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- **Clara Maoling Tiang and Xian Jian Xu** (China): 
  “The Preservation of Traditional Value System of Sichuan Migrant Tibetan”

- **Lucas Rodrigues Lopes** (Brazil): 
  “Voices from/on the Street: An Identify De-Construction of Childhood Friends, Places, Memories.”

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- **Rafael Figueroa Hernández** (Brazil): 
  “Yo no soy marinero: Son jarocho y resistencia cultural en California.”

- **Rocío Ruiz Lagier** (Mexico): 
  “La transmisión de la memoria y la identidad catalana en hijos y nietos de republicanos exiliados en México.”

- **Josible Rodrigues e Silva** (Brazil): 
  “‘I miss freedom’: Life history of male students in an educational institute in a city in the Amazon”

- **Aigli Brousou** (Greece): 
Abstract: The Sichuan Tibetan Area is the Sino-Tibetan convergence zone at the east side of the Tibetan Plateau. With transportation ever-improving, tourism blooming, and the modernization of nearby cities and towns, similar to other areas in China, people here have also been involved in the tide of going out for work or study, with their existing value system inevitably clashing against the external culture. How well the traditional value system is preserved by Sichuan migrant Tibetans? What are the factors that undercut the preservation? Living in an environment of cultural diversity, what kind of cultural collisions were experienced by them and what are their impacts? What can we learn from their experiences in order to promote and preserve Tibetan culture? The paper analyzes these issues based on the oral history materials of 4 Sichuan Tibetans who went out of hometown for work or study. As a novice doing oral history with the intention of helping record the shine of the Tibetan Culture, I share my reflections on the process, hoping to serve as a reference for future participants in this effort.

Keywords: value system, cultural inheritance, Sichuan Tibetan, cultural conflict, cultural convergence
1. **INTRODUCTION-BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

The Tibetans in China live in the regions across the Tibetan Plateau. While a majority of the Tibetan population concentrates in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Qinghai province, Tibetan communities can also be found in West Sichuan, South Gansu, and Northwest Yunnan provinces. In Sichuan province, Tibetans reside largely in two northwestern autonomous Prefectures of Aba and Ganzi, that border on the Tibet as Sino-Tibetan Convergence zones. National and regional roadway expansion projects have brought booming tourist business to these areas and consequently offered native Tibetans opportunities to venture out to non-Tibetan areas for education and employment. In the course of exploring and interacting with the world outside, differences in cultures were brought to fore in their daily encounters with others, which oftentimes collides with their intrinsic values rooted in their culture and region. Since 2011, I began to conduct interviews with four migrant Tibetans representing different gender, age group, and social-economic status of the migrant Tibetans in an attempt to document their views on how they have been adapting to or struggling with blending into the culture of Han communities.

The Jiuzhaigou Valley located at the Aba Prefecture was the starting point of this exploration. I am an English-speaking tour guide. Due to my job, in the 8 years after I graduated from university and before I became a mother, this place is where I have stayed for the longest time besides my hometown Chengdu. Before 1980s, there were only mountain trails for man and horses, and the Tibetan people here provided for themselves and seldom contacted the outside world. In the past 30 years tourism has made Jiuzhaigou Valley a world-famous resort, attracting millions of domestic and foreign visitors every year. A big number of “gold seekers” have also been attracted here, including mainly Tibetan, Muslim, and Han people. What the Jiuzhaigou Valley has gone through in the ethnic tourism development is typical in Sichuan Tibetan area. The Kangding County, Hongyuan County, Danba County mentioned in this paper are all similar to a certain extent.

When I first arrived in Jiuzhaigou in early 2003, Tibetans appeared to me unruly and not easy to get along. They often got together and spoke Tibetan that we knew nothing of. It seemed like there were many secrets that we were banned to know. With the passage of time, as I tried to approach them by putting down my “urban” and “civilized” manner and talking to them with respect and sincerity, I felt the change in their attitude. The better I was able understand them, the closer I was drawn to them; they became more approachable, genuine, and polite to me.

In 2011, when I was greatly attracted by the Tibetan culture after 8 years of tour guiding, a rare opportunity occurred. In a tour, I met a member of the Evergreen Foundation which at that time was actively looking for volunteers to record the diminishing local cultures using oral history. Thus, with the help and guidance from the Evergreen Foundation, my first oral history project started in November 2011 with my first interview to Sanbuzha.

Through our interviews, we wanted to document the experience of migrant Tibetans. Specifically we want to seek answers to the following questions:

1. How well the traditional value system is preserved by Sichuan migrant Tibetans who went out of hometown for work or study?

2. What are the factors that undercut the preservation of the traditional value system?

3. Living in an environment of cultural diversity, what kind of cultural collisions were experienced by the migrant Tibetans and what are the impacts? What can we learn from their experiences in order to promote and preserve Tibetan culture in order for it to flourish and coexist with a more influential and main stream culture?
2. **PROCESS**

In the beginning, I took the initiative to understand Tibetan culture because of my work. In Sichuan, many scenic spots are located in the Tibetan areas, such as Jiuzhaigou, Hailuogou, and Mt. Siguniang. As a professional tour guide working in this area, the Tibetan cultural traditions are essential for my knowledge reserve. My work experience in Tibetan areas gets me acquainted with a lot of Tibetans. It took a long time for my impression of them to change from rebellious to kind, upright, honest and courteous. Many people do not really understand them. Their cultural traditions, religious beliefs and values quietly changed along with factors such as economic development, tourism, and cultural conflict and integration with outside world. I hope very much that they can get adequate understanding and respect. I also hope that I can help record some valuables of the Tibetan Culture in its irreversible process of change, as its footprints in the course of history. The Evergreen Education Foundation gave me a way and an opportunity, and most importantly, she gave me the confidence and courage to do it as an ordinary tour guide. Hence, I would like to share with the readers my reflection of the process, to encourage more people to participate in such a recording and preservation of Tibetan Culture:

**SUBJECT SELECTION**

My original intention of starting this project was to record rather than to research. So my intended subject covers a wide range of Tibetan religious and cultural traditions. Any topic related to Tibetan culture is of my interest.

**INTERVIEWEE SELECTION**

When starting to do this project, I invited Sanbuzha as my interviewee to reduce the difficulty for me as a novice interviewer. In fact, this interview went smoothly and successfully, with a lot of useful information collected. But problems arose when I set out to find Tibetan migrant workers in the Jiuzhaigou Valley to interview through Sanbuzha’s connections. Tibetans I met there were afraid of talking about their lives and thoughts in front of a stranger and Han. The needed trust couldn’t be built even if Sanbuzha vouched for my sincerity. Even though few workers agreed to chat with me, they objected any recording of our conversations besides note-taking with pen and paper.

So I circled back, starting from my friends, and expanding my focus from Tibetan migrant workers in the Jiuzhaigou Valley to Sichuan Tibetans going out of hometown for work or study. During the interviews, I found these seemingly ordinary Tibetans around me actually had particular experience. Though Sanbuzha and Guoquicang are both migrant workers, there was a more comprehensive manifestation of Tibetan cultural and religious traditions in Sanbuzha because his hometown is relatively remote and isolated. For Guoquicang, though he is from pastoral areas, due to his civil-servant family and his open-minded businessman father, all four brothers in his family received a better education compared with their peers in the region. Furthermore, his work experience as a tour guide broadened his horizon and helped him form rational understandings of his cultural tradition.

To make my cases more complete, with the help of my connections, I got to interview two girls studying or working in Chengdu city ---Zewanglamu and Rongmu. They are about the same age, both from the Kham Area, the Sino-Tibetan pass. One is a descendant of a Chieftain, the other is a daughter of an ordinary farmer. The former is special, the latter is common. Zewanglamu as a graduate student of anthropology in Sichuan University is undoubtedly among the conspicuous of Tibetans. She grew up in a Chinese-style formal education system and cannot speak Tibetan. So she has a strong awareness of native language and native culture complex, and has a very keen sense of Tibetan cultural traditions and their changes. Rongmu is from an ordinary or even poor family, with the least education received compared with the other three interviewees. She is more concerned about the living conditions of herself and her family. Although she speaks Tibetan, she is lack of awareness of their ethnic culture. Among the four interviewees, Rongmu’s experience is the simplest. But her case reflects the typical living situation of the bottom Tibetans who live in the Sino-Tibetan convergence zone and hence has significance.
INTERVIEW QUESTION DESIGN
The first interviewee is my friend. Before designing the questions, I chatted with him to understand his life, in order to locate useful information. I then designed my questions based on the information, hoping to reveal it in the formal interview process. As such, there was a lot of repeated questioning for confirmation in the first interview. Realizing this weakness, I designed a detailed list of interview questions, with life experience as the main thread, involving family, education, work, marriage, religion, customs, etc., comparing their present life situations with the past, to excavate their values as well as the their understandings and attitudes towards cultural conflict and convergence.

INTERVIEW LOCATION AND RECORDING CHOICES
My interviewees are all with work or study to do and have limited leisure time. So to avoid unduly affecting their normal life, interview were agreed to be conducted in their studying or working places. Sanbuzha and Rongmu both work in noisy restaurant environment. By avoiding the peak time, interviews can still go smoothly. I did video recording during the first interview of Sanbuzha, but after I noticed the uneasiness Sanbuzha had before the camera lens, I only used audio recording in the subsequent interviews.

RELEASE FORM
Since I started the oral history project, my colleague in Evergreen repeatedly reminded me the importance of release form. I have to admit that in China the general public’s awareness of intellectual property and its protection is still very weak. Among my interviewees, Zewanglamu is the only one who signed the release form after she read and comprehended it by herself. The others signed after they understood the form with the help of my explanation. What touched me is that they trusted me unconditionally, either as a friend, or as a friend’s friend.

3. BACKGROUND OF INTERVIEWEES

3.1 Regional Background
The four interviewees all came from the Sichuan Tibetan Area which is multi-ethnic, mainly featured with the convergence between the Tibetan and the Han. The Sichuan Tibetan Area includes Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Muli Tibetan Autonomous County in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, which belong to Kham and Amdo Tibetan Ethnic Areas respectively\(^1\). With the Yangtze River and the Yellow River rising here, and bordered with Han areas to the north, the south, and the east, the Sichuan Tibetan Area has been known as the “Sino-Tibetan Corridor” connecting inland and Tibet/Qianghai since ancient times. The inland Han culture and the Tibetan Culture exchange and converge here, forming unique regional cultures:

Kham Culture: On one hand, Kham is adjacent to Han areas to the east and the south, as the hub and pass of Sino-Tibetan political, economic and cultural exchange. On the other hand, next to Qiang, Naxi, Yi and other ethnic areas, it is in constant cultural exchange with these ethnic groups. In the Song Dynasty, the blooming of “tea-horse trade” between Sichuan and Tibet and between Yunnan and Tibet changed the self-sufficient natural economy in this area, and stimulated commerce and urban settlements, and promoted the economic and cultural exchanges between Tibetan and other ethnic groups in particular between Tibetan and Han people. These urban settlements, such as Kangding County and Ganzi County, have all become the economic and cultural centers of the Kham Area since the Qing Dynasty. Along with the rising of Guozhuang, an economic organization which plays multiple roles including a shop, a hostel, an intermediary, and a guarantor in Kangding County, a unique Kangding Guozhuang Culture was formed, epitomizing the Sino-Tibetan exchange and convergence [2]. (Chen, 2008)

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\(^1\) Tibetan areas can be divided into 3 ethnic areas based on dialect: Tsang, Kham, Amdo. The area including Lhasa and the highland to the west of Lhasa is called Tsang. The Lhasa/Shigatse district is the political and religious center of this area. The Kham area is located among big mountains and rivers of the Hengduan Mountains. The Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Muli Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan, the Yushu Tibetan area in Qinghai, etc. belong to the Kham Area. To the North of Hengduan Mountains, the prairie in the North Tibet, Qinghai, the South Gansu, and the Northwest Sichuan is called Amdo. Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture belongs to the Amdo Area.
Gyalrong Culture: The Gyalrong Region is named after the holy mountain Jiamomoerduo. It covers the farming areas around the holy mountain, including areas from Ganzi, Aba and Liangshan Prefectures. The Gyalrong Culture in this region, featured with the belief structure that contains both strong Bonism ingredients and other sects of Tibetan Buddhism, the stone tower architectural culture, Gyalrong clothing, and Tibetan opera, etc. is the result of cultural convergence between indigenous farming culture and Tibetan culture diffused to the east.

3.2 interviewees’ background
The selection of the four interviewees in geography covered Aba and Ganzi prefectures – two main regions of the Sichuan Tibetan Area, pastoral and agricultural areas, Kham Cultural and Gyalrong Cultural districts. The selection also covers two cases of going out of hometown for a living, namely for study or for work. For work, it further covers three cases: the blue-collar worker (waitress), the small business owner (restaurant partner) and the white-collar worker (tour guide).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Sanbuzha, Male, 46</th>
<th>Zewanglamu, Female, 25</th>
<th>Guoqiangcang, Male, 32</th>
<th>Rongmu, Female, 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Tibetan Restaurant partner</td>
<td>Graduate in the Department of Anthropology, Sichuan University</td>
<td>Tour guide</td>
<td>Waitress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hometown</td>
<td>Qililongzhai, Xiadi Village, Zhanwa Township, Ruoergai County, Aba Prefecture (Ruoergai is a county big in animal husbandry)</td>
<td>Kangding County, Ganzi Prefecture (Kangding, located in the Sichuan-Tibet pass, was an important tea-horse trade center, and the birthplace of Guozhuang culture)</td>
<td>Sanludong, Rangkou Township, Hongyuan County, Aba Prefecture (Hongyuan is a pure animal husbandry county, and a site on the big Jiuzhaigou Scenic Route)</td>
<td>Qiongshan Village, Badi Township, Danba County, Ganzi Prefecture (Danba County in mountains and canyons of West Sichuan, is an agricultural area, belonging to the Gyalrong Region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Background</td>
<td>Family Members: Sanbuzha and his wife, Nephew and his wife and their daughter. A herdsman family. Living conditions in his childhood was poor. Meals are mostly roasted barley. Couldn’t afford rice or wheat flour. In recent years, living conditions have been improved. But</td>
<td>Family Members: Zewanglamu and parents. Father is a Tibetan of Han descent. Mother is a descendant of &quot;Mingzheng Chieftain&quot;. There are three living Buddha of different sects of Tibetan Buddhism in the family. Mother’s father is a minister of Mingzheng Chieftain, also a headman of</td>
<td>Family Members: Guoqiangcang and 3 brothers, parents. Mother works in road maintenance office. Father owns small businesses. (By contrast, most families in Hongyuan are herdsmen families.) All four brothers are fluent in English and have obtained a good education under their father’s proposition. The big brother has been a township official, a</td>
<td>Family Members: Rongmu and her younger sister, parents, an uncle-Father’s younger brother. Typical farmer family of Danba County. The family is poor. Parents are ordinary farmers. Father has a broken foot and cannot go out to work.</td>
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with the decrease of arable land due to the policy of returning farmland to forest and grassland, barley grown is not enough for family’s rations. With only a few pigs and yaks, family’s livelihood basically relies on Sanbuzha’s business.

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<tr>
<th>Educational Experience</th>
<th>Guozhuang</th>
<th>white-collar worker in foreign NGO. Currently 4 brothers work as partners in the tourism industry.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Went to the Han primary school at the age of 6 or 7 (no Tibetan primary school in his hometown). After graduation stayed at home, grazing and doing housework similar to his peers. Went to Tibetan middle school at the age of 18. Graduated and went out of hometown to work at the age of 24.</td>
<td>Went to primary school, middle school and high school in Kangding. Attended the University of Arts in Dazhou, Sichuan, major in Chinese Language and Literature. Is now a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology, Sichuan University</td>
<td>Two and a half years in primary school. Two years in preparatory classes before attending junior high school at the age of 16. After that attended Aba Normal Training School, Wenchuan, major in both Tour Guide and Art. Later, driven by the needs of tour guiding work, spent one year learning English in Qinghai. (Only a small portion of tour guides are Tibetan. Tibetan tour guide from Hongyuan is even rarer.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied at primary school from 10 to 15 years old. Quit before graduation.</td>
<td>Life planning is to do something related to Tibetan culture, and anthropology.</td>
<td>In 2002, started to work as a tour guide, 2005-2007, worked as an English-speaking tour guide. In 2006 began to run his own business, first in food and beverage industry, then clothing, finally</td>
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<td>Life planning is to do something related to Tibetan culture, and anthropology.</td>
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**Work Experience**

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<th>Work Experience</th>
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### Educational Experience

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4. **THE PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL TIBETAN VALUE SYSTEMS FAITH, VIEWS ON LIFE, VIEWS ON ECOLOGY**

4.1.1 **Faith**

Like most of the Tibetans, my four interviewees and their families are Tibetan Buddhists.

Sanbuzha’s came from Ruoergai county, his homeland is far from the Han communities, and it is a very closed community. They still make a living by raising livestock, and since they are far apart from the city, they have preserved the old culture well.

At Sanbuzha’s hometown, every family worships Buddha. Each family selects a high spot in the house where they believe is the best part of the home to set up an altar for the Buddha. Ever since he was a little child, Sanbuzha recite the sutra every morning. When I asked him why he burned the incenses and recite the sutra, he answered: "Sutra indicated that reciting the text didn’t mean to ask wealth and health for an individual person. When we recite the Sutra, we prayed for everyone in China and precisely the people all over the world. Even for a little insect, we wished it to be safe and sound. Of course, we prayed for ourselves, but not just worry about our own safety: whether I could make a living, or whether we could live a longer and better life. Sutra never told us to think just about ourselves and neglect the life and death of others. He also said: "Some people do ‘prostration kowtow’ every night before they go to bed, but this is not required. Reciting Sutra is not important, what is important is what you think in your thoughts, and how you feel in your heart. To pray for all the mortal beings in the universe reflects the basic Buddhism concepts: the benevolence, the self-sacrifice, and the equality among all the living beings. As the result, Sanbuzha has internalized the Buddhism teaching, not just followed the formalities.

They also apply the living Buddha’s teaching on the younger generation: 1. To wear modest clothing. "Wearing beaver, tiger or jaguar’s fur does not show one’s wealth, but one’s stupidity.” "A person does not need to wear that much gold and silver.” “He should only expect to be healthy and safe.” 2. To concentrate on good education “Spend the money on children’s education. Learn different languages: Tibetan, Chinese and English.” “One only becomes a hero or a role model if one studies well”. “Being ignorant and uneducated does not help. Selling parents’ living-stock in exchange of tiger fur, leopard fur, corals, or playing mahjong and gambling do not work either. Now that the government has good policies, banks give out loans, and people have freedom to go anywhere. People are able to do what they prefer. If you have
wings you could fly to the sky, if not, you could dig a deep hole under the ground. However, one needs to
learn skills. If a person only brags around without any knowledge, he will not have anything to teach to his
offspring.” 3. To treasure the family “Parents are the most precious gift to their children, and vice versa;
therefore, they should love and treasure one and another. This will be the luckiest thing that happens in
one’s life. In addition to the traditional values of self-control and modest living, the modern Tibetans
emphasize good education in order to make good progress in life.

Guoqiucang, a highly educated Tibetan from Hong-Yuan County, has traveled many places domestically. In
addition, he makes friends with people from other ethnic groups. He even has connections with people or
organizations from foreign countries. What is interesting is that his past experience gives him more
rational thinking and opinions. He explained: “As for Tibetan Buddhism, I neither believe in it 100%, nor I
do not believe it. I believe its theoretical doctrines.” In his views:

1. Reciting Sutra is a good psychological adjustment. “Reciting the Sutra may not do any good to a person,
but it will calm the person down because he always recites it with love and benevolence. This activity
relieves Tibetan people’s psychological burden and stress.” “Why are the Tibetans different from the other
ethnic groups? Tibetans are different because reciting Sutra relieves their stress. However, people from
other ethnic groups don’t have this advantage. They are unable to find their equilibrium in emotions, and
they often need to let out their anger. However, Tibetans don’t get mad and never throw bowls at people
because they have ways to relieve their stress.”

2. The full body prostration gives Tibetans a healthy body. “I really believe in full body prostration. It does
not make you live forever; however, it helps you strengthen your body. Every time you prostrate your whole
body to kowtow, every inch of your muscle and every piece of your joint get the exercise. This is not a
gesture to worship Buddha; this is an exercise to strengthen your body. Actually, this is what the Sutra
means. Not just worshiping at the statue, that was a misunderstanding developed gradually during the
later years.” In Guoqiucang’s eyes, every New Year’s gathering actually is a body building party: “To my
understanding, New Year is annual workout frenzy for the Tibetans. It last about 15 days, and people only
do three things. They repeatedly turn the praying wheel, prostrate their body fully to kowtow, and recite
Sutra.”

3. The Tibetan Buddhism promotes good public life and integrates the community. “You cannot find old
people at home because they all go to the temple, and Sutra Rooms. Those who can walk, go to the temple
to turn the praying wheels. When they are tired, they sit down for a cup of tea, and they chit-chat. For those
who are unable to walk, they just sit among the others. These old people exercise when they walk from
their house to the temple. When they arrive in the temple, they continue to walk around and exercise. The
temple becomes a large nursing home. All the old people get together to exercise and chit-chat. The
whole village becomes a media center.

4. Tibetan Buddhism also serves as a teaching tool to the community. The content is simple and easy to
understand, using everyday life issues as teaching examples. “When people gather in the temple, Lama
shows up constantly to preach: little kids need to study hard, the fat and lazy people should do more
prostration kowtow in order to keep fit, doctors should concentrate in taking care their patients. Lama will
explain and give examples.” In Guoqiucang’s opinions, The Wheel of Life with its six Realms can be used as
a concrete material while teaching the abstract doctrine in Buddhism. “To be a good person, you have to
overcome laziness, desires and jealousy; then you will make achievement.” “If an eminent monk teaches
the Buddhism theory directly to the laymen/women, they may not understand the lesson because they are
not well educated. Therefore, the monk has to use examples to explain what he wants to deliver.” “As the
result, he will tell you the consequence of everything you have done. He categorizes your behaviors. For
instance, you killed animals, you did good or bad deed before..., and the monk will tell you a different
impact on each deed you have performed. Actually, what he has given you is just an analogy. This analogy
will let you know that it’s good to be a good person and bad to be a bad person, Actually, the monk has not
sentenced you to heaven or hell, he just help you to win (or lose) all the admiration and respect from your
friends. You feel good at heart; you are in heaven. On the other hand, if you did something bad, you are not happy and you feel depressed, then you are in hell."

5. Tibetan Buddhism establishes a system that provides benefits and security to the community. The temple is the center of the community. Due to their resourcefulness, they are able to provide schooling, medical help and deliver daily necessities effectively to the poor and needy in its community. "Traditionally, the temple plays the role of the local charity for many years." "Many people do not understand why people donate their hard-earned money to the temple." "These people are wrong. You can get free drinks, free education at the temple. For example, you have difficulty at home. All the temples will come to help you. That is where your donation money goes. Temples do not use all the donations to remodel or expand their buildings. Most donations go to the poor Tibetan families, senior citizens who live alone, or orphans. All these needy people are often taken care of by the monks, not necessary by the local government. Sometimes, the local government does not even know... Although government has policies, the officers may not even know where to locate these people who need the help. The orphans are often too young to ask help from the authority, and the old mostly do not know how to express themselves clearly. Wuming(refers to five branches of knowledge) Buddhism College makes a good example. You don’t need to pay a penny if you go there to study. There are a lot of elementary schools and hospitals that are donated by the Buddhist temples. Most those places are free. Even they charge money, they charge a minimum fee. For example, if you are seriously sick, they only ask you to pay two dollars for the treatment.

Guoqiucang’s religious point-view shows an analytical tone; his opinions often meet with the academia studies of the Tibetan Buddhism’s social function. Consequently, we can see a person’s education, knowledge and multi-cultural interactions will help him to develop a more rational attitude toward the religion.

Rongmu is the youngest among my interviewees. She is also the least educated one. She came from a typical peasant’s family in Danba County that locates around the Gyalrong Area. The local Gyalrong culture not only displays the Tibet Plateau traditions, but it also shows the special agricultural traits of Han peasants. The locals believe in Bon Religion. At the beginning of each New Year, almost every family will ask the village fortune-teller casting the good and ill luck of the year, also telling them which activities, things or foods to avoid in order to shun away from the bad fortune. They will use this information as a guide to plan for the coming year. "This year, what I have to do in certain months... Originally, I was told that April will be unlucky for me... but I don’t know... I was told to be careful during that month." "In addition, he will tell me what types of foods I should avoid this year, all those things will be told to me. Last year, I was told not to eat fish, so I did not eat fish." When these people got sick, they have to see a fortune teller (a feng-shui master) besides seeing a doctor. "He will tell you what you have done wrong previously. He will also let you know what you have done wrong to make you sick now. I strongly believe in this." From her conversation, we can see the religious life of the uneducated, lower class Tibetan people. They don’t understand the doctrine, nor are they able to read Sutra. However, they followed the religious rituals generations after generations. They pray Buddha by burning pine and cypress branches, they worship the Buddha, and they help others and believe in Karma.

4.1.2 Views of Life
Since the concept of incarnation prevails in Buddhism, life and death are not opposites. Death is not the ending; on the contrary, it is a new beginning. Therefore, the Tibetans are very composed and fearless when they face death.

\[\text{Located in Seda County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, Wuming Buddhism College was established in 1985, belonging to Rongla Monastery. It is committed to nurture Buddhism talents and develop Buddhism culture.}\]

\[\text{Research shows that Tibetan Buddhism has ultimate concern, enlightenment education, the development of art, political and economic functions (theocracy, the main economic activity), and impact on daily life and public life (religious rituals, folk festivals, etc.) and other social functions (Guo, 2007). In modern society, according to the process of religion’s secularization, its political and economic functions no longer exist, educational function have almost been replaced by modern school system, but it’s influences in ultimate concern, the daily enlightenment and public life cannot be underestimated. (Yan, 2007)}\]
In 2013, Sanbuzha’s mother died before our second interview. It was very difficult for me to ask the details about his mother’s death. Sanbuzha was not as sorrowful as I expected. He told me the whole incident calmly. Before her passing away, she said to him: “Please don’t be sad after I leave you. You are so nice to everyone in the family; that is why they are good to me, not just plain good. I am pleased.” Sanbuzha told me that the other reason why he was not sad was he knew his mother would be reincarnated. She would be born in a nice family in the north, and she would meet him in next life. “After (mother’s) death, I went to see a fortune teller. The fortuneteller told me to clean the body nicely, and recite Sutra well. There will have a new person in a wealthy family in the north. You would see that.” This type of situation happens a lot in his homeland. His niece has found her previous life’s parents. As the result, she considers both this life’s and last life’s families as her family.

Seven days after his mother’s death, Sanbuzha followed the local traditions and had a Sky Burial for his mother. Due to various reasons, we seldom see celestial burial in Sichuan province now. However, Sanbuzha’s village has preserved this traditional culture. After chanting the Sutra by the Lamas to expiate the sins of the dead, a lucky date is selected for the burial. Before the burial, pine branches are burned on the burial site, and the smoke will invite the vultures (the incarnated Goddess Dakini⁴) to enjoy the dead body, which is considered as a sacrificial offerings to the God. Because Tibetans believe that the soul stays in bardo⁵ between the time of death and reincarnation, a complete corpse may slow down the process of reincarnation. Therefore, if the body decomposes quickly, it helps various Gods and Goddesses to bring the dead person’s soul to the God realm⁶. Moreover, it will also help the dead to expiate his/her sin rapidly. Tibetans believe that Sky Burial is a favorable way to end the journey of life. It benefits the dead as well as the nature. “Mutilating the body to feed the vultures” helps the dead person to reincarnate and to expiate his/her sin, therefore it is beneficial to the dead person. Simultaneously, the body is fed to the vultures as the offerings to the Gods; this act is advantageous to the nature.

4.1.3 views of ecology

The core of Tibetan Buddhism’s ecology values is to protect and treasure every living creature in the nature: human beings and the nature should share the universe in harmony.

Although these herdsmen raise cattle and goat all year-round, but they hardly eat four to five cattle or goat a year. They view food like medicine. They don’t enjoy food, but they take it just to keep their lives going. They use food to curb their hunger, just as medicine to stop their pain. Sanbuzha told me they usually do not kill any animal. They only kill a goat or two on special occasions, such as celebrating the New Year, summer time gatherings or weddings. “We, plateau people cannot survive without meet. However, we still feel bad when eating animals. Do we have to kill another life just because we are hungry? It does not sound humane.” Even this type of “Ahimsa” (killing) requires religious blessings. “We have to chant special Sutra, and we pour the water that was blessed by the Sutra into the animal’s eyes, nostrils, or mouth. Then we tell the animal that we are sorry. We wish them to reincarnate into a person in their next life. We also pray the Buddha to bless it. Then we terminate its life.”

When Zewanglamu did her research studies in a rural village in Kang Ding County, he met Zerang family. This family raises livestock, but they only eat the animals that were died of cold and sickness. However, in Kang Ding County, in Zewanglamu’s family, they even eat the fish (a food that most Tibetans do not eat). In Kang Ding, a multi-ethnic, diversified, commercial trading center, the traditional ecology values have been changed. Moreover, “it has been like this a long time ago”, the change has been for a long period of time.

⁴ Dakini: meaning the person walking in the air. Dakini is a female deity, she is vigorously and available to fly in the air, hence named. In Tantric Tibetan Buddhism, the Dakini is the goddess of wisdom and compassion.
⁵ The term “bardo” refers to the state of existence intermediate between two lives on earth, after death and before one’s next birth, when one’s consciousness is not connected with a physical body. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bardo, accessed March 10, 2014
⁶ Therefore in sky burial, it is auspicious to have the corpse eaten up, indicating that the deceased did not sin, the soul has risen to heaven quietly. Otherwise, the remainder should be collected and incinerated, while chanting sutras for salvation
Views of Family and Marriage
Benevolence, self-restraint, behaviors that benefit the egoism and altruism, honesty and personal loyalty are the major Buddhist ethics. We can see these merits reflect from their marriage and family relationships. Tibetans always place the family’s benefit before the individual’s. To care about the family benefit is their major life principle.

Sanbuzha was the only one among the interviewees that got married. His marriage is a little special, because he married his brother’s widow. Locally, they have a tradition of “wife sharing” among brothers. Moreover, Tibetans do not care about the age difference in marriage. Although his marriage is not common, his parents did not oppose it. The reason why he married his sister-in-law was that he wanted her to take care of his parents.

When his parents wanted him to get married, he tried to persuade his sister-in-law to let him take care of his parents in another house nearby after he married. However, his sister-in-law disagreed, and she said: “When I came to your house with you brother, our goal was to take care of your parents.” His sister-in-law wanted him to marry another lady in the same house, and they can take care of the parents together. However, he had second thoughts. He indicated: “There will be no problem for me to be nice to my sister-in-law, my niece and my nephews. If I marry another lady, she may not be as nice, and then my sister-in-law, my niece, my nephews and my mom may not to get along with her. Then, it will create difficulties for me.” After struggling for two years, he finally took his sister-in-law’s advice: “You never wanted to leave your parents. You considered taking care of your parents as your responsibility, and this makes you a good person. I can understand your thoughts. When we asked you to get marry, you do not agree. However, when you wanted your parents to move out with you, I disagreed. In this case, why don’t we stay together?” As the result, he married his sister-in-law because they wanted to take care of their parents, and not because of love and attraction. “I married my sister-in-law because my parents. I never fell in love with her, not before and not now, even at this age, I still don’t love her.”

After he married his sister-in-law, he continued to provide a good life to his nephew and niece. His wife suggested bear his child, he turned her down. He did not want her to mention about it, he said abruptly: “We don’t need to have babies. We stay together, and you take care of my parents. I will not regret this decision in my life. If I do, I am not a human being. If you don’t agree with me, I am not going to stay together with you.” Until this day and age, he does not have his own children, he never regrets. He points out that his niece and nephew treating him very nicely, even better than if he has his own.

From the point of view of Han culture, Sanbuzha sacrifices his love and the opportunity of having children his own in exchange of a stable life for his parents, and a harmonious relationship in the family. However, in Sanbuzha’s eyes, what he has done is not just for his family. What benefits his family benefits him. His decisions are spontaneous. In conclusion, the teaching of the Tibetan Buddhism gives him wisdom and strength to consider this problem. It has helped him to perceive the weakness of the human beings, and to select what is best for the family in the long run.

As for the unmarried, single interviewees, such as Guoqucang, Zewanglamu and Rongmu, they all share the same values about family. For example, when Guoqucang became independent and started to earn his own money, he took over his big brother’s responsibilities of educating their younger brothers, just as in a relay. He spent fifty thousand RMB in five years to send the two younger brothers to school. Rongmu told me while she was an immigrant worker in the city, she always give all her savings that she put aside to her parents, who were struggling in poverty. Every time she told me the story, her voice would get choked. When I asked them to show me the differences between the Tibetan people and Han people, Zewanglamu gave mentioned: “In our view, family is an unity, just like an cooperation, it has a center core, it should never be separated. For example, if you want to go to a place, it will be a matter of whole family. If you want to buy something, that will be something for the whole family, not for yourself.”
The Community Life

Community life shows the relationship between each individual with its community, and it also shows the relationship among the people. The Community life of my four interviewees has interlinked foundation. But it also reflects evolutions due to the social development of the times and geographical differences.

In the Tibetan communities of Sichuan Province, the important gatherings or blessing ceremonies are held during New Year, weddings, funerals and worshipping the mountain God. In Sanbuzha’s hometown, Ruoergai County, people celebrate New Year: “If the whole village is all right, parents are healthy, then everyone will have a good time.” Besides the traditional horse race and yak race, people also added basketball games in 2000 for the New Year celebration. However, if any of the villagers gets sick or passes away, the whole community will hold a fasting ceremony to pray for him. “The first day, we don’t eat dinner. The second day, we don’t talk, and the third day, we clean our mouth before the sun rises, and later we drink the “Zan Ba” soup (a soup made with cakes of fried flour blended with tea and butter).” In Guoqiucang’s village, the Hong Yuan County, there were the gatherings that he missed the most when he was in Cheng Du. New Year gathering: They usually celebrate the New Year in a temple. “The place is sacred. You know that it will have a safe, clean and healthy gathering.” When I go there, I will meet all the grandpas, grandmas, uncles and aunties (these people may be family acquaintances not necessarily Guoqiucang’s own grand-parents, uncles or aunties) and schoolmates that I have known them since I was a child. It is a wonderful moment. I just keep waving and saying hello to all the people I know. It gives me such a warm and loving feeling.” Other family gatherings: “You consider the place as your own, so you do not make a mess there. When you talk, you talk softly. Everyone can hear you and understand you... When everybody gets together, it forms such a peaceful and quiet atmosphere.” As for Rongmu’s village, they still dance “Guozhuang Dance” during the New Year celebration. This dance shows traces of the Tibetan’s old traditions, which is seldom seen in today’s world. The weddings in Ruoergai and Danba are also very different. In Sanbuzha’s hometown, the groom family will hold the party, and they will kill cattle and goat to feed the guests. As for the village of Danba, the bride family will give a party, but they are not going to kill any animals. They give away candies, cigarettes and bowls of highland barley wine. Besides celebrating with songs and dances, they also play mahjong. These rituals are obviously very close to the customs of a Chinese Han wedding. In Ruoergai, the hometown of Sanbuzha, they still practice Sky Burial. At Sanbuzha’s mother’s burial, “We are so pleased to see the body was eaten cleanly” “this is the happiest thing for us...” Zewanglamu’s family is in Kang Ding. They believe in bury the body in the earth, and they also believe to visit the grave .... Danba also practices Earth Burial, just like the Han Chinese people. Now, we could see the traces of changing in different places.

Due to the influence of rapid social development and the impact of the multi-facet cultures, the Tibetan values and traditions have been evolving along the years. As the result, each community shapes its own unique new culture because the development speed and the integration of the diversified cultures of each region are different. All of the growing up experience, the traditional values, the family background, and the educational and working experience will affect the Tibetan people’s religious belief, their life philosophy, and their values regarding the balance between the ecological environment and the human beings. The herdsman’s traditional lifestyle made Sanbuzha carry on his traditional values. Growing up in a worker’s family gave Guoqiucang a lot more opportunities to be educated and to work in a more diversified place out of Hong Yuan area, and this experience gave Guoqiucang a chance not only to form a more diversified modern values system, but also to develop a rational introspection. Zewanglamu and Rongmu came separately from a commercialized town center and an agricultural region where the Han and the Tibetan cultures integrated. However, the current change of the Tibetan public life has implied the weakening of an old value system which used to support its traditional way of living.

5. THE DIFFERENCES, THE CONFLICTS AND THE INTEGRATION OF CHINESE HAN AND TIBETAN CULTURE

5.1 The attitudes of the interviewees towards cultural differences and conflicts

All the interviewees had perceived the cultural differences in between Han and Tibetan people, also they had seen the conflicts and the biases that caused by these differences. However, due to different personal,
educational and working experience, every interviewee saw different incidents. They mentioned a lot of occasions of stereotyping and labeling people.

Rongmu mentioned that at the Han community where she worked, some of the Tibetan were “pretty nasty...because they did not understand Han Chinese, they suspected that the Han people were bullying them,” “In comparison, Han people were more polite, and they were nicer to people.” Actually, what she mentioned was how people usually perceived a stereotyped minority.

Zewanglamu discovered that Tibetans seriously concerned about the “blood line” of their own people to see whether they are “pure blood”. For instance, when she was in Kangding: “When there was a holiday, every religious community created its own celebrating activities. All the people of the community joined various parties,” “If a Han joined a party, he would think this was not a real Tibetan place that I expected. If a Tibetan went by, I had some class mates were Tibetans, then these Tibetans thought they were assimilated by the Han people, it was finished...” The Hans as well as the Tibetans both complained that Kangding is no longer a pure Tibetan place. The former was hoping to see only Tibetans in Tibetan community because he came for the differences, if he saw his own Han people, he would feel that the place was not a pure Tibetan place anymore. The latter, a Tibetan, he was worried about the merging of another new culture into his own. This incident reflected an embarrassment for people who were living on multi-cultural zone.

Zewanglamu experienced how people stereotyped minority students at her school: A lot of people felt that “Minority students have a lot of problems, you must have problems at home or you must have problems in your studies. If you did not have good grades, that’s because you are a minority student. Minority students could never achieve, anyways, they were just bad. However, if you got good grade, then they thought since you were a minority, the teacher must give you some favors...” Of course, this was stereotyping. However, it was due to the government’s preferential policies for minority students.

Zewanglamu also mentioned another stereotyped impression on the Kham Tibetan people: Kham Tibetans are fighters. She met a lot of Han people who did not understand why Kham people love to fight. They pointed out that this behavior conflicted with the Buddhism teaching. Zewanglamu explained: “People say that when chieftain holds a bell, he is a Lama. If he puts down the bell, he is a chieftain. In this case, the Buddhism teaching has nothing to do with it. It is the Tibetan culture and Kham’s history that are influencing these people.” The Kham man develops this very blunt and courageous temperament due to a lot of bloody wars in the past. 7

To stereotype people in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic community is an active way of labeling; however, the passive way of classifying people is also obvious in the community. It makes people to ignore the differences, and it hinders them to make a positive judgment about people from another ethnic group. It creates the Pygmalion Effect. As the result, it generates more conflicts among different ethnic groups. It usually develops a negative effect on the integration of different ethnic groups.

Due to his tourist guide profession, Guoqiucang has observed many cultural conflicts in the process of ethnic tourism 8 between the native Tibetan and the Han tourists. For tourism, Si Chuan is rich in natural as well as cultural resources. Around 100 million of Han people have come to visit since 2006 (Li, 2013). They usually focused on the 10 most famous scenic areas. You can imagine that this large group of tourists will seriously impact the life of the natives. The Han tourist come with their own language, costume, eating habits, religious beliefs, values and point of views to a place where they do not know, or partially know, or just know it by reading some flyers from the Tourism Bureau. In addition, people usually use their own

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7 In the history, before the 7th AD, Kham people led by their own clan chiefs, campaigned and migrated for hundreds of years. In the two centuries when under govern of Tubo, they were sometimes migrated as a whole, or sometimes went with the Tibetan army on expedition in the tribal-based organizational system. The reason why Kham people like knives and fighting with weapons is related to the wars and turmoil in their life. (Wang, 2001)

8 It is a variance of Tourism. Residents in tourist destination is a non-principle nation in the social cultural, the region they live were labeled a tourism tag because of the unique and different natural ecology and culture.(Cohen, 2001)
values to make judgment on others. In these circumstances, it is easy to develop misunderstanding among the tourists and the natives. Just as Lao She (a famous Chinese author) indicated in his novel “Four Generations in a House”: “For people who live outside of a certain culture, it will be very difficult for them to taste its essence. With a little blush, you see it as beauty; with a few speckles, you see it as ugliness.”

Even spending a short period of time together – for ten minutes, or a little bit longer, for an hour - conflicts may occur. “Minor clashes happen all the time. It depends on where you go.” Guoqicang gave a lot of examples: sometimes the tourists forgot their manners, and relieved themselves wherever they wanted, and other times they took pictures without asking permission from the natives - this specific incident happened over and over again. Since the animals and human are not equals in Han culture, and the Chinese do not respect the horses and the yaks like the Tibetans, the tourists did not know how to deal with the animals properly. They threw stones at the Yaks if they were afraid, they threw their leftover to them and not feeding the yaks with grass, or they thought the horses were dirty. All the conflicts occurred due to the different upbringing and the values of rankings in the nature. Another example of different values caused conflict: Tibetan believes in being fair when sharing goods, Han people are more humble in this area. “When Tibetans shared the beef, everyone should have an equal share. They counted the pieces accurately. Even the richest person should not behave generously. He would get his share just like everyone else. For instance, when people played a game in an ordinary day, everyone should be treated equally. No one should yield to any of his buddies; otherwise, the game would not be fun.

Rongmu observed very few clashes in between Tibetan and Chinese, she experienced more about the integration of the two cultures, and how people tried to live together in harmony. Zewanglamu mentioned that the study of the “Anthropology” helped her to understand the conflict between the two cultures. In addition, the learning also helped her to remain calm during various conflicts. Due to his rich experience at work and his opportunities in communicating with foreign resources, Guoqicang had the most rational reflection in these issues: “It is very normal for people from under-developed communities to be discriminated at a more affluent society. “This will happen in other cultures too. For example, poor peasants from the rural areas become very sensitive if they are in big cities. This is a very obvious situation in Tibetan communities.” He also indicated: “If a person from a rich city goes to an under-developed area, he has to be very careful about what he says and what he does when communicating with the locals. If you don’t respect a person, he would think that you are humiliating him.” 2. He believed social conflict was caused by misunderstanding. Once it is resolved, it would cease the conflict. As for discrimination, he emphasized: “I don’t have problem with this issue, I am able to understand it.”

The three unmarried interviewees also showed their mindset towards the racial preference when selecting their spouses. This also reflected how they perceived the cultural differences. Zewanglamu hoped to find a Tibetan spouse because she had seen a lot of cultural conflicts, and she enjoyed the mutual understanding, and the unspoken bond of two people who came from the same background. Guoqicang did not reject the idea of having a Chinese spouse. Rongmu had already found a Chinese boy friend while working at a restaurant, and her family did not oppose to it. They all believe that Han people and Tibetans could get along well.

During the interview, Zewanglamu told me that she had crisis with her self-esteem because she did not know her own culture. Thus, she wished to go back to her roots. “After I attended Dazhou University, I realized the problem of not speaking my own tribal language. Language really influenced your thinking. It also represents the sign of your identity. I need to know my own language. Due to various reasons, I have never learned my own language, as the result, I did not know too much about my own culture. The Han people think that I am a Tibetan; however, the Tibetans think I am not pure enough.” “Without the support of my culture, I don’t have an identity and confidence to support my self-esteem, and it gives a weak feeling. I want to go back to my roots. Tibetan culture really attracts me. There is a force to pull me back to my culture. I have not had a chance to learn it while I was growing up, but I will work harder and learn it now.” When asked the reason why she did not speak the Tibetan language, she replied: “May be it is a
historical reason. It is caused by many reasons: the environmental influence, the government policies, and the school’s curriculum. You see, we don’t even have a school that teaches in Tibetan language. When the Nationalist Chinese governed here, they promote bilingual education. They wanted the children to learn Kang Ding dialect as well as Han. I have seen the slogans on those old pictures, they wrote on the walls. But now people don’t promote those ideas. All children learned Chinese when they began the school, of course, eventually you learned about Han culture. This is the power of the country, and it is so strong. It will also gradually bring out the change of the cultures.”

Zewanglamu hoped to return to her own culture. For a young Tibetan who grew up in a place where the Hans and the Tibetans mingled and received a Han dominant school education, it is natural that she has her emotions tied to her mother tongue and her own culture. Through her explanation, we can perceive the importance of a native language in the process of search one’s identity and self-esteem.

From the stories of the interviewees, we could see the differences between the two cultures (Han and Tibetan) often created conflicts. Therefore, it is importance to encourage each ethnic group to return to its traditional culture. This change will not only preserve the culture and traditions of each minority group, but it will also help every minority youth to establish his/her self-esteem and identity. When minority groups prefer to return to their own roots and culture, the most important issue is to develop an educational system that provide curriculum in their own native language, because language and traditions are inseparable. Furthermore, behind each native language there are a lot of hidden history as well as traditional culture. For those ethnic groups that do not have written history, language became a more important tool to preserve its culture. In these circumstances, the most important issue of minority education is to set up schools in its native tongue. On the other hand, we should make an effort to cease the conflicts and to avoid biases among people from different ethnic groups. The basic strategy is to train people to accept a multi-cultural society where differences can be resolved. Moreover, people from different ethnic groups should learn how to respect and admire each other’s culture and traditions in order to create a harmonious society. We are able to consider the following educational system:

1. Public education: To increase multi-cultural curriculum in the K1-12 regular public school system in order to introduce the concept of having a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.
2. National Tourism: Since tourists only stay for a short period of time in a scenic area, it is very easy for the two different ethnic groups to start a conflict that do not have enough time to resolve. Under these circumstances, it is important to train the tourist guides and the related personnel about the local culture, and simultaneously, to prepare the local residents about the culture of the tourists that come from different ethnic groups and foreign countries. In addition, the tourists should use his/her best knowledge to help people to avoid conflicts and try to bring all different cultures into harmony.

From preparation to interview to collate information to form an analysis, I have been guided patiently by the Evergreen Education Foundation. I realized that though everyone can do oral history, the oral history process is not just a simple recording and organization. This discipline has its own theoretical system and rigor. But it is also open to everyone, without imposing constraining model and prequalification. For me, what was done is just a beginning. I understand that to achieve the ultimate goal --- to leave the imprint of ordinary Tibetans in history, there is still a long way to go. I will keep trying.

To this day, I still miss the cool thin air on highlands, blue cloudless sky, Tibetans’ innocent smile and bright eyes. Sanbuzha is my first interviewee. The interviews drew us closer. We became brother and sister. More than once he said to me, “You’re just like my sister.” That is Karma which Tibetans believe in. Their hearts full of simple goodness are shining like gold. Religion-based ethical values bring them sources of happiness. Perhaps what we did everything to pursue is what they disdain, whereas what we forgot along the way is what they cherish most.
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Yo no soy marinero: Son jarocho y resistencia cultural en California.

Rafael Figueroa Hernández
(Brazil):

Resumen: El son jarocho vive un momento de resurgimiento que lo ha llevado a desbordar sus fronteras naturales en el estado de Veracruz y desarrollado una comunidad transregional y transnacional de proporciones notables. Una de las comunidades más fuertes fuera de México es aquella que se ha dado en California donde, desde la frontera en el sur hasta la zona de la Bahía en el norte, un gran número de jóvenes han visto en el son jarocho, y su movimiento de reivindicación llamado movimiento jaranero, una vía para poder fortalecer su identidad, tanto para los mexicanos emigrados recientemente, como para los mexiconorteamericanos de segunda o tercera generación. Parte de la reivindicación de este grupo social, formado dicho sea de paso por una abrumadora mayoría por personas que no tienen su origen personal o familiar en Veracruz, ha radicado en el uso de versos compuestos a partir de los esquemas jarochos pero que ahora reflejan su posición de subalternos en el concierto étnico estadunidense. Así cuando el grupo Las cafeteras canta sus propios versos de La bamba (“Yo no soy de la migra, ni lo seré” o “Yo no creo en fronteras, yo cruzaré”) o el grupo Son de Santa Ana canta “El señor presidente” y en vez de los versos tradicionales utiliza “Señor presidente/ le vengo a avisar/ que los inmigrantes/ se van a quedar./ Me gusta el durazno,/ me gusta la pera,/ pero no me gusta/ que haya tanta guerra, se están conectando con una tradición de varios siglos que les provee de la fuerza identitaria necesaria para resistir culturalmente la hegemonía WASP (White Anglo Saxon Protestant).
The transmission of memory and Catalan identity in children and grandchildren of Republican exiles in Mexico.

Rocío Ruiz Lagier
(Mexico):

Resumen: La memoria tiene un lugar central en la reproducción de la identidad y en la construcción del sentimiento de pertenencia de los individuos. Recordamos lo que es significativo para nosotros, lo reproducimos y lo transmitimos. En el caso de los exiliados, el papel de la memoria se intensifica; recordar es vital para saber de dónde se viene, cuál es el punto de origen.

El exilio republicano en México ha sido ampliamente documentado, sin embargo, el proceso de adaptación y de reproducción cultural e ideológica que experimentaron las generaciones subsecuentes de los recién llegados no ha sido documentada. En este trabajo se abordan la transmisión de vivencias (historias y anécdotas) a hijos y nietos de exiliados catalanes, las cuales fueron transmitidas de generación en generación y que han sido cruciales en su adscripción ideológica, así como en la construcción que a través de ellas hicieron de lo que es ser catalán y de lo que es ser hijo o nieto de exiliado.

Abstract: Memory is central to the reproduction of identity and the construction of the sense of belonging of individuals. We remember what is meaningful to us, we reproduce and transmit it. In the case of the exiles, the role of memory is intensified; remember is vital to know where you come from and what is the point of origin.

Republican exile in Mexico has been widely documented, however, the process of adaptation and cultural and ideological reproduction of the subsequent generations of newcomers has not been documented. This work shows the transmission of stories and anecdotes to children and grandchildren of Catalan exiles. These experiences were handed down from generation to generation and have been crucial in their ideological affiliation, as well as in the construction are addressed of what is being Catalan and what is being exiled son or grandson.
Sobre el exilio en México se ha escrito mucho: existe vasta información sobre la llegada de los refugiados, su organización, los primeros años, su quehacer cultural y el gran legado que dejaron en México. Sin embargo, hay algunos puntos que son una carencia todavía: por un lado, no se ha hecho un gran esfuerzo en mirar el exilio más allá del avasallante grupo cultural que representaron algunos; no ha habido pues un interés por desmenuzar una masa social diversa que quizá no haya sido tan interesante en cuanto a su papel cultural en el país de acogida, ni tan excepcional en su militancia política como aquella élite intelectual de filósofos, pedagogos, antropólogos, médicos y artistas de renombre que dejó a su paso por el país una gran legado. Por otro lado, y es el interés de esta ponencia, no se ha trabajado sobre las generaciones posteriores del exilio, es decir, sobre los hijos de padres catalanes que nacieron o crecieron en México, y mucho menos sobre los nietos que son actualmente una generación que realiza una labor importante de recuperación de memoria histórica. Estas generaciones se vieron atravesadas por el retorno -real o imaginario-, pues la vuelta a casa era un anhelo constante presente en prácticamente todas las casas de exiliados, y en la mayoría de las casos marcados por la nostalgia y el vacío que dejaba lo inalcanzable de su deseo. Como veremos más adelante, la percepción y significación del exilio también es distinta de una generación a otra.

El número más ampliamente aceptado de refugiados republicanos es el de un aproximado de 500 mil personas (Rubio 1977), si bien hay autores que consideran que fueron más. Dentro de esa masa, el sector catalán representó un porcentaje relevante: según algunos autores, los catalanes significaron la porción mayoritaria –un poco más de la tercera parte- del exilio en general y en el caso de México una quinta parte (Plá 1999). En los numerosos estudios que se han hecho, así como en la herencia tangible que esta generación dejó en México a través de diversas aportaciones culturales, los nombres catalanes a parecen por doquier. Y como bien señala Dolores Plá, ”el hecho de que la mayor parte de los títulos hubiera surgido de la propia comunidad refugiada ponía en evidencia que se trataba de un grupo particularmente interesado en la conservación de su propia memoria” (Plá 1999:15).

Ahora bien, la construcción y reproducción de la memoria no se lleva a cabo dese los libros e investigaciones, no de manera exclusiva por lo menos. Se realiza sobre todo en el día a día, en lo cotidiano. Y en ese sentido, el exilio catalán se distingue por el reconocimiento y reproducción de sus particularidades culturales. La lengua, sin duda, el más importante de ellos; es notable como al día de hoy, nietos de exiliados catalanes [nacidos en México y de padres también mexicanos], mantienen el catalán como lengua vehicular en el núcleo familiar, gracias a que sus abuelos lo transmitieron y mantuvieron en el ámbito privado.

El exilio republicano contaba con una organización importante, lo que convirtió el arribo a tierras mexicanas en un proceso sumamente organizado. En un inicio organismos de ayuda como la Junta de Auxilio a los Republicanos españoles y el Comité Técnico de Ayuda a los Republicanos Españoles crearon albergues y comedores sociales, si bien más adelante también se generaron empleos de diversa índole (en el ámbito editorial, fábril, de la construcción y educativo). Precisamente, la creación de colegios no sólo fue un éxito, sino que sería un hecho clave en la integración e identificación de la generación de hijos de refugiados. En agosto de 1939 se fundó en la ciudad de México el Instituto Luis Vives y más adelante se crearía el Colegio Madrid. No debemos olvidar que los profesores republicanos que echaron a andar estos proyectos educativos venían de un momento de gran calidad y excelencia en los métodos de enseñanza. No obstante, lo que en estos colegios se transmitía día a día, iba más allá de una metodología interesante de participación activa del alumno, además los alumnos “aprendían” de manera implícita que pertenecían a una comunidad específica, la del exilio.

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1 Algunas de las obras relevantes son: Fagen Patricia, Transfierrados y ciudadanos. Los republicanos españoles en México, F.C.E., México, 1975; Serie Palabras del Exilio; Matesanz Jose Antonio, Las raíces del exilio. México ante la guerra civil española, Colegio de México, UNAM, 1999.

2 La Institución de Libre Enseñanza fundada por Francisco Giner de los Ríos tuvo un gran impacto como propuesta pedagógica, y muchos de los profesores exiliados trataron de aplicar y reproducir este método de enseñanza.
Ahora bien, algunos testimonios dan cuenta de un sector del exilio catalán que decide y cuenta con los medios económicos para hacerlo enviar a sus hijos a estudiar al Liceo Francés. La razón que se ha dado por parte de los propios hijos de exiliados catalanes es la reticencia de sus padres a que estudiaran en castellano y menos aún siguiendo un modelo educativo en que España constituía un eje vehicular. De modo que la comunidad catalana comenzó a reagruparse, ayudarse y fomentar la reproducción de su cultura e identidad. En este sentido, el Orfeó catalá de la ciudad de México significó un espacio crucial en la vida de los exiliados y de sus hijos y nietos. No sólo creó un Comité d'Auxilis als Refugiats, sino que organizó un servicio de atención médica y comedor. La vida social y cultural que llegó a tener el Orfeó en esos años es memorable, si bien arribó un momento en los primeros años en que las diferencias ideológicas se hicieron presentes. Con el término de la segunda guerra mundial y el inminente asentamiento del franquismo, se hacía más difícil el regreso, pero mientras tanto, en todo este proceso ¿qué pasaba con los hijos?

Los hijos del exilio habían llegado muy pequeños o nacido en el nuevo país, pero la integración a este nuevo contexto era muy peculiar, pues además de contar con la añoranza común que suele tener el que emigra, se añadía un plus ideológico. Eran hijos de exiliados que habían peleado por unos ideales. En ese sentido, la idealización de los valores y la ética de aquellos excombatientes está presente tanto en hijos como en nietos. En todas las entrevistas que he realizado se ha valorado como algo positivo ser hijo o nieto de exiliado, los padres o abuelos son un ejemplo o una enseñanza de dignidad. Hay pues una resignificación de la derrota que va ligada a historia -oficial o no-, a las imágenes comunes de la guerra y el éxodo, a la memoria social que prevaleció del otro lado del Atlántico –porque aquí las valoraciones son diferentes–.

Sus padres les hablaban en una lengua distinta a la que se utilizaba en el colegio o en la calle, pero en casa y con los amigos lo que se hablaba era catalán. Es decir, que el catalán era la lengua materna, la de la intimidad, la de la vida privada, pero también era la lengua social y del ocio, pues hay que recordar que muchas de estas familias se reunían rigurosamente en el Orfeó o en Casal catalá de México. Ahí los hijos tomaban clases de sardanas, festejaban Sant Jordi, comían comida catalana, acostumbraban la coca de Sant Joan, festejaban navidad y San Esteban –y no la cena de noche buena como se acostumbra en México–, y todas estas actividades se realizaban con gente de la misma comunidad catalana, es decir, con sus iguales, sus semejantes. Estas vivencias iban acompañadas de las historias idílicas que padres y abuelos narraban sobre la Cataluña que habían dejado: sus calles, sus paisajes, su comida, su gente. Iban también acompañadas de cuentos y arrullos catalanes. Si bien es cierto que había un esfuerzo por reproducir y transmitir la cultura catalana, para los abuelos nunca parecía ser suficiente; no bastaba con ir a buscar a la tienda La Catalana o a la inigualable biblioteca que consolidó el Orfeó, la mirada estaba puesta en el retorno. Pero para los hijos no.

Los hijos, a pesar de lo que he descrito antes, han podido participar perfectamente de las dos culturas, lo cual sin duda es una gran riqueza. Con sus peculiaridades, evidentemente, pues como me dijo alguna vez una de ellos: “Yo era de ellos, pero no era como ellos”. Y es que los hijos ya no tenían las sorpresas culturales de los que llegaron, no se sorprendían de la misma manera con los olores y sabores de la comida, con el color de la piel de la gente o con los sonidos de la calle. Habían crecido o nacido ahí, pero su entorno había sido muy particular, es decir, muy catalán. De tal modo, que en varias de las entrevistas que he realizado a hijos y/o nietos de exiliados, hay momentos en que se refieren a los mexicanos como “los otros” a los que inequivocamente “descubrieron” en alguna ocasión. “Nunca había visto a tantos mexicanos como cuando entre a la Universidad” dice una entrevistada en tono de broma. Sin embargo, es cierto que el ser hijo de exiliado resulta particular, y quizá en algunas ocasiones requiere, el hacer un cruce de distintos planos identitarios de los sujetos, que en otro momento resultaría más conflictivo. Pues en el

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4 Precisamente en el Orfeó se desarrolló una importante labor de edición revistas en catalán.
exilio se podía ser catalán, español, anarquista, mexicano, comunista, republicano y refugiado. Categorías que en combinación resultaban altamente conflictivas, por no decir contradictorias. Sin duda, hijos y nietos asumían dichas identificaciones de manera distinta a los padres, y esas diferencias permitieron que hubiera diferentes tipos de exilio, y de retornos también. Para los hijos del exilio, Cataluyna era la tierra prometida, pero la vuelta a casa no era fácil. Ya sea porque no había la economía para hacerlo y empezar de nuevo, porque en México se habían consolidado de alguna manera o por razones ideológicas: “no se regresaría mientras Franco estuviera en el poder”. Este fue un argumento que estuvo presente en la mayoría de las familias refugiadas a lo largo de muchos años. Lo cierto es que para aquellos que lograron hacerlo el contraste de la Cataluyna que sus padres habían descrito con lo que se encontraron fue tremendo. Todavía hoy sigue siendo fuerte para los nietos que regresan –si es que puede ser considerado un retorno-, pero ya no por la discrepancia entre las narraciones idealizadas de los abuelos y el escenario que hallaban, sino por la soledad del retorno y el olvido que Cataluyna tiene de sus exiliados.

En países que han sufrido sistemas dictatoriales y/o de violencia como guerras civiles, invasiones o guerrillas, la necesidad de hablar y recuperar esa historia se ha hecho primordial. Si bien es cierto que en los últimos años la guerra y la posguerra han sido tema recurrente de la literatura y el cine en específico, en el ámbito social o en el privado no ha pasado lo mismo. Existen asociaciones civiles en las que familiares de víctimas del franquismo se han involucrado ya sea por la posibilidad de encontrar el cuerpo de un familiar en alguna fosa común, o para exigir de manera más amplia una demanda de justicia y reparación. En este proceso se distingue una clara diferencia entre los hijos y nietos del exilio, y los que se quedaron y vivieron la posguerra. En el exilio, la transmisión de la memoria era un trabajo arduo, constante, voluntario; en tanto que en Cataluña el silencio se imponía. Resulta paradójico pensar en aquellos miles de catalanes hablando su lengua y reproduciendo su cultura a miles de kilómetros de su país, mientras en Cataluña resultaba comprometedor incluso hablar en su propia lengua.

La memoria colectiva de hijos y nietos de exiliados difiere –obviamente- de la que de los hijos y nietos de este lado del atlántico. En España se impuso el silencio durante décadas, el olvido fue un decreto que las nuevas generaciones asumieron. La terrible posguerra, la represión y el miedo crearon un vacío narrativo, a diferencia de lo que pasó en México en donde había que contarles a los hijos de dónde se venía, para que supieran quiénes eran.

Tal vez por eso, para los hijos y nietos del refugio es hablar y rescatar la memoria de la guerra y el exilio es una cuestión de orgullo. Aquí es un hecho lejano, ajeno, y para aquellos que deciden sumergirse en el reconocimiento de la historia, es un acto doloroso. Herzberger ha señalado que también la memoria reconstruye o inventa lo que olvida, pero las políticas de la memoria necesitan esos relatos, aunque sean débiles

En el caso de los hijos y nietos de exiliados, su lengua, todas las historias narradas por abuelos y padres, y sus retornos les han permitido vivir en dos patrias, y descubrir qué de catalán y qué de mexicano se tiene. Aunque quizá, como dijo Sánchez Vázquez en sus Memorias del exilio: Tanto si vuelves o no, jamás dejarás de ser exiliado.
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I miss freedom’: Life history of male students in an educational institute in a city in the Amazon.

Josibel Rodrigues e Silva (Brazil):

**Resumen:** Instituto Federal de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología del Amazonas se encuentra en la ciudad de Manaus, Estado de Amazonas, Brasil. Esta escuela recibe estudiantes de la ciudad de Manaus, y también de las zonas rurales de la Amazonía. Algunos de ellos vienen de lugares lejanos, pequeños pueblos y comunidades. Con el enfoque de la historia oral presentamos los relatos de tres (03) estudiantes que viven en el internado del Instituto. En este trabajo tenemos la intención de mostrar las relaciones de poder en este contexto educativo basado principalmente en las narraciones de los estudiantes en cuanto a su experiencia actual en el internado, la vida cotidiana, momentos de alegría, así como la tristeza y la angustia en la institución educativa. También tenemos la intención de presentar la reconstrucción de sus historias de un tiempo antes de que se trasladaran al Instituto, de una incursión en el campo de sueños, la imaginación y la memoria. Por lo tanto, tratamos de conocer y entender la historia de la vida de estos estudiantes, la valoración de las relaciones basadas en su visión del mundo, las formas de resistencia, aprendizajes y experiencias. Consideramos estos estudiantes agentes sociales en la construcción del conocimiento de este estudio.

**Palabras clave:** Historia de vida, el internado, estudiantes.

**Abstract:** The Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Amazonas is located in the city of Manaus, State of Amazonas, Brazil. This school receives students from the city of Manaus and also from the countryside of the Amazon. Some of them come from faraway places, small villages and communities. Through oral history approach we present the narratives of three (03) male students from the countryside who live in the Institute boarding school. In this work we intend to show the power relations in this educational context based mainly on narratives of students regarding their current experience in the boarding school, daily life, moments of joy as well as sadness and anguish in the educational institution. We also intend to present the reconstruction of their stories of a time before they moved to the Institute from an incursion in the fields of dream, imagination and memory. Thus, we seek to know and to understand the life history of these students, valuing the relations based on their worldviews, forms of resistance, learnings and experiences; we consider these students as social agents in the construction of knowledge that gave rise to this study.

**Key words:** Life history, boarding school, male students.
INTRODUCTION
The Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Amazonas - Manaus Campus Zona Leste (IFAM / CMZL) offers technical and technological courses in the primary sector as Agriculture, Fishery Resources and Agroecology. It has a style of school-farm whose extensive area houses sectors for breeding and agricultural crops.

The Campus is located on the East Side of the city. This area is considered dangerous with high incidence of crime most related to theft and drug trafficking. Thefts happen in the campus by criminals from outside the school and by our own students.

The Institute receives students from the city of Manaus (mostly), and also students from the countryside. Some of them come from distant places, small towns and communities. That is why there is a boarding school in order to house students who come from faraway places. It offers an infrastructure with bedroom, dining room, games room, gym and other recreational areas.

It is undeniable the existence of ethnic and cultural diversity in the Institute. Thus, within these socio-cultural relations, the school sometimes produces the exclusion of groups or students whose socio-cultural patterns do not correspond to dominant. The school adopts practices that “silence” the different voices that come to school [CANEN, 2001].

Therefore, we aimed in this study to record and analyze the life stories of students who live in the boarding school of IFAM-CMZL, in view of the cultural and identity relationships experienced by students. We hope to reveal the trajectory of acts, gestures and words of student, but this goal requires a certain posture of the researcher, which is expressed in the awareness that any fact, no matter how simple it may be, can be considered small or insignificant [GUSMÃO; SOUZA, 2010]. According to Benjamin (1994, p. 223), “the chronicler who narrates the events without distinguishing between the great and the small ones, takes into account the fact that nothing that happens can be considered lost to history.”

This study emphasizes the recognition of existing identities in the Institute, which are not voiceless even in the imposition of silence, because even in silence identities are sources of meaning and construction of reality (KREUTZ, 1999). Thus, we see students with their own worldviews, visions that are created and transformed in the experiences, within the cultural boundaries in their relationship with others (BARTH, 2000).

This research, the interview and the treatment of the narrative were performed on the theoretical possibility of oral history, specifically “oral history of life”. It is an instrument to interpret the social process from the involved people in extent that consider the subjective experiences as important data that speak beyond and through them.

Ronald Grele (1991) suggests that oral history should be interested in recording and organizing the narration of events, but not with the intention of accumulating narrative, texts and empirical reports, but with the intention of understanding the historical sense that such deeds and experiences have had in the past and still has for the narrators.

According to the description of methodological framework in oral history that we sympathize (MEIHY, HOLANDA, 2007), there is a process of transcription of the interviews that integrates a coherent text, allows the clarity of the ideas and identifies the main message.

This study presents 03 narratives constructed by the identification of the “vital tone” that, according to Meihy (2006) it is the central message of the social agents, messages that they consider important to register.
The following are the narratives of Pedro, Daniel e Mário.

**Pedro**

Pedro is 19 years old. He came from the small town of Apuí to study at IFAM in order to get something better in the labor market. In his community he used to work on the farm. He currently lives in the boarding school of the IFAM/CMZL. He is a student with good grades.

*Sinto Falta de liberdade,*

Lá em Apuí é bem diferente. Quando eu cheguei aqui eu senti dificuldade em me acostumar. Eu trabalhava no sítio. Eu geralmente fazia o serviço mais pesado, roçando, fazíamos cerca, trabalhávamos com conjuntos de boi, trabalho pesado. A gente tinha plantação de café, arroz e milho, a gente sobrevivia do sítio mesmo, plantando café, mandioca, são essas coisas que a gente plantava, a gente sobrevivia do sítio.

Aquí em Manaus sinto falta de liberdade... Lá em Apuí saía com meus colegas, participava das atividades do colégio, ia pros banhos, coisas que aqui eu não faço tanto, por ser um pouco perigoso, eu não saio. Quando eu cheguei aqui eu fiquei muito parado, no interior eu sempre tava fazendo alguma coisa.

Aquí o conteúdo que os professores passam é mais avançado, os professores são mais experientes e nem sempre a gente consegue tirar uma boa nota. Têm aquelas disciplinas que a gente tem mais dificuldade, as que têm mais cálculo eu tenho dificuldade, agora as de escrever eu não tenho dificuldade não.

Como a gente é interno, a gente toma conta dos setores¹ no fim de semana, cuidando das galinhas, dos porcos, principalmente dos animais. Aí tem um tempo livre pra estudar só que, eu tava acostumado no interior a ficar todo tempo na atividade, mas agora...não, sinto falta de liberdade.

No final de semana, às vezes a gente dá uma saída pra visitar algum colega, ou a gente vai lá pro Centro andar “à toa”, às vezes algum colega de fora convida, e aí a gente vai pra casa de algum colega mesmo.

Já senti vontade de voltar várias vezes porque eu sentia muita dificuldade de me acostumar, lá no interior eu saía pra caçar ou pescar, aí aqui eu fico muito tempo parado. Pesa também a questão financeira. Eu recebo uma bolsa da assistência estudantil, o que ajuda um pouco.

As drogas atrapalham bastante, geralmente os rapazes saem do interior pra ajudar a família, pra ter melhores condições, aí quando chegaram aqui já mudam completamente, muitos não conseguem, têm muita dificuldade e entram pro mundo das drogas.

**Daniel**

Daniel is 19 years old. He came from the small town of Borba because he “got into confusion,” so his mother told him to come. He thinks about going to college to study Agronomy or Animal Science. He likes to live in the boarding school where he currently resides.

*Sempre tem o pessoal que bebe e usa drogas,*

Sempre tem o pessoal que bebe e usa drogas,... Isso às vezes atrapalha, quando a gente vem pra aula em uma segunda, com uma ressaca, mas dá pra separar. Eu já bebia no interior, brigava muito por lá, bebia e já fui preso algumas vezes. Minha família ficou com medo de acontecer algo comigo por lá, por isso eu vim. Conheço bem uns sete (07) rapazes que usam drogas, uns três já começaram a pegar nota ruim, um já desistiu, não aguentou o ano. Ele começou aqui, ele nem bebia, começou a beber e usar droga, tá ficando doido. A mãe dele, acho que vai tirar ele daqui.

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¹ The narratives are in Portuguese. We did not translate them in order to keep their real nature and meaning.
² Sectors of Animal Science and Agriculture
Eu sou do município de Borba. Trabalhava no sítio, fazendo horta. Também tínhamos galinha e porco. Eu sinto falta de lá, da família e dos amigos, das coisas que eu fazia, do bairro. Aqui aonde eu vou, eu não conheço ninguém. No fim de semana eu vou pro São Lázaro, casa da minha prima, e volto na segunda pra escola.

Aqui é bom. Tem o horário para as refeições e do estudo. Aqui ninguém me trata mal não, porque sou calmo, quieto. Aqui aprendi os conhecimentos técnicos, o que mais gostei foi a matéria sobre inseticidas e biodefensivos.

Antes, quando cheguei aqui pensava em voltar, agora eu quero tentar entrar em uma faculdade. Pensei que eu não iria me adaptar, mas gostei. O ensino aqui é mais puxado, tive muita dificuldade, mas é tudo bom aqui, eles fazem a gente se sentir em casa.

Mário

Mario came from the city of Altazes. He is the youngest of nine (09) brothers. He lives in boarding school where he presented some problems of adaptation. At the beginning of the interview he just talked about the boarding school, specifically on how it is handled by the coordination of the school. He showed no nervousness and his narrative was spontaneous, almost without interruption from the interviewer.

Acho que eles precisam ouvir mais o aluno,...

Acho que, que eles precisam ouvir mais o aluno, entender um pouco o aluno, porque eles só olham o lado deles, não veem o nosso lado. Por exemplo, se acontece alguma coisa, eles julgam muito a gente. Eles não querem saber o porquê que a gente fez aquilo. Querem julgar a gente na hora. Tá tudo bem que a gente tá errado, mas eles não querem saber o porquê. Eles sempre estão certos, falam “ah eu já passei por isso”, mas não sabem o que eu tô passando. É fácil falar,... eles poderiam escutar mais o aluno. Ah, porque as coisas não são fáceis, eu já passei muitas coisas, e aí a pessoa quer humilhar o cara e tal, eles falam um monte de coisa, e eu sou muito alterado, estressado. Eu só vivia brigando, só vivia na CGAE, agora que eu melhorei, meus colegas me deram conselho, me falaram que o que eu tava fazendo era errado.

Aqui não é difícil encontrar drogas. Eu acho que o uso de drogas faz mal à saúde, mas às vezes tem que conhecer a história dessa pessoa que usa, às vezes a gente ta longe da família e quer algo que traga felicidade, alegria, mas não é nada disso não, é o contrário, aqui muita gente usa porque tá distante da família, e quer ficar feliz, mesmo que seja aquela alegria momentânea.


Eu vim pra morar no internato. Eu gosto daqui, das amizades, tudo gente boa. Depois da aula a gente malha na academia, eu gosto. É difícil eu sair, às vezes no fim de semana eu vou pra casa da minha irmã, mas o marido dela não gosta de mim, aí é difícil eu sair, só quando um amigo convida.

No primeiro ano aqui eu senti muita dificuldade, com matemática, português e biologia. O ensino mudou muito, os conteúdos que a gente vê lá no interior são mais fracos, aqui é mais avançado com certeza.

Em Manaus não tem nada pra fazer, porque em Altazes a gente saía. Eu só voltava à hora que eu queria. Aqui não, tem que ter muito cuidado, de assalto, de roubo, assassínato.

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3 Neighborhood of Manaus.  
4 Coordination of students.
Sentir muita vontade de voltar. Mas quando foi no meio do ano, eu pensei, não, tenho que ficar aqui pra eu dar o melhor pra minha mãe. Sempre pensei muito nela, ela batalhou muito pra me criar depois que meu pai me deixou. Sinto falta da minha mãe, dos colegas, da moçada de lá do bairro.

A POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION

As Maciel (2013), we sought the life story of ordinary people by the reconstruction of students’ memory. With the narratives we have no concern with proof of objective truth, thus we agree with Pesavento (2005, p. 39) when she states that “individuals and groups see the world through representations that they build on reality”. In this sense, the narrated experiences may have a fictional content, they can speak untruths from the point of view of conventional history, but in oral history the narratives are true from the moment we enter the world of memory, where the stories are recreated.

I identified myself with Peter’s story. I am also from the countryside, so when he told his story I could not help recalling my own. The lack of freedom that he feels I also feel it; it is a feeling of failure and limitations, a false freedom. To Haesbaert (2006), it is a strange freedom that we live nowadays, where even on the street, which was once an area of contacts, it is being transformed in a limited area where there are certain conditions that we must obey. This is the great synthesis of the metropolitan space: world/place. It is the very nature of modernity, in which we are simultaneously near/distant, trapped/free, local and universal (HAESBAERT, 2006).

Manaus differs from the Amazon countryside, where the places are calmer, where everyone knows everyone else, life happens more slowly and there are still ties of solidarity and neighborhood. In these regions there are small towns, ranches, farms and villages. This is the Amazon area where live the farmers, fishermen and miners, rural workers in general and their large families, which still constitute the vast majority (BATISTA, 2007). This region maintains deep relationship with the subsistence activity. Such activities are, in most cases, the only source of income for the families. Thus, it is understandable the strangeness about the new space, especially when we start living in a city like Manaus, capital of Amazonas.

Manaus is still considered the city of opportunity, employment, study and progress. It is strongly affected by the action of the national state, mainly with the implementation of the Industrial factories. However, soon it begins to show the other face; the various social and human problems, high crime rates, unemployment, poor quality of life and poverty.

The large supply of jobs in the industry has led to an uncontrolled growth of the city with an extraordinary exodus of the countryside, where populations in search of better living conditions, schools and jobs for children are deceived by the illusion of the city (RIBEIRO, 2004). According to Scherer (2005), this new capitalist rationality transforms the city of Manaus, impacts the daily lives of Amazonian life and changes the physiognomy of the city with the process of urbanization. The urban area has another visibility, with the population growth and the creation of numerous districts that became part of the periphery of the city.

It is in this area that the IFAM is located. It is surrounded by neighborhoods formed by migrants from other states and people who came from the countryside of Amazonas. This region suffers with the lack of governmental actions and has the stigma of “red zone”. Thus, students that enter this school every year are also stigmatized; victims of the classification process of things, since the social science itself is compelled to classify things (BOURDIEU, 2001).

The narratives indicate the drug abuse in the Campus. The coordination of the IFAM has made projects and organized lectures in order to prevent it. However, the use of drugs persists.

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Dangerous zone.
Daniel had a history of alcohol abuse in the countryside, and he was famous for “getting in trouble”. In the beginning, he did not want to stay at IFAM, but now he wishes to stay and finish his studies, he says he likes the school.

The narrative of Daniel changes in relation to the narrative of Mario. Mario is a drug user and he states that he is always judged by the coordinators. He states that they do not want to know why he is a drug abuser. Mario began using drugs at school; he said that he wanted to escape from sadness and homesickness. In the beginning of the interview he did not speak of anything else, addressing how he felt misunderstood, as if people did not understand what he was going through, having a need to be heard and express all his pain and anger.

It is important to reflect on how we deal with these boys. The success of a school is often measured in numbers, how many students passed the exam, how many students took the average, how many students failed, and so on. The numbers prevent us from realizing the particularities of the students, their individual needs, since there is a classification already established, a stigma already formed in our minds; students are weak in reading, lazy and unfit for studying. Thus, we were deprived of grasping the logic of a struggle in which the strength of social representations is not necessarily proportionate to its truth value (BOURDIEU, 2001).

The narratives differ regarding the boarding school. The boarding school is mainly characterized by the control of human needs, internal regulations and judgments by coordination. According to Goffman (1975), this is an area of residence and work where individuals with similar circumstances are separated from society for a certain period of time. The author calls this process of mortification of the “self” and Foucault (1975) calls disciplinarization, in which the discipline is imposed in order to grow the docility and “usefulness” of individuals, greater obedience to these rules and standards functioning of the institution.

From the narratives, we can say that students deal with the disciplinarization differently. Daniel has adapted himself to the boarding environment. However, Pedro and Mario already have some difficulty in adapting themselves. Among them, Mario presented more resistance to the discipline in boarding school. We approach the category of resistance from a historical view, in which the social agents adopt strategies and actions that involve identity, political or economic mobilization, to ensure inclusion in social life, in this case at boarding school. So, it can be argued that the social agents can reorganize themselves by the reconstruction of their identities (ARRUDA, 2001). The resistance is closely linked with cultural and identity issues in a context of contact with the model adopted by power relations. Then we have the classic resistance through struggles, such as Mario’s, going by a possible passive acceptance of rules and standards, as in the case of Daniel’s. For, as Bourdieu (2001) when dominated people in a relation of symbolic forces enter the fight in an isolated state, has no other choice but to accept the dominant definition of their identity.

According to some authors this passive acceptance can be understood as “passive or adaptive resistance” in which within a cultural dynamic the social agents perceive that their place in the world goes through symbolic investments by which they negotiate their insertion in society. Because of this, to understand the dynamics of individual’s actions, we must understand some aspects of the sociocultural context and identity, in which students make use of different strategies for living into society, or specifically, in the boarding school.

The title of this work “I miss freedom” reveals strangeness to a new space, strangeness that reminds us of a time that will never return. Thus, the past is recreated from happy memories, from a space of freedom, fun and family. And the new space brings the difficulties, loneliness and misunderstanding. Thus, we agree with Barela (2009), when he says that there are not absolute truths, especially in the social sciences.

Like these boys, thousands of people come from the countryside in order to study, work and “try something better”; and with the narratives constructed in collaboration we can think about these social
agents and their untold stories. People that are silenced by the power relations in school, stigmatized by their origin, and thus already excluded from the possibilities of intervention in their own reality.
REFERENCES


