

## Opinions on the Dowry System

### Nepali transcript:

सनिता: अनि दहेज दिने कस्तो छ ?

सञ्जय: दहेजमा त्यही एउटा...हाम्रो सबैभन्दा नियम खराब भएको छ, दहेज। त्यो छोरीलाई बाउ...छोरीको बाउले पैसा दियो भने राम्रोसंग राख्छ होइन, छोरीको बाउले पैसा नदियो भने छोरीलाई एकदम दिक्क दिन्छ। अनि माग्दा माग्दा त्यो पनि सकियो भने त्यसलाई घरबाट निकालिदिन्छ।

सनिता: अनि तपाईंको गाउमा धेरै छ यस्तो?

सञ्जय: हाम्रो गाउमा त्यस्तो धेरै छैन, वरिपरि छ, हाम्रो गाउको वरिपरि। तर हाम्रो गाउमा छैन।

सनिता: अनि तिमी चाहि विवाह गरेर दहेज लिने कि नलिने?

सञ्जय: नाइँ ।

सनिता: नलिने? किन नि?

सञ्जय: जस्तै एउटा राम्रो केटी भयो होइन, त्यो चाहि, पैसा नभए, पैसा जहिले पनि आउछ नि होइन, त्यो त इज्जतको सवाल भएन। राम्रै केटी आयो भने पैसा कति दियो, कति दियो।

सनिता: अनि तिम्रो आमाबुवाको चाहि कस्तो विचार छ नि यस्तो दहेज लिने, नलिने?

सञ्जय: मेरो आमाबुवाको विचार छैन होइन, दहेज सहेज<sup>1</sup> केही पर्देन, राम्रो केटी चाहिन्छ रे। राम्रो केटी भईदिए पैसा आउछ, त्यो त काम गरेपछि आईहाल्छे। त्यो चाहि, त्यो पैसा...(inaudible)...तेल दिनु त हो नि होइन।

सनिता: हो? अनि तिमीहरूको...नेपालमा त जे होस्, दहेज माग्ने समस्या जस्तै नै हो...

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<sup>1</sup> made-up word that rhymes with the word previous to it

सञ्जयः तर काठमाडौँमा खासै त्यति छैन, तर हाम्रो तराईमा<sup>2</sup> छ धेरै त्यो...

सनिताः तराईमा त धेरै समस्या हो...

सञ्जयः धेरै छ...

सनिताः त्यसको लागि तिमीहरूको गाउमा सरकारले केही...सरकारले अथवा अरुहरूले, कसैले यस्तो चेतना जगाउने, 'दहेज लिन हुन्न', त्यस्तो कार्यक्रमहरू गर्छन् कि खासै छैन?

सञ्जयः गर्देन, मुखियाले आफैँ .... आफ्नै उ गर्छ। धेरै ठूल- ठूलो मान्छेहरूसंग आफ्नै घरको मात्र उ गर्ने, अरुहरू गर्देन, सक्दैन।

सनिताः कसैलाई दहेज बाड्नु, त्यस्तो त भन्दैन?

सञ्जयः भन्दैन।

सनिताः अनि तिमीले चाहि कसरी थाहा पायो त दहेज लिनु हुदैन?

सञ्जयः हेर्नुस्, त्यहा नराम्रो केटी भयो भने होइन, ल्याएको भए दहेज भन्थे, नदिन सक्नी भए त्यसलाई पठाहिदिन्थे, लखाटेर। राम्रो केटी भयो भने पैसा नदिए नि केही हुन्थिएन, उ राम्रो भयो भने, केटी राम्रो भयो भने। त्यस्तो हो।

### **English translation:**

Sanita: So how is the dowry system?

Sanjay: On dowry, there's one... Our worst law is about dowry. To the daughter... if the father gives money [to the husband and his family], they will take care of the daughter. If the daughter's father doesn't give money, they [husband and his family] give the daughter a hard time. They [husband and his family] keep asking and if they are done asking, they throw the daughter out of the house.

Sanita: So there is a lot of this going on in your village?

Sanjay: It isn't like this a lot in my village, it happens around... around my village... but it isn't so in my village.

Sanita: And will you take dowry if you get married?

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<sup>2</sup> Region in Nepal

Sanjay: No.

Sanita: No? Why not?

Sanjay: For example, if there is a good girl, if there is not money... money can always be earned. It is not a matter of pride. If there is a good girl, then there is a lot of money.

Sanita: Really? And what do your parents think about this, regarding taking dowry?

Sanjay: My parents don't have a thought about this. They say that they don't need any dowry, they want a good girl. If there is a good girl, money can be earned. When she works, we'll get money. Money is like... (*inaudible*)... giving oil.

Sanita: So you... now, giving dowry is a big problem in Nepal...

Sanjay: But it's not that much in Kathmandu...but it's a lot in Terai<sup>3</sup>.

Sanita: Yeah, it's a lot in Terai...

Sanjay: There is a lot.

Sanita: For that, in your village, does the government... does the government or anyone do programs to raise awareness and say, 'Do not take dowry?' Or don't they?

Sanjay: No, they don't. The head of the village does that... with other respected people, he only does that for his house... He doesn't do anything for others, and he can't.

Sanita: He doesn't tell people to give and take dowry, right?

Sanjay: No he doesn't.

Sanita: And how did you know that you shouldn't take dowry?

Sanjay: Look, if it isn't a good girl, if I had brought her home, I would ask for dowry. If she was unable to, I would send her back... chase her out. If it is a good girl, even if she doesn't give money, it wouldn't matter... but if she is good... the girl is good. It's like that.

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<sup>3</sup> region in Nepal

**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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