DEEPISH SUBEDI
Central Market – Nashville, Tennessee
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Date: April 5, 2016
Location: Central Market – Nashville, Tennessee
Interviewer: Jennifer Justus
Transcription: Deborah Mitchum
Length: 44:47
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Interviewee: Deepesh Subedi

Interviewer: Jennifer Justus

Interview Date: April 5, 2016

Location: Central Market, Nashville, TN

Length: Two audio files; 00:44:47

START OF INTERVIEW

[00:00:00]

Jennifer Justus: Hello. This is Jennifer Justus and it is April 5, 2016, and I'm with Deepesh Subedi at Central Market in Nashville, Tennessee, and I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself, please.

[00:00:17]

Deepesh Subedi: Hello. My name is Deepesh Subedi, and I'm the owner of Central Market Tennessee, and I'm from Bhutan and my date of birth is October 2, 1984.

[00:00:28]

JJ: Thank you. Okay, so could you start, please, by telling us how you got to Nashville?

[00:00:34]

DS: Okay. I was born in Bhutan but I grew up in Nepal as a refugee, in a refugee camp, and we lived there for like seventeen or eighteen years. Then finally I applied for emigration to USA, and we ended up being here. But at first we didn't know anything about USA, so we ended up being in Idaho. It was a random selection, like they will just put you wherever they have a spot.

[00:01:02]

JJ: What city?

[00:01:03]

DS: Boise, the capital city of Idaho, Boise. So, we were helped by refugee agencies for a couple of months, but after that–. It was in August of 2008 that we came here and the economic [*Unintelligible*] was so bad, like, instead of we finding a job the people were like moving out of the jobs. So, we had no option, and it was the time that the receiving agency stopped giving us any money because we are running out of eight months. So, at that time we, as a family, we decided to do something else, and we talked to the agency people and they said there's a job opening in Oregon where we have to work in farm, and my parents, they were like farmers throughout their life so they are like, "Okay, farm sounds good for us," and my parents, they moved to Boardman, Oregon and they worked in a dairy farm there. My brother moved too, my mom, my dad, they went to Oregon, but I stayed in Idaho, in Boise, and started school. I went to Boise State University.

[00:02:21]

But, you know, they worked there, I think almost for a year and a half, and then they said, "Okay, we can't separate anymore," like, family work, basically separating. So my dad and my mom said, "Let's leave together now. We can't do this anymore." So they came and I called them back in Boise and we lived there for six months but none of us could find any job, so we are running out of money to pay rent and everything else, and we have to make some kind of safe decision to continue living.

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At that time what happened was that from our country, from Nepal, like my family was the first family who came to USA, and we could call our relatives, you know, whoever applied for immigration, but what happened was that we didn't call anybody in Idaho because the job

was so bad, like people were having a really hard time. Instead, like, from Nepal, like my relatives, they applied for immigration visa and then we told them, "Don't come to Idaho. Come to wherever you like. We will move wherever you come." So they ended up being in Tennessee. That was just a random selection.

[00:03:45]

So, you know, in 2012 me and my family, we moved to Nashville, and then it was—Nashville is most diverse. Like, there are a lot of people from different cultures. But Idaho, it's like you can count your head in a group of people, you know, so, it was so bad. And my dad started working at Tyson here in Nashville. I think it's in a different city but, you know. And my mom found a job, and my brother started a job, and I was in school, so we fairly settled good here in Nashville than in Idaho. You know? It was good.

[00:04:28]

So, what happened was that in 2014, like early 2014, my younger brother, he went to Charlotte, North Carolina to see one of his friends who influenced him to do a business because that friend was already doing a business. My brother got so influenced from that that he came back with an idea how to start a business here, and then I was interested too at the time. So, when he came back from Charlotte I went to Charlotte again to see how that friend was doing there, and then I was like, "Oh my God! This is what I want to do now." You know? "I know it's hard, but I'll take the challenge." Then I came back and we set up a very rough plan. We didn't have any advisors or anything else like that. Everything, every plan or every action that we did to start a business, was in our own mind. But what happened was that I was like kind of regretting it at the beginning of the business because there's a lot of government paperwork to do here. It's a

legal process that takes like three months, but I was thinking just like my country, like just open a store, you know? But it's not how that works here.

[00:06:02]

It was hard, but the time taught us a lot of things, like we just learn it. We made a thousand mistakes and learned thousands of things from our mistakes, and we were given the opportunity to learn and then slowly we started. We started having our accountant for the store. The accountant was super-nice and she helped us a lot. She was our like our whistleblower for the store. She said, "You have to do this, you have to do this, you have to do this." So, and within the family we raised around forty thousand dollars, and then we borrow money from our friends to start a business. Roughly around seventy to seventy-five thousand dollars we put in that store, [but still] the challenge was so hard. We didn't know where to buy. Like, we don't know where to go to buy a price gun; we don't know where to go buy a camera, where to go buy the scanner, all that kind of stuff. We didn't know anything else. We don't know we have to go to a bank and make a merchant account. We didn't know that. But, you know, we learned.

[00:07:22]

So, we just called friends in Charlotte, North Carolina, and they said, "You have to do this. You have to do this." He was like, "Do this, do this, do this," and then we ended up starting the store, and it's been already —2014, '15, '16—it's been like almost three years now and we are doing super-good.

[00:07:44]

JJ: Great!

[00:07:45]

DS: Yeah, we are super-good, and we bought one more store. Last May we bought the store next door. We bought Discount Beer and Tobacco. So we basically have two stores right now and my elder brother is running the Discount Beer and Tobacco, and my younger brother is running the Central Market, and I'm supervising both of them at this time. Thank you. [*Laughs*] [00:08:07]

JJ: Can you tell me about Central Market? What kinds of things do you have for sale? [00:08:12]

DS: Okay. The one more thing that makes us start business was at that time there were not any ethnic food stores in Nashville, you know, like Nepalese ethnic food store. There are some ethnic foods that we eat and we couldn't find here. Then the friend of mine in North Carolina was bringing all that stuff from Nepal legally and selling them in his store at a reasonable price, and I was like, "Why not I meet this bridge between people need and then, you know, like whatever I can," because not everybody can afford to bring the things from Nepal because they don't know, they don't know how to bring it, you know. So, that was one interest too.

[00:09:03]

We have ethnic foods [that the people want the most], and we have spices, rice, vegetables, fruits, drinks, and all that kind of stuff, and we have some ethnic clothes, ethnic musical instruments. We call it grocery store but it's kind of like a junk store, you know, like everything is there, whatever we sell in our country. Then, you know what, people, they come to us and they say, "Hey, I need this item. My daughter is getting married in next three months, so for that marriage there's some ethnic items that we have to have for the marriage," and then they will come to us because they know that we bring stuff from Nepal. So they come to us and they

say, “Can you bring this item for us?” and we just bring it and then sell them at a reasonable price. So their need is met and then at the same time we make some money out of doing the business, so that was the thing behind starting the business.

[00:10:10]

JJ: Okay. Are you the only Nepali market at this time, and the second question would be what do people come and buy the most often?

[00:10:23]

DS: Okay. You know, for now I’m only the one, but some of our friends, they started doing business like two years ago. It was just a year after we started, and then they ended up going out of business in three months. It was that hard. It’s not easy. It’s not easy. Our family, we work here like sixteen hours a day. We are the ones who wake up early in the morning and go back to bed late. We work so hard, and the people, they come to our store mostly, you know, they buy the items like —. We have—What do you call? It’s an ethnic item that is called —. It’s a fermented radish. It’s a fermented radish and green vegetables, green leaves of spinach. It’s fermented and it’s dried, and nobody sells that here, you know? And we have some pickles. I don’t know what we call in English but some special kind of pickles, like people, they have the taste of that pickle in their tongue, so we don’t find that.

[00:11:39]

People, they come to grab that, but at the same time we have bananas, potatoes, and all that kind of stuff. We have thousands of spices. Our food is like seventy-five percent spice and twenty-five percent food, you know, when we eat at home. So, we have all these kinds of spices, and people, they come to buy the spice and they come to buy the ethnic item, you know, ethnic

food that we sell here, and that's the merchandise that we sell, but we keep all the things and then when they grab one thing they will just pick another one. That's the business.

[00:12:15]

JJ: Can you tell me how the dried fermented radish, how do you eat that? Do you eat it with other things? And then how do you also eat the pickle? What do you put it on?

[00:12:29]

DS: Pickle is all ready to go. It's hot and spicy. All the spices that we mix with it is already there. It's really hot, like, we eat a lot of chilies, you know, and pepper. It's ready to go. It's ready to go with anything that you want to eat. Yeah, just put it on the food that you want to eat. And the dried radish, people, they want to make some soup out of it. You can put a couple in a pan and you can just boil it in the water and it's ready to go. It's so quick. Yeah, it gives flavor, and you can add some spices but, you know, it depends how people want it, but for me I just take it and it's really good. If it's raining outside that tastes really good on that day, you know, that thing. Like, if it's raining I just miss that. If I don't have it at my house I'm like, "Oh my God. I might have to go buy some fermented radish so I can just make some soup and eat." So, it's just ready to go. It's ethnic. You can eat it with a food as a soup, like you can make a soup, but most of the people – and some people, they make a soup of it and when they're having a really bad cold they just drink that soup and that makes them feel really good.

[00:13:55]

JJ: Okay. So how old were you when you came to Idaho?

[00:14:01]

DS: I was twenty-six.

[00:14:04]

JJ: Okay, and then you say your parents were farmers. Was that right?

[00:14:10

DS: Mm-hmm.

[00:14:11]

JJ: In Nepal—

[00:14:14]

DS: Yes.

[00:14:15]

JJ: —at the refugee camp?

[00:14:16]

DS: Yes.

[00:14:17]

JJ: Can you talk a little bit about food there? What did you eat at the refugee camp that you remember? Did you learn to cook there?

[00:14:28]

DS: Yes. Yes, I learned to cook there, and you know in a refugee camp it's a different story. Like, I never ate pizza until I came to America. I never had a pizza. I never had burger. You know? I never had any of those kind of food there. It's not that we don't find them in Nepal, but as a refugee it's really hard to afford it, so we didn't eat [those foods.] But living in a refugee camp is like, you know, we were like monitored. We were provided basic things for living, like food, shelter, and protection by UNHCR, and whatever they give us we have to depend on that item for fifteen days. They used to give us rice, vegetables, you know, like oils, and all that basic kind of things.

[00:15:21]

I don't want to say that was not healthy at all but, you know, we had a lot of health problems. Right now I am at nursing school and I'm learning that most of the people from my country have vitamin B12 deficiency because in a refugee camp it was really hard for us to afford to buy meat, meat products, you know. And then, the vitamin B12 is one of the products that we get from meat, or we have to eat some other food that we were not given by the UNHCR, so we have that problem. Most of the people living in refugee camp in Nepal, we have vitamin B12 deficiency. So, the food that we were given, it was not sufficient but it was like okay, you know, like we have to—. We can't eat sufficient but it was enough for fifteen days and then, you know, the next day we go and we just bring that stuff. But I want to say that it was a really hard life. Anything was not really like the way that it is right here.

[00:16:25]

JJ: And did you learn to cook at that age?

[00:16:28]

DS: I learned to cook, I think, when I was six years old. In my culture it's like most of the time mom or sister at home cook the food, but in my case I don't have sisters, you know, and it was like I was taught so early by my parents to cook food because sometimes the parents are not at home, and it's kind of like cultural teaching. My parents, it's like they had to teach me how to cook, how to clean, and all that kind of stuff, like I don't have option to not learn them, but I think I was kind of like, let me say, a good guy, you know, so I was just helping them since I was like six years old so I learned to cook. But right now, I'm not really good at cooking because my wife is super good, so the credit goes to her, not to me, right now. [*Laughs*]

[00:17:27]

JJ: What does she like to prepare, and is it foods from—and where is she from?

[00:17:34]

DS: She's from Nepal too and she, you know, right now we, like part of our meal is rice, like always. The rice is the biggest meal that we have. Some families, they eat rice in the morning and they eat rice in the evening but me, we eat [rice] once a day and we eat either like breakfast cereals and all that kind of stuff [and eat rice] once a day. But she cooks fairly good. She cooks—what do you call?—curry, like two or three different type of curry, vegetables, you know, and rice is there, and there's always some kind of soup, and there's always some kind of hot and spicy pickles. Yeah, she's a really good cook, so she just cooks and we never—. Let me not say "never" but I think the last time I went out to eat was a year ago, so we don't really go outside and eat because we cook all this stuff at home and that's how we grew up and sometimes if we don't have time then only we go outside but we always make time to cook food and eat together in the family, so.

[00:18:55]

JJ: And you have children, right?

[00:18:57]

DS: Yes. I have two kids. I have two kids, and one of them is almost three and one of them is two. My bigger one is my Mother's Day gift and my smaller girl is my Valentine's Day gift.

[00:19:09]

JJ: You have a boy and a girl?

[00:19:10]

DS: Yeah, a boy and girl, so I am a super good dad now. [*Laughs*]

[00:19:15]

JJ: Let's see. I wanted to ask you more about—. Oh. So, when you cook at home, is it mostly Nepali-type food or does your wife ever do American-style food or a blend?

[00:19:30]

DS: Yeah, it's all Nepali food at home. So, we just try to, you know, adjust the taste with some American food but it still is like, you know, we just like spicy food, we just like hot food, you know, like hot curry and vegetables, and, let me say, it's typical Nepali kind of food that we eat at home. But my baby, he likes pizza, because he was born here, so he's like, "Hey, Daddy, can I have pizza?" So, I don't know how that will go longer but right now he's trying to [*Unintelligible*] both American food and the food that we cook at home, so.

[00:20:19]

JJ: And your parents, are they here?

[00:20:21]

DS: Yeah, they're here.

[00:20:22]

JJ: So they're here, and their farming tradition, does that influence what you eat, and do they still—? Well, you said your dad works at Tyson. So I guess could you talk about farming, and did you learn any of that growing up?

[00:20:39]

DS: Yeah, my parents, they has been farmer for their whole life. Back in Bhutan my dad was a landlord. He has land and it was like – what do you call? – sustainable income, like whatever we [grow] on the farm we eat at home. My parents, they rarely go out to the market and buy anything else to eat at home. They have to go buy like salt, oil, and some other basic

stuff but the bigger part of the food that we eat all comes from our dairy, or our farm. We had cattle, oxen, and all that. So, and then we came to Nepal but my dad was still interested in farming. He started raising cattle there again. He didn't give up.

[00:21:36]

So I was raised under the farming influence, and it is a hard job. I saw my parents working maybe eighteen hours a day. They were just working on the farm and making sure that the kids are getting good education, and they're working really hard. So, I had that influence from them, and they came to USA and the first thing my dad was really eager to know was he want to see a cow. That was the first thing that he was really, really, really trying to look for, because he missed them so bad, because he'd been [living] with those cattle for almost forty-eight years and then all of a sudden you stop seeing those and you're just going to miss it, you know? Then one of my friends, he's from here but he lives in Idaho, he took us—me, my dad, and my mom—to a farm, just to see cattle. Yeah, he helped us with that.

[00:22:39]

But right now, he worked for—. I told you he worked for the dairy farm in Oregon. He was really interested to work for that, but as he learns the system to milk the cow, you know, it's not like the way that he did it in his life. It was hard for him, because it's all technology, [the way] they milk the cows here. It's not like the way that we do back in our country. So, he had really hard time to adjust to that technology of milking cows, but he learned it down the line. He came here and he worked at Tyson but he quit job like almost a year ago, once my brother got married and we expand our store. My brother has two kids and I have two kids, so we need somebody to look after them so we can put our time in the store. And none of my parents speak English, and my mom, she works at Central Market and she's really good at talking to people.

She has a business voice. She knows how to attract the customers. That's one of the things that I have learned from my mom. She has [such a] sweet voice. [*Laughs*] And she works for my brother at Central Market but my dad, he comes to the store and does some basic things, but most of the time he stays home and takes care of the kids.

[00:24:06]

JJ: What percentage of your customer base is from where you come from, all of it?

[00:24:15]

DS: It used to be a hundred percent. My store is an ethnic store. It used to be a hundred percent when we started, but slowly what happened was that people from Burma, you know, they live very close to our store. They live in an apartment very close to our store, and we are immigrants, so they started—because they eat a lot of vegetables too, like we do. They started liking vegetables that we sell in our store and slowly they started telling us, "Hey, can you please bring this stuff for us? Will you go buy it?" and they gave us a sample to bring some of their spices, or some of their food, and then we took the sample to the place where we go get our stuff. Then we went to some other places where they say like for Chinese, or for Korean, or for Thailand, the food supplier, so we went there and we talked to them and they said, "Yeah, we sell this," so we started bringing it. So for right now I have fifty percent of the people from my country and, let me say, thirty-five percent Burmese, you know, from Burma, and fifteen percent some other people from other different [countries], but at the beginning it was like a hundred percent, all people from Nepal.

[00:25:45]

JJ: Has it been interesting to get to know people from Burma and the differences and the similarities?

[00:25:53]

DS: Oh, yeah. It's so interesting. At first I used to be kind of conservative. I used to only like people of my country. I was like, "I don't want to talk to this guy. I don't know who he is." But right now it's like I'm part of their family. When they have some kind of special function going on they will come and they will invite me, [to their weddings], you know, and when they have bigger programs. They have interstate soccer tournament and some other kind of stuff, so they come and ask me for the donation, which I feel really good, because when somebody comes and asks you for the donation that means he has to have that kind of bond with you, you know, and me and my family, being in a business we're so glad that our networking is so big with different cultures and community people, and I'm really happy that we were able to build that bond with them. And slowly, you know, I started liking their food. Let me tell that. Yeah, I started liking their food. I eat the noodles that they eat and it's super nice. It's spicy. It's not that hot but it's okay. [*Laughs*]

[00:27:12]

JJ: And I guess it's worked the other way too. People from Burma have gotten to know–.

[00:27:17]

DS: Yeah. They eat the–. You know, the people from Burma, some of them, they lived in Malaysia before they came to USA and some of them, they lived in Thailand before they came to USA, and whoever comes from Thailand, you know, Thailand and India, it's not a hundred percent same food but the spices kind of like matches each other, and our spices match with Indian spices too. They have similar flavor. So they started liking our food too, so they eat some of our food right now.

[00:27:51]

JJ: Okay. [*Pauses*] Just looking over some of my questions here.

[00:28:02 *Break in recording*]

JJ: Okay. I was wanting to ask you about the opening of the business. What was the hardest part and what was most rewarding?

[00:00:10]

DS: Okay, the hardest part was knowing how to run a store, meeting the expectation of the state, like the government, the federal government, the state government. They have guidelines and they come inspect our store every six months. We have to make sure that–. But, you know, that's good. They come and they inspect us to make sure that we are selling the fresh product and all that kind of stuff. But when we start the business, okay, we have to go apply for the license. They do the background check and then they will say, "Hey, fill out these sales tax [forms]." The first month that I got the paper for the sales tax I was like just crying with that paper. It's like a bunch of information there that I never knew, and I can't go talk to anybody. I didn't know any people [to talk to] about it, you know? I was just thinking, "Okay, so I just sell the product in my store and at the end of the year I fill out my 1099-K and pay my income tax." That's all I was thinking before I started the store, but that was not the case.

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They started sending us [paperwork to pay] the sales tax for this month, this month, this month, and I was so worried it about it that I didn't know what to do. But my friend from North Carolina, he helped me how to, you know, on the computer. He said, "Hey, you have to put the price of the item that you bring and you have to put the price of the item that you want to sell for, what price you want to sell it for, and you have to put the tax percentage," that we charge to the

customer, according to the state rule. For food it's 7.25; for nonfood it's 9.50, 9.25 here in Nashville, in Tennessee.

[00:02:10]

So I did all that kind of stuff but I didn't know how to fill out that form for sales tax, and I said, "I don't know what to do," and my brother was like, "Oh, my gosh." So, who do I go talk to? I went to the state. I went to IRS office. I went to their office and I sat with an accountant. I said, "I don't know anything. Please help me. I'm not cheating. I'm not doing anything bad. So, this is the first month that we started our business, and this is the paper that we got from you, so what do you expect me to write here in these line by line?" He was helpful. He taught me what to do, and from the next month I was able to get everything else up. That's not the only thing. Every year we have to pay for–. There's so many licenses that comes with a business: it's called Department of Complaints, Department of Labor, Department of Unemployment, or something like that. There are so many different places that will send you a bill and you are like, "Is somebody scamming me, or is that the true amount that I have to pay?"

[00:03:23]

JJ: Yeah.

[00:03:24]

DS: You know? Yeah, and once we had a call from Nashville Electrical Company. The guy on the phone was telling, "Hey, this is blah-blah-blah from Nashville Electrical Company, and you haven't paid your bills for this many months, so within forty-five minutes you have to pay eleven hundred dollars, otherwise the electricity in your store will go off," and I had more than two thousand dollars in the cooler and freezer so I was so scared. I was almost to the point of giving that guy the amount of money [that he was asking for] but, before I paid, I think I was

kind of helped by God. I just googled the number that he called me from. It just happened, you know? My mind said, "Before you give the [money] just google this," and I googled that number and [*Snaps fingers*] all of a sudden the Google [identified] it as a scamming number. I saved eleven hundred dollars. I saved that money. Since then everything that comes in my mail or any phone call that I get it becomes like a scam for me, you know? I was like, "Is somebody trying to scam me again?" you know, trying to make me a victim.

[00:04:39]

So, it was hard, but, as I said to you before, we learned a lot by hit and trial. Let me say that. We just fall down on the floor, but we again stand up full of knowledge. It was hard, but right now what I'm doing, like there are some friends in some other states who started their business and I'm helping them a lot because I have learned by making mistakes, and I don't want them to make the same mistakes that I made so I'm telling them, "Don't do this. Go do this; don't do this," because I think—Okay, let me tell it. In the beginning, by having not enough knowledge how to run a business, I think at the starting of the business we lose somewhere between five to seven thousand dollars for nothing else. If I had the knowledge of how to open a store I could have saved that money, but I lose that money. But that's okay. It's the learning time, because for now if somebody wants to start a business, like, no problem at all. I can just help them.

[00:05:45]

JJ: Do you ever see people who come in as first-time customers and they're excited to see something that they didn't think they would be able to get?

[00:05:55]

DS: Okay, it's a really interesting question. So, like I said, the first thing that my dad was really interested in when he came to USA was he wanted to go see a cow. But right now the people that come to Nashville, the second day they come to Nashville they want to come and see the Central Market Nepali store, because that makes them feel so homely, you know? They feel like they are in their own home because they see all the spice and they see all the clothes, they see all the musical instruments. It will take them—. Because they will have the anxiety, and the frustration and all that stuff is so high when they come here first, but when they enter inside the store they find everything, whatever they find back in home, and they feel so homely. They're like, "Oh, my God! You guys sell this? We find this stuff in America? Do you do this?" And even, you know, the holding board I have outside my store, like the signboard, part of it is in Nepali and part of it is in English, and whenever people drive by and read Nepali they're like, "Oh, my God! We have a signboard in USA with Nepali print!" They're so excited, and I have seen one guy, I don't know what part of Nepal he's from, but he took a picture of my signboard and he put it on Facebook [*Laughs*] and I read some comments. I think he didn't come inside the store but he took the picture of the board and he put it [on Facebook] because there was the excitement, you know, because people, they feel like, "Oh, my God. Even in USA we have our print on a signboard by the road," you know?

[00:07:36]

So, the people are so excited to come see the store when they come here first, and then the other thing is like, you know, the debit card, credit card, everything works different than what we're used to back in our country. In our country it's all cash, but here—and they don't know how to use it. So, what they do is they will just come to our store and then they will buy the stuff and they will leave and like show us their pin number, "Here it is," and didn't know how to even

scan it. We have to help them scan it, "Do like this, and you have this number so on the print one, okay, press this number." So next time he goes to a different place he's learned how to do that. And my store is very close to a bank. There's a Bank of America and there's a CVS pharmacy, and people, they go to the hospital and the doctor prescribes them medicine, and then they will send them. Back in our country you will get a bag of medicine right there, within doctor's office, but here it doesn't work like that. So they come, and then they get lost. They come to the store and they say, "I have this problem," you know, "I have that problem, so what to do?" They treat us like their advisor, and then we just show them their way.

[00:09:00]

One day I had a guy, I had to close the store. I physically closed the store at 12:00 noon. I took him to the Bank of America and I taught him how to use ATM, because if he didn't pay the money by 1:00 he was losing some of his things at home. So I just prioritized that over my store, so I just locked my store and I took him there for like twenty-five minutes. I taught him how to do it and then paid his bill and then came back and opened the store. So, you know, they come for advice in the beginning, whoever comes to the store, like for anything; not only for the food. They will come to our store after one year and they will say, "It's time for me to apply for green card. What do I do?"

[00:09:49]

JJ: Well, how did you know, and how did your family know? Did it work the same way? Did they meet someone in Idaho?

[00:09:57]

DS: We learn by hit and trial. [*Laughs*] We paid money. You know, for green card processing, we don't have to pay any money. Right now, for anybody who comes to me, I can do

for free for them. It's all online. I can just print it and I can fill the form. The only thing that they have to pay is their passport size photo [that they take] at Walgreens or anywhere else. That's only the thing that they have to pay, but I paid a hundred and twenty dollars for each family member back in Idaho because someone was helping us and he was a professional, but now it's all for free here. I learn it, you know? So, it was like, for us, since we were the beginners, we came early and we were the beginners, we learn most things by hit and trial method, but right now whoever comes here they are having kind of like an easy life, you know?

[00:10:52]

JJ: So, is it sometimes the food, or things like that, that get them in the door, and then they ask the other questions?

[00:11:01]

DS: Okay, the other question that they ask is, "Can you give me a ride?" because sometimes somebody dropped them in the store and they go to work, and sometimes people, they come walking and they buy like six bags of rice which they cannot carry in their handbag, so we give them ride. Sometimes we have like two or three people, you know, other people working in the store, and we say, "Can you take this?" or sometimes we have just one people working in the store and then we'll say, "Keep it here. Make your payment. Keep everything here." So we will bring those things in the evening. And sometimes when they have a special function, you know, the people, they have like marriages or any kind of special functions at their home, in advance they will just give us the list of the items that they need for that event and then we just go find those items. And anyhow we just go out of state to bring other stuff from–. Most of the time we go to Atlanta, we go to New York, we go to Chicago, so we have to go anyhow so we just go there and find those stuff for those needy family and we just help them too.

[00:12:17]

JJ: I see. Are there food-related things that you miss about where you grew up?

[00:12:28]

DS: Only the thing that I miss is I feel like the food that we grew back in our country is organic, it's more fresh, it's more tasty, the same way that we cook here and that we used to cook back in our country. It could be some other kind of factor but I feel like the taste that I used to have, I'm losing that here. Even if it's the same food but I'm still losing it. The reason behind that is because whatever we bring and sell in our store right now, like whatever we bring from within USA, it's all like commercial products, you know? So back in our country it's like home product. We just produce that to eat at home. We didn't produce that to sell to somebody else and make money. So that's the part of the thing that I really miss.

[00:13:23]

JJ: How did you decide on the name of the store?

[00:13:30]

DS: Oh, we came with like bunch of names, and I was interested to put the name of the store as "Everest Store" because of Mt. Everest, you know, Nepal, but what happened was that the friend of mine in North Carolina, he already had a store named "Central Market." I don't know how he came up with it, but he came up with Central Market, and then he suggested me to put the name, "Central Market," so to whoever vendors that we bring the items, if we call them and tell them, "This order is for Central Market," they will give some discount, because there are like–. So far we have three Central Markets in USA. One is in Vermont, one is in North Carolina, and one is in Tennessee, so the vendors, when they get order from Central Market, they give us kind of like cheap, so that was the reason that we choose "Central Market," but my

interest was either choose “Himalayan Spices,” you know. I had like a couple names, “Himalayan Spices” or “Everest Store,” but we ended up being “Central Market.”

[00:14:38]

JJ: Okay. Only a couple more. What do you like about Nashville?

[00:14:46]

DS: Okay, Nashville, the land here, the land topography, it’s kind of like my country, the hills up and down, and even the vegetation. It’s green. It’s so green here, and my country is so green. The land topography and the vegetation is the one that I really like about Nashville, but when I came to Idaho, Idaho is–. Not the Boise city, but Idaho in general is a desert. There are no trees. The tallest trees are up to your like knee, and we were just missing that. And it’s a plain land, it’s a flat land. Back in our country, either in Bhutan or in Nepal, we live in hills and Himalayas, and Nashville, it doesn’t have the Himalayas but it has some hills, ups and downs, and the vegetation here, like big trees and all that stuff. That’s what I like a lot about it, and it’s more diverse.

[00:15:46]

JJ: Do you feel like the population from where you come from is growing? Do you see more and more new people coming from [Nepal?]

[00:15:56]

DS: Okay, right now the people, they are coming, but the people are moving out of state too. Even within my relatives in Nashville, some of them, they move to Ohio; some of them, they move to Pennsylvania; or some people, they move from Texas to Tennessee. It’s all like people are moving for some kind of–. We moved here from Idaho, so we started doing the business, you know. The same way they feel like they might get some opportunities there, or

they have some family support and some other kind of thing. So, it's balanced, but more and more people are coming right now.

[00:16:35]

JJ: Okay. I think that's about all I have. Thank you very much for your time today.

[00:16:42]

DS: Thanks a lot. Thank you.

[00:16:45]

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcriber: Deborah Mitchum

Date: May 31, 2016