

English translation:

Irena: So you were telling me that there is a subject called “Religion” in your school.

Samin: Yes.

I: So does that subject teach you about the various religions in the world or

S: My own religion.

I: Just one religion? So what's your religion?

S: *Islamiat*.¹

I: So in school you have different students, right? Are all of them from Bangladesh, or do you have students who are from abroad?

S: Everyone is from Bangladesh...all the students. But we have some teachers who are foreigners.

I: So say that one of the students is not a Muslim, s/he is a ...

S: Hindu?

I: Yeah, say he's a Hindu. Can he study *Islamiat* with you to learn about Islam, or does he not study that?

S: No. he only studies his own religion. We have an Indian teacher to teach that religion.

I: So they have a system for everyone to study their own religions?

S: Yes, Christians have Christian teachers, Muslims have Muslim teachers.

I: Say, you're in sixth or seventh grade and you have already learned a lot about your religion. Can you then learn about another religion or can you only learn your own religion?

S: I can only learn about my own religion.

I: Have you ever been out of the country?

S: No.

¹ by *Islamiat* he means Islamic studies.

I: If you have a chance to go abroad, which country would you go to?

S: London

I: Why London?

S: My uncle stays there, and I also want to go there.

I: What do you want to see in London? London Bridge, or the Queen's palace? Or do you just want to visit the place?

S: I just want to see that country.

I: I have two or three more questions to ask you.

S: Okay.

I: You said that you have an assembly in school everyday, right? And you have to sing your national anthem every day. Can you sing the Bangladeshi national anthem for me?

S: Okay.

My Bengal of Gold
I love you
In spring, O mother mine,

....actually I don't remember it. I can sing it while seeing the lyrics.

I: Okay, it's hard isn't it?

S: Yes. Since we all sing it together, if one person doesn't really say it, it doesn't matter.

I: What's your favorite food?

S: Bangladeshi?

I: Bangladeshi food. What do you eat here for breakfast, lunch and dinner?

S: Sometimes we go out for dinner to restaurants.

I: So what kind of restaurants do you go to?

S: The Pavilion, World Food, Meridian.

I: What type of food do you get at The Pavilion? Bangla food?

S: Just Chinese.

I: Okay, just Chinese?

S: But in World Food, they have fast food as well as Chinese.

I: So do you like Bangladeshi food more or English food?

S: Chinese food.

I: Do you have a TV in your house?

S: Yes

I: Do you watch a lot of TV?

S: Yes.

I: What shows do you watch?

S: I watch Cartoon Network the most. I like Tom and Jerry the most.

I: Do you watch Bangla programs?

S: Yes, I do. I watch serials and songs.

I: Okay. Bangladesh has a new program like American Idol where people sing and then the best one is voted to be the winner. Do you watch that?

S: Yes.

I: Do you call them and vote?

S: Yes, I've done that.

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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