CHAPTER 5

Imprisoned at the Tibet Military District Headquarters

AS SOON AS we got inside the gate of the army headquarters, a large group of soldiers gathered around the truck we were riding in and searched it, and many of the soldiers occupying the shelters around the entrance came out to take a look at us. Amazingly, their wives were also there, carrying their children on their backs and guns or grenades in front, glaring and shouting at us. It seemed that the guards who had brought us didn't know where we were to be taken, and we had to wait there for half an hour before a soldier was sent to accompany us. We came to realize that they had been preparing for conflict for a long time, for only ten days had passed between the invitation to His Holiness to visit the army camp and the outbreak of fighting, and they could not have set up such formidable defenses inside the camp in such a short space of time. I remember thinking that they must have long since resolved to impose their rule by force, on the pretext that the Tibetans had gone against the [Seventeen-Point] agreement. We were then taken to the prison, which was an extremely fearsome place even to look at, with two-story circular surveillance towers in the middle of the courtyard and at each corner of the boundary wall, iron grilles on all the cell windows, and coiled barbed wire, supposedly electrified, all around the windows and atop the boundary wall. It had been built in the place where the palace stewards used to go for picnics.

After we got down from the truck, the ropes binding our hands were untied and we were thoroughly searched and locked together in pairs with either handcuffs or leg irons, and allocated to [one of] several cells. I was handcuffed with my relative, the monk official Ngawang Chöpel, and put in cell number 11. That room was no more than two square yards in size, but there were already fourteen people inside. Since they were officials who

had been picked out of the crowd at the Norbu Lingka summer palace the night before, I knew that if they had not been executed, my uncle and elder brother should also be alive. We were packed in there day and night, squatting on our haunches, unable to stretch our arms or legs, and Ngawang Chöpel-la and I being chained together made movement even more difficult, especially going to the toilet.

Among those whom I can remember being locked in that cell were: an elderly Géshé (and *mTshan zhabs* or debate partner of a high lama) from Gya-rong, the cabinet secretary (*bKa' drung*) Gégyé-pa Tendzin Dorjé, the cabinet steward (*bKa' mgron*) Sarjung-sé, the lay officials (*Shod drung*) Kyarsip-pa and Wolön, and the palace cook (*gSol thab pa*) Losang Pelden. Among the officials who were arrested in Lhasa and brought there the following day, the elderly ex-cabinet minister (*bKa' zur*) Tashi-lingpa was put in our cell. He was already suffering from a nervous disorder (*Srog rlung*), but after the sudden, devastating events we had all been through, his illness worsened and he started babbling nonsense.

Those who brought us our food were the older prisoners already in Chinese military custody, including the Chinese trader mentioned earlier, from the "Beijing store" (*Bar 'khor Pad cing tshong khang*), married to the daughter of Gonjo Chösur-tsang. He had been arrested without warning the previous year on the way to Ganden with a group of others to see the Siu-tang festival and put in this prison, without anyone knowing where he had gone. He now brought us our food and drinking water, and commiserated with us a great deal. There was also a group of young vagabonds from the Lhasa area who had been caught stealing from the camp. At that time they fed us twice a day, mostly steamed corn buns with a little bit of fermented garlic leaf or fermented bean curd. It was passed into the room through a circular hole in the door. The prisoners were taken out to the toilet twice a day. Most of us who had been arrested at the summer palace were chained.

After three or four days, the soldiers went to each cell and called for the wounded prisoners to go for medical treatment at the hospital. We were tied together in line with a long rope and led off. As the gunfire in Lhasa had still not come to an end, we had to walk along in a ditch, and since some of us were quite unable to walk in any case, it took nearly two hours to get there. At the hospital were members of the Yabshi Langdün household, Chamdo Pakpa-la's mother, and others. Pakpa-la's mother couldn't help referring to us as "the killers of my son," although we were hardly to blame. Wangdü and Peljor of the Langdün family and a group of other Tibetans carrying arms who worked as officials for the Chinese came over to stare at us for their

amusement. As we were already defeated, wounded, and forlorn, having to suffer their infuriating behavior as well was miserable indeed. In any case, that day, far from receiving medical treatment, we were simply shouted at and then taken back.

About seven days later, we were summoned to what served as the prison meeting hall, where the Chinese officer with a harelip who was in charge of the prison told us through an interpreter that if we followed prison regulations he would release a group of us from our handcuffs and leg irons that day, but if we broke the regulations he would not only chain us but also tie us up, after which most of the younger prisoners had their chains removed. At that meeting, Mön-ling Dzasa was by my side and looking at the wound on my cheek; he asked me how it had happened. As I was replying, the harelipped Chinese officer heard me, and as a punishment for talking, he took the kind of elasticized wire he always carried in his hand and twisted it around my head two or three times. I felt more fear than pain, but after the meeting was over and I touched my palm to my skull, I could feel that a long swelling had come up, and that night it was extremely painful. However, it was a tremendous relief to get out of the handcuffs we had been wearing constantly. That was the first time during my ordeal that I was assaulted.

One day, a group of aristocrat collaborators including Tsi-pön Tsogowa Dondrup Tséring; Wangchuk Gyelpo, son of Rimshi Changlo-chen; Tétong Khen-chung Losang Namgyel; and Tsédrung Tendzin Trinlé came to visit and talk to those of us in custody. Tétong Khen-chung told us, "You people really took the wrong path. From the beginning, the People's government took the trouble to offer education and future prospects to all, but you didn't listen and have now committed the heinous crime of rebelling against the state. Even if you regret it now, it is no use. The way out for you now is to give clear answers when the People's government questions you about your crimes," and many other cruel things.

About two weeks later, we were led out of our cells and into the courtyard to attend a kind of meeting. There were about three hundred of us, lamas, government officials, staff of the great monasteries, and army officers who had been arrested at the Norbu Lingka, at the Potala, or in the city, and at that point we got some idea of who had died in the fighting or had fled. At that meeting they read a list of names and told those people to come forward. Most were officials below the fifth rank, as well as monastery staff and lamas in general. We were taken immediately to the Traldé Lingka, a park where the palace bursary workers used to hold picnics and where later there had been a carpet factory under joint Chinese and Tibetan manage-

ment, and we were accommodated temporarily in those buildings. There were about twelve rooms of different sizes, and I was one of seven people put in a one-pillar [one pillar = about 3 square yards] room in a Tibetan-style building. Compared to (*gNyer tshang gling kha / rGya'u gling kha*) [the TMD prison where we had been] previously, it was relaxed, although we had only the clothes on our backs and no bedding at all, and we had a hard time making it through the cold spring nights. They fed us and took us out to the toilet twice a day.

By that time, the fighting in Lhasa was over, there was no armed resistance left, and most males over the age of seventeen had been taken into custody. As for those of us who had gone armed to defend the Norbu Lingka, Potala, or Tsukla-khang temple, our relatives began trying to find out whether we were still alive by going to the area where we were supposed to have been on duty and examining the corpses there. If they did not recognize their loved ones, there was some hope that they were still alive, and they then went around all the different prisons, often spending many days standing outside the gates trying to confirm the presence of their relatives there, and if they were able to do so, bring bedding and food for them. If they were not able to confirm their presence, they could only hope that the missing people had escaped into exile. The large number of relatives gathered at the entrance to the military headquarters were given slips of paper confirming that we were held there, and in that way my family members too were able to bring me bedding and food. At that time, the soldiers would give us whatever food had been delivered, regardless of its quality or quantity, at the twice-daily feeding times. The bedding brought by our relatives was even more important, since we had none whatsoever.

Then they started questioning us. Since there were many of us, several groups of officials did the questioning, but mostly it was Chinese students who had been learning Tibetan at the Central Nationalities Institute in Beijing who acted as interpreters. To begin with, they questioned us only in outline: name, age, occupation since age eight, where we had been during the fighting and whether we had taken part, whether we were members of an underground organization, whether we had killed any PLA soldiers, how much we had fired guns, and so on. One day, all the lay officials had their hair ornaments removed and their long hair cut, and at the same time we all had to wait with our heads bowed in submission as they took frontal and profile photos of each of us, to be attached to prison documents.

While I was in the Traldé Lingka prison, there was a serious epidemic of stomach disease [dysentery?], which spread easily due to the poor medi-

cal care and nutrition and the lack of bedding to keep us warm, and those affected had continual diarrhea. The doors were locked so we could not get to the toilet, and they taunted us by saying that we should do it out of the window. When some of the slightly kinder Chinese soldiers were on duty, they would take us on extra visits to the toilet, but the bad ones, far from unlocking the door, would scold us harshly just for calling out. The sick prisoners would be obliged to soil their pants and even to use their clay eating bowls, the whole place was filled with the stench, and several died from the disease.

One day, all those being held at the Traldé Lingka were suddenly called out to attend a meeting, where we were addressed by Kung Ping, the official who had identified me at the summer palace. Holding a newspaper in his hands, he told us that the meeting had been called to give us the good news reported in the *People's Daily* that the heroic PLA fighters had thoroughly eliminated the Khampa reactionaries in Lho-ka. He also announced that although the Dalai Lama had now arrived in India after being kidnapped by the reactionary clique of upper-class Tibetans, He had always belonged to the "patriotic and progressive" faction. That really was good news. At that time, four or five aircraft were taking off every day and heading south, and imagining that they might be pursuing His Holiness, we were disturbed by thoughts of them endangering His life by dropping bombs and so on, so the announcement came as a relief.

We were being interrogated, but "struggle" sessions and such had not yet begun, and except for a few occasions, neither had forced labor. My first experience of prison labor was when one of Kundé-ling Dzasa's attendants called Gyelpo, who knew a little Chinese, and I were called to work as servants in the prison officials' kitchen. In the morning we had to sweep the area around the entrance and chop firewood. In the afternoon, they made us empty their toilet. Unlike in a Tibetan toilet, their shit was all red, and because the Chinese always ate garlic and pickled vegetables, the smell was so bad that as a free man I would not even have approached the toilet, but as prisoners, we had no choice but to empty it. Later, I remember thinking that I would rather die than continually have to do that job.

One day, they read another list of names, and most of us were put into a group called the "training brigade" (*sByong brdar ru khag*) and moved to the Tsédrung Lingka [next to the Traldé Lingka]. Except for one or two fourth-rank officials, we were all people of regular status; most of the higher-status people and those facing specific charges were being held at the Gyawu Lingka detention center (*lTa srung khang*). Unlike before, our cells at Tsédrung

Lingka were not locked, and during the day we were free to go to the toilet unaccompanied. In the morning, they took us to the river nearby to wash our hands and faces. Then we had to study the *Tibet Daily* [Party newspaper] and Communist texts for four hours every morning and four hours every afternoon. After the evening meal, we were put to work until it got dark, followed by a further study session until ten o'clock at night. The main work we were given at that time was dismantling the barricades that had been constructed in all the Chinese army camps before the outbreak of fighting. Thereby we confirmed not only that the Chinese had been stealthily preparing for a confrontation for some time, and that the hastily built barricades put up by our side at the Norbu Lingka were like child's play in comparison, but also how fortunate it was that the fighting had been brought to an end within three days. Had we attempted sudden attacks on the Chinese army bases, it would have amounted to suicide, for these barricades were so strong that none of us could have got past them.

About a month after our arrest, a group of us younger prisoners were taken out to work. Since we spent most of our time cooped up, going out to do various jobs was something of a relief, and moreover, leaving the army camp gave us some hope of meeting our relatives. The task we were given that day was to burn the unidentified corpses of those killed in the vicinity of the summer palace during the fighting. First we went to the west gate of the Norbu Lingka to exhume all the bodies that had been dumped in the trenches dug by the Amdo people who had been defending that gate, and loaded them onto a truck. Those bodies were not only unrecognizable but also completely rotten; even with two layers of cotton wrapped around our mouths, the smell made us retch. There was still a group of Lhasa women whose husbands or sons had been volunteers at the summer palace during the fighting and had not been seen since, and who had come looking for their bodies. They picked through the putrid corpses, turning them this way and that without caring about nausea or the stain of pollution, which demonstrates the very loving attitude that Tibetan women typically have toward their husbands, as well as the commonly stated claim that we Tibetans have a psychological attitude [to such things] quite distinct from other kinds of people. We gathered all the rotten corpses, as well as those scattered across the meadow south of the Norbu Lingka, on the south side of the Mani Lhakhang [chapel]. They amounted to four or five large piles, which we threw gasoline over and burned. The acrid smoke and stench of burning flesh hung in the air over the city, and the miserable thought occurred to me that had I been killed that day, I would now be one of those corpses.

Then our so-called training brigade was moved back to the central [TMD] prison at Gyawu Lingka, which was organized into inner and outer divisions. The high-ranking officials and special suspects were kept in the [inner] detention center. They were mostly in leg irons and were kept in locked cells even during the day. The members of our training brigade were put in buildings near the inner division that were not purpose-built cells and were usually occupied by the guards. It was only a short distance from there to the central prison, and because the prisoners in the inner division were brought out every morning to a round patch of open land by the entrance, where they walked around for exercise and there was a well where they could wash their hands and faces, I was able to see my uncle from a distance every morning. He had still not been released from his leg irons, and his hair and complexion seemed to get paler every day, but as a loving gesture of encouragement to my elder brother and me, he kept smiling.

Our training brigade was divided into three work teams (*Ru khag*), each subdivided into four groups (*Tshogs chung*) of 11 members, which adds up to about 150 people in total. We had the same kitchen and diet as the inner-division prisoners, but except for the rest day on Sundays, when we were fed twice, we were fed three times a day and regardless of the quality of the food, this was enough to fill our stomachs. We could also receive the food and clean clothes delivered by our family members. We could go to the toilet as we pleased during the day, but if we needed to go at night we had to call out in Chinese loudly enough for the guards to hear. Other than various tasks such as dismantling barricades or preparing vegetable gardens, we had no regular work allotted to us. The main requirement was that we should each make a statement admitting our participation in the uprising. But first of all, as a preparatory stage, for many days we were taught and urged to accept the Chinese government's version of history: that, due to the relations between Tibet and China starting with the invitation of Princess Wen-ch'eng Konjo [to marry the Tibetan king; seventh century] right up to the Qing dynasty, Tibet was indisputably an inseparable part of the glorious Chinese motherland. After that we were required to identify those who had participated in the uprising. Most of us said that at the very beginning of the fighting there had been gunfire and cannon fire on the west side of the Norbu Lingka, but we couldn't say exactly who might have been responsible. They told us repeatedly that this was not clear enough, and in the end we had to repeat what they said in their propaganda: that the uprising had been started by the upper-class Tibetan reactionaries in collusion with foreign imperialists and Indian counterrevolutionaries.

Then, the denunciation (*Byur bkag*) of our crimes began at a series of general meetings about the "policy of seizing the guilty," "leniency for those who confess and severity for those who refuse," [the need to] "atone for crimes with worthy deeds" (i.e., confession and informing on others), [and the declaration that] "those who were deceived by the reactionaries have done no wrong," and so on, where we once more had to give an account of our lives from age eight onward, and in particular, give a written statement of our involvement in the fighting, which was scrutinized and queried by the group leaders. The officials of each team also did their own investigations. The team-level officials set about investigating the serious situations and problematic cases, and their method of internal investigation and cross-examination was vicious and accusatory. The officials also held a separate meeting for some of the keener [to collaborate] young prisoners and repeatedly enticed them by telling them, "Atone for crimes with worthy deeds," and "Every confession means a corresponding reduction of your sentence," and there were some who succumbed and agreed to report whatever they had "seen, heard, or suspected" of others in exchange for their own records being overlooked. Some even confessed to things they had never done, and were praised for clearly acknowledging their guilt and presented as a model for others, but when the time came for them to be sentenced, there was no corresponding reduction, and some people had much cause for regret. For example, Shödrung Tséwang Dramdul, son of the Lhasa headman Ko-karwa, confessed many things he pretended to have done during the uprising, and when the time came, he was sentenced to fourteen years on the basis of all his false confessions. He was only seventeen at the time.

The leader (*Tsu'u krang*) of our group was Losang Chöjor, also called Peljor, formerly an attendant at Trijang Labrang and later a monk official, indeed assembly delegate of the ordinary monk officials, as well as a secretary in the emergency headquarters [during the uprising]. As one of the ordinary monk officials most heavily implicated in the fighting, he traded his own integrity for a lenient sentence and not only reported everything he "saw, heard, or suspected" of others but also cross-examined other members of the group very harshly and thoroughly. Worst of all, in the hope of being rewarded [by his superiors], he went to the group members individually and tried to get their stories out of them, whether through gentle coaxing or fierce intimidation. However, as most of the group members behaved with great restraint, we had no incidents of people being beaten or bound.

Special investigators also came from the intelligence office known as the Public [Affairs] Bureau. They dealt with special cases, members of un-

derground organizations, suspected spies, and foreigners, and the groups paid special attention to people under their investigation. One time, a Public Affairs Bureau official with the family name Wang, who spoke Tibetan extremely well, sought me out. At that time I had admitted only to having signed the assembly declaration and served as an armed guard, so I wondered if he had the wrong name, but as he led me into the interrogation room, he told me, "You are a relative of the Gyatso Tashi chief secretary." He sat down in the chair at the desk in front of him, sat me down on a squat chair two or three paces away, then took out an unholstered pistol from his waist and put it on the table in front of him, took a cigarette from his shirt pocket and lit it, and also lit one that he passed to me.

He asked me, "Do you want to get out of prison?"

"Naturally," I replied.

"So what is the Party's policy?" he asked.

"Leniency for those who confess their guilt and severity for those who refuse, atone for crimes with worthy deeds, and so on."

"But have you given all the facts?"

"I have given an account of my history since the age of eight, and particularly a detailed [account of] my situation during the uprising in writing, and spoken about it many times in group meetings."

"I don't mean your situation," he said. "Your release from prison doesn't depend on confessing the facts in your own case. You have to tell the facts about your uncle, the chief secretary. For instance, you need to tell us which members of the welfare association he met in Kalimpong when you all went to India in 1956, and what political activities he engaged in on his return to Lhasa."

This was something I had not even imagined, much less thought over. I replied by saying, "I did go to India with my uncle, but I was so young that I just enjoyed myself and had no idea about who might or might not have come to see him, and after returning to Lhasa I paid no attention to his activities. Since my uncle is still in prison, you can ask him about it directly."

"If he would tell us straight, there would be no point in asking you," he said, "but your uncle's thinking is highly reactionary, and instead of admitting the facts, he insists that he has done no wrong."

"Are you fond of your uncle or not?" he continued. "He is in a very dangerous situation, and if you care about him, this is the time to come to his aid. That means telling everything you know about him. One of your relatives has already told us that he must have mentioned the main things that went on at that time to you. I can give you a signed guarantee that you

will be released as soon as you tell us everything about it. If not, there will be no hope for your uncle and the outcome for you also will be uncertain, just like 'both losing hold of the reins and getting dragged along behind [a galloping horse].' You should make the right choice and speak out."

"A few different people came to visit while we were in Kalimpong, but I don't know who any of them were. And I don't know anything about his political activities after returning to Lhasa," I replied, "but some propaganda materials from the Kalimpong Tibetan Welfare Association that had come into my uncle's possession were discovered when our house was confiscated by the state. That's all I know."

"You can't get away with such a convenient summary," he said as he dismissed me. "You must think more carefully. It is not yet too late, we can wait [for you to speak], but time is limited."

He questioned me on several subsequent occasions, and when I repeated what I had said earlier without adding a single word, he either went into a rage, waving his arms and stamping his feet, or cunningly tried to entice me by pretending to give me confidential advice.

When my group leader Peljor came to know that I had been investigated by the Public Affairs Bureau, he was convinced that it was a serious matter. But he didn't know what it was about, and without being ordered to participate in a special investigation, he could not make his own inquiries, as this would have exceeded the limit of his responsibility; there were some such matters about which information was restricted. Anyway, he wanted to know more about my case, figuring that there could be an opportunity for his own advancement if he was able to discover something about it. While pretending to have great concern for me, he told me, "The Party's policy is really very correct. For example, in my own case, I wasn't just someone who signed the declaration or served as a guard, I was an eminent ringleader, not only representing the monk officials in the assembly but serving as a secretary in the emergency headquarters, and if you consider the serious nature of my crimes, what I said during the uprising and the false rumors I spread about the Party, I could barely have survived this far. But because of the Party's correct policy, I am not even in the same situation as you and most others, but have been put in charge of the group. This is due to having taken the Party into confidence concerning my own crimes and whatever I have 'seen, heard, or suspected' of others. If you want to be like me, you need to speak clearly about any misdeeds you may have committed in your youth, or concerning your family members, and especially concerning your ongoing investigation by the Public Affairs Bureau."

"The Public Affairs Bureau are questioning me about my uncle, the chief secretary," I replied, "but I really don't know anything about it."

He told me, "Since you were always in his company, no one will believe that you don't know. You don't have to know all about it, suspicions and incidental stories are enough—not necessarily in a written report, but preferably as an embarrassing accusation (*gDong gzhi ra sprod*), which indicates that you have done some thinking. Soon they plan to hold a big meeting where the older government officials will be confronted with embarrassing accusations. If you take that opportunity to stand up and expose your uncle, that would be very good. I can make arrangements." He mentioned many other reasons informing on my uncle could benefit me.

Some time before that, at a combined meeting of the inner and outer divisions of the prison, one of the Chinese leaders had issued a warning that the Gyatso Tashi chief secretary and Rimshi Sa-lungpa were being extremely obstinate, and there would be trouble unless they improved. After that, at a reeducation meeting of our team, number 3, Tashi Topgyel, the son of Shödrung Nam-pön, echoed that Chinese leader's words by saying that the Gyatso Tashi chief secretary and Tsi-pön Shu-küpa were among those chiefly responsible for the uprising, aping what the Chinese had said, which got me really worried. Because of all this, I was beside myself with fear for my uncle.

Then, one day there was a big meeting of all the prisoners where Shölkhang-sé Sonam Targyé and Khyung-ram Rikdzin Namgyel, who were among the leaders and "activists" of the training brigade, stood up and called the names of elder former government officials such as Khendrung Tubten Tendar, Mak-chi Khen-chung Lo-dro Késang, Khen-chung Késang Ngawang, Tsi-pön Shu-küpa Jamyang Khédrup, and Rimshi Mentöpa, making them stand up and telling them that they had to take full responsibility for the uprising, while subjecting them to cruel treatment like slapping and punching them, spitting at them, and pushing them down by the neck. Worse, both Shölkhang-sé Sonam Targyé and Khyung-ram Rikdzin Namgyel held long-legged boots with iron nails in the heels, which they used to beat them. I was dreading the prospect of their doing the same to my uncle, and the idea of Peljor and Nam-pön Tashi Topgyel specifically calling on me to make accusations was terrifying, but that day the meeting ended in uproar.

In the evening, a generally more peaceful team-level meeting was held where we were told to state our views on the earlier meeting. No doubt the officials and those responsible for the beatings wanted to hold such meet-

ings more frequently, but the members of the groups protested forcefully about the earlier meeting. Like many others in teams 1 and 2, many of the people in team 3 said that it was absolutely in violation of Party policy, and that even if it was necessary to subject one or two obstinate individuals to struggle, that kind of physical brutality was never justified. The Communist Party was reforming the thinking of old minds patiently through reeducation, whereas those couple of people at today's meeting had conducted themselves despicably and without regard to their responsibility, physically abusing people on any pretext, in contradiction to Party policy. They also said that regardless of their differing backgrounds and offenses, all the prisoners in both divisions of the prison should be treated equally, and made such strong criticisms that the authorities had no choice but to stop holding such meetings.

By thus using the policy of the Communist Party itself to counteract this corrupt and loutish minority, the prisoners were able to halt some of the direct physical abuse, but the same aggressive style of interrogation continued in the group meetings. Over the next five months, I didn't suffer badly for lack of food or clothing, nor from compulsory labor, nor even on account of my own offenses. It was concern for my uncle that disturbed me the most.

Meanwhile, outside prison, the "Three Rejections and Two Reductions" campaign (*Ngo rgol gsum dang chag yang gnyis*) was going on. The Three Rejections were: reject the reactionary uprising, reject feudalism, reject the three big oppressors (the state, the church, and the land owners). The Two Reductions were reduction of high-interest loans and reduction of land rent. To conduct this campaign, the Chinese gathered those who either had been born blind, crippled, or with missing limbs due to their karma or had previously suffered mutilation as a legal punishment for serious crimes such as murder and horse rustling, and persuaded them to testify that their physical defects were the result of cruel mistreatment at the hands of the "three big oppressors." They held public meetings at which the people were required to "remember the sufferings of the old society," and in Lhasa, they arranged exhibitions in the former prisons at Nangtsé-shak and Shöl by filling them with skeletons, which they had to bring from elsewhere, and lots of scorpions, and calling on people from each neighborhood committee to come and see, and they made propaganda films and magazine articles about it for distribution at home and abroad. According to those who were under the Shöl neighborhood committee at the time, the scorpions used for the display in the Shöl prison had been collected by the children from the Shöl

People's school, but when they tried to film, the scorpions would not stay on top of the corpses where they had been placed and kept escaping into cracks in the walls, so they had to be held in place with invisible threads attached to their limbs.

They also pressured workers, servants, and poor dependents of the government, noble houses, and monasteries (*gZhung sger chos gsum*) to struggle against their former masters, and for a time these struggle meetings were going on every day, and people were taken from the prisons to be struggled against in the city. One time, Tsédrung Ngawang Tashi-la, the Norbu Lingka steward (*Khang gnyer*) who was in our section, and the Shöl steward Rimshi Mu-jawa from the inner division of the prison were taken out to a struggle meeting, and when they were brought back in the evening, Tsédrung Ngawang Tashi's face and eyes were swollen and his ears were almost dangling off his head. They had assembled people from Gyatso, near Norbu Lingka, Jar-rak, Chabgo, and other areas previously under the authority of the Shöl and Norbu Lingka stewards for the meeting, and he said that the cruel mistreatment visited on Shöl-nyér Mu-jawa was worse than his own injuries. They had loaded a sack full of sand on his back and forced him to go to work on the river embankments until he was half-dead with exhaustion.

Then when another prisoner in our section, Trinlé Gyelpo (the son-in-law of the Changdong-tsang house in Banak-shöl) was taken for a struggle meeting, he came back in the evening with a lot of food and fresh clothes and told us that many of his family members and relatives had come to meet him, bringing tea and beer. He was a target for struggle because he had been a people's representative at the time of the uprising and had led the people on, but although he had had to stand submissively for a long time, which made his waist a little sore, he hadn't suffered any beatings. Thus we anticipated our fate with hopes for the best as well as fear of the worst.

While I was in that training brigade, Khen-chung Losang Tendzin of Namgyel Dra-tsang college jumped into the Kyi-chu river and drowned himself. Then there were those who died of disease, and in this way our numbers decreased somewhat in a short time.

Since we had never experienced these kind of things before, very few of us were capable of grasping the deceitful nature of Chinese strategy, so a few wrongly motivated and feebly committed individuals, who betrayed their people and country, were able to stir up internal squabbles on the pretext of some flaws in our former system of government, while some other small-minded people did whatever the Chinese told them in order to save them-

selves. Because of this there was so much internal contradiction [among the Tibetans] that the Chinese did not even have to show their real intentions.

It was at this time that training brigade prisoners were taken to remove sewage from the drains on either side of the Mön-drong bridge [in east Lhasa], to be used as fertilizer. Since that work was not done regularly, we experienced great hardship wading in the sewers and digging out muck, the evil smell was overpowering, and we were bitten by swamp insects, which was so irritating that we could not sleep at night. Nonetheless, this was the first time since imprisonment that we had been taken to work in the city, and during our three days there, many of the prisoners' families—wives, children, parents, siblings, and other relatives—came to visit them, bringing food and fresh clothes. In addition, many other people would come to us with gifts of tobacco or snuff, and we were so encouraged by the commiseration and determination of the ordinary people that we ignored the difficulty and the smell and worked joyfully.

Since we took our midday meal there at the work site, the prisoners' families could bring them food, Tibetan tea, sweet tea, and so on, for them to eat their fill. More importantly, hitherto they had only been able to pass things to their imprisoned relatives indirectly using the paper slips issued by the prison authorities, and this was the first time the prisoners and their relatives had met at close quarters and seen one another's condition for themselves.

Those days coincided with my mother's release, due to illness, from the prison known as "Tsémön-ling Reeducation," where the investigation and interrogation concerning secondary incidents in the uprising was taking place. One day she came, supported on both sides by my brothers and sisters, to visit my elder brother and me, and we saw her from a distance. Our kind mother smiled lovingly toward us, clenching her jaw and blinking her eyes, as a way of encouraging us to be brave. She left me feeling affectionate joy and looking forward to our next meeting, and I never imagined that that was the last time I would ever see her.

One day not long after, following the celebration of the [tenth] anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Republic on October 1, 1959, the training brigade prisoners were suddenly transferred to the Norbu Lingka prison.