

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eyewitness Accounts of Surviving Tibetan Elders Now Available

"I have been waiting my whole life to tell what happened in Tibet," says 82-year-old refugee.

Moraga, California, USA (July 31, 2009) - The Tibet Oral History Project (TOHP), which aims to preserve the true history of the Tibetan people, has posted 25 oral histories of refugee Tibetan elders on their website: www.tibetoralhistory.org.

TOHP videotaped refugee Tibetan elders in the United States and in Bylakuppe, India and has now translated and transcribed 67 of these interviews. The participants ranged in age from 60 to 95 and originated from the three regions of Tibet: Amdo, Kham and Utsang.

In addition to the interview transcripts, portraits of each interviewee and a short film entitled, "*Tibet Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of Tibet's Elders*" with clips from several interviews, can also be viewed on the website.

One of the interviewees told TOHP, "I am one of the older persons of the Tibetan community. If I had education, I should put my story in writing. However, I can neither write nor speak well, so it could not be done. Today you have given me a great opportunity to tell my life experiences and I am very grateful to you. I feel I have received a golden opportunity."

This oral history collection is invaluable. It provides intimate portraits of the elders—the last generation to live in a free, unoccupied Tibet—and preserves for future generations their memories of their homeland, including: cultural traditions, the invasion of the Chinese army and its devastating effects, eye-witness accounts of Chinese brutality and forced labor, efforts of Tibetan resistance fighters, and the escape into exile.

The current goal of TOHP is to make the entire text of the interviews available on the Internet for future Tibetan generations, the Chinese people, historians, journalists and those who cherish the Tibetan people.

As funding becomes available, future plans include providing copies of the interviews and printed transcripts to the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and other libraries around the world, including the U.S. Library of Congress and translating the oral histories into Mandarin and Cantonese so younger Chinese generations can obtain a better understanding of what really happened in Tibet.

Visit the organization's website at www.tibetoralhistory.org for more information.

About the Tibet Oral History Project:

At the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, this project was initiated to record the life experiences of Tibetan elders who were forced to flee their homeland following the Chinese invasion. His Holiness emphasized the urgency of conducting interviews of these elders before they pass away and their stories are lost forever. The Tibet Oral History Project strives to keep these stories alive for generations to come.

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