compare.

Tenzin: Mmhmm, mmhmm. The difficult thing is walking to school when I went to middle school, high school we had to walk from the village like...4-5 hours and then when you got to school you're too tired. You have class Sunday evening when you got to school, you're too tired.

Dolma: How often...do you have to walk?

Tenzin: Every weekend, go home and Saturday after lunch you can go home and you got home...you can get home in the evening...sometimes it's already dark. And next day after lunch you have to go back to school.

Dolma: So, you only get to spend one day with your parents?

Tenzin: One day with parents. Every time when you go back to school, you feel really

sad...to leave your parents and siblings at home.

Dolma: Your siblings didn't go to school with you? Or these were the very young ones?

Tenzin: I was uh...at that time...at the beginning, I'm the only person. In the village, we have only 5 children go to the middle school. That's the...so many years later, we are the uh...in uh...1978 I think...no...1976....and before that in our village only 2, 3 people went to school.

Dolma: So, let's talk about your husband...also my father. How old were you when you met him? And where did you meet him?

Tenzin: That's in 1986, I think.

Dolma: Did you guys meet in college?

Tenzin: No, at that time he's in middle school teacher.

Dolma: He's a middle school teacher and you were in college still studying?

Tenzin: We know each other before during the high school.

Dolma: And before that too...right?

Tenzin: Yea

Dolma: You knew each other as children?

Tenzin: No, no.

Dolma: What about...there was a story...

Tenzin: Oh, that's...we don't know...that time actually... Dolma:

You didn't know each other.

Tenzin: We didn't know each other...

Dolma: (continuing sentence) but later on you realized you knew each other

Tenzin: Saw once.

Dolma: That was it?

Tenzin: Yea, and he trying to uh...do something (laughing).

Dolma: ...mischievous?

Tenzin: Teasing or? What do you call it?

Dolma: Yea, or mischievous. He was how old? Maybe 10?

Tenzin: At that time yea, maybe.

Dolma: You were 9?

Tenzin: Uh huh.

Dolma: I think the story was he told the...

Tenzin: Told the younger boy to take dirt and throw on my face (laughing)

Dolma: (also laughing) and then later on, he ended up marrying you.

Dolma: Tell me about your husband/my father's role in the government. At this time, there was a Tibetan government correct?

Tenzin: No.

Dolma: Still? Not yet?

Tenzin: (confused) Tibetan government, what do you mean?

Dolma: (clarifying) Tibetan government-in exile?

Tenzin: Oh yea! Oh yea! Tibetan exile government right after escape in 1959.

Dolma: That's what I was referring to earlier. I meant...I should've added the Tibetan government in exile but...that's what I'm referring to. So, what kind of work was he doing?

Tenzin: Uh at that time, I cannot say exactly what he did but that's some kind of...secret. You can't say because some people still there and uh...

Dolma: They can get in trouble...

Tenzin: Yea, of course.

Dolma: So, you know what he...?

Tenzin: He work for Tibetan...and yea...

Dolma: You know what he did but you can't tell me?

Tenzin: When I was in college, that was 1987...and uh...there was a protest in our Repkong...ethnic...in Tibet...it's called middle school but the school has both middle and high school both together um...the students did a protest.

Dolma: Against the Chinese government?

Tenzin: Yea, at that time they protest about the family plan...birth control policy.

Dolma: Can you explain that?

Tenzin: At the time, in Tibet, Tibetans can have 2 children. If you have 3<sup>rd</sup> child then the woman need to uh...

Dolma: Forced sterilization?

Tenzin: Yea, and at that time there is no standard medical equipment and there's no standard doctors, nurse...so they take all the women in a truck

Dolma: They do this in a truck?

Tenzin: No, they take them in a truck and in a tent, do the surgery.

Dolma: Were they under anesthesia at all?

Tenzin: Some are not.

Dolma: So, this was poorly handled?

Tenzin: Poorly handled, worst. And those women really frightened and they cry and...but they forced to take them there and so that's why the students protest in the street to say stop this policy. And they also call it...all the ethnics need equal right, schooling and everything need to be equal because always Chinese people get better treatment and Tibetans always second-class citizens. The schools also very different in our area. The Tibetans schools are very poor condition. Outside the building also, you can see...

Dolma: So, going back to your husband, my father...

Tenzin: Yea, at that time he and several teachers organized those protests so then the government didn't let them stay in that school so they sort of fired but changed to a very rural area...

Dolma: They went moved to another area?

Tenzin: Yea...other area to teach. Some sort of punishment.

Dolma: As a punishment, oh okay. So, tell me about how he ended up in prison.

Tenzin: That was um...in 1990...no 1993 in the summer. Summer vacation we planned to go to Beijing, go to take a tour and I got...at that time...train tickets and prepared everything and he was...he doesn't...we planned that before he come home to Repkong. He was in Xining.

Dolma: Is that a part of...

Tenzin: There's a law school.

Dolma: He was in law school?

Tenzin: He was in law school, teaching in law school.

Dolma: Tibetan law?

Tenzin: Chinese law. There's no Tibetan law. He was teaching in law school in 1993. Right after

he was put in rural area...

END Audio "2 Dolma"  
BEGIN Audio "3 Dolma"

Dolma: So how did he end up in prison? Was he actively involved with the Tibetan government?

Tenzin: I don't know the reason why he got arrested but 1993...somewhere in July...I think July 2<sup>nd</sup> I found his calendar. There's a calendar booklet and every day you have to turn (mimics turning for each day/page of calendar) ...another day turn...another day turn. Have you seen that?

Dolma: Uh huh...yea... day by day calendars (also mimics).

Tenzin: Yea, he has one of those and July 2<sup>nd</sup> is there when I went to his house, his room. There's no house, there's one room. We planning to...we were planning to go to Beijing so I went to his room and his room is locked and his friend and colleagues...nobody know where he is and he got lost. They say they didn't see him for few weeks. Two weeks at that time.

Dolma: At that time he was missing for two weeks?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: And how many months were you pregnant? And you were pregnant with me.

Tenzin: At that time? It's July 16<sup>th</sup>...I remember... and yea...so...and then I went to find his good close friends and learned that he got arrest.

Dolma: So, by looking at the calendar, you knew that he hadn't been home because it said July 2<sup>nd</sup> and you were there July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: And that's what...was a red flag...was an alarm in your head?

Tenzin: And then also I saw some...his cabinet? Cabinet is messy.

Dolma: Like someone invaded?

Tenzin: Yea, they searching something maybe...

Dolma: Did you have a key?

Tenzin: No, I don't have a key.

Dolma: When you got there was the door already opened?

Tenzin: I called his neighbor to break the lock.

Dolma: Oh. You broke the lock?

Tenzin: I broke the lock and got in and then learned all these things. His window is this much open (spread hands about 4 inches apart) for the fresh air...sometimes you open the window this much.

Dolma: Oh, yea.

Tenzin: (holds hand position) ...his window is open partially. So...if he planned to go somewhere...

Dolma: He would close it.

Tenzin: (nods) ...close the window. Then I thought, this is not right and if he go somewhere he could tell me.

Dolma: He would tell you.

Tenzin: He would tell me but he didn't We planned he come home after...uh summer vacation. He didn't come.

Dolma: So then eventually you did find him?

Tenzin: I didn't find right away. His close friend told me he was arrested.

Dolma: How did he find out?

Tenzin: Because also, his friend's friend and friend also arrested...two people.

Dolma: Oh, they were arrested and put in the same prison?

Tenzin: Later yea, we learned it was same prison but they didn't know they were both in the same prison because they keep...secret.

Dolma: So, this was July...July and you were 6 or 7 months pregnant? I was born in October so you were more than 6 or 5 months pregnant?

Tenzin: More than 6 months and then of course I was so scared that I never see him again and all night I couldn't sleep and sometimes I pray. There's a Dalai Lama's picture...small one...um...pray all night. And I also afraid to turn on the light...then maybe somebody watching.

Dolma: Were you staying at his place?

Tenzin: His room. Turn off the light and pray, pray...pray. Like that. Day another day another day and then I went to see provincial officers that I know and I went to see many people around these days. Also, I went to the security office?

Dolma: Of the prison?

Tenzin: No, security. Security office is...they took him. They took Pala (Tibetan for father).

Dolma: Oh.

Tenzin: So, I went to their office and nobody...everybody say 'no, I don't know, I don't know.'

Dolma: Were they lying to you? They knew, didn't they?

Tenzin: Either the people I asked...maybe they don't know or they don't want to tell me...because those kind of insider information not everybody know. Even in there...workers.

Dolma: So how long was he in prison for?

Tenzin: More than one month...I think 34 days.

Dolma: So, how did he finally get out?

Tenzin: How? I think they didn't get any evidence.

Dolma: So they kept him for 40 days and then decided 'oh he has no valuable information we're going to let him go'?

Tenzin: No, there's no evidence.

Dolma: Oh, evidence. Evidence of what?

Tenzin: Evidence of what they accused him of.

Dolma: And what did they accuse him of?

Tenzin: They think...maybe...I don't know. There's no accuse. There's no accuse.

Dolma: They just feel like doing what they want? There's no trials or justice?

Tenzin: No, no. Just...Pala told me that they asking questions.

Dolma: Do you think he told you everything?

Tenzin: No, I don't think he told me everything.

Dolma: What did he tell you...about what happened to him?

Tenzin: He didn't tell much. Later when we went to India, he told more. And then when we come here, he tell more...something like that. (speaking as if she was talking to her husband) 'What? Why you didn't tell me this?' Then he said, it's not good. Everything...maybe he think that if he tell me everything...people sad, feel sad. Feel bad. Maybe.

Dolma: I think so, maybe it's also hard to talk about it. It's a difficult and scary experience. Do you notice a change in his behavior, kind of like soldiers when they go to war and come back? They suffer from PTSD?

Tenzin: Yea, at the beginning when he out of the prison, he sweat a lot and his skin color is pale.

Dolma: Pale and yellow? Discolored?

Tenzin: Yeah. Very pale. He didn't see sun for many days.

Dolma: Oh. Was he very thin?

Tenzin: Yea, they give him one small bread in the morning, bread and water, then no lunch, in evening give some kind of soup. Very thin soup so that's not enough. Once, I sent of his friends who work in security office, through him – two of them, through them– I send tsampa (Tibetan staple food, barley porridge) mixed with butter and cheese so...later he said that's really helpful and also, I send him eggs and meat. The meat, they brought back. When we it got back, it's already...uh

Dolma: Spoiled?

Tenzin: Yea, I don't know why they took it and bring back and then they say no need for this, he will come out soon.

Dolma: And then did he?

Tenzin: No, after that not for another 4 or 5 days. Yea. And once I made hard-boiled eggs and when Pala got it, already rotten. I don't know where they...the place from Xining is quite long...

Dolma: Oh. It's probably the heat too. The summer heat. So...he was tortured...

Tenzin: Yea, he was tortured by the uh...um...prison guards.

Dolma: How often did he have to endure torture? Did he tell you?

Tenzin: No, no...how often? I don't know.

Dolma: When he finally came out of prison...was he...did he look badly injured? Could he walk?

Tenzin: Yea, he can walk but dizzys all the time.

Dolma: Disease or dizzy?

Tenzin: Dizzys.

Dolma: What do you mean?

Tenzin: (acts out dizziness)

Dolma: Dizzy. He doesn't have good motor control.

Tenzin: Yea, and um...and he has heart failure.

Dolma: (in shock) ...heart failure?

Tenzin: He had to go to a hospital...stay there 2 months to recover.



Dolma: So, from what he told me...I remember him telling me that they finally let him go because he was in such poor health.

Tenzin: Yea...

Dolma: So, he was still--they put him in the hospital and while he was in the hospital...

Tenzin: Not only that...they couldn't find any evidence.

Dolma: (repeats) they couldn't find any evidence...so they didn't see any reason to keep him any longer. So, after he was released, did he go straight to the hospital?

Tenzin: Yea and in the hospital, the security people always watch him.

Dolma: He was under surveillance?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: For how long?

Tenzin: Until he escape. Do you know how he escaped?

Dolma: No, but before we talk about that - I want to go in chronological order – because he escaped after you so let's talk about how you escaped and why you escaped.

Tenzin: At that time, we uh...in Tibet, it's hard to live because he's being targeted.

Dolma: He's being watched at all times?

Tenzin: Yea, and one of his close friends who get those information from Chinese security people.

Dolma: He was an insider?

Tenzin: Somewhere (misunderstands).

Dolma:...so he worked for the Chinese government and he was telling you guys what was happening?

Tenzin: No, this person...his friends. His friend told him 'be careful. If you don't be careful, you'll be arrested again.'

Dolma: Arrested again?

Tenzin: Yea, because sometimes...that's Chinese gov't do. They arrest people and then release and then look after and see, watch this person doing, who this person meet, what this person talk, everything they look, watch...all the time and then if they find something, then they...they finding evidence because they didn't get any evidence. They will find evidence.

Dolma: They saw my father – your husband, Lama Gazan – as a threat to the gov't so they continually looked for evidence?

Tenzin: Yea, maybe...yea.

Dolma: He's an intelligent man, well-spoken, he was an activist, he was a leader so they were threatened by him.

Tenzin: Yea, yea. In Repkong, when he was there teaching middle school, there were more than two times protests by students so he...and he uh... they believe some of those groups were organized by your father.

Dolma: From what he told me, he said they believed that he was conspiring against the Chinese gov't with the Dalai Lama...correct?

Tenzin: Yea, they connected Dalai Lama...they thinking.

Dolma: Is that true? Can you not say?

Tenzin: Um...no. I don't want to talk about that. So anyway, they let him get out since they didn't find any evidence. In his room, nothing there...they didn't find anything so they let him go out and then watch and find more connections, evidence...so we were talking about going to India, to escape and then um...at that time I think he got some sort of order...he need to complete. I don't know what kind of...

Dolma: By who?

Tenzin: A group of people who work together. So, yea, that's why he couldn't go and then we left before him and during that time we made it look like we were separate.

Dolma: Like as if you guys had divorced?

Tenzin: Not divorced. Divorce, you need to get the paper from the gov't. Look like separate so they Aku Jamyang and Pala said I need to write a letter, saying that we are separate so I try to write a letter and they say 'put worst words...how bad he is' and then I try to write and I couldn't. They say 'oh, this is not bad enough' (begins laughing) and then Pala wrote the letter and then I copied it.

Dolma: (also laughing) ...so who was it sent to? Was it sent to him?

Tenzin: Yea, and we went to Kuormo.

Dolma: Where's that?

Tenzin: Kuormo is a city, between Lhasa and Tsorhung. There's a city. Uh...and there, Aku Jamyang went to the post office and sent that letter to Pala.

Dolma: So, you wrote a letter from yourself, he wrote the letter and sent it to himself as you! (giggling) That's funny.

Tenzin: And then he said he always have that letter in his pocket.

Both: He carry... (more giggling)

Tenzin: All the time in case captured and say he got this letter from me.

Dolma: And at this time, was I born?

Tenzin: Yea, you were 5 months at that time.

Dolma: Okay, so then I was 5 months..

Tenzin: At that time, in March 1994...

Dolma: March 1994. So, they continued to keep surveillance on him, for months. Okay, so let's talk about your journey -your escape.

Tenzin: And then, that's uh...yea in March..So, then we uh, in Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, we prepared everything and at that time I was sick, you know that. I have low calcium and the...the muscle tightness problem. I need to get medicine so we prepared all these and then left. Took a train to Kuormo and from Kuormo to Lhasa by bus and I think four days three nights...something like that...to Lhasa city.

Dolma: And from Lhasa, where did you go?

Tenzin: In Lhasa, we stayed in somebody's house and rent...

Dolma: Who's we?

Tenzin: You, and your aunt Dolma Thar, and...

Dolma: Father's younger sister.

Tenzin: Yea, your father's younger sister and Aku Jamyang and Aku...do you remember Lhamo Kyi's pala and his brother?

Dolma: I didn't know they went with us.

Tenzin: Oh yea? They also with us. Eh...yea and then somewhere in April, we left Lhasa to go to India and our group...we have including you...20 people.

Dolma: 20 people and I'm the youngest?

Both: (laughing).

Tenzin: You're the youngest and on the way I always need to get the injection from vein (says medication name in Chinese).

Dolma: For your muscle tightness?

Tenzin: Yea, to release from...

Dolma: Is it a calcium shot?

Tenzin: Yea, there are calcium and also some other...it's like liquid so Aku Jamyang...before Pala...because we are...in our village, there are no doctors or nurse so there's one (says name in Tibetan health practitioner) ...but he sometimes there and sometimes not there so Pala had to learn how to do the injection.

Dolma: But he wasn't on the trip...

Tenzin: And then when we left from home and...Pala teach Aku Jamyang how to do that

Dolma: And he administered the medicine.

Tenzin: Yea and then yea...on the way Aku Jamyang always (uses hand gesture) ...when I need it.

Dolma: So how long was the journey overall?

Tenzin: The journey from Lhasa to Nepal...was about uh...maybe two weeks.

Dolma: Two weeks? That's it?

Tenzin: Yea, because we were lucky. We uh... (speaks Tibetan and asks for translation).

Dolma: Hitchhike?

Tenzin: No uh, we paid a truck to send us all the way to the foot of the mountain, Himalaya mountain.

Dolma: To the base of the Himalayan mountains. And then you had to walk by foot?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: Was it all snow from there?

Tenzin: Of course, snow is over knees.

Dolma: Over the knees...for two weeks?

Tenzin: No, we walk like one day and one night.

Dolma: That was it?

Tenzin: Only the highest mountain has snow because it's in April...April 20-4 or something.

Dolma: So it's not that bad.

Tenzin: Yea so it's Spring and the other side, the Nepal side, grass also growing, start growing.

Dolma: But you walked one entire day and one entire night? Is that what you're saying?

Tenzin: No, in snow mountain. We walk at least two weeks.

Dolma: Were you scared at all?

Tenzin: Oh yea of course, if Chinese army catch us, then of course...

Dolma: What would happen?

Tenzin: Nobody knows, some people just get lost.

Dolma: There's video footage on Youtube from European mountain climbers who filmed...

Tenzin: Oh yea, luckily that's one evidence...one evidence.

Dolma: And I'm going to explain what happened...so there were people just like us who were fleeing/escaping Tibet in the snow and they were shot down by Chinese soldiers. They were just shot point blank and killed.

Tenzin: If the Chinese soldier see us, of course same situation.

Dolma: They would shoot you without even knowing who you are?

Tenzin: Yea, see the video!

Dolma: No, I know, I know but maybe different?

Tenzin: No, same situation. Pala warned me that...he said we never know. 'If you're lucky, you can get there in India. If you're not, then maybe you could die in the border...at the border. Both you and baby.'

Dolma: At that time, for both you and him believed that was your best—that was your only option – to escape?

Tenzin: Yea, you cannot live under surveillance and then maybe captured again and then they sentence many years yea so...

Dolma: And you have another child at this time, you have your first child who couldn't...

Tenzin: Yea, your big sister. She was 4 years old, yea 4 ½ ...more than 4 years...in May 13<sup>th</sup> she will be um...5. So, at that time in March.

Dolma: So why did you guys leave her?

Tenzin: We cannot...I cannot carry two children.

Dolma: And she's much bigger, not only that but she has a disability.

Tenzin: She's uh...she can't walk and uh...I can't carry two children.

Dolma: Yea.

Tenzin: And she's heavier.

Dolma: Much heavier and bigger risk because you can easily hide me.

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: So, with your first child, the one who stayed back – Choyang – you had some birth complications...right? When you gave birth to her, there were some issues?

Tenzin: Yea we, it took...something wrong um...one day it's...I got um...feet swollen, not only feet, whole lower body was swollen and the doctor was my best friend's sister-in-law so she said 'this is dangerous, you must need to stay in hospital.'

Dolma: Okay.

Tenzin: So, I had to stay in hospital before the birth. I stayed in the hospital, I think, two weeks. And then start give birth, some kind of tractions started and then um...next day stopped.

Dolma: Next day stopped?

Tenzin: Traction stopped.

Dolma: Contractions?

Tenzin: (nods) oh... (nods again) con-contractions. (softly asks) Contractions?

Dolma: Yes, contractions.

Tenzin: Stopped. Then the doctors worry—

Dolma: They thought the baby was going to die?

Tenzin: And they think this is not good, usually it's not good. And the next day, afternoon, water broke but still the baby did not born. Then, they did some kind of surgery and pull the baby out by uh...by uh...

Dolma: Who's they?

Tenzin: That's...at that time...the doctor, my friend's sister-in-law, she was not there. There was another doctor and nurse, Chinese doctor and uh...so they use uh... (begins speaking Tibetan to ask for translation.)

Dolma: ...like clamps?

Tenzin: (speaks Tibetan)

Dolma: ...like a claw?

Tenzin: (speaks more Tibetan and uses fingers to show what tool looks like)

Dolma: Oh, just two?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: Forceps!

Tenzin: (speaks Tibetan to say the doctor's used the forceps-like tool to pull out the baby's head)

Dolma: They pulled out the baby's head using forceps? Are they supposed to use this tool on a baby's head?

Tenzin: I don't know supposed. It's uh...a baby's skull is very soft and when she was born, she uh...both sides was blue, red and blue.

END Audio "3 Dolma"  
BEGIN Audio "4 Dolma"

Tenzin: First day I didn't realize then next morning, I realized both sides um...marks.

Dolma: Do you think she suffered brain damage from that?

Tenzin: Yea, I believe (nods).

Dolma: And you believe her disability is a result of that?

Tenzin: Yea, I believe...later (nods and long pause). And after her birth, um...5 days, after 5 days she got very bad fever and then she had to go to children's hospital. No no, children's section...only one hospital in our area. She had to go to the hospital and she was almost dead (long pause) Her face is blue, become blue and the doctors think...very dangerous. She may be going to um...die but she didn't. She...so...

Dolma: Do you think the way that the doctor and nurse handled the birth...was that hospital malpractice on their part or was that what they were supposed to do?

Tenzin: I don't know what they doing but I uh...don't think their um...they're not standard.

Dolma: They're not trained very well?

Tenzin: Yea, they don't have the knowledge.

Dolma: Did they...did they treat you well? Because you are Tibetan...?

Tenzin: Um, for me is okay because I was a government worker so it's quite different than other ordinary people (referring to other Tibetans).

Dolma: Oh okay...so now going back to your journey, so you took two weeks to get to Nepal and that was two weeks on foot. Finally, you get to Nepal...and then?

Tenzin: Between there when you walk, in Tibet side we successfully passed. We didn't have any problem. We sometimes walk in daytime...oh! walk in nighttime, daytime, hide somewhere and nighttime walk. And then uh...between Nepal Tibet border is highest mountain that's called

Gyala and that's the highest mountain we...at the...pass that mountain.

Dolma: Mmhmm.

Tenzin: ...highest mountain, we uh...we had to...we can't stay somewhere there...it's really cold.

Dolma: Yea, you might die in your sleep.

Tenzin: High altitude and cold, if you stay somewhere there maybe some people will die so we had to walk all night so at midnight...start from foot of snow mountain. We started to walk after lunch and then midnight...that's 12 hours of walk.

Dolma: Wow.

Tenzin: We are at the top of the mountain and then the other side, go down. That's...for me...it's much easier...sometimes I sit on the snow and slide (smiles).

Dolma: (laughs) ...was that fun?

Tenzin: No, it's scary...sometimes maybe you can (uses hand gesture to show fast steep gliding motion).

Dolma: Oh, it was steep?

Tenzin: Yea, some area is very steep so uh...some people...Acha Dolma Thar and Aku Wangthy, those are youngest em...they're like teenager. Acha Dolma Thar was 16 years old. Yea, so we walk walk all night so of course tired, everybody tired, but they, they were...when we rest for few minutes, they sleep and it's hard to wake her up and in morning when we...that next morning uh...we still walking but you sleep (seated but mimics sleep-walking).

Dolma: You're walk-sleeping?

Tenzin: Because too tired.

Dolma: Oh, wow.

Tenzin: Like that and my feet swollen like this (used hands gestures), like a balloon.

Dolma: From the cold or walking?

Tenzin: Walking.

Dolma: The pressure? Did anyone lose any limbs or toes to frostbite?

Tenzin: Yea, one of us is a monk. He's a monk. He lost his shoes and he didn't know.

Dolma: (shocked) he didn't realized he was walking barefoot?



Tenzin: He didn't know. We walk and walk in snow. The snow was here...up to the knees...over actually and eh...his shoes in the snow somewhere...he didn't know because too cold, its numb. Your feet...he didn't know, he didn't (shakes her head)...he lost his shoes so walk in snow and then his feet frozen and in Nepal when...after we got Nepal...he got...he had to do uh...

Dolma: Amputation?

Tenzin: ...surgery, cut off his...some part of his feet and toes.

Dolma: It's good he didn't lose his legs.

Tenzin: No.

Dolma: So, he only lost some of his toes...that's not too bad but it's still bad. So how did you feel when you finally arrived to Nepal? Do you remember what that was like?

Tenzin: Yea, of course. When we got to Nepal in the morning because top of the mountain is border.

Dolma: Oh...

Tenzin: After that...

Dolma: You guys can relax for a little bit?

Tenzin: No! There's no relax because Nepal police is really bad.

Dolma: Worse than Chinese?

Tenzin: Similar, because the Chinese government they order...some kind of agreement so they, they're not...

Dolma: Yea, they have to follow Chinese.

Tenzin: Yea, so uh...when we uh...in Nepali place, we hide in daytime and then walk in the nighttime like that for few days and then we were almost...got Katmandu?

Dolma: Uh huh...Nepal's capital?

Tenzin: Yea, Katmandu. And then the police arrested us (small smile).

Dolma: They arrested you? How did they know you were...?

Tenzin: They can see, our face because we walk in high mountain (hand gestures to show skin peeling)...our face like uh, our skin is peeling and um...we wearing differently and they can see we're different people. We are Tibetans from Tibet. They can see. We're not Nepali because we don't speak Nepali and we look different.

Dolma: So then what happened?

Tenzin: Then they took us to the Pohra...Pokhra...is a Nepali...old...

END Audio "4 Dolma"  
BEGIN Audio "5 Dolma"

Tenzin: So in Nepal...uh..yea they arrested us...almost got... I think about one hour...We were on the bus to Katmandu and...they...then...I think one more hour to get there...they arrested us and took to Pokra the city so they put us in big room. I was so worried that Nepalese police were sometimes torture...they...

Dolma: Are there stories that they do?

Tenzin: Yea, rape cases...everything happens and uh...before we were captured...after we captured, there's another group. The group is smaller...uh they were 7 people. The police took everything from them!...money, camera, everything they took.

Dolma: Anything valuable?

Tenzin: Yea and we also...before...this is a place called Simtho. When we got there, we were so hungry and we didn't eat for more than 24 hours. We were out of food. So, when we got to Simtho, so hungry and there's a restaurant. A Tibetan woman, lady...and we eat in their restaurant and stay in their um...also some kind of guest house. So when we stayed there, police came, show up and they try to arrest us and this lady...this Tibetan lady, she's understand Nepali and talk with them and then we had to pay a lot of money to let us go. Then later, near Katmandu, they arrested again, I think maybe same police. We didn't see those police. The lady talk with them. So uh...they took us to Pokra and kept 2 nights there. I was so scary.

Dolma: Did they try to do anything to you?

Tenzin: No. But uh, the guard was an old man and he give you...bring you milk from home...for you because the little small baby need milk.

Dolma: (small laugh) he thought I was cute? That's really lucky.

Tenzin: And he...yea...that's something and also they have a very uh...(speaks following in Tibetan) banged up pan where he brought boiled milk.

Dolma: (laughs again) they boiled it? Wow.

Tenzin: Otherwise, get sick, babies.

Both: That's really nice.

Tenzin: So...

Dolma: So, then they let you go?

Tenzin: finally, they...after two days...took us back to Katmandu and give, handled to UN uh...office.

Dolma: Oh, that's good!

Tenzin: Yea, usually once [at] Katmandu, they won't send back. There's agreement with UN

because I think from UN, they get some kind of benefit so that's why they send us to there. And then, we stayed there like...one week. And there's also we have uh Tibetan refugee...um...

END Audio "5 Dolma"

BEGIN "6 Dolma"

Tenzin: Yea we uh...then Nepalese police sent us to UN office in Katmandu and then they kept us...about three days...and the days UN doesn't give us any food...that's surprise huh?

Dolma: Yea.

Tenzin: They should...they didn't give us anything to eat or drink so uh...the Tibetan organizations sent food to us.

Dolma: So were these UN people Nepalese natives or actual...

Tenzin: The UN people? The workers who interview us are Tibetan.

Dolma: Oh, they're Tibetan.

Tenzin: Yea, because we only speak Tibetan.

Dolma: Why...why do you think they didn't give you guys any food? Do you think they didn't have any food...or they're just saving it?

Tenzin: I don't know...that's make me feel...this is not right, this is the UN organization, kept us 3 days and 2 night and they didn't give us any food or drink but...they...maybe they trying to save money...maybe but they let Tibetan organizations to know that there are over 20 people...

Dolma: ...that need food?

Tenzin: ...need food and drinks.

Dolma: So, I guess...

Tenzin: They tell other people to give us food...I think

Dolma: Maybe they didn't have enough resources.

Tenzin: I don't know...anyway after that...then yea...they said they give us...(speaks Tibetan and asks for English translation of word and figures it out)...handle...UN interview with us.

Dolma: Okay

Tenzin: 'Why come out?' (referring to UN asking about reason for escape)

Dolma: Oh.

Tenzin: Yea, 'why escape?' and then they ask us what did we do before in Tibet. Then I told that I graduated from college and...that I was a teacher and then the person who interview told me, 'Oh, why you run...why you escape (begins speaking Tibetan to say 'out there, you will not find

work, you will not find good work like that' a woman there, she told me that).

Dolma: Oh.

Tenzin: And then I said uh...I came out for a reason...I came not escape for a job...

Dolma: (chuckles)

Tenzin: But I cannot tell her what happened and everything because Pala still there so yea...

Dolma: So, then what happened?

Tenzin: But those people look...they don't get...they don't understand why people escape from Tibet.

Dolma: Wow...how do they not understand?

Tenzin: I know, I know. They...she told me (begins speaking Tibetan again and is referring to the Tibetan UN translator who told her 'you left such a good job and you won't find a good job like that out here'). That make me...ugh...I didn't know how to answer...if I say everything...maybe she understand but I can't.

Dolma: Mmm...yea...do you think she could've been Chinese pretending to be Tibetan?

Tenzin: No no no...she's Tibetan.

Dolma: She just didn't understand? ...that's sad.

Tenzin: No...some people...they really don't know at that time.

Dolma: How bad it is?

Tenzin: That's in 1994 so um...yea...and then after...a little more than one week, Tibetan reception center put us on a bus and sent to India but at that time...was so hot, the weather uh...between Nepal India border...so hot and the buses doesn't have air condition. The buses doesn't have window...its open like that...and I got diarrhea, you got diarrhea.

Dolma: In the bus?

Tenzin: Yeah, while we travelled from Nepal to India.

Dolma: ...in the bathroom or in the bus like...right where we were sitting?

Tenzin: We were sick! Of course, not in the bus. Every time bus stop, we need to...sometimes we need to ask bus to stop...need to go bathroom.

Dolma: Oh, probably the water, food, everything?

Tenzin: Food, everything, the weather.

Dolma: The weather especially?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: Oh yea.

Tenzin: Every time bus stop, I run to the water tap?

Dolma: Tap water?

Tenzin: Mmhhh, tap water and take shower for you because I afraid something going to happen...scary.

Dolma: Oh...

Tenzin: And then you don't drink...don't drink milk, don't want to eat breast milk so that's something. I afraid...you [had] diarrhea and doesn't like to eat much.

Dolma: So I'm losing fluid and I'm not eating?

Tenzin: Every time the bus...bus every two hours stop. They know, in the bus it's too hot. The thing is even the Indian villagers...very poor. Their house is like uh...animal uh...shelter? The house...roof is grass and look so poor...

Dolma: Wait...

Tenzin: ...but everywhere they have water tap.

Dolma: Oh.

Tenzin: ...in front of their house...has water tap. That make me surprised...wow...that's something because in those areas, it's really hot. People lay down under the tree and sitting under the tree so that's much cooler...of course no air condition...their house look so poor...

Dolma: This was what part?

Tenzin: And the people look so skinny, very skinny...

Dolma: Did anyone try to...

Tenzin: Hands and legs are really skinny...

Dolma: Did they look at you or stare at you because you're different?

Tenzin: Oh yea, we're different. Of course...

Dolma: Was there ever a point during the journey where you thought that... "oh, this is it, I don't think I can make it" ...did you ever feel that way?

Tenzin: No, I never uh...stop hope...never stop.

Dolma: What kept you--

Tenzin: If you're not there maybe...maybe easily give up...something.

Dolma: But because you had...

Tenzin: So...because I have a little baby...I need to live...

Dolma: (comments) 5-month-old baby...

Tenzin: ...I need to take responsibility.

Dolma: You have to make it.

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: Well, good thing I was there. So do you think the treatment of Tibetans in India by India natives is better, worse or the same than the treatment of Tibetans by Chinese natives?

Tenzin: I don't know. Uh, the government is really good, I think.

Dolma: But the people get jealous?

Dolma: So, you leave Tibet, you're in Nepal, and then from Nepal, you're on a bus to India. What part of India are you in?

Tenzin: Uh...northern India.

Dolma: Northern India...

Tenzin: Himachel.

Dolma: So, May 4<sup>th</sup> you arrive in India, what's the first thing you do in India?

Tenzin: I uh...started study English.

Dolma: At this time, did you have money?

Tenzin: No.

Dolma: Where were you staying?

Tenzin: I have some money. When we got in Dharamsala, the... (speaks Tibetan)...security office? Since Pala is connected to the office, they know him...[because] of that they give us rent...some money...for rent.

Dolma: And how long would that last you?

Tenzin: That last uh...after 3 months, Pala (her husband/my father) came so they keep uh...give us rent...all the way...until we started the restaurant.

Dolma: Oh, so how long was that?

Tenzin: (counting) 3 years.

Dolma: So, they paid for your rent for 3 years?

Tenzin: Yea, 3 years.

Dolma: All because...was that all because of Pala's involvement with the Tibetan government?

Tenzin: Yea...yea yea

Dolma: And then so...for three years, what did you guys do? Were you working?

Tenzin: When we got there?

Dolma: Yea.

Tenzin: I said I...

Dolma: ...learned English.

Tenzin: Took English, I carry you in class and you make noise all the time (mimicking baby noises "da da da da da da")

Dolma: Interrupt? No...contribute, contribute to the class

Tenzin: And the teacher was so nice, he doesn't mad and sometimes he play with you.

Dolma: So...we already talked about this in the car but I want to record it this time so how did Pala escape?

Tenzin: When Pala escape...maybe...the Chinese government knew that I escaped Tibet. Once they knew, then Pala is more...

Dolma: Under more surveillance?

Tenzin: Yea, so...

Dolma: So they had to devise a very strategic plan?

Tenzin: Yea, during his summer vacation, he planned to escape so then he got a bus ticket to Repkong from Xining. His friend help him get a train to Lhasa. Yea, he's in Xining city so he pretend going to Repkong. He got a bus ticket, got on bus, and went to uh...pretend he went to Repkong and then on the way he got off and turn back to Xining. He changed his clothes, and everything look different.

Dolma: He shaved his head right?

Tenzin: Yea, he shave his hair and then he took the train to Kurmo. And from Kurmo, take a bus. There's no more train at the time. You have to take bus to Lhasa. That's way he escaped. In Lhasa, he pretend he's a monk.

Dolma: (chuckles) he pretended to be a monk?

Tenzin: He shaved, he wearing a red shirt so uh...(laughs)...looks like a monk. Then in Lhasa, he prepared to escape to India for a few days...maybe more than 10 days. Of course, need some prepare. Of course, you don't get out much...need to hide.

Dolma: Instead of walking, he didn't walk at all right? What did he do?

Tenzin: He walk couple hours...

Dolma: Yea, but he didn't have to take the two-week walking journey over the Himalayas, how did he bypass that?

Tenzin: (begins speaking Tibetan and then back to English) So, he got a monk's travel document. He use somebody else's travel document and they look a little same and then at Dam (place) a business person put him in a garlic truck so he was hiding in garlic...

Dolma: For how many days?

Tenzin: I don't know...uh...not days...maybe one day...two days...something like that.

Dolma: The garlic is probably really good for his health

Tenzin: No, he said it's really hard to breathe...sun heat the garlic and he is beneath the garlic.

Dolma: (gasps) that must've burned...

Tenzin: ...so it's hard to breathe he said.

Dolma: So then...how did you end up coming to America?

Tenzin: Oh, that's uh...when we are there, I keep taking the class...English class. I have two children to take care, I have restaurant, still I keep the English class...

Dolma: That paid off, didn't it?

Tenzin: I had a very busy time...you have to get up early in the morning 5 o'clock and prepare all the food and then uh...lunch is busiest time. It start like 11:30, start busy. Then, afternoon, I have English class. Usually, I don't get time to eat lunch. Get something in my hand and eat...

Dolma: Oh, how long did you do that?

Tenzin: 97, 98, 99...2 years.

Dolma: So then, going back to how you got here...so because you were taking English classes and because at this time you were fluent in English?

Tenzin: Not fluent...

Dolma: But proficient enough?



Tenzin: We uh...one of our friends say RFA hiring people.

Dolma: What does RFA stand for?

Tenzin: What do you mean stand for...stand for Radio Free Asia.

Dolma: Radio Free Asia.

Tenzin: (repeats after Dolma) Radio Free Asia. Yea, and then one day, I applied and then after one month or two months... I don't remember how long. We got notice that this day...going...you have exam for about my knowledge in Tibetan, English, and also see if I can write a news story. So they let us...me...uh [write] a news story. They give me the information and let me write a story. And also they give me something in, uh, news, in English and write down in Tibetan. Then...after some time...hired.

Dolma: Yay...

Tenzin: At that time, I didn't happy.

Dolma: You weren't happy?

Tenzin: Yea.

Dolma: That you were hired?

Tenzin: I cannot take you guys.

Dolma: Oh...

Tenzin: So I need to go...by myself. At that time, you were six years old. Dhasang (son) was four years old. 1999...July...so Dhasang...

Dolma: Dhasang just turned four...I was five still, I mean, yea turning six.

Tenzin: Turning...yea. So, we went to New Delhi. We...you guys take me with the car to the airport and that was uh, 12--then after one year, you guys came here. I thought you would grow bigger and then finally I saw you're smaller!

Dolma: Smaller?

Tenzin: Thinner, and darker...face...your skins are darker and thinner and it's not...

Dolma: Healthier.

Tenzin: Not healthier...and that make me [think]...what happened?

Dolma: I know I got lice (laughs)...I mean that was like what, Pala's first time taking care of two kids. I don't think he knew how to take care of us like you did.

Tenzin: Oh yea...

Dolma: So...do you think you'll ever go back to Tibet?

Tenzin: Yea, if get a chance.

Dolma: Do you think it'll be okay to go back? Will you feel safe?

Tenzin: I don't know. I think I'm okay...because since U.S. citizen.

Dolma: U.S. citizen and you work for a U.S. agency funded...and right now you're a radio news broadcaster for Radio Free Asia and you've been working with them since 1999.

Tenzin: (same time) ...1999

Dolma: So, before we conclude this interview, is there anything you would like to share?

Tenzin: Right now, I can't remember anything...I'm sleepy and tired.

Dolma: Well, this concludes our three-hour interview.

Tenzin: Wow...

Dolma: Thank you very much for your time.

END Audio "6 Dolma"