



Tibet Oral History Project

"With my own eyes..." Elders Recount Their Experiences in Tibet

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Dalai Lama to Recognize Work of Tibet Oral History Project

Moraga, California, USA – His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, will hold a private audience Thursday morning, October 14, 2010 with representatives of the Tibet Oral History Project (TOHP) in recognition of the organization's contributions to the preservation of Tibet's history and culture.

"When I met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1999, I asked what could be done to improve life for the people of Tibet. He emphasized the vital importance of recording the life experiences of older Tibetans in exile, who both witnessed and endured the invasion and occupation of Tibet by the Chinese," explains Marcella Adamski, Ph.D., TOHP's Executive Director. "The Dalai Lama urged that the elders be interviewed before they passed away, their stories and insights lost forever. In response to his request, I founded the Tibet Oral History Project in 2003."

This rare honor of an audience with His Holiness is important recognition of the Tibet Oral History Project's efforts. "The Tibet Oral History Project plays a crucial role in the Tibetan struggle for freedom," said Dennis Cusack, Co-Chair of the International Tibet Support Network. Faye Straus, Interim President of TOHP's Board of Directors, agrees. Straus, Vice President of the Firedoll Foundation, an early supporter of Adamski's efforts, notes that the Tibet Oral History Project has used its funding wisely to achieve a great deal in a very short period of time.

Adamski and the Tibet Oral History Project's small, but dynamic team of Americans and Tibetans have videotaped 120 eyewitness accounts by Tibetan elders, including many residing at the Doeguling Tibetan Settlement in Mundgod, a Tibetan refugee town in southern India known as "Little Tibet". These accounts document the memories of the refugees' peaceful early life in Tibet, their firsthand experiences during the Chinese invasion and subsequent occupation of their country, and their inspiring vision of hope for the future in spite of the suffering they have experienced.

"The refugees we interview come from diverse backgrounds – nomads, farmers, housewives, traders, nuns, monks, and community leaders. After the Chinese invasion of Tibet, many became political prisoners, forced laborers, and even resistance fighters. Now at the ages of 80 or 90, these refugees are the last generation who can describe what it was like to grow up in a free Tibet," says Adamski. "We thank His Holiness for this great honor, and hope that all those who care about the people of Tibet will support our efforts to preserve Tibetan history before it is too late."

Film footage and transcripts of interviews are available free of charge on the Project's website. The complete oral history collection will also be provided to Tibetan archives and international research libraries. In addition, Radio Free Asia's Tibetan Service is broadcasting interview excerpts worldwide, even in China, on the weekly "Life in Exile" radio program. To learn more or to donate: www.tibetoralhistory.org.

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