

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Videotaping the Life Stories of Elderly Tibetan Refugees in Nepal

MORAGA, CALIFORNIA, USA (March 4, 2015) – The Tibet Oral History Project is travelling to Nepal in April to videotape the life stories of some of the most aged Tibetans still with us. This oral history endeavor is urgent. The elders who can recount what Tibet was like before fleeing after the Chinese invasion are now in their 70's, 80's and 90's. The elders' eyewitness accounts ensure that the wisdom culture and true history of Tibet will not be forgotten, but will instead be preserved for generations to come.

The Tibet Oral History Project (TOHP) has often been encouraged to document the stories of Tibet's elders living in the Kathmandu area. As one Tibetan welfare officer said, *"There is a sizable Tibetan population in Nepal, most of whom arrived shortly after Tibet's occupation and now are quite elderly. There are many varied and rich stories that need to be documented before we lose these elders."* Because they found refuge close to their beloved Tibet, these seniors will be able to describe family traditions, local customs, and spiritual practices undiluted by travel to distant refugee settlements.

This important mission in Nepal will document eyewitness accounts of Tibet's vibrant culture, unique traditions, language, and cherished Buddhist religion. The videos and interview transcripts will be accessible worldwide to persons interested in Tibet through various media, including the Internet and Radio Free Asia. TOHP will also distribute the collection to the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in India, the U.S. Library of Congress, and 20 university libraries and Tibetan refugee communities around the world.

These new interviews from Nepal will be added to the 226 oral histories of Tibetan elders living in exile in India and in the United States, which are already in TOHP's collection. Interview transcripts and video clips can be found online at www.tibetoralhistory.org and on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). The project's efforts are endorsed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, and the Kashag (Tibetan Cabinet) along with many other Tibetan organizations.

Interviewee Thupten Chonphel, age 72, told TOHP, *"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 complex and costly endeavor to interview elders in Nepal will only be possible with the support of individuals worldwide. To learn more about TOHP's mission to Nepal and how you can contribute, visit the Nepal campaign webpage at <http://igg.me/at/tohp>.

About the Tibet Oral History Project:

One the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibet Oral History Project was initiated in 2003 by Marcella Adamski, Ph.D to record the early life experiences of Tibetan elders, who were forced to flee their homeland in 1959 following the Chinese occupation. The Tibet Oral History Project is a non-profit organization committed to making the elders' oral history interviews accessible via the Internet in order to share with the world the culture and history of Tibet.

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