What do you lose when you lose your native language?

With 96% of the world’s population speaking only 4% of the world’s languages, what does it mean today to speak your mother tongue? To put it another way, what do you lose when you lose your native language? “You already know the importance of saving a language. You know the reason, but not the motivation to save it,” admits Anchi Chen, one of the collaborators for TONGUES OF HEAVEN.

Using video as the primary medium of expression, four young indigenous women from the Austronesian language territories Taiwan and Hawai‘i share their questions, desires and challenges of learning their native languages. TONGUES OF HEAVEN was funded by the prestigious Creative Capital award and a National Geographic All Roads Seed grant.

Anita Chang is a Bay Area independent filmmaker, educator and writer. Her award-winning works have screened internationally and broadcast on U.S. and Taiwan public television. She has taught in community centers and film departments in San Francisco, Nepal and Taiwan’s College of Indigenous Studies at National Dong Hwa University. Honors include grant awards from the Fulbright, San Francisco Arts Commission, and KQED Peter J. Owens Filmmaker programs.

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