

Tibetans love beautiful clothes, jewellery and large shaggy hats. They plait precious stones into their hair and sew silver coins and jewellery into their belts and clothes. But the Tibetan refugees in India often dress simply. They had to leave everything they owned in Tibet.

Lamo's wardrobe



"The only thing missing from my wardrobe is a digital watch, which would make it easier to get to school on time," says Lamo, who lives in the Tibetan children's village in Bir.

"My mother is still in Tibet and I haven't seen her since I escaped. But compared with those children who remain in Tibet, I feel lucky. I can go to school and be free."

Lamo admires Jetsun Pema because she has created the Tibetan children's villages and made it possible for refugee children to go to school and have a new home in India. "I've never met her, but if I got the chance I would say thanks. And ask how old she is!"

School Uniform

"We get two uniforms from the school every year. The uniforms for girls and boys are similar: blue trousers and blue-checked shirts. We wash one of the uniforms every Wednesday and Saturday, so we always have a clean one. At the end of the school year the children's village's tailor takes measurements for next year's uniform. We hand the old ones in, so a younger student can have it if theirs get worn out."

The wardrobe

"I keep my clothes in a locker just inside the door in the house. Our home mother makes sure we keep the lockers tidy. It's important when there are so many of us!"

Lamo, 12

Born in: Tibet.

Came to the children's village: When I was six.

Likes: School. Reading comics.

Wants to be: An English teacher.

Admires: Jetsun Pema.



Chupa

"The Chupa is our traditional Tibetan costume. My mother gave it to me. She bought it at the market in Lhasa and packed it when I

escaped to India. It was too big then, but now it's just right. I am really glad that I have it; it's the only memory I have of my mother."

T-shirt and trousers are favourites



"These are my favourite clothes. It doesn't matter that they are a little torn. I got the jumper from an older girl, who is like my older sister. She gives me her clothes when she grows out of them. That's what we do. The older ones take care of the younger ones. We only throw away clothes that are totally worn out. We also lend each other clothes."

No shoes indoors

Lamo's trainers. Tibetans don't wear shoes indoors.



Hats





Chupas suit everyone

Both girls and boys in Tibet wear a chupa, an ankle-length coat or dress that is held together with a belt. Usually it is made from simple material and is one colour. For a party it can be made of silk with beautiful patterns. The man's chupa has long sleeves and is made of thicker material than the woman's sleeveless dress variety.



Fine jewellery



Tibetans love big jewellery! Both men and women can wear earrings.

Rinchen's wardrobe

Rinchen lives in the children's village with his two sisters, Dolkar, 8, and Tso, 9. They came here from Tibet and have not seen their parents for many years. Many families do not even dare to write because the Chinese government opens and reads letters. But Rinchen has received a parcel containing Tibetan cheese and a chupa, a traditional Tibetan coat.



Rinchen in his chupa

Rinchen in his school uniform

Rinchen, 11

Likes: Reading comics, drawing, film, cricket and football.

Favourite artist: Penpa Tsering, who grew up in the children's village.

Wants to be: Actor or artist.

Favourite football and basketball player: Beckham and Iverson.



Married or unmarried?

It's easy to see if a Tibetan woman is married or unmarried, because only married women wear a striped apron over their chupas. The apron should match the dress. A married woman can own many hundreds of aprons, in order to change her style every day of the year!



One-sleeved cool style

Phuntrok and Tridhe wear embroidered silk coats which were worn by rich men in old Tibet. They had the long sleeves to show they didn't need to get their hands dirty, because they had many servants. It is typically Tibetan and pretty cool to let one coat sleeve drag along the ground. In Tibet, warm days can be followed by freezing cold nights. Traditionally, a Tibetan only put his arm in his left coat sleeve or tied both sleeves around his waist. In the evening chill he would put the whole coat on.

show who you are!

In Tibet you must wear something on your head to protect you from the cold. And to look good! The hat a Tibetan wears depends on if they are a monk, musician,

woman or man or where they live. In the children's villages hats are mostly used when the children act, dance or perform music.

