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Translation by Adrian Moon of anonymous story written in Tibetan, published in translation in "*Background Papers on Tibet, September 1992*", Part 2, Tibet Information Network, London, September 1992, p.20-26. The introduction is by Adrian Moon.

### *A Monk's Story*

*A Monk's Story* is an example of the modern Tibetan novella. It was written in December 1990 by a former monk from Amdo, four months after he arrived in Dharamsala, Northern India. This is the first time it has been published in either Tibetan or English.

#### Introduction

In 1990 a young monk fled from his monastery at Labrang, in Tibet's north-eastern province of Amdo, now divided between the Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Gansu. Tashi Khyil, the monastery at Labrang, was founded in the early 18th Century and later grew to be one of the greatest monasteries in Tibet, traditionally housing some 7,000 monks.

From Labrang the young monk travelled to Xining, Qinghai's capital, and thence to Lhasa, and from Lhasa to Dram, a Tibetan village on the Nepalese border, known in Chinese as Zhangmu. After crossing the border with some difficulty, he made his way to the sacred stupa at Boudhanath, a few miles from Kathmandu, where there is a large Tibetan community. He was then sent via Delhi to Dharamsala, where he met the Dalai Lama.

This account is a translation from his own typescript, written a few months after his arrival in Dharamsala. Its interest lies not in dramatic

and dangerous events, of which there are few, but in the descriptions of people he meets and difficulties and discomforts overcome, which give the story its picaresque quality.

Within modern Tibetan literature it belongs to the genre of what could be termed "escape narratives". These have appeared regularly since the Lhasa uprising in 1959, when many Tibetans fled the country. They either stand as narratives in their own right or as part of a longer lifestory. Often, as in this case, the journey ends in the joy of meeting with the Dalai Lama, tempered by the memory of relatives and friends who have died or been left behind.

The original is written in contemporary Tibetan literary style, which differs considerably from classical Tibetan and, to some extent, from that of the Tibetan exile community. This style has been evolving since the 1950s. With China's liberalisation since 1980, outlets now range from semi-official papers such as the *Qinghai Tibetan Language News* and *Legal News*, through the literary magazines *Gentle Rain* (sBrang Char) and *Qinghai People's Art* (mTsho sngon Mang-tshogs sGyu-rtsal), to the most recent journal *The Hills, the Sun And the Moon* (Nya zla'i ri), started in 1991 by a group of writers in the grasslands town of Chabcha (called Gonghe by the Chinese) in Southern Qinghai.

Despite the obligations to produce a certain amount of propagandist work, the energy and enthusiasm of most Tibetan writers are directed towards literary composition and academic research into Tibet's history and culture.

Amdo is proud of its literary traditions and in recent years has produced several important writers, including Tibet's most highly regarded modern writer, Dondrup Gyel (sometimes spelt Tondrup Gyal). Beset with marital and financial problems, he committed suicide at Chabcha in 1985. There are also Yeshe Tenzin, a poet, and the prolific writer Rebkong Dorje Khar, the new editor of the literary magazine *Moonbeam* (Zla zer).

As in other countries, a considerable amount of low-quality work is published, partly because the mainstream publications pay contributors so that many people, especially underpaid teachers, use writing in order to supplement their incomes. However, the existence of a genuine literary movement is shown by the efforts made by writers to establish their own periodicals, as in the case of *The Hills, the Sun And the Moon*,

as well as by the great contributions made by people who have escaped to India since 1980. They write in exile publications like *Young Sapling* (lJang gZhon), *The Yak Calf's Roar* (gYag-gu'i har-sgra) and *Democracy* (dMangs gtso). Unfortunately, with the exception of the Dalai Lama and his relatives, Amdo has produced no modern biographies or autobiographies, unlike Kham or Central Tibet.

The writer of this account, in common with most other Tibetan writers, received his education at one of China's Minorities Institutes. There are now few grammar teachers in the monasteries, much to the chagrin of monks who genuinely want to study. The author was also trained in Tibetan medicine. He left Labrang after a number of demonstrations there in the years that followed the 1987 Lhasa riots.

He is now employed in India as a researcher into Tibetan monastic and religious history and is a regular contributor to Tibetan periodicals, his work laboriously tapped out on a Tibetan typewriter. He is considered a good writer although some people feel he uses too many archaic poetic synonyms and idioms.

*A Monk's Story* is essentially a truthful account of his journey, except for the comments on Tibetan exiles made by the hotel keeper at Dram, which were interpolated from another source. The speech is comparable with the short story of the young nun in *The Snow Mountain's Tears* (written by Kelsang Lhamo and published in *Jang zhon* in 1990) which describes the nun's oppression in Tibet and disillusion in India.

This story has been well received in both India and Tibet and has also been dramatised.

In this translation some sensitive material has been omitted and some names have been changed, or the letters X, Y and Z have been used, to protect the identity of the author and of some of those who helped him leave Tibet.

Adrian Moon, August 1992

## ***A Monk's Story***

or

### ***A Record of My Observations on Arrival in India***

*[Gya-gar-la bslebs-pa'i mthong-thos yi ger bkod-ba]*

Anonymous  
Translated by Adrian Moon

How impermanent is the nature of this world! It is two or three months since I arrived in this country, so different [from my own] in its customs and people. Even before I aspired to go to India some friends said the police had been making enquiries about me, which I was already aware of. I had been feeling uneasy as a result. For some days intensive deliberations caused me lack of sleep, but I concluded that whatever action they took, the Chinese were up to no good.

I broached the subject to my parents with the idea of explaining my intentions but it seemed that we felt differently. From the early age when I started school I'd shown some talent, and so my parents loved me more than their other children. They could not bear to see their most beloved child go to a distant country. However we eventually came to agree because my parents did not want to see me in a Chinese prison. Accordingly I decided to come to India. Because my family was not rich they could not immediately collect up my travelling expenses but a sister gave me seven hundred yuan which I put in my pocket.

At six in the morning of the seventh day of the fourth Tibetan month [30th May 1990] accompanied by my parents and

close relatives I arrived at the bus station. My old father then said to me, tears falling from his eyes:

"If you reach India send us a letter. If not, don't keep trying, stay in Tsung. I pray that you will be able to serve His Holiness."

When the bus started I waved my hand and said my farewells from the window of the bus. The bus headed towards Kachu, a Hui district, and I started re-evaluating my plans. I felt I was a man of feeble character and my school did not know I had left so who would teach my pupils? Who would look after my clinic and keep its accounts? The thought "what have you done?" rose in my mind.

While brooding on this, the bus passed the district boundary at about half past twelve. The city was modern with a lot of multi-storey buildings, motor vehicles and a great noise from the crowds. I cut through the throng in search of a hotel. A small Chinese child appeared and seeing I was carrying an overnight bag asked if I was going to a hotel. In Chinese I asked the price and was told two and a half yuan. Agreeing to this we went to his family hotel in which were two old mattresses, old torn sheets and a large table. There was also a yogin from Rebkong staying there.

I told the Chinese child to see if there was a bus for Xining the next day. To this he replied, with a smile, that he would go for one yuan.

"If you buy a bus ticket I will [pay you]", I said, and then he left cheerfully. The sun was about to set and I was feeling very hungry, so, leaving my bag behind, I went to a

restaurant where I ate a two and a half yuan thukpa. Then I felt a little more content.

I went back to the hotel and found the Chinese child had bought two blue tickets for the six o'clock bus next morning. Afterwards the yogin and I talked together for a while. He praised religion all the time and it seemed that he did not realize I was a monk because I was wearing townsman's clothes. I did not sleep well because of the old bedclothes, and besides the yogin's muttered mantras were burning in my ears and my mind was filled with worries.

Before six a Chinese woman called me and I quickly rose and had my breakfast. Then, with my bag on my back, I went to the bus station. There I saw a woman who I thought I might have seen before. She turned around and headed towards me. Feeling embarrassed in my townsman's [clothes], I quickly got on the bus and busied myself with finding a seat. A little later the bus started out onto the highway. I took a copy of Gentle Rain [sBrang-char] magazine out of my bag and was reading it when I felt a hand tap my shoulder. On turning round I saw a smiling woman who said;

"Don't you recognise me?" The woman had a beautiful face and was regarding me with an uncertain expression.

I replied, "Who are you? I don't know you." However, my voice betrayed a sense of familiarity and before I finished she looked at me strangely and said:

"Aha, now you're a scholar, how can you acknowledge an ordinary woman like me?"

"I'm not like that, certainly not," I said, wondering how to stop her flow of words. She seemed experienced in the ways of the world. Soon she continued:

"Oh, I was only joking. When I was at school we were in the same class for three years, then at the time of the High School examinations I got a telegram saying my father had been admitted to the District Hospital so I had to go and see him. Unfortunately nothing could be done [for him]. Because I was so unhappy at my father's death I was not able to go to school for some months and although I went later the exams had finished. Then I did not want to go to school. Afterwards my mother was always scolding me saying 'How stupid you are, you don't even know your letters'."

After she had gone on like this for a bit, I realized who she was, and "Ah, now I recognize you, you are so different," slipped from my mouth.

How could this woman be the same girl I was at school with? Then she was thin, always wearing hand-me-down clothes and very playful. Suddenly her appearance had changed so much. A charming, beautiful woman; I remembered the playful child.

We talked together of our different experiences and time slipped by until it passed twelve. The bus stopped by the roadside and she gave me some money for lunch and then the journey continued. The conversation was so interesting that we did not notice the sun going down and that other passengers were exhausted.

This woman had a strange history, as she said.

"First I grew tired of staying there because the young people looked down on me and talked behind my back. Then I went to an uncle at Labrang and stayed there for about two years, which seemed like only two or three days because I was so happy. But my uncle became fond of me and I heard he was planning to make me his bride, so I fled to Lhasa with a school-friend, where I sold butter. I made over two thousand yuan and about two years later a child was born.

But, truly, the school-friend turned out to be bad and he ran off to Sichuan with a Khampa girl. I entrusted five hundred yuan to a girl-friend and then went home leaving my child in the care of my mother before returning to Lhasa. Again I sold butter and sent five hundred yuan to my child. I had a trader from Kokonor as a lover, but how could I know he was also bad? Later his wife appeared and freely abused me in the street, calling me a 'widow' until some men led her away.

The next day when I went to the side street to sell butter I was full of shame. Since then I have not wanted a husband or lover. The words of today's men are just trifles and they behave without loyalty. Do you understand how I feel?"

A sigh escaped her and tears fell from her eyes. How sad, I thought, a woman deceived by these wicked men, now wandering from place to place and living from day to day. She carried nothing apart from some cooking utensils and women's necessities in a good quality shoulder bag. She told me all her thoughts as if I was a school-friend. I also talked of my past and present circumstances when I accidentally mentioned that I was going to India.

All of a sudden it was nearly dark and the bus had arrived at the bus station. After we left the bus I decided to go to a

hotel when she looked at me, and clearly perceiving my intentions said,

"No, that's not right," telling me she would return and buy train tickets for Golmud [Kor-mo]. I complimented her and afterwards we went to a hotel where she knew the hotel keeper's daughter. At first the family looked at us with surprise until the daughter muttered at them and we were given a small dark room.

The day was nearly done and I felt very tired but she did not feel the same. She offered to buy food and afterwards we ate together. Later I fell asleep and when I woke I found a blanket had been drawn over me and she was sleeping in a chair. I called and woke her. The hotel keeper said there was hot thukpa on the fire which she bought. I drank three bowls but the woman drank only a little it seemed. It was nine in the evening and I was unhappy about both of us sleeping in the same room.

Shortly after a group of young men speaking a mixture of Chinese and Tibetan crowded into our room and the woman became uneasy. They took her hand and pulled her out and there was a lot of indistinct whispering, then she came back and asked if I wanted to see a film.

"I'm not going but return quickly," I replied and put my money under the mattress and went back to sleep. Tak, Tak, knocking sounded on the door. I turned on the light and saw she was not in the room. I opened the door and there she was.

"It's time to go," she told me.

I was surprised and looked at my watch. The time had passed six.

"Didn't you return after watching the film last night?" I asked. She smiled and shook her head. We hurriedly ate breakfast and then went to the station. We found a seat, and then the train started. This city, Xining, seemed to be even bigger than Nepal and the crowds are like an upturned ant-hill. All Chinese; I did not see any Tibetans. The train, groaning and sighing as if in distress and sending clouds of smoke into the sky, clattered along the rails.

## Two

A day and a quarter were spent on the train and we saw a few other Tibetans. We were happy discussing our affairs. She said to me:

"We have both experienced good and bad events and want to go to India. On your side, you don't have enough money and on mine, I am thinking of resuming my studies. Apparently His Holiness has said that study is beneficial and it is proper that it should be encouraged." Thus she continued, talking all the time about going to India. I gave some reasons why she should not:

"What will people say if a monk and a woman travel together? Life in India is very hard and people's characters are very bad so why this needless excitement about India? Unlike you I don't want to remain under Chinese oppression. Secondly there is no problem if a man wants to go somewhere. Your situation is not like this at all." For a time she looked at me as if she would object, then:

"So a monk is not allowed to travel with a woman; but your mother is a woman!" she said smiling, a smile different from her usual one.

I was about to ask her how she would go but she didn't seem very sure of where she was going and I didn't have the nerve to ask. I looked out of the train window and saw a flat plain filled with sheep, cattle and horses. A day passed and at eleven we arrived at a sandy desert filled with modern multi-storey factories and crowds of people, all Chinese. I thought they were mostly from Shaanxi.

We got off the train and went to look for a hotel. We stayed in a four-bed room where two Chinese from Kokonor were staying. It was the fourth Tibetan month and very cold. The Chinese gave us some fruit but as we were very hungry we went out to look for a restaurant where we had a delicious thukpa. Here was warm water to nourish oats. That night the four of us slept in the dark room for a day.

In the afternoon we looked for a lorry. A man told us of three lorries that would be leaving so we followed him and shortly after found three drivers in a restaurant. We both gave them a hundred yuan and the lorries started for Lhasa at ten. The woman was in the first lorry and I was in the second. Some time later the lorry stopped at a Chinese checkpoint in a range of hills. I showed them my teacher's work pass and had no problems but I didn't see what the woman did. That night the lorries continued without stopping for sleep.

At nine the following morning we stopped for some poor food then started again. Most of the settlements along the road were of Tibetan farmers. I saw horses, donkeys, dri and yak.

A day passed and at dusk we all stayed in a run-down hotel. I went with the woman to look for a restaurant, but all we could get was a thukpa without meat or vegetables, in a smoky old building. One yuan for a bowl. She was very happy. That night we all slept in the hotel and continued the journey at six the next morning. At dusk we stopped at another dark and decayed hotel where there was no food whatsoever. The lorry drivers muttered some indistinct words into the woman's ear which made me feel very embarrassed.

We started again at six and had to go through many high red mountains. We stopped at midday by a turn-off on the road. The driver of the lorry the woman was travelling in said:

"I have to deliver some logs, and then I will quickly return." We came to a rough bumpy road and after that I never saw the woman again. So sad. Some time later my lorry arrived at Lhasa. The first thing I saw on getting out was the Potala's roofs glittering with light. The lorry driver then went down a crowded side street after telling me it was the way. I asked him when the woman's lorry would come and [he] told me it would arrive soon. I waited some time and then went to look for a hotel.

On the way I met a trader from my district and we both went to his house where his wife was. She was a good woman. A short time before a one-time student of mine named X had come. He wanted me to go to his house so we both went. His wife, a very humble girl and flustered, pressed on me some good eating utensils and paid me great respect. That day I truly felt as if I was back in my country. I went again, with my students, to look for the woman but she had not arrived. That evening we stayed at his neighbours and until twelve talked with people who had been to India.

The next morning we drank tea, then went to the Jokhang. By the Jokhang's door a number of girls and young women were performing prostrations. After seeing the Jokhang, thoughts of its history rose in my mind. By the door of the Jokhang and the nearby white building I could hear the threatening sounds of Chinese soldiers performing drill.

I followed this with a visit to the Potala where I felt great faith in the past Dalai Lamas. Then I walked around all the side streets with my student and met a lot of his friends. I was introduced to all of them as a teacher and they paid me great respect. Later we went to the Norbulingkha and saw the religious relics, the clothes of the Dalai Lamas and the beautiful gardens. That afternoon we walked in the park behind the Potala and my friend made enquiries after the woman, but we heard nothing of her. Everywhere in the park, the people and the pedlars were enjoying themselves. But how time flies! The sun was setting in the West. I stayed the night at my friend's house.

The next morning I rose early, drank tea and we went to Drepung and Sera. We did not see many monks and their circumstances seemed very poor, as we realized from their clothes and living conditions. I did not have much time left in which to finish my journey so that afternoon I bought a bus ticket before returning to my friend's house.

My student gave me one hundred yuan and at six the next morning I went with him and his wife to the bus station where the bus was about to leave. I waved from the bus window and paid my respects, then it started off. As the day passed I grew very tired. All the settlements I saw from the window were Tibetan.

After some time we came to Yamdrok Yutso Lake and went round its long bank where, near two long cliffs, we saw the water shimmering. At Gyantse we saw the place where the British and Tibetans fought and also a big stupa. A long time after we arrived at Tsangis Tashilhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama [in Shigatse]. This is now a big district capital.

It was eight o'clock and I went to find Y who was working in the XXX Office. I enquired at an Amdo restaurant not far from the bus station and a man led me out and showed me the house. He then returned and I went into the building and asked a woman about Y and she said he had gone to see a film. Without paying much respect towards the woman I threw my bag onto a bed and lay down because I was very tired.

I was so tired that although it was only about half an hour until Y arrived, it seemed like six or seven. His face went red, I don't know why. That house was one provided by his officqe, so we went to his wife's house and I paid my respects to her. She had a very calm temperament. Apart from her and her father there was no-one else there. Y's house was very well furnished. That evening Y said he would get a travel pass, though I would have to wait a while.

Early next morning, Y and his wife went to Tashilhunpo and visited the shrine of the ten Panchen Lamas, and saw many monks. We returned to the restaurant and had several bowls of tea. This city had many multi-storey buildings and everywhere were traders selling clothes and necessities. The prices were twice that of Amdo and of poor quality. The people's faces were black with dirt and, I wondered, could

they really be Tibetans? I stayed seven days and carefully studied the life of this strange place.

After some time Y obtained a travel pass by "going through the back door" and using many financial stratagems. I was able to start my journey again after paying sixty yuan for a lorry.

Y gave me 1,500 yuan and his wife hid various kinds of food and sweets in my bag. I was very sad and the corners of Y's eyes were filled with tears. Because of past karma I and Y were separated from this place.

### Three

Along the road I saw many Tibetan settlements whose standard of living was very poor, with old run-down stone-walled houses. The children did not even have any clothes. That evening we stopped at a decrepit rest house. We left at five in the morning and reached Nyalam Dzong at ten and spent the night in a hotel. I had a delicious thukpa at a Chinese restaurant. Here there are not many multi-storey buildings.

We left at five and at twelve reached Dram [Chinese: Zhangmu], a small place in a forest. I gave the lorry driver his money and then went in search of a hotel. I met an Amdo trader who took me to a hotel whose owner was an Amdowa. The houses in Dram are all huts. The hotel manager gave me some bedclothes and a good room, then he said to me:

"You're going to India, are you? Isn't that surprising, every one from everywhere says they're going to India. I went five

years ago too. Do you know why you're going? Apart from His Holiness the Tibetans in India have been there a long time, with some bad officials who will act as if they're superior to a boy like you.

"They look down on those they term the `New Arrivals' [gsar 'byor-pa]. You people don't think of anything except going after his Holiness. If we suppose that His Holiness might disappear from India, then in two or three years they would all be scattered because of their jealousies. I know their great pride is in wealth. Shit! Some unprincipled old man gets the opportunity for an official position and then he stands on ceremony.

"They hold on to the bad customs of the aristocracy from the past and keep their positions by mixing soft words and bad hearts. Besides that, they do little useful work. If you go, you'll see their bad behaviour. I'm saying this because those old-timers are all the same. There is no idealism in their thoughts and politics.

"The boys and girls spend the day wandering about. How can this be right? Unsettled people run off to India saying they are going because of His Holiness and for the Tibetan people. If it turns out that the situation is not good, then they return with embarrassment and shame. This is very true."

And so he went on and on. "It is only His Holiness who gives all of himself for Tibetan independence. Apart from him there are only two or three people who work for independence. They are skilled in promoting themselves, their jealousies and rivalries. They look at their work and think, if I do business and build myself up, that'll be good. Ha, ha!". He laughed aloud.



Then there was a knocking at the door. It opened and a young man from Amdo Kokonor came in. The hotel keeper said, "This monk is also going to India". He continued in a dour manner,

"If you think India is like your home-country then go.

"As for me, I only ate dal and rice. I wouldn't stay there a day. If you listen to me you'll go back. If you work as a teacher your life will be alright! If you don't have any money, I'll give you some."

"Is this dal tasty?" I asked him.

"Shit! It's bean water! If you drink it you're hungry. If you drink it for two or three months you will turn black. Go and see!"

Then the boy from Kokonor said "That's right, quite right. It's best if you go home. India just has rich people, they won't notice a poor man. They think that if you don't have lots of money you don't have any virtues.

"I found this. In 1987 I went to India. I left the Qinghai College [mtso-sngon slob-grwa chen-mo] and for some months had problems, so like you, I thought I would go and meet His Holiness. However getting a position [las-bya: the term implies an office or government job] is like finding a day-time star. Even if you know Tibetan well they don't hold you in high regard.

"But if you know a little English or Indian their respect has no bounds. The work they do is such that it is not surprising that

being able to write a letter is like being a scholar in our homeland. But this is nothing. As the saying goes, in front of an idiot, even a scholar looks bad.

"Their understanding of Tibetan is so limited that if someone who knows even a little mixes with them, he is despised and teased. Others can't get work because of their shame and red faces. Even if you can write a good composition in Tibetan, no-one will care.

"People in India are living in other's conditions [living off others?], aren't they? In a situation like that, anyone's character would grow evil.

"Even if you live as neighbours for twenty or thirty years they won't offer you a cup of tea if you go into their houses. Smooth words, bad hearts! When you walk past they'll greet you with 'tashi delek', but if you go inside they won't even give you a cup of boiled water.

"If you're called a new arrival you've not a sesame seed's chance of being given a position. They keep their jealousies hidden, but always say 'Underneath the new arrivals are really Chinese spies', and because of this they don't give official posts to new arrivals."

If this sort of thinking became common, there would be divisions between the old-timers and new arrivals, so I said "Their system is not so surprising. In our homeland a small district is of little account. I am following the example of His Holiness and Tibetan heroes in going into exile."

We argued for some time. Then he lost patience and said, "All right, you've had your say. If you're decided on going to

India remember that most of those in Dram who don't go outside or talk to anyone finish by making a visit to the Public Security Bureau next day" [i.e. they arouse the suspicions of the police by not acting normally]. Then he left.

That night I spent many hours watching a film with the householder and his family. Next morning, after having tea and changing 1,300 yuan into Nepalese money, I went out with Z. That afternoon I met a trader from my district and we discussed going to Nepal together.

"Everyone has to pay 1,200 to the porter", he told me. "Keep quiet and I will come and call you tomorrow morning."

This man had been doing business in Nepal [and had sneaked back into Tibet without a pass].

At five the following morning a low voice called. I quickly rose and took my bag. At the door were three people, a porter, Z and the trader. We quickly went into the forest where three men appeared. They were Chinese spies who [were] holding guns, [me-md'a ring-po] blocking our path. I was terrified, shaking with fright. Shouting, the gun-toting men pursued us and willy-nilly we were taken to the Public Security Bureau. Luckily Z knew the means to get us released.

The following day at six we took the path into the forest again and after a long time came to XX. We were all in great danger of falling to our deaths. We three left the path for a rough track, and then climbed most dangerous cliffs. I thought it was like the road of the God of Death's [gshin-rje] in a story.

That afternoon we left the forest and the porter told us "You two hide and I'll look for transport."

After a while he made a signal and we went to a bus. We had been waiting a long time when the Nepalese police came to make a check. We didn't have travel passes and they shouted at us "You must carry travel passes," or so it seemed.

We were tied together and beaten violently so we could not move. Then we were handcuffed and put into a dark, windowless room. Because we were hungry we signalled to the guard but he pretended not to understand and did not give us even a mug of water. Our porter had disappeared. We were searched inside and out and all our money was stolen. They also took all the important papers, personal letters and even my Writer's Association card out of my bag. That night we were not able to sleep.

At ten the next morning we were each given a cup of milk tea and a piece of bread. Then we were put in a small vehicle and except for my bag given nothing. They said they were going to hand us over to the Chinese. In the vehicle were a driver and two policemen who after a time said "If you two have a thousand rupees we'll let you go."

The trader said that although he had no money on him, if they went to Nepal he promised his wife would get it. We were taken to the stupa of Charungkhashor [Bya-rung Kha-shor - Boudhanath] and we searched for his wife. Later we found her, related the whole business and handed over the thousand rupees. We went to a restaurant and had an extremely tasty Thukpa. His wife was a good woman and

said that money was no object - more important was getting us out. That night I slept at their house.

The following morning I circumambulated the Stupa and saw a lot of Tibetans. I thought it seemed a poor country because the people seemed so miserable. The customs and appearance of the people are a little like that of India. That day I was questioned at the reception centre and asked where I was going by an old man called XX. I informed him of all my circumstances and he told me there would be no problems. They gave me 750 Nepalese rupees.

At four in the afternoon of my third day there, I started for the Indian capital, Delhi. The trader and his wife accompanied me to the bus and gave me some good advice. I travelled with an Amdo trader whose name I forget. It was very hot and I sweated profusely.

At nine the next morning we stopped for morning tea and for the first time I ate dal. We arrived at Delhi around four o'clock that day. What a lot of multi-storey buildings and cars filling the roads, going here and there, with the noise drumming in my ears. I thought that, except for the cars, India did not seem as impressive as China and did not compare well with it.

A Tibetan took me and the trader to the reception centre. There, twenty people were staying in a small dark room, all new arrivals. There was nobody to look after them and as some of them had no money they had not had any food for two days.

At ten the following evening we got on the bus for Dharamsala. After travelling all night, we arrived at

Dharamsala the following morning. At the reception centre we were given a piece of bread for breakfast and three pieces for lunch. The evening meal was rice and dal.

Four days later I had an audience with His Holiness. Joy and sadness filled my eyes with tears. However you looked at them, his virtues and speech were without fault, a truly enlightened man. It is the good fortune of the Tibetans that he has been born among them. I hoped then and afterwards to follow him and work for the Tibetan cause. Whatever my fortune or misfortune, I vowed I would follow his thoughts in my writing. It has been my fate to come to him from the place where my mother gave birth to me and I wish to give my all for the Tibetan cause.

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