

### **English translation**

We were living in Russia. There, our... identity... was at a second-class degree, that they were looking down at us as, umm... dark-skinned people, second-class people. I mean, I have already mentioned these torments. People were never happy. We were always treated as a lower class. We took refuge in the United States, and we were flabbergasted. I mean the people who came before us [were flabbergasted]; I came a little later than those people -- it has been a year since I came here. Frankly, after coming here, the rights that people have here ... I mean, the virtue of humanity, the respect and praise that people have here, umm... seeing that, we couldn't believe our eyes. We said to ourselves, "is this real?" Umm .... Even we are being praised and respected by exalted and respectable people. We admired it immensely. This is truly a thing that should be experienced. Umm... Words are not enough to explain this. People should live here and see it for themselves. God bless the American people and all the people from different nations living here. All people from different nations approach each other with positive attitudes and see each other with favorable eyes. They refer to each other with positive attributes. Everyone, umm... is feeling their humanity in their human attributes here.

Here there are great opportunities. Umm... In kids' going to school as well ... that kids are not seen with different eyes. If the kid has it in him/her, here s/he can absorb as much knowledge and science as s/he possibly can. After school, you see after that, umm... opportunities to be admitted to colleges, big universities, big knowledge lodges [institutions of knowledge] ... are available, in a wide range. Together with all American people, here the Abkhaz Turks also have opportunities. No one has put a, umm... I mean a thing, a ban on it. Along with everyone, with all nation[alities] that are living in American States and are citizens of the States, Abkhaz Turks have the same equal degree of rights, and there is no exclusion.

I mean, this community has encountered a [negative] attitude in Russia, umm... that "you are Turks; your language, religion, customs and traditions is not aligned with our language, religion, customs and traditions." After we came to the United States we never encountered those kinds of words; those kinds of attitudes were never present. Indeed, each nation that is speaking another language, believing in another religion, if they have beliefs, they [Americans] respect those people's language, religion, customs and traditions. It is even making them happy -- it is giving them joy to see that those people believe in God; I mean they have beliefs; they are not faithless; they have faith in God. I mean, a person who believes in God never does harm. Umm... I mean if you were to lay [down] your prayer rug and pray in the middle of the street somewhere, no one would come and say "what you are doing here?" There is no such thing. It would even make them happy, I mean they would let you do it and give you the personal space for you to pray there. Religious rituals are free in the United States. Each individual, each nation[ality], is free to, umm... exercise their religious rituals. They can pray and, umm... lead their own ways. I mean, as much as there are opportunities related to their religion,

people can improve their knowledge and, umm... can improve themselves in their religious attributes.

We are truly happy with our lives here; we appreciate it. Umm... People from different nations highly respect each another. We are deeply grateful to the American government for this. God bless.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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