

Tashi Chutter Biography

April 2011

Tashi Chutter, the son of Pasang Gyalpo, was born in December 1937 in a peasant family at a village called Drenya, Jora Dzong near Lhokha, Tibet. Drenya was a small village located on the northern bank of the Jayul River originating from Tsona, a border town opposite the Indian town of Tawang (in Arunachal province). In 1956, Tashi escaped the advancing Chinese forces in Tibet and managed to get to Darjeeling, India through Tawang. In India he received private tutoring for three years, mainly to learn English.

In 1959, he went to Camp Hale (called “Dhumra” by Tibetans, which means garden), in Colorado, to serve as an interpreter for the Tibetan resistance forces for three years. Detailed information about the Tibetan resistance force can be found in the book entitled “Orphans of the Cold War” authored by John Kenneth Knaus, and a summary is available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Hale. Much of the information in the Knaus book was based on information provided by Tashi, who is cited several times throughout the book. In 1962 the training was temporarily halted and Tashi attended specially arranged courses at Georgetown University, in Washington DC for further studies. In 1964, he went to Cornell University in New York to join some other young Tibetans for a one year course.

In 1965 he returned to India and remained deeply involved in the Tibetan resistance movements in India, Nepal and inside Tibet. In the late sixties and early seventies, he carried out numerous visits to the Tibetan border areas, under the most difficult conditions, and often risking his life for the cause of his country. In the mid-seventies due to increased danger from Chinese military presence in these areas, he had to change his role to remotely monitoring the situation inside Tibet and the resistance efforts. During these years he worked closely with the Dharamsala Administration in Exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Based on the knowledge and experience he gained from his rare dedication and solemn pledge to the cause of Tibet, he wrote and published a book entitled Confidential Study on Deployment of Chinese Occupational Force in Tibet. The book was published in a small print run for the use of the Tibetan government in exile and for government officials of a few countries that support the Tibetan people’s aspirations for freedom and liberty. In September 2010 Tashi gave a lengthy interview on Radio Free Asia discussing his life’s work, which can be heard at <http://www.rfa.org/tibetan/tamlenggiletse/tamlengzhalpar/tashi-choedak-trained-by-cia-09152010111046.html> (click on audio link on upper right of page).

In 1999, Tashi retired and settled in the United States. On September 10, 2010, Tashi Chutter spoke about the Tibetan resistance movements of the 1960s and 1970s at the Camp Hale Commemoration for Tibetan Freedom Fighters (as reported at <http://www.vaildaily.com/article/20100910/NEWS/100919989>). After his presentation, Tashi had the opportunity to meet Colorado Senator Mark Udall, who was in attendance and had been instrumental in organizing the Camp Hale commemoration. Tashi requested Senator Udall to raise with the Obama administration the long-dormant proposal for the resettlement to the United States of a number of Tibetan refugees in Nepal. In response to his request, Senator Udall contacted the US Department of State on this issue.

Tashi Chutter passed away on April 18, 2011. Shortly before he passed away, he made a special request that his body be cremated in open air using wood fire according to Tibetan customs, if possible in Colorado, where he spent several formative years early in his life.