

My name is Kunga Dorjee. I am from Saga County in Shigatse and am 20 years old. I reached exile on 13 of December 2008.

Nomads and grassland conditions in Tibet?

Earlier nomads were only herding their animals. They have become farmers and cultivate lands that have result in rangeland degradation.

Are you a nomads or farmer?

We used to be nomads. Now I am neither nomad nor farmer. All the families have been settled into brick houses all along the highway. The Chinese claim that they are doing this to help us, but much the nomads have gone through much hardship. We have to pay 4000 Yuan to stay inside these brick houses.

What are the reasons that the government has you settle?

There are two reasons:

Earlier they gave houses to poor nomads who received subsidized housing. Later they gave houses to well off nomads who were required to pay most of the expenses on the new houses except for the construction of a roof.

Do you keep livestock? Are there differences in taking animals to graze now and then?

Earlier, we took animals to hilltops without any barriers. We still take them now but the animals face difficulty in grazing with fences everywhere. Animals now have to often jump across the wires.

Has there been any change in rainfall patterns in your area? (Climate change)

There have been changes in weather pattern. In 2007 there was a heavy snow fall in the Ninth month of the Tibetan calendar. We used to have rainfall at the end of the fifth month of the Tibetan calendar but from 2006 we receive rainfall much later during the sixth month. Now, we also do not receive snowfall.

Do you think this affects the grassland?

Yes, the grass growth has become poor.

Does this bring down the animal number?

Animals do not die out of hunger. Nomads graze their animals in different places at different times.