

*This discussion guide offers suggested topics and themes for your Khabda conversation. We hope this will provide some useful framings for your local gatherings, though we know each conversation is unique and will move in its own direction. The self-generative nature of the program provides an open-ended, exploratory space for continued learning and engagement with the works of contemporary cultural producers and creatives from Tibet. We look forward to hearing more about your local conversations as you share your notes and reflections with the global Machik community. Have a splendid Khabda!*

## GENERAL

This film was made by a young Tibetan college student who had never studied filmmaking. It was an act of curiosity, creativity and exploration.

What were your expectations before you saw the film?

How did the film surprise you or otherwise affect your original perceptions?

What were you able to see from the young Tibetan filmmaker's lens that felt new and meaningful?

## LANGUAGE

Have you seen other films or television programs in Tibetan language? If so, please describe your favorites. If not, how did watching your first Tibetan-language film affect you?

If you or your family speak Tibetan, is the Tibetan spoken in Valley of the Heroes similar or different?

The community in the film clearly expresses their desire for Tibetan language instruction for their young people. What do you think are the challenges that communities in places like Hualong face in terms of education?

What are some of the challenges of speaking one language at home and being taught in another language? If you have had this experience, what was your experience like? What are some of the memories that have stayed with you?

What was your reaction to the Tibetan college students volunteering to teach Tibetan to children in Hualong? In your local community, how is Tibetan language being promoted and fostered? How could local efforts be grown?

## RELIGION

What insight did you gain about the role of religion in the lives of Tibetans living in the Hualong community documented in the film?

Demographically, the great majority of the Tibetan population practices Buddhism. What are your thoughts on the coexistence of Buddhism alongside Islam in Hualong? What does this film about a Tibetan Muslim community illuminate for you about the mainstream Tibetan narrative of Tibetan culture and religious identity?

In your experience, what is the level of tolerance for diversity of spiritual traditions in Tibetan communities?

How, and to what extent, does institutionalized religion shape your understanding of your own community? Of yourself?

How can religious pluralism be fostered, whether in Tibet or in exile? What are some key issues related to religion that you feel need to be addressed?

## ACTIVITIES

**Exploring Language Diversity:** In your Khabda group, how many Tibetan dialects can you list? List them and try to locate these dialects on map of the plateau.

**Art & Calligraphy:** If someone in your group is able to offer a quick Tibetan calligraphy lesson, you can host a calligraphy writing activity where participants learn how to write their names, favorite quotes, new words learned, and other texts. We'd love to see what results from this activity, so feel free to share on social media or through direct messages to Machik.

**Personal Reflection:** On your own time, take a moment to go through this activity. Take a piece of paper and list down all languages you know in terms of speaking, reading, writing and comprehension. Then give each language you listed a score (between 1 to 5, the latter indicating a higher score) for how well you do in the given task (speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension). Did your results surprise you? If applicable, where does Tibetan land in this mix? In which language(s) do you want to improve your scores? In the next few years, do you think you'll be adding any new language(s) to this exercise list?