Translator's Introduction

WHAT WENT ON in Tibet during the twenty years of Maoist rule between 1959 and 1979 is still only vaguely known to the outside world, and even to most Tibetans born in exile. The history of the period has yet to be written in depth, and the memories of those who lived through it are one of the few available sources. Tubten Khétsun's autobiography is so vividly self-explanatory that further introduction seems superfluous, but it is hoped that a brief survey of the historical background and related literature may be of service to the reader.

History

The modern history of Tibet is usually thought to have begun with the British invasion of 1904, the subsequent missions of reconquest by Sichuanese and imperial troops from 1905 to 1911, the final collapse of the Manchu empire in 1911, the return of His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama from exile, and the reestablishment of a national government in 1913. There followed a brief era of top-down reform, initiated by the Dalai Lama, who sought to introduce the modern institutions needed to guarantee the country's integrity, chiefly a national army. This involved dependence on British India, the former enemy, which had brokered unsuccessful negotiations on Tibet's status with Nationalist China at Simla in 1913, and intervened again when British-trained and -equipped Tibetan troops repulsed Sichuanese advances in 1917–18. Western influence and moves toward modern statehood were opposed, however, by the conservative establishment, particularly the great monasteries, unable to countenance an end to ecclesiastical power and

international isolationism, and while trade and communication with India inevitably broadened Tibet's exposure to modernity, the reformist agenda was largely stifled. It also provoked a rift in 1923 between the Lhasa government and the Panchen Lama's court at Shika-tsé (historically rival provinces) that was to undermine national unity.

Shortly before his premature death in 1933, the Dalai Lama warned his subjects that Tibet would suffer the same fate as Mongolia, where Buddhist monasteries had been destroyed wholesale by Communist troops, unless they were able to defend themselves. The regency governments that ruled the country for the next seventeen years (Reteng Rinpoché 1934–41, Takdra Rinpoché 1941–50) showed no such initiative, and were characterized by factionalism, intolerance, and corruption. The former's main achievement by far in office was overseeing the search for the infant Fourteenth Dalai Lama (who was found in the far northeast, in a Tibetan village on the traditional border with China) and his enthronement in Lhasa at the age of five (1940).

For Chinese Nationalists and Communists alike, the multinational Chinese republic including Tibet, east Turkestan, and Mongolia was (indeed still is) an unquestionable goal, and colonization of these countries was part of the sacred duty of reclaiming territory lost to foreign imperialist powers in the late Manchu era. During the 1930s, the Hui Muslim warlords of Xining enforced military control over much of northeastern Tibet, while the Sichuan warlords held firmly onto the eastern half of Kham province (east of the Yangtse river) and laid claim to the western half. These regions were notionally constituted by the Nanking government as Chinese provinces called "Qinghai" (the Tibetan regions of Amdo, Golok, Tsaidam, and Nangchen), for which there was some Manchu administrative precedent, and "Xikang" (most of Kham, Powo, and Kongpo), which had no such precedent and was abandoned by the Communists soon after coming to power.

The British Government of India reestablished a permanent diplomatic mission in Lhasa in 1936, trade between the two countries boomed, noble families sent their children to school in India, Tibetans in Lhasa sipped sweet tea and hummed songs from the latest Bombay films, but Tibet was never more than peripheral to British imperial interests, which in any case were history once India gained independence in 1947. As elsewhere in decolonizing Asia, the former colonial power's role was taken up by the United States, which extended discreet diplomatic support to the Lhasa government and went as far as training and equipping Khampa resistance fighters in the 1950s, but these interventions were essentially opportunistic, and it is most

unlikely that the kind of military and political commitment needed to support a real resistance war was ever seriously considered in Washington. For the new government of independent India, warm relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) were essential to the nonaligned movement of developing countries, and it was ready to concede Tibet as a Chinese sphere of interest, provided that local autonomy was respected. Even so, there was consternation at the speed with which the People's Liberation Army (PLA) took over the country and pushed into its Himalayan borders.

The occupation of Tibet was led by the southwest command of the PLA in the summer of 1950. The main advance followed the highway from Dartsédo to Kandze, across the Yangtse and on to Chamdo, seat of the Lhasa government's eastern commissioner, which fell with little resistance in October. The Beijing government then called on Lhasa to send delegates for talks on "Peaceful Liberation," undertaking to halt the military advance while these took place. The Tibetan delegates were presented with a Seventeen-Point Agreement stating that all Tibet was Chinese territory, that the Tibetan government should allow Chinese troops to enter the country unopposed, but the traditional government would remain in place with limited powers of administration alongside the regional military authority. It was made clear that the alternative was invasion on less benign terms. Advance units of the Sichuan-based armies under the southwest command started to reach Lhasa in summer 1951 and were joined several months later by an army under the northwest command that had advanced through western Qinghai and Nakchu-ka, laying the route of Tibet's main supply line (later highway, and now railway) as they went.

Communist rule in Tibet can be periodized quite simply as follows: Liberal 1950–58, Maoist 1959–79, Liberal 1980–89, each phase turning on a pivotal event: the 1959 uprising, the 1979 reforms in China, the 1989 protest movement. A different term might be needed to describe the period 1990 to the present (economic privatization, political repression, and hyperconstructionism), but that is not our concern here, for this book is mainly about the second phase.

In the first phase, 1950–58, PLA soldiers had orders to win over the population, not to impose on them or offend their beliefs. The United Front had exceptional authorization and funding to co-opt former nobles and religious figures, many children of the former elite were sent for schooling in mainland China, model schools and hospitals were built, "poor families" were given cash handouts, children were given sweets. Still, the arrival of thousands of troops in Lhasa and other towns led to huge

economic inflation and political encroachment, which was not popular. The military authorities insisted that the Tibetan government arrest leaders of protest groups in Lhasa and Shika-tsé, and in 1952 requested the prime minister's resignation because they found him too outspoken. This approach was "liberal" only in the context of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Nationality policy, which argued that Tibet's "special characteristics" should be respected and that efforts should be made to build up a local cadre force capable of managing regional affairs. At that time, for example, Tibet was allowed its own time zone (two hours behind Beijing time; it was withdrawn in 1959 and never reinstated). As in other colonial regimes, quite a few of the early Communist administrators were earnest idealists seeking to uplift what they saw as a hopelessly backward society, although most fell victim to the 1957–58 Antirightist campaign or the "cleansing" campaigns of the early 1960s.

In 1956 a committee was established, including members of the now largely symbolic Tibetan government, to prepare for an "autonomous region" comprising central and western Tibet and western Kham, the eastern half of the country having been divided into "autonomous prefectures" in four neighboring Chinese provinces. The Dalai Lama and his entourage took the opportunity of a Buddhist anniversary to visit India, apparently with a view to eliciting Indian pressure on the PRC to respect Tibet's autonomy. The attempt was unsuccessful, though serious enough for foreign minister Chou Enlai to stage an unscheduled appearance in Delhi, and His Holiness elected to return the following year, against the better judgment of many of his subjects. Chinese leaders had repeatedly offered assurances that socialist reforms (collectivization, expropriation, and persecution of "class enemies") would not be forced on Tibet, but this did not apply to eastern areas outside the "autonomous region," where their direct imposition sparked a war of resistance and brutal counterinsurgency. This continued throughout 1957, and worsened in 1958 when nomadic areas across eastern Tibet became affected. Guerrilla resistance prompted military assaults on civilian populations, and refugees flooded into Lhasa. These developments coincided with the rise of Maoism at the center, the purge of "rightist" officials, and the launch of the Great Leap Forward. As armed insurgency spread to central Tibet, the military authorities prepared to respond in full measure, and the liberal policy phase was at an end.

The turning point came in March 1959, when rumors that the Dalai Lama was to visit the Chinese army camp in Lhasa unaccompanied drew large crowds to gather outside the walls of the Summer Palace (*Nor bu gling ka*),

denounce the senior ministers as collaborators, and appoint their own guards for his protection. In the chaos of the following days, as the agitated public held demonstrations and passed resolutions, the Dalai Lama and his immediate entourage fled through rebel-held territory to the Indian border, where he was granted exile. The PLA garrison waited nearly a week before launching an artillery barrage, then moved into the city to restore order. Across central Tibet, tens of thousands were killed, tens of thousands fled as best they could through the Himalayan passes into India, and hundreds of thousands were arrested as "counterrevolutionaries" over the following months, most of whom were forced to labor in prison camps for the next two decades, if they survived that long.

The authorities lost no time in imposing "Democratic Reform" throughout the country; monasteries were disbanded and closed, castles and estates were looted and vandalized, former nobles and land owners were subjected to "class struggle" and their property confiscated. The population was registered, categorized by class, and reorganized into local committees run by newly recruited Tibetan officials, which dictated much of the people's everyday lives and held compulsory political reeducation meetings most evenings. One group of former nobles and lamas, so-called "progressives" who had gone over to the Communist Party in the 1950s and denounced the uprising, were rewarded with government salaries and not dispossessed during Democratic Reform. The Shika-tsé faction, whose quarrel with Lhasa had been well exploited by Beijing, also denounced the uprising and retained their privileges. The campaign was followed by another, called "Reexamination" (1960), which broadened the criteria for including individuals in the persecuted upper-class categories and intensified the inquisition into hidden weapons and property.

In 1961 there was a slight relaxation, corresponding with Liu Shaoqi's rise to power at the center; class categorization was revised and wronged individuals were given compensation, some private trade was permitted, and key Tibetan monuments were given state protection. China was then in the grip of its worst-ever famine, induced by three years of disastrous Maoist policies, and many thousands of Tibetans inside and outside prison also died of starvation in those years, but Tibet was run by the military, and official personnel and their dependents continued to eat as usual. Thus internal economic and humanitarian crisis did not prevent the PRC from inviting a border war with India in summer 1962, fighting simultaneously on two fronts at opposite ends of the Himalaya and winning convincingly. The victory set the seal on China's control of Tibet, led to the militarization

of the Indian Himalaya, and dealt Sino-Indian relations a blow from which they have yet to recover.

The relaxation was soon over, and as Mao Zedong swiftly regained control of the Party leadership, more punitive campaigns were launched in Tibet (like the "Three Big Educations" and "Four Cleanups"). The main Tibetan victim of Mao's new antirightist purge was the Panchen Lama, the most senior religious figure still in Tibet, whom the Party had been grooming as a figurehead, but who had dared to speak out during the brief premiership of Liu Shaoqi, against the oppressive rule of Tibetan areas since the uprising. His denunciation and imprisonment in 1964 were accompanied by a harsh campaign aimed at rooting out "little Panchens" in society at large. In 1965 the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was finally inaugurated, the first flagship projects like the Lhasa airport and Ba-yi yarn factory were completed, and the onerous commune system began to be introduced in rural areas.

Then came the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a radical campaign launched by Mao to unseat suspected opponents in the leadership that turned into a violent and chaotic mass inquisition. With its launch in Tibet in September 1966, Party activists and Red Guard youth militia set about desecrating whatever remained of the country's heritage, subjected formerly "progressive" Tibetan officials and other non-Maoist figures of authority to public humiliation, and forced everyone else to destroy anything associated with the "old society," from statues and books to clothing and eating utensils. For most of the next three years, people lived in terror as Red Guard factions battled for control of the administration, though the military remained sufficiently aloof to ensure the maintenance of essential networks and institutions. Things came to a head in the summer of 1969, when popular revolts broke out in several areas and the PLA moved to crush them and then reimpose order under martial law in 1970–71. Civilian government was reestablished under a unified Party committee in Lhasa, as in many homeland provinces, one committed to "leftist" goals and vigilant attention to security, and Tibet was governed accordingly until 1979. The eyewitness account of the political campaigns of the early 1970s in this book is perhaps the most detailed to have appeared.

The post-Maoist reforms in China began to have an impact in 1979: class labels were removed, prison camps were disbanded, the ban on visible manifestations of Tibetan culture was lifted, and representatives of the exile government were permitted to make an inspection tour. The third phase had begun, and was formalized by the visit to Lhasa in 1980 of Party Secretary Hu Yaobang, who issued the first and only apology by the central

government for decades of misrule and announced a package of reforms for the Tibetanization of the local administration and implementation of the autonomy measures envisaged by the 1979 constitution. Tibetan society began to revive with remarkable determination: monasteries and temples were restored, traditional crafts resumed, education and language reforms drafted, and tentative negotiations held with leaders in exile. These developments faced considerable resistance within the Party at both central and regional levels, however. Hu himself was forced from office in 1987, and nationalist protests in Lhasa led to the imposition of martial law in March 1989, months before it was imposed nationwide in response to the momentous pro-democracy movement of that year.

Autobiography

Autobiography as a means of narrating personal experience of historical events is, as far as we know, a recent development in Tibetan literature, at least when written by those of undistinguished status or achievement. Under the influence of modern literary forms, it has emerged largely as an attempt to register Tibetan perceptions of the catastrophic twentieth-century history of their country, often in contestation of official Chinese interpretations. The memoirs of aristocrats, lamas, and former government officials account for a good deal of what has been published in Tibetan; most recall personal involvement in the events of the second quarter of the century and evoke a way of life that came to an abrupt end with the 1959 flight into exile.[1] This group includes several memoirs by grandees of the exile community ghostwritten in English, and their description of pre-Communist Lhasa society, aimed at non-Tibetan readers, has become the most familiar.[2] These works have some parallel in the brief histories of noble families commissioned and published by various United Front presses in occupied Tibet, although virtually no voluntarily written Tibetan autobiography has been published inside the PRC.[3]

Tibetan accounts of life under Maoist rule after 1959 tend to be prison memoirs, many of which were originally ghostwritten in English. These include the stories of Palden Gyatso, an ordinary monk imprisoned for twenty years and then rearrested for political activism in the 1980s; Adhe Tapontsang, who spent twenty years in the labor camps of eastern Tibet; Ani Pa-chen, the Khampa princess who led resistance fighters against Communist troops and spent her adult life in prison; and Tendzin Choedrak, who survived twenty years in Chinese prisons to become a leading physician in

exile. The recent autobiography of Ba-pa Puntsok Wang-gyé is so far the only such work by a senior Communist official.[4]

One other group of memoirs is concerned with Tibetan armed resistance to the occupation in the 1950s and 1960s. Otherwise, there are precious few published accounts of life in eastern Tibet in that period.[5]

This Book

Tubten Khétsun was born into a respectable Lhasa family in 1941, and at the time of the 1959 uprising he had just completed the rigorous examinations that qualified young men of his background to enter government service. Caught up in the dramatic events of that year—the flight of the Dalai Lama and his court into exile, PLA bombardment of Lhasa and imposition of Democratic Reform in central Tibet—he was arrested along with thousands of others, and spent the next two decades being subjected to forced labor and political reeducation, first as a prisoner and then as a "class enemy" in civil society.

His memoir, first published in Tibetan in 1998 (*dKa' sdug 'og gi byung ba brjod pa*, Tibet Cultural Press, Dharamsala), has the quiet integrity of an everyman's tale, with a careful recollection of detail full of poignant images that give the reader something of the texture of everyday life. Unlike most of the material so far published in English, it is primarily addressed to the author's generation, recalling the sufferings undergone by all in restrained and occasionally humorous language, and has been well received as such by Tibetan readers in exile.

Khétsun-la gives his own vivid accounts of the main events, well known among Lhasa people, although seldom articulated in writing—the 1959 uprising, the 1966 launch of the Cultural Revolution, the mass executions of 1969–70, the destruction of Ganden monastery—and touches on others less known, the failed attempt to relocate the regional government in 1965, for instance, or the punitive "cleansing" campaigns of 1973–74. In particular, the narrative is peppered with tales of work accidents, such as the infamous Nga-chen landslide and the Tölung power station canal leak, which were evidently a common feature of socialist construction. There are fascinating asides on matters such as the fate of Lhasa's Muslim communities, public health, and rural taxation. There are dispassionate and insightful portraits of Tibetan collaborators. Ultimately, it is the evocation of the petty cruelties of Maoist rule that gives the book its power: the images of

barefoot prisoners carrying their guards piggyback across icy rivers, of local officials having "class enemies" lay out Chinese slogans in white pebbles on the mountainside, of soldiers burning harvested swamp grass for fun or hounding invalids from their beds in the middle of the night. Its publication in English will be a heavyweight addition to the literature, and I hope it will go some way toward fulfilling the author's intention.

I would like to express my thanks to those who have helped bring Tubten Khétsun's story to the English-reading world, especially Robbie Barnett of Columbia University, Tashi Tséring of the Amnye Machen Institute, and Warren Smith of Radio Free Asia for their encouragement, and our editor, Anne Routon, for her enthusiastic and diligent support.

Notes

1. E.g.: *rGas po'i lo rgyus 'bel gtam* by Khe smad bSod nams dbang 'dus (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982); *Mi tshe'i rba rlabs 'khrugs po* by bSam pho bsTan 'dzin don grub (Delhi: Privately published, 1987); *lHa'u rta ra'i lo rgyus* by rTse mgron bsTan 'dzin rgyal mtshan (Dharamsala: Tibet Cultural Press, 1988); *Mi tshe'i lo rgyus dang 'brel yod sna tshogs* by rNam sras gling dPal 'byor 'jigs med (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1988); *Rang gi lo rgyus lhad med rang byung zangs* by Shan kha ba 'Gyur med bsod nams stobs rgyal (Dharamsala: LTWA, 1990); *lHa rgya ri'i gdung rabs rin chen phreng ba* by Khri chen rNam rgyal rgya mtsho (Delhi: Paljor, 1999); *Mi tshe'i lo rgyus las 'phros pa'i gtam thabs byus snying stobs kyi 'bras bu* by Kun bde gling 'Od zer rgyal mtshan, 2 vols. (Mysore: Privately published, 2001); *The View from My Window: Memoirs of a Young Noble Girl's Days in Lhasa* by Tsha rong dByangs can sgrol dkar (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen, 2006). Numerous memoirs and short biographies of former nobles and officials in exile have appeared in the LTWA Oral History series (17 vols., 1996–2002). English titles of this type include *Born in Tibet* by Chogyam Trungpa (Boulder: Shambhala, 1977) (first published by Allen and Unwin, London, 1966); *My Life and Lives: The Story of a Tibetan Incarnation* by Rato Khyongla Rinpoche (New York: Dutton, 1977) and *In the Presence of My Enemies: Memoirs of Tibetan Nobleman Tsipon Shuguba* by Sumner Carnahan with Lama Kunga Rinpoche (Santa Fe: Heartsfire, 1998).

2. E.g.: Rinchen Dolma Taring, *Daughter of Tibet* (Boston: Wisdom, 1987) (first published by John Murray, London, 1970); Dorje Yudon Yuthok, *House of the Turquoise Roof* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1990); Jamyang Sakya, *Princess in the Land of Snow* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990); Jetsun Pema, *Tibet, My Story* (Shaftesbury, England: Element Books, 1997); Dundul Namgyal Tsarong, *In the Service of His Country: The Biography of*

Dasang Damdul Tsarong, Commander General of Tibet (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2000); Namgyal Lhamo Taklha, *Born in Lhasa* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2003).

3. E.g.: histories of the bShad sgra, Hor khang, lHa klu, lHa rgya ri, lHa smon, and lHa'u rta ra families in the Collected Materials on Tibetan Culture and History series published by the TAR Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) since the mid-1980s. Profiles of "patriotic" officials and religious figures appear regularly in official publications. *Gangs ri'i pang gi lang tsho'i rol mo* by gSer tshang Phun tshogs bkra shis (interpreter at the 1951 negotiations and later central government official) is apparently the first book-length memoir to have been published in Tibetan in the PRC (Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2003). Tashi Tsering's *The Struggle for Modern Tibet* (an autobiography coauthored by M. Goldstein and W. Siebenschuh, University of California Press, 1997) is perhaps the only such foreign publication to have enjoyed legal distribution there.

4. *Fire Under the Snow: The Testimony of a Tibetan Prisoner* by Palden Gyatso with Tsering Shakya (London: Harvill Press, 1998); *Ama Adhe: The Voice That Remembers* by Adhe Tapontsang with Joy Blakeslee (Boston: Wisdom, 2000) (a story already told in *A Strange Liberation* by David Patt [Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1993]); *Sorrow Mountain: The Journey of a Tibetan Warrior Nun* by Ani Pachen with Adelaide Donnelly (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2000); *The Rainbow Palace* by Tenzin Choedrak with Giles von Grassdorf (London: Bantam, 2000) (a story already told in *In Exile from the Land of Snows* by John Avedon [Boston: Wisdom, 1984]); *A Tibetan Revolutionary* by M. Goldstein, W. Siebenschuh, and Dawei Sherap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). There are other prison memoirs in English by Ke'u-tsang Lama Jampel Yeshe (*Memoirs of Keutsang Lama* [Delhi: Paljor, 2001]) and Losang Yonten (*The Fire of Hell* [Utrecht: Pantau, 2001]), and a series in Tibetan published by the Gu-chu-sum ex-political prisoners' association in Dharamsala. Accounts of life outside prison include Dhondub Choedon's *Life in the Red Flag People's Commune* (Dharamsala: H.H. the Dalai Lama's Information and Publicity Office, 1978), Rimbur Rinpoché's Tibetan-language autobiography (*dGe sdig las kyi myong ba* vol. 2 [Dharamsala: Tibet Cultural Press, 1989]), and *A Tailor's Tale* by Namsa Chenmo Gyeten Namgyal (in *Chöyang* [Department of Religion and Culture, Dharamsala] no. 6 [1994]: 28–63).

5. E.g.: Gonpo Tashi Andrugtsang, *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet* (Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, 1973); Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet: The Story of Aten and the Khampas' Fight for the Freedom of Their Country* (Boston: Wisdom, 1986) (first published as *Horseman in the Snow* by Tibet Information Office, Dharamsala, 1979); Kunga Samten Dewatsang, *Flight at the Cuckoo's Behest: Life and Times of a Tibetan Freedom Fighter* (Delhi: Paljor, 1997); *Gangs can bstan srung dang blangs dmag* by Phu pa Tshe ring stobs rgyas (Dharamsala: Nartang, 1998); the *bTsan rgol rgyal skyob* series by Tsong kha lHa

mo tshe ring (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen, 1992–2003); *Khrag gi mig chu* by rDo gcod dKon mchog bstan dar (Dharamsala: Privately published, 2002); *A mdo rDo thar gyi mi tshe mthong thos myong gi gtam* by Sa dkar 'Od zer rgya mtsho (Delhi: Privately published, 2002). Autobiographical accounts of ordinary life in eastern Tibet after 1959 include *Under the Blue Sky* by Hortsang Jigme (Dharamsala: Privately published, 1998), and *Six Stars with a Crooked Neck* by Pema Bhum (trans. Lauren Hartley) (Dharamsala: Tibet Times, 2001).

Preface

H omage to the supremely enlightened Tendzin Gyatso
A valokitesvara, embodiment of the compassion of all the buddhas
I ngenious propagator of the Buddhist teachings
L ord of the Buddhist polity and protector of the land of snows.

WITH THIS WORSHIPFUL invocation of the noble object of refuge, I shall begin. In 1959, after the brazen military invasion and subjugation of our independent country, Tibet, the land of snows, by the Red Chinese, some of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's disciples and followers among the peoples of the three great districts of Tibet fled as refugees to the neighboring land of India and other countries, while those of us who were less fortunate remained behind and experienced unbearable suffering under the rule of the aggressors. No single person could thoroughly or comprehensively describe the inexpressible destruction of the country and way of life of the Tibetan people by the Chinese invaders, but it is up to all those who experienced the various aspects of this [destruction] at different times and in different areas to tell whatever they know and recall. I had long wanted to write an account of my own story, but since the sufferings I had experienced were quite ordinary, I doubted if it would have much value. My own level of innate and acquired knowledge is extremely low, and thinking how difficult it would be to put my memories into writing, I remained hesitant and discouraged.

Then, during the commemoration of the March 10, 1959 uprising in 1988, His Holiness the Dalai Lama told us that concerning the situation of occupied Tibet, truth was on our side, but it was not enough for us to realize and know that only for ourselves. It was very important to put the truths of our experiences into writing. It would not do [just] to say that with the imposition of Chinese rule in Tibet in recent times, both our land and our people have been entirely decimated and those who actually experienced this have died. He said that these experiences should be articulated in a form that could be clearly seen and heard about, so that in future the world

could be shown, a clear historical record could be written, and the next generation could understand what happened. Therefore it was very important for us all to write a frank and direct account of the sufferings we had actually experienced individually, based on what we had seen and heard for ourselves, without depending on what others may have said. Otherwise, all who had actually experienced such suffering would gradually pass away, and without the direct, detailed transmission of their stories to the new generation, there was a danger that nothing more would be known about it in the future than the general statement that some great suffering took place at that time. We should try to produce many different written accounts of people's actual experience, whether in summary or in detail. A few people had already written accounts of their personal history and a few more were still being written; if the volume of such writings could be increased, particularly by those still in Tibet, that would be a good thing. Because of the impossibility of publishing and publicizing them inside Tibet, such writings could be brought out and published here in exile.

Hearing this advice, I made up my mind, because of my recurrent thoughts of writing as well as the opportunity of having arrived in a free country, to put down the story of how I lost my youth to suffering, an unadulterated and untiring account of what I heard and saw for myself, whatever I knew or could remember.

MEMORIES OF LIFE IN LHASA UNDER CHINESE RULE