

Anonymous Interview

(The Interviewer's name is withheld by request.)

Tibetan Refugee Reception Center

Dharamsala, India

23 June 2011

Interviewer: Katie Bruick

:00 Anonymous, Tibetan Reception Center

:10 When were you born?

He was born in the year 1984.

:23 Where were you born?

He was born in Kham(....) (:38)

:42 Do you have brothers and sisters?

Yeah he had brothers and sisters.

:53 Were your parents born in Tibet?

Yeah, they were born in Tibet.

1:01 How did they make their living?

They are a nomadic family.

1:10 Does your family still live in Tibet?

They are still in Tibet.

1:19 Why did you leave Tibet?

One thing was that he was not very happy under the Chinese oppression. The second thing was they do not have the proper environment to study Tibetan religion, Tibetan culture, and

language like that. Third is he wanted to come to India to study all the traditional Tibetan education and learn so that later he hopes he can serve his own country, Tibet and the Tibetan people.

2:15 Could you describe how the Chinese authorities in Tibet affected your life?

He joined Drepung monastery in Tibet in the year 2006 and in the year 2008 he was expelled from the monastery and sent to his village in Kham(....)(3:32). Then even in his village, the Chinese always keep him under observation no matter what he did. He was not allowed to go out of his village. He had no freedom of movement.

3:50 Do you still have contact with your family in Tibet?

After reaching Dharamsala he contacted his family in Tibet but he is not going to contact them again and again because he heard that the Chinese might be tracking their sound and like that and they are making lots of trouble for their family back in Tibet.

4:36 Could you describe the education you received in Tibet before entering the monastery?

He never had the opportunity to go to school back in Tibet. He was helping his family until age of 17. Then after that he joined the monastery.

5:20 Did the Chinese have any effect on what you learned when you were in the monastery?

One thing is that the Chinese did not allow someone who was below 18 years old to join the monastery, and second thing is they can only enroll a limited number of monks to the monastery.

6:18 Could you describe your journey leaving Tibet?

When he left Tibet in February 2010, on the Tibetan calendar, he left from his(7:15) to Lhasa. Then he was in Lhasa for 11 months to find a proper guide to take him to Nepal because he heard that many guides had been fooling them after getting their fees. They were trying to be really good at picking but when they got the fees they do not feel liable. So in this way he was trying to find a reliable guide and it took him 11 months in Lhasa. Then after that he had his brother with him and they were given 28 thousand Chinese yen. They were given 40 thousand Chinese yen plus 44 thousand Chinese yen for the guide for him and his brother to take them to Nepal.

8:30 Did your guide end up being reliable?

Yeah their guide was quite reliable and they were brought to Nepal in 3 nights and 2 days. It took 3 nights and 2 days to reach the Katmandu reception center with the help of their guide.

9:25 Were there any difficulties on your journey from Tibet?

[BEGINNING OF SECOND VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS1]

1:00 He said he had been complete vegetarian for more than 2 years because of this his health is quite weak. On the way when they escaped there was some time when they have to go at a very fast pace. In that time he could not follow his friends that were with him. When he could not follow them they have to carry him on their backs. Then he said no you all have to keep moving, you do not worry about me because maybe I will be able to follow you or maybe I will be caught by Chinese police but they did not listen to him and they kept helping him. They carried him on their backs and in this way they faced little problems. They faced little problems on the way.

1:55 What was your mental state like after leaving Tibet?

When he reached the Katmandu reception center he felt a very un-expressable happiness because after seeing a picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan flags he was very happy then.

2:52 Have you been able to have an audience with the Dalai Lama yet?

He has not had the audience yet.

3:05 If you feel comfortable could you tell me why you would like to have your face hidden from the camera?

One reason is that he has his family back in Tibet. If the Chinese authorities knew about him being in India, then he is worried that they might make trouble with his family back in Tibet. The second thing is he came to India to get the proper religious traditional studies and modern studies. If he could ever succeed in his dream, then he wants to go back to Tibet and he wants to promote his own education to the Tibetan people inside Tibet. Showing his face to the camera might make trouble with his dreams because there are a lot of restrictions under the Chinese government for people who have been educated or been to exile.

4:51 Could you specify the trouble you might receive from the Chinese authorities? (To translator: if they could find his face)

One reason is that in the year 2005 he tried to escape to India, but unfortunately he was caught. They took the signature from his family and then he was released. Again in March 2008 he participated in a peaceful protest against the Chinese government. At that time, he was put in prison and was released after getting signature from his family saying that they would take all the responsibility that later he will not make such a disturbance to the higher authorities. Again if he was seen in the picture, then they might make trouble for his family, like they

keep interrogating them or they might be put in prison. Yeah, this is the reason. Second if his picture was seen by the Chinese authorities, then when he goes back to Tibet after completing his education they might again arrest him and put him in prison and torture him.

7:40 Could you explain to me what happened after you were caught trying to escape in 2005?

[BEGINNING OF THIRD VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS2]

1:40 When he was first arrested in 2005 from the ... (1:43) center in Tibet ... (1:47) He was put in that prison and he was not given proper food. They were treated without any respect; they were treated like dogs. They were given very limited food, and none of it was very nutritious. Later they were transferred to (2:06) prison, and they were put in labor camp. They were walled in; they were digging a very high wall. They were put in a labor camp. There was one 17 years old boy with him at that time who was also arrested. Then that boy got very sick but the Chinese authorities did not treat him well. They were put in prison for 6 months and later with a signature and a responsibility form, his family got him released, but that small boy, this teenage boy, became very serious and was left in bad form for 20 days like that. Then later they tried to take him by foot to the bigger hospital in their city but unfortunately that boy died.

3:10 Could you explain the aftermath of the 2008 protests?

On 10 March 2008 in the afternoon, all the monks from Drepung monastery voluntarily assembled and divided into 3 groups. They started peacefully protesting against the Chinese government. At that time the high Lamas from the Drepung monastery requested that they not do this demonstration but they did not listen to them. Then they did not have a leader. They voluntarily did the protest. From 2 o'clock in the afternoon to midnight, 12 o'clock, they were doing their peaceful protests

against the Chinese government. Then around 12 o'clock the Chinese armed forces came to stop them.

6:11 What did the Chinese armed forces do to the peaceful protestors?

[BEGINNING OF FOURTH VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS3]

:57 On the first day, the Chinese police asked the monks to give their reason for doing the peaceful protest. At that time there were three groups and their group is very near to the Chinese police. Then they said, "Why are we monks of Drepung monastery not allowed to do the proper religious practice?" because they had made a new policy in 2008 that limited the numbers of monks in jobs and about having to be the age of 18 can to join the monastery. These were the sort of policies they have made. "And what is the reason for that? Because Drepung monastery is the main center for religious studies. Also there are lots of Chinese people migrating into Tibet. Why all these things? Because Chinese people can migrate into Tibet but we Tibetans in our own country are not allowed to practice religious freedom. What is the reason for that?" They have asked the Chinese police. What, yeah.

[TIBETAN]

3:48 Another reason is that the Chinese government is making lots of propaganda that they were developing Tibet and they were developing an infrastructure and everything in the monastery, but you can see that the present situation of Drepung monastery. Then another reason is that those who are really good in like education, they are trying to eliminate all the intellectual scholars from the monastery. This is all the reason that they came to protest. During their first day of protests to the Chinese government the Chinese armed forces did nothing to their group but then they heard that the other two groups had been kicked or beaten. They had beaten the helper of the high lamas from their monastery.

5:13 Can you explain to me your imprisonment, the second time, after the peaceful protest in 2008?

In the beginning they were kept in the monastery for 15 days and at that time they faced problems because all the rations and food they had been finished and they were not allowed to go outside to buy things. They faced a little bit of problems like that. Then after 15 days they were taken to(7:09) prison, then they were using very bad words against them. Then from there they were transferred to(7:24) and at that time they were saying that the main reason for their protest was because of instructions from the government in exile government. They were saying such words to them.

[TIBETAN]

8:39 They were saying that because the Drepung monastery was the main leader of this peaceful protest; they initiated this protest against the Chinese government. They have to accept this because of all the shops are being burned. They are showing this on television, all the shops are burnt and the men are carrying knives and fighting among them. They were destroying all the shops, but this sort of situation is being done by the Chinese people or Chinese armies themselves. They were wearing Tibetan traditional dress and they were doing this by themselves. Then they were putting all the blame on the Tibetan monks; they were trying to convince that they did all these things.

[BEGINNING OF FIFTH VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS4]

:01 Besides the accusations from the Chinese when you were in prison, what other things would they say to you?

He said he personally was not interrogated when he was put in prison cell but at that time there were more than 30 monks in his cell. Then he saw one of his seniors being taken for

interrogation. At that time he was interrogated that the main lama the(1:37) is one of the high lama from Drepung monastery but in prison nobody knows where they put him. That time he was interrogated the how the usually, no, the(1:48) Lama tried to advise the monks, he's giving instruction for this political protest or something like that. He was interrogated like that at the time.

2:08 Did you ever see or experience any physical abuse when you were imprisoned?

Okay, he personally did not face much beating or torture from the Chinese police, but he heard that when monks were transferred to other cells they were dragged and kicked with the beatings. They were not allowed to take their money or their things and they were not allowed to take their clothes with them. This happened, he heard.

3:20 What was your emotional state like in prison?

He was once arrested in 2005 and again he was arrested during the situation inside Tibet in 2008. When they were kept in the monastery for 15 days, the Chinese disconnected all their telephone lines and everything. When they were put in prison for 4 months he was worried how might be the situation outside prison? What will happen to them later? Thinking of that made him a bit worried.

5:25 What has helped consol you in light of your struggles in life? What has helped consol him in time of his struggles? What has calmed him?

In Buddhism when he faces some problem there is a solution to solve his problem then it is solved. But when there is no way to solve a problem (interrupting banging noise)

[BEGINNING OF SIXTH VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS5]

:02 In Buddhism when you face problem, if there is solution then we do not have to worry. When there is no solution for the problem then we have to be tolerant with the problem and consol our heart to calm down. He practices that.

:26 How has your life been with the other refugees since you have come to the reception center?

When he first reached the reception center, he could not express his feeling because he has been trying to escape since 2005. Then this year he could succeed in his trip. When he reached here he was very impressed and very happy to see this facility has been given and supported by the USA and people from other countries and the world. He could not express his feeling of happiness.

2:01 What is your life plan after you leave the reception center?

After he complete his paper and his audience, then he will join the sister monastery in South India.

2:25 Do you hope to return to Tibet or bring your family into India?

It depends on his education and after he joins the sister monastery. He said if he could ever have a really good education or a good practice, a good religious education then....

[BEGINNING OF SEVENTH VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS6]

:05 Do you plan on engaging in any sort of political activity involved in raising awareness about Tibet's struggle for freedom while in India?

His main reason to be in exile is to get his best modern and traditional education. Once he completes that then he wants to go back to Tibet because even in Tibet many Tibetans are not aware of the situation inside Tibet. There is a lot of difficulty in language problems like when they listen to the ..(2:29) of Free

Asia and the Voice of America they hardly understand their language because Tibetan language has many different dialects. In this way they tried to educate the other Tibetan people inside Tibet. This is a main aim for him.

2:50 What are your thoughts on the differing Tibetan political opinions about the movement for Free Tibet, including autonomy and independence. What is his opinion of the movement of Free Tibet? Autonomy? Independence? Or something?

He supports the Middle Way approach. When he was in Drepung monastery they protested not because they do not want to stay under the Chinese authority, they were making it clear that their propaganda, the Chinese propaganda is not realistic about inside of Tibet. They make lots of propaganda about developing Tibet and they make propaganda that they have religious freedom. But in reality, they do not have such freedoms, improvement or development for the Tibetan people. For that reason they were peacefully demonstrating against the Chinese government, not because they don't want to stay under the Chinese authority. From that time he supported Middle Way approach.

4:56 Do you believe that non-violence can Free Tibet?

He believes in nonviolence because the nonviolence approach is receiving lots of support from the world. The Tibetan people inside are also hoping for that because of the truth, we have truth and nonviolence. This will help us to get our freedom or the Middle Way approach.

6:15 What is your reaction to His Holiness' recent retirement from political office?

Actually he heard about His Holiness' giving them complete democracy and proper democracy for the Tibetan people. Then this time he said practice it completely because he feels that

providing complete democracy to the Tibetan people is a good idea.

7:27 Do you believe that His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama will ever return to Tibet?

[BEGINNING OF FINAL VIDEO SEGMENT: ANONYMOUS 7]

:03 Yes, he believes that one day His Holiness will return to Tibet.

:07 Do you have a message for the Chinese authorities?

He wants to say that we have high Tibetan lamas, for example the monk(2:05) from his monastery, Drepung monastery, who are concerned for both Tibetan and Chinese people in Tibet. The Chinese government has tried to eliminate or tried to, we can say kidnap, because we do not know about them, so he wants to tell Chinese government to respect all these High Lamas and please release all these people in prison for no reason. This is the message he wants to convey to the Chinese government.

3:05 Do you have anything else that you want to say in this interview that I might have missed? Anything he would like to add?

He wants to add that one of his prison mates he met in 2005, when he had tried to escape, was a 17 year old boy and because of the Chinese not treating him well when he was sick in prison, that boy died. And at ...(4:48) prison when he was again arrested in 2008 one monks also died. He wants to give the message that we still have lots of Tibetan political prisoners inside Chinese prison, and he urges them to release all of them, not to treat them badly in prison and to release them as soon as possible.

5:15 Myself and all of us would just like to say thank you so much for your time and for your courage and it's been a great honor to talk to you.

Thank you very much. Thank you.