

BYkids School Guide for:
MY COUNTRY IS TIBET



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This **BYkids School Guide** is designed to help teachers expand students' use of this film from passive watching to active discussion and deeply personalized learning. Included are three sample Pathways, each driven by an essential big question to challenge students to think and reflect. Use the Pathway questions to start discussions, in small groups or with the whole class. We've also added Discussion Starters and Suggested Projects, but we encourage you and your students to follow your own pathways and create your own projects.

BYkids wants to make our films part of compelling, project-based, collaborative learning experiences that are cross-curricular, link cultures and countries by themes we all share, and spur students to develop the competencies needed to become global citizens while mastering necessary college and career ready skills. Most of all, we want students to value their own stories while learning from the stories of others around the world. We see this guide as a starting point and encourage you to share the creativity and expertise that flourish in your classroom as you and your students expand on these **BYkids** suggestions and create your own learning units. We'd love it if you would share those with **BYkids** at bykids.org!

ABOUT THE FILM

Filmed, directed and narrated by 17-year-old **Namgyal Wangchuk Trichen Lhagyari**, *My Country Is Tibet* is the personal, rare and timely story of the exiled, teenage King of Tibet. Trichen (pronounced 'TREE-chen') introduces us to his friends, family and community members living in exile in India. We see their efforts to overcome the obliteration of their very identity – their culture, their languages, their freedom to choose where they live and work.

Trichen is the direct descendent of the great Kings of Tibet. Coronated by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Trichen carries the unique responsibility of representing Tibet's unbroken history and cultural heritage. Yet, as a teenager, he belongs to a new generation of young Tibetans caught today between the peaceful traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and a desperate desire to fight for their freedom and cultural identity.

Trichen was taught the art of filmmaking by **BYkids** Film Mentor, Dirk Simon, to make this award-winning documentary.

BACKGROUND

Tibet's history is ancient, as is its spiritual tradition of Buddhism. Tibet lies on a high plateau between China and India. It is nicknamed "the Roof of the World" with the mountains of the Himalayas and the source of many of Asia's important rivers. Traditionally, the Buddhist religious leader, the Dalai Lama, was also the political head of Tibet. But conflict between Tibet and China is part of the history of the region, and the Chinese Army claimed sovereignty over Tibet in 1951. In 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet to India, where many Tibetan refugees now live and where the Tibetan government-in-exile is based.

Trichen is one of many Tibetan people who do not want to lose their heritage. Trichen is 18th in the lineage of the Tibetan throne-holders. He is a direct descendent of the seventh-century Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo, who played a pivotal role in establishing the Tibetan Buddhist nation-state. Trichen's father was imprisoned in Tibet by the Chinese for 20 years and struggled for the survival of his nation's identity and cultural heritage, after which time he fled to India. Born in exile in Dharamsala in Northern India, Trichen was entrusted by the 14th Dalai Lama in 2004, after his father died, to serve "the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Tibetan people."

Trichen carries the vision of two worlds: the one-thousand-year-old traditions of Tibet's Dharma Kings and the current struggle of a people striving to retain their culture.

THE GUIDE

PATHWAY 1

WHAT IS HOME?

Trichen has never lived in his homeland of Tibet and he is the would-be King of a country he may never get to visit. He and his community are in India.

Quote From Film

“My country is Tibet, but I was born in India as a refugee and I’ve never seen my motherland.”

~ *Trichen*

Discussion Starters

- How do you define “home”?
- What are the historical, cultural, ancestral and geographic elements that define home?
- Is your home limited to where you live? Explain.

Suggested Projects

- Each of us represents a compilation or mix of those who came before us. Our ancestors may be from close or far away. Create a short documentary film or video to explore and express what ‘home’ means to you or to a group of people you know.
- Create a work to exhibit or perform in a gallery that expresses your vision of your ideal home. Use any medium you wish including visual arts, music, technology, or dance.
- Trichen’s family had to flee Tibet. If you had to flee your home and could take only what you could carry, what would you choose to take? Why? Create your list and explain why each item is important to take. Your explanation may be written, or you may use audio, video, or another mode of expression.

PATHWAY 2

WHAT IS THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES AROUND THE WORLD?

Because of conflict in Tibet, Trichen grew up in India. He is a refugee.

Quote From Film

“You may be shocked. You hear I am the descendent of the Kings of Tibet, but still I’m washing my own clothes. You know, right now I’m a refugee boy.”

~ *Trichen*

Discussion Starters

- What are some reasons that people become refugees?
- How do some refugees establish new communities?
- What do you lose or gain as a refugee?
- Are there refugees in America? If so, why?

Suggested Projects

- Create a storyboard to tell the story of the refugee community in your area, somewhere in America, or in a country like Sudan or Israel. Share some of the key events of that community.
- Organize a social media campaign to give voice to the voiceless refugees that most interest you.
- Write a letter to the editor or op-ed bringing focus to the issues of a refugee community.

PATHWAY 3

WHEN DO YOU STOP BEING A KID?

When Trichen's father died, Trichen was coronated and given immense responsibility.

Quote From Film

"Sometimes I dream about leaving everything behind, and living a life without expectations and responsibilities. But no matter how painful it might be, I will continue to search for the best path to serve my people and my country."

~ *Trichen*

Discussion Starters

- When do you think you become an adult? Explain.
- How do different cultures mark adulthood?
- What are the differences between responsibilities you choose to take on versus those that are placed upon you?

Suggested Projects

- Collaborate with at least one other person and create a podcast called, "ADULTHOOD" to be played for an audience of younger students.
- Working with others, create and film a Public Service Announcement highlighting the benefits of being an adult. Create a Public Service Announcement highlighting the benefits of being a child.
- Write and perform a poem or song, or create a playlist, about growing up.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Dear Educator,

Some College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards from the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts that may be applicable are listed below. But you and your students, in defining the creative and collaborative details of each Pathway, will use many other standards, some not limited to English Language Arts. We hope you will share your experiences and insights with us at BYkids.

PATHWAY 1

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3: analyzing how and why ideas and individuals develop and interact.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7: integrating and evaluating the use of diverse media.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3: writing narratives.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6: using technology to produce writing and to collaborate.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8: researching and using relevant information.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Speaking & Listening:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: preparing for and conducting successful collaborations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: integrating information in and from diverse media.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4: presenting ideas and knowledge clearly, and audience-appropriately.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3 & 5: using nuanced language in context for meaning and style

PATHWAY 2

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6: assessing how purpose shapes content and style.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7: integrating and evaluating the use of diverse media.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8: evaluating arguments

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4: producing clear, organized writing to persuade.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6: using technology to produce writing and to collaborate.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7: conducting research based on focused questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8: researching and using relevant information.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Speaking & Listening:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: preparing for and conducting successful collaborations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4: presenting ideas and knowledge clearly, and audience-appropriately.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5: using digital media and data effectively in a presentation.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3 & 5: using nuanced language in context for meaning and style

PATHWAY 3

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6: assessing how purpose shapes content and style.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3: writing narratives.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6: using technology to produce writing and to collaborate.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Speaking & Listening:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: preparing for and conducting successful collaborations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: integrating information in and from diverse Media.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6: adapting speech appropriately to the task.

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3 & 5: using nuanced language in context for meaning and style

ABOUT BYkids

BYkids is a global educational movement that uses storytelling through film to inform, engage and inspire action. **BYkids** provides kids around the world with both the video cameras and the mentoring to make short documentaries about their lives. Renowned filmmakers mentor these young people in the art of filmmaking. Through innovative distribution platforms, **BYkids** films enable fresh, new perspectives to be seen and shared by a global community.

Join us at bykids.org