CultureTalk Tibetan Language and Culture Video Transcripts: http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu

Moving from an all Tibetan School to an American School

"Exile" Dialect (mix of regional dialects, usually considered Lhasa dialect...) **Tibetan transcript:**

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English translation:

Tenzin: My name is Tenzin Choekyi and I came from Tibet. It has been about four months since I got here [USA]. Then... when I was in India... then I went to study in the Bylukuppe ¹ school. I was in the 7th grade at that time. After that I moved up to the 8th grade. However, I was only able to stay there for a month. Then... I did not get to study there and then I came to the United States. Then if I were to talk about how is my school in India; it is a boarding school which means that there are 8 Tibetan Children's Village schools and mine is one of them. My school is far from Dharamsala². It is located in the south of India. It is near Sera and Ghaden. Then... ummm...

Interviewer: What are Sera and Ghaden?

Tenzin: Sera and Ghaden are monasteries. You know... monastery... Then when I was in India, I am very poor in English and I don't [speak] it well. Then... Tibetan... even though I am Tibetan, I am not so good at it. Especially I am not so good at spelling. I am not good at English too. Therefore in order to learn English, I came here. Right now, I reside in New York City. I went up to 8th grade... I mean... I am currently enrolled in 9th grade. After July I will be in 10th grade. Then if I talk [about] how I see about how the school in this country—America; it is completely different [from] the school I went to in India. My school in India, the rules are very strict and all the students look the same. Since it is a boarding school, after school everyone returns to their homes [dorms]. In each homes there will be children from different grades.

Interviewer: What are the ethnicities of students in your school?

Tenzin: They are all Tibetans. The majority of them came straight from Tibet and there are few who are from the settlements [Tibetans families who live in India]. They are

¹ A Tibetan Children's Village School in South India.

² Northern India where Dalai Lama lives.

children [who] were born in India. Our school is called "Tibetan Children's Village School," right? Oh yeah... that's why there are all Tibetan children in the school.

Interviewer: Are the teachers Tibetan too?

Tenzin: Most of the staffs are Tibetan but there are some Indian teachers and also because we live in the country, there are people who learn Hindi too.

Interviewer: Now that you are in the United States, can you tell me about what kind of impression you perceived?

Tenzin: How I felt when I first got here is that I thought I wouldn't be able to study here.

Interviewer: Why?

Tenzin: Most of the students speak in English and when they speak to me I couldn't understand them. When I need to ask someone about something, I felt so nervous and shy. I thought I wouldn't be able to learn English and thought it was useless that I came to the United States. When I enter into the class I get really scared to talk to people because I thought if I speak English and make mistake, they will make fun at me. I am always cautious about whether what I said is correct English or not. I always had such consciousness.

Interviewer: You studied English when you were in India. Were the textbooks in English? How is that?

Tenzin: There are textbooks that are all in English, but most of the answers for the assignments are completed by discussing with friends.

Interviewer: Then since you guys are all Tibetan, so you use Tibetan to communicate with each other?

Tenzin: Everyone uses it. During English period we sometime use English. However, there are not many people speaking in English because we all are Tibetans thus English rarely comes out from our mouths. Even if it does so, you have this conceptualization that other students will tease you... (*laughs*)

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 every day. 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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