

CultureTalk Bangladesh Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Bangladeshi Values While Living in America

English translation:

Irena: I understand the Bangladeshi values. I might not like it, but I understand why my parents say [what they do]. But Ashfin sometimes doesn't understand it. The things that Ashfin learned -- they are not bad things, but he doesn't understand. There are a lot of things that are not wrong in themselves, but parents still discourage us from doing them. Ashfin doesn't understand that. In America, he has learned that people say "no" to something if it's not good, and [even] if your elders explain to you why they don't want you to do that thing. A lot of times, we ask our parents about something and say, "It's nothing bad, so why aren't you letting me do it?" Sometime sour parents don't have satisfactory answers for their doings, but still we are somehow supposed to understand, right? That's the problem Ashfin has. He doesn't understand all this, and it's extremely hard to make him understand that our culture is like this. Since I was a bit older when we moved, I understand some things that he doesn't. There are things I know that I shouldn't ask about. Asking is a problem, because they might say no and they will not be able to explain why they do so. Ashfin still doesn't get it. He says "Okay, fine I will listen to you, but I want to know why you forbid me to go there or do this thing. Why don't you explain why you are saying no? Then I will feel better." Say we are talking about the issue of sleeping over. I know it's not very common here, but it's pretty common over there. And Ashfin doesn't understand why our parents don't let us stay over. He says, "Mom and Dad see when my friends come over, we just hang out, play some video games. We don't do anything bad. It's just fun to stay over. But when my friends ask me to stay over at their houses, my parents don't let me. Mom knows my friend and his family very well, and he comes to our house so often; then why doesn't she let me stay over at his house? I don't understand." And Mom will say "This is looked down upon," and Ashfin replies to that by saying, "So then is my friend bad, because he comes over?" Mom says no, and Ashfin craves for an explanation for that. He says that "It's not like we're going to stay over at my friend's house by ourselves. His parents will be there to check on us. Then why do you forbid me?" So he doesn't understand things like this. I, on the other hand, understand this and find that it's better to not ask at all, because if they don't give me permission, I'll feel bad as well.

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.