

Chapter Seven

Family Experience

Family is a central point of Asian American experience and the setting in which many of the positive and negative aspects of both tradition and new adaptations are learned, expressed, and fought over. It is a source of pride, feelings of shame, and the arena for battles. Confirmation of its importance is reflected in the dominance of family as a topic among Asian American writers.

Discussion of Asian American family should begin with recognition that it is an institution undergoing considerable change in response to totally new social circumstances. Family is a primary social unit of human existence with origins in past environments incongruent with those in which we operate in today. In the modern world, a variety of forces tend to disrupt family and threaten its form and functions, yet no other social unit has replaced it and family continues to be important for all societies and the individuals in them. The struggle to adapt old family structures and relationships to new circumstances, to evolve new forms of family, is a wide spread phenomena and not restricted to Asian Americans.

Families in the larger society face many of the same challenges because they also are in a state of change. There is no reason to believe that either Euro-American or Asian American family structures are better adapted for life in the twenty-first century. In both cases, concepts of family are still largely shaped by preindustrial rural or small town environments, in which most no longer live. As with other American families, Asian American families face adaptation and change, with all the accompanying stress.

The character of life in modern society often fragments family. Family and economic life are usually separate, people seen at work are not those seen with our family. Life is often dispersed, with members of the family working with different people, in different locales. Residential patterns are usually dispersed, extended family usually does not live together and contacts correspondingly reduced. Work and school schedules reduce the opportunity for family contacts and the demands of both can draw individual interests and concerns away from their families.

Schools and other institutions have taken over many functions of education and child rearing that were formerly the prerogative of families and communities. When, as with Asian Americans, these institutions are governed by different cultural expectations than those of the children's families, the children are subjected to

messages and pressures that may serve to alienate them from their families. This process is abetted by the messages in the media, particularly the entertainment and advertising world. Some Asian American young people compare their own families to TV families and arrive at the conclusion that their families do not communicate and do not love one another because they don't behave like idealized families seen in the media! Conversely, with the development of "dysfunctional family" shows, some Asian Americans (both young and old) think that all families in the larger society are like that and arrive at the conclusion that Asian Americans have "better" families because "we have strong family values." Such unrealistic comparisons are, sadly, all too common. Similar mis-comparisons are also made, often by parents, between actual families here and idealized versions of families in Asia. Such comparisons, whether with American media families or mythological Asian families, are uniformly unproductive and produce unattainable expectations.

Cultural change affects all members of Asian American families. For younger Asian Americans changes are frequently associated with inter-generational disputes over dress, entertainment, dating, marriage, and other differences in tastes and expectations. For the older generation, particularly immigrant parents, the changes in their children can produce mixed emotions of pride in their children's accomplishments but also sensations of loss and loneliness as worlds diverge. In some families these changes become the focus of tensions and arguments that threaten relationships. Other families are more fortunate and arrive at accommodation between generations. Tensions associated with cultural change are not uniquely Asian American, except in details. Jane Addams, head of a immigrant community center in Chicago in the early 1900s, wrote regarding Eastern European immigrants: "There is no separation as painful as that between the immigrant parent and the immigrant child who has gone to school and thinks they know it all."(1)

More significant cultural changes occur beyond those of dress and other tangible symbols of culture. Changes in family structure and operation are often invisible to the younger generation but major adjustments for the older. Generally, the family unit becomes less extensive in the United States, as only portions of families immigrate and extended families are dispersed by employment and residence. There is increasing pressure on parent/child relationships and more emphasis on the individual. For families with origins in the patrilineal societies of Asia (China, Vietnam, Korea, Japan) there is often a shift to a bilateral structure of relationships in which both mother's and father's relatives may become equally important. Increasingly, people and institutions outside the family become an individual's major social connections. Friends and peers may become more important sources of emotional support than family and child-care centers may take over child rearing functions from parents and relatives for significant periods of

time.

Changes in roles of men and women are a feature of Asian American family circumstances, although it should be recognized that many of these changes are occurring in Asia as well. Economic necessity usually requires that wives and even teenage children work outside the home to help support the family. The roles of family members within the home setting are so variable that it is difficult to define any pattern that does not have major exceptions. In some families the roles of men, women, and children are stereotypically male dominated and hierarchical while in others women dominate in decision making. In other families inter-generational and or gender relationships are fairly equal. Likewise, who handles finances, who cooks, or does other housework is equally unpredictable despite common expectations of consistent divisions of women's and men's activities. A particular type of role reversal results from older generation dependence on the younger generation to assist in handling matters that have to be done in English. Parents may find themselves using children, sometimes quite young, as intermediaries with the English speaking world. Sometimes this translation activity results in children becoming decision-makers for the family on a variety of issues. This dependence, often galling to the older generation and frustrating for the younger generation, is frequently a cause of tensions.

No one's relatives are perfect and most extended families have individuals within them that meddle, dominate, harass and exploit their relatives. Ordinarily, it is possible to avoid such relatives or to use family pressures to moderate their abuse. But when family is smaller, dispersed or incomplete, exploitative relatives can be a more serious problem. In the Asian American context relatives are sometimes economically exploitative of their members, occasionally to extreme degrees. Values of family unity and respect for elders are abused by such individuals to force relatives to assist them economically through low or unpaid labor. Marginal economic circumstances of some families may even make such exploitation an economic necessity but it still remains exploitation, souring family relationships and contaminating cultural values.

Despite the difficulties in America and the process of cultural change and adaptation, most Asian American families operate fairly well. Accounts in this chapter describe a variety of families, most of which function quite well. Chapter Eight follows with further discussion of tensions and change.

My Chinese American Family by Sharon Hsu

For me, family includes grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins from my mother's side. The reason I say mother's side is because dad's

family were all deceased before I was born. Some people think it's weird, but I'm very close to all my relatives. It has to do with how I was brought up. As I was growing up I saw the close relationship between my mom and her siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives. I guess I liked it so I took after her. My family is very open minded and up to date. There are no secrets between all three generations from grandparents to us. We've always shared everything. Whether we want to or not, everything ends up being shared. As I was growing up my parents taught me to say whatever was on my mind and not to keep it inside me.

We share many ideas and values that have been passed down from our grandparent's generation. First is respect for elders. When we see someone older we are supposed to add auntie or uncle to their name. When someone older asks you to do something, you try to do the best you can, but if you can't, then just tell them that. Now that we are older, my older relatives give us a choice, in other words it's up to us to do what they ask or not. Sometimes we talk back to our parents, we kind of learned that from them. I remember my grandma telling me that when she was growing up she talked back to her dad and got away with it. So when we talk back we get away with it too, sometimes. My mom has never spanked us or grounded us, she just explains what we did was wrong and that it should not be done again.

Second is not wasting. All three generations share this value. I was taught not to waste. My parents constantly remind us that "money is hard to come by so don't waste it!" We were taught to buy only the things we need. For example, with clothing, we buy enough to wear but no more.

Third is education. All three generations think that education is very important. When my mom was growing up my grandparents told them that getting a good education will get you a good job. That's why my aunts and uncles all went to college and some of them even got master's degrees. My mom didn't go to college because she got a job right after she graduated from high school. She wanted to help support the family. At that time both grandma and grandpa were working but they were just getting by, so my mom decided to go out ad work to help them. In my generation education is important because of all the technology we need to know about. We still agree that education is important.

Though we share many values we also have differences. There are two major differences between the younger generation and the older generations. The first is having girlfriends and boyfriends. When we meet someone we like and that person likes us too, we sooner or later would want to become steady girlfriends and boyfriends. Usually our first love was in high school but our parents and grandparents disapproved of starting this young. They don't want us to have girlfriends or boyfriends until the later years of college or even later. So none of us in

the younger generation have had girlfriends or boyfriends up till now. Its kind of funny to talk about this topic. The older generation wouldn't let us date but now my mom and grandparents worry that I won't get married because I'm already 22 years old. My grandma constantly reminds me that when she was 22 she already had my mom and my aunt. I guess this is hint for me that it's time for me to have a boyfriend and get married.

The second difference is about moving out, being on our own. We want to but the older generation disagrees. They think we can't handle being alone and doing everything on our own. Well, my mom proved her point about this. A year ago, my younger brother, Sid, wanted move out and be on his own. He told my mom and grandparents this and they all disagreed. They argued for a while but my mom finally gave in and let him move out. The only reason she agreed was to prove her point and she succeeded. Three months after Sid moved out he came home every night for dinner and sometimes even slept at home. He couldn't move back home because his lease wasn't up. Several months later, when it was up, he moved back home and admitted that being on his own was really tough. Since then, none of us, including all the cousins, have talked about moving out.

Besides these two major differences we have little disagreements. Some of my cousins wanted to start wearing makeup in junior high but the older generation thinks that make-up should not be worn until it's necessary, like when they are older. They like us with natural looks and think that make-up is for older people to cover up their wrinkles. But they didn't make a big deal about it and let my cousins be. Another area of small disagreement has to do with marriage within the same ethnic group. When we first came to the United States the older generation constantly reminded us to only marry Chinese and no others. As time has passed, they're not so concerned about if we marry Chinese or not because they know that its hard to just marry Chinese people. They gave in on this issue because they know that we socialize with other ethnic groups so they can't tell us who we will fall in love with.

In my family the way we share with each other in a pretty strange way. For instance, when I decided to come back to school I talked to my aunts and uncles about choosing a major so I could get suggestions about how to pick one that really fit me. Then the news spread to all the other relatives and especially to my grandparents. They know everything. The reason I shared the problem of schooling with my aunts and uncles is that they know more about it than my mom. On other subjects I share everything with my mom. I share my personal problems, my joys, my sadness, my first kiss -- anything that happens to me she knows. So do all my relatives because, like I said, news travels fast, so there are no secrets among us. If I go to my mom with a major problem that she can't solve, we will share the problem

with the whole family and they will help me try to solve it.

The men in my family have more input than the women. The women have ideas too but sometimes the ideas are shot down by the men saying they are stupid ideas. The older generation men in the family like the women to stay home and take care of the house while the men go out and make a living for the family. The older generation of women did stay home and raise the kids. In my generation the boys would like their wives (when they marry) to work and the girls would like to work instead of staying home all the time, day after day, year after year. It would be tiring and boring. In my family my dad made the living in Taiwan until mom and dad were divorced. He has his own import export business. He stayed in Taiwan after we came to the United States and every other month he sent money over to us. My mom had to learn how to pay bills and take care of the house real fast when we came over here because in Taiwan my dad took care of the money and there was a maid to cook and help with the house. Now mom has more responsibilities and does all the worrying about us and how we will be when we grow up.

I'm really glad that I was born into this family. Everyone is so understanding and open minded. We have the privilege of making our own decisions. Our parents taught us how to make our own decisions, to choose between right and wrong. As I was growing up, if I had to make a decision, they would give me suggestions and examples to help me make up my own mind. If there were major decisions to be made the whole family would decide. Like when a relative buys a house the whole family helps them decide and gives their input, but the final decision is still totally up to the person that needs to make the decision.

I think a family should be just what my family is like, they are there when you need them to support you in everything you do. My family does not expect us to become famous or anything, they just want us to get a good education, do well in life, establish a family, have kids, and lead a happy life. When I have a family of my own I would raise my kids the way I was because I would like my kids to be open and to share everything with me and my family, just like I did. I will try to be the best parent that I can.

A Filipino American Family by D. R.(2)

Today my family is composed of those who live in my household. The people are my parents, my sisters, myself, my younger brother and my maternal grandmother, who is 85 years old. The size of my family is different than it was in earlier generations. Both sets of grandparents had 14 children each while my parents had only five children and my uncles and aunts had only four or five children each. In our generation the downward trend continues, my siblings and I agreed that two to three children would be enough for us.

The composition of family seems to show less change. Immediate, nuclear family has constituted the family for several generations, except that parents, when necessary, live with their favorite married children. Perhaps, in time, when my generation is all off and married, my mom will live with my next oldest sister.

Certain values have been somewhat successfully passed from one generation to the next. Both my parents are Catholic like their parents and grandparents. Catholicism has been instilled in us children as well, accompanied by with catechism, daily prayers, and Sunday masses. Some change with regard to religion has occurred in my generation. Since we all have American educations we have been exposed to Darwinism and the process of questioning everything. We allow evolution and Genesis to co-exist in our beliefs and, although we are still Catholic, we may not be as devout or as pure as our elders are.

Our parents tried to teach us certain patterns of behavior early in childhood. The most significant was how to conduct ourselves among elderly Filipinos. In the Philippines people older than oneself are automatically given respect as signified by two actions: 1) "mano" - the raising of the elder's hand to one's forehead when you greet them - and 2) the use of the term "po" in addressing elderly. Both actions show respect, politeness, and subserviency. They are also the mark of a good Filipino upbringing. Now in America, my siblings and I have not forgotten how our parents taught us to show respect but we tend to reserve our "manos" and "pos" only for the oldest relatives we are most acquainted with.

Besides respect for the elderly another behavior expected of my generation is that of getting an education and doing very well. Both sets of grandparents encouraged their children to go to school. My parents have the same expectation of us but they are even more demanding in these areas than their own parents were. They put stress on us by asking us to milk as many A's as possible from school. Now that we are in college, however, they have stopped harassing us as much. They probably realize that we can get A's on our own without them breathing down our necks.

From generation to generation, there is one situation - intermarriage - which most family members oppose but which occurs anyway. In my grandparents' generation, my paternal grandmother's sister married a Cantonese speaking Chinese man, much to everyone's consternation. In my parents' generation, my mother's brother married an Illocana, to the horror of my Kapangpangan grandmother. In my generation my cousin married an *Americanized* Illocano, which was doubly horrific. Several factors account for older generations' disapproval of intermarriages. My uncle's marriage to my auntie (the Illocana) is a classic example. My aunt was an outsider with a different language, different beliefs, values, and ways of thinking. Arguments ensued and the family's unity was disrupted by this outsider. Eventually, my uncle and his family went their separate ways with only occasional visits. So, for the parental generation, such intermarriages must be avoided to prevent such disasters and to ensure family unity and only marriage to those "within our own kind" should be accepted.

We disagree with our parents' restrictions on intermarriage as well as some other restrictions they have imposed. Among these is "no dating" - my parents believe that dating should occur only "after your studies are over," which is what they did when they were young. They are wary about us "going out." My mom says "when I was a young girl, I never went out" and my father claims "only boys go out." These restrictions on going out and dating built up resentment against our parents during high school years. They have slacked off on the "no going out" rule but "dating" is still taboo, even though my sisters are all over 22 and I'm now 19. My parents', like their parents, seem to think that dating leads to pregnancy and is kind of a sin. Actually, they should know that none of us would want to get pregnant and that dancing is harmless but I think they still believe that dating and going out is morally corrupt.

The roles of men and women in the family have changed only somewhat over generations. In my grandparents' days the husband was the bread winner and dominant figure in the household. The wife was a homemaker, took care of children, did the laundry, and cooked for the family. The female children helped the mother by taking care of younger children and cleaning the house. The male children did "manly" tasks like fixing roofs. Today these roles are somewhat altered. My mother is still head homemaker but she also works and contributes to the family income. A larger proportion of housework has passed to the children, regardless of gender. My father, however, remains the chief bread winner and is still the dominant figure in the family. He is the most dominant figure because he's loud and he exercises the most influence and control. My father is temperamental and his bark always evokes a sense of dominance. While my mother tends to leave us alone, our father tends to stick his nose into our education and influences our study habits. Since he owns the

house, provides the food, and pays for the schooling his money, in a way, controls our behavior.

Of course, he's only the *most* dominant; my mother has significant control and influence, too. When it comes to big decisions - immigration, buying a house, or getting a new car - my mother always has final say. We children never have any real say in our parents' decisions. They decide together what is best for the whole family.

In my family, communication between generations ranges from awkward to absent. Communication among siblings is great and we can talk everything from dust balls to nuclear war. Communication between my parents and my grandmother is great, too. They have fun gossiping about distant relatives and other subjects. Unfortunately, when my generation is together with the older generations we either don't have anything to say or we don't know how to say it. When we do talk, the conversation is simply informational, like "what's for dinner?" or "Dave's birthday is on Saturday." This lack of communication between generations is a manifestation of several factors. Among these is a language barrier. For example, my younger brother and I grew up listening to Kapangpangan at home but learned English in school. We understand some Kapangpangan in a conversation but we can only reply in English. Unfortunately, while we can understand some of our parents' speech they have difficulty understanding our English, so we keep conversation simple and informational only. The age gap between generations is another factor, I'm almost twenty but my parents are close to sixty. We have a hard time relating to one another and the language barrier leaves little room for understanding.

The lack of communication prevents us from being close and understanding of one another. If I knew Kapangpangan better, perhaps I could explain a curve ball or *Dangerous Liaisons* to my mother. If my dad knew English better he would understand my brother's reasons for difficulty in school and maybe would be more sympathetic toward him. Indeed, if we were closer and could understand each other better, perhaps some of the disagreements we have would be resolved.

Besides "dating" and "going out" the other areas of disagreement include conflicting views of college and of majors. My father seems to think that the purpose of going to college is to get a job so he pushes stable, vocational type majors like nursing or accounting. We, in contrast, believe that you go to college to gain knowledge and wisdom, that the major is a four year commitment that guarantees little. Unbeknownst to our father, most of us are into broad, risky, noncommittal liberal arts type majors. We do not try to explain this to our father, he would never understand that we go to college for the education and that once that is achieved we will then get a job. Another area of disagreement has to do with independence. We are all rather independent by nature and we long to move out of the house. My

parents are dead set against such a thing. Even staying in a dorm for college is a no-no. They believe that family members should stay together until marriage and that even then close ties with the home should be maintained.

The function and purpose of the family has changed in one interesting way since my grandmothers began giving birth to their broods in the mid-1920's. Back then, I really believe that they considered the function of the family was to replenish the earth's population. (Honestly! Even my three older sisters support me on this.) Today, of course, our parents had children because they wanted them, replenishing the populations was not uppermost in their minds.

Otherwise, the function and purpose of the family has stayed much the same over the years and generations. In each generation the family has served as a network of loving, emotional, financial, and physical support. This continues today. When I needed cash for a textbook my older sister helped me out. When my brother graduated my mother was there to cheer him on. When my grandmother came from the Philippines my mother took her in. Overall, despite our disagreements and communication difficulties, helping out and being there for one another remains the main function of our family.

I talked to two friends about their families as a comparison. One is Diane, a Chinese American student at City college. I found many similarities between Diane's family and my own. She also has a communication problem due to language. Her parents speak Mandarin but Diane considers her Mandarin as the "fifth grade variety" and often feels "like I'm talking to a brick wall with my mom. She speaks only Mandarin and literally no English." She also has problems with her dad with conflicting ideas about college and majors. "My dad is very practical, he wants me to major in a concrete field like business or accounting so that I can get a job straight after college." Diane is a math major and said "I once considered using my math for teaching but my dad blew his top, so the idea was thrown out the window."

Diane's parents also disapprove of intermarriages for the same reasons my parents do. "If I marry outside my race, my parents will disown me." Her family's religion and nationality is different than mine and they do not object to "going out" but Diane and I have both experienced similar troubles and ways of thinking that quite a number of other Asian American young people have probably experienced as well.

The other person I talked to was David, a Filipino American business major at Fresno State. His family and mine are similar in origins. Both came from the same town, speak the same language (Kapangpangan), share the same religion, and most other value, behaviors, and ideas which come with such a background. From doing

"mano" to being scolded for "going out" our families are almost carbon copies of one another. But, interestingly enough, there are significant differences. First of all his family really communicates. David is fluent in Kapangpangan so he can communicate well with his grandparents. His parents speak fluent English and can communicate well with him. Secondly, since both his parents are college teachers they understand David's desire to learn, they suggest majors but allow him to make his own decisions. Finally, his family does not disapprove of intermarriages. His uncle married a Black woman and they welcomed her with open arms. In David's family there is real esprit de corps.

In the end I think, and Diane and David agreed, that our generation is a significant pivotal point in our families histories. We are the Asian American generation with one foot in our Asian past and the other in our American future. When we have children we'll install pride and recognition of their Asian cultural backgrounds but they'll definitely grown up with more American values than Asian ones.

A Vietnamese Chinese Family by V. L.(2)

I have never written about my family, that doesn't mean I have a perfect family but only that I never took the initiative to reveal it to myself or to others. Anyway, it is nice to write about it today.

My family contained five members; my father, my mother, older sister, brother, and I. We have been in the United States for ten years but my father passed away only three years after we got here. Back in the old country (Vietnam) my father was head of the family and earned all the money for family expenses, including school tuition for us, housing, household needs, food, and all the necessities for his lovely wife and kids. My father did not have time to take care of all these things, so each month he handed my mom the money and she would take care of all the rest. In other words, my mother was in charge of all the financial matters in the family. I guess she had much of the power, my father asked her advice on many things from small purchases to big plans, like buying a house.

Aside from my mom's position in the family, we still respected my father the most. He was the one you had to ask for permission to go out. We thought he was the greatest, he never hit us or even scolded us. Now I understand why. My mom told me that he did not think that was his responsibility. When I was young in Vietnam, nothing much seemed to happen in my family, I mean that it was always peaceful and joyful inside the family. Perhaps I was too young to see or hear any arguments except that I fought with my brother all the time. My childhood there was a treasure to remember.

Family life in the United States was different. After the first three years, roles in the family changed rather quickly because of my father's death and my sister's marriage. When my father was here, he was still the man in the family even though we were on welfare. Every month he still would hand the money to my mom to handle and, even though he did not make money, we still would go to him for permission to go out, just like in Vietnam. But here, living all together in a studio apartment, we saw and heard all the arguments, not only between my father and mother but also among ourselves, the children.

I started to see frustration on my father's face. Every time he wanted to go somewhere people spoke English he had to bring my sister along. When he had to borrow money for dental lab classes he had to take her. When he went to see the social worker he had to take her. Whenever there were forms to fill out he had to take her. I guess he was tired of depending on his child to help him. In Vietnam, we would never have the guts to ask what was happening in the family but here it was all right in front of us. I remember one night he had a big argument with my mom, which started with a ridiculous topic about a Black woman in the bank refusing to sign a form or something. Anyway, for the whole night he kept mumbling to my mom, saying he wanted to go back to China or if he stayed here he wanted to die and come back in the next life as an ABC (American born Chinese). Then my mom told him she would follow him to China after my brother and I grew up. That night I did not sleep at all because of what my father said in reply, "If I stay in the United States I would rather be shot." And the very next morning he was killed by a gun shot. (Editor's note: The father was killed in an attempted robbery of the family's apartment.)

Life was quite different without a father, the person that used to be here was not around anymore. Every time we ate or slept, we were missing something. Then we moved to another apartment and from then on my mother was the head of the household. She was in charge of rent and food. We, the children, went out to work. I worked in the sewing factory on weekends, my brother was a newspaper boy and my sister worked for an import-export company. My sister started to support the family with half her salary and my brother and I gave my mom some of our money to make her happy.

During this time, I was in high school and met many friends and shared many secrets with them. I did not talk to my mom much because there was nothing important to talk about and with my brother, ah, only yelling and arguing, nothing good. I had nothing in common with my sister, we even had different tastes in clothing. She is ten years older than me, too much older to understand my thoughts. Truly, in my heart I wished so much that I could talk to my sister like my friends

talk to their sisters. My sister was always a nice girl, she told my mom everything and tried to follow my mom's wishes. She even finished courses as a dental lab assistant at City College because my mom thought it was a nice career but, in fact, my sister hated dental labs. She likes real estate and accounting. I found out only after she got married, now she is studying real estate. When I found out that my sister did not really like dental work, I warned my mom that I would not become whatever she wanted me to be, like a doctor. I like business and, fortunately, she is willing to accept that. My brother really did the opposite of what she planned. She told all her friends he was going into dentistry and my brother was persuaded to take two years of clinical science until he could not stand it anymore, so he changed to an accounting major. My mother was disappointed but realized that it was not in her control anymore, that we were growing up and should make up our own minds. I wonder, if we were still in Vietnam, would we be this strong and stand up for ourselves?

Two years after my father's death, my sister got married. Then I missed her a lot! My mother was angry that my sister got married this early. I mean, my sister was not young but she had just graduated from City College and was working in a downtown dental office. She was a great help at home, not only with money but also as traditional older sister and cleaning and cooking sometimes. I think she did more than she should have. But while my mother was angry that my sister got married, she was also rushing her to get married, saying "You two have been together for one year, so why not get married?" I hate it when she rushes things like this, so again I warned her, "I will get married when I think I am ready."

My sister and I started to write each other and tell each other secrets and now I often go to Los Angeles to visit her. In eighteen years this was the first time we both opened our doors to each other. I also started to have a good relationship with my brother, he would come to me with problems of girls he was interested in and how they might feel. We were so close that my mother was jealous. My brother and I have part-time jobs, so we are responsible for bills around the house, everything except the rent. As the youngest in the family I get the chance to take care of dishes, laundry, and buying appliances.

Not long after my sister got married there was an incident with my brother that showed how he was affected by American society. My brother was nineteen and he wanted to move out and live with his friends. My mom was furious when she heard this news, our house was like a war, which I stayed out of. Actually, I was behind my brother all the way, I thought he should go out to the real world and survive without my mother's cooking. I wanted him to compare which was better, maybe he would learn more outside the cage. My mother was mad that this was not a discussion but a decision from my brother, he was moving for sure but he told my mom all the

reasons he wanted to move. He said the apartment was too small. He stayed in the living room; we were bothering him by watching the t.v. and he just wanted a change of environment. My mom was mad that she had no control of this family, that her son was the opposite from her. She said, "If you were in Vietnam, you would never think to leave me." She did not understand that my brother was not leaving her but wanted a change. She even said things like, "If you leave, you will never be my son again!" She tried everything to keep him from going. She was afraid that his departure would destroy her plan to open a shop because if he left she would have to pay more of the family expenses. The main fear was that she had no control over him. My brother left anyway. And she missed her son like hell. She asked me about him every day.

I didn't have to get my independence by moving out because every day I grew older, I gained independence within myself. I was responsible for the things I should be responsible for, after my brother left I covered his payments for our housing. My mother was too angry and sad with the incident, so I took care of all the bills and money for our budget. My mom and I both depended on each other. I am very independent, with friends I like to socialize with, but my mom and I became very close. I started to tell her everything in my life but I admit a mom will always be a mom, there is a limit to what you should tell your mother. Last summer, I spent a night at my friend's house after we had a summer break party. When I went home the next morning my mom didn't say anything. We had guests that weekend, anyway. She did not get mad and after two days we were still like pals and talked to each other. Then I told her that I tried to smoke a cigarette at the party. She was shocked to hear it from me. I told her I that i didn't like it a bit, that it smelled awful. But you know, she started to create a story of my future, she said if I could smoke today then I might even sleep with a guy tomorrow. I regretted so much that I told her and it had taken me two days to decide to tell her. She had said to me before, "I am not only your mother, I am also your friend." If I can share feelings with my coworkers and friends, why not with my mom? But I was wrong. After that night she kept asking me to promise never to spend a night at a friend's house again. I did not accept this request. If I am bad I can be bad in the day time, not necessarily at night. She said, "If you don't listen to me, I would rather die." I replied, "If you really want to die, let's go to the Golden Gate bridge and die together." Yes I did, I said it exactly like that. I even said, "From now on, you are not my friend but only a good mother, don't expect any secrets from me." From that time on, I did not spit a word of my life story with her. When a person distrusts me, I let it be.

After two months, my brother moved back to the house. It wasn't that he disliked his new life but he had no money to live on his own any more. He spent all his savings during that summer with his girlfriend. My mom was the happiest person in

the world, because she won. I was glad, too, because there was someone to talk to her.

Recently we moved to a three bedroom flat, which costs double the old rent. So now my brother and I hold two jobs and at the same time try to be college students. Each month we are responsible for everything. My mom takes care of the food, cooking dinner. From this you can see roles have changed from Vietnam and when my father was alive. I do a lot at home, I'm responsible for family finances, go to Price Club, fill out forms like the census. Too much is too much, I start to show my frustrations sometimes. My brother never washes dishes but he does his own laundry now. Every month he hands me \$350 and that's it. Me, I end up spending \$450 for each month. It is not fair that he makes more than me but takes less responsibility. My mom lets him do that because she is really afraid that he might leave again.

In values and expectations I am very similar to my mom, though I never discuss expectations with her. We both expect each other to be that way. I put education as my first priority in life. We both agree on characteristics of a spouse for me, including one prejudice I feel a little ashamed about. In my mom's generation she could not marry a Vietnamese, only other Chinese. My older aunt in Vietnam ran away to marry a Vietnamese gentleman. My grandfather rejected her as his daughter until his death. In my senior year in high school, I had a Vietnamese prom date. My mom felt disgraced and convinced me to go with my brother instead. I didn't think a prom date was worth making her mad so I went with my brother and spent most of the evening eating cheese cake. (See, now I am so fat!) I didn't dance a slow dance. Many of my Chinese friends from Vietnam have the same perception of marriage with a Vietnamese. Their parents also object. I don't know why they have such hatred but it seem that I am born with this prejudice also. I don't mind going out with Vietnamese guys on a date but I sure will not marry one. I know it is wrong to judge people by their nationality or be so influenced by our parents but if I have a chance to choose my future husband, I would like a gentleman who is Chinese from Vietnam, just like me.

Friends play an important part in my life and in most of my friend's lives. We can hardly talk to our families, the only thing we can talk to them about are simple things like what we did today or what we would like to eat. I cannot tell my mom about flunking a class or about feeling too much pressure from my peers. She never gives me emotional support I need in school. This semester, I dropped two courses and tried to be a part time student with two jobs. I didn't tell her about this because she would not care, I think she would just worry I could continue to bring home \$450 a month. I understand she does not know English and I do not expect her to help me write an essay. she thinks I am old enough to be on my own in these things. Indeed,

I am, but I need encouragement and motivation also. I tried to break this wall between us but I was wrong to expect my mother to be like those on t.v. As I grow older and wiser each day I feel I am alone in this place, I don't go to anyone for advice anymore because they don't know which road is better for me. I guess I am the only one who can write my own script for my future. I talk to myself in front of the mirror a lot. I leave many questions unanswered and many goals to be reached.

My Family by S. Y.(3)

In a traditional Chinese family, females were supposed to do all the housework and take care of the family. They couldn't go out late at night, which excluded parties and late night movies. The males were usually the spoiled brats in the family. Parents and grandparents all wished for sons and grandsons when the mother gave birth. It would be a disappointment if the child was a girl. Some men would go as far as marry a second wife, just hoping that they would bear a son.

Brought up in a semi-traditional Chinese family, I experienced some of the phenomena of a traditional Chinese family. However, being the youngest in the family does make a difference. My parents spoil me also, not just my brother. My sister is the eldest, so she suffered the most out of us three kids. I remember my dad yelling and beating her when she did something bad. Sometimes it wasn't even her fault. I feel bad now, thinking back, but then I was too young to understand anything. There is an instance that sticks in my mind after all of these years. My sister and brother had a fight. My dad did not even bother to find out who started it, he just took out the stick and started beating her. My mom tried to stop him ... but he went on beating her. We were all crying. (Editor's note: The author chose to delete some material at this point, it described the failure of the family to control the father's abuse.) Later, when my dad was very ill, I sometimes even wished that he would die, but I know that my mom would have been very sad if that ever happened. So I disregarded that thought.

One thing that made me even more mad with my dad was that he usually took his frustration out on my sister and me and we suffered through that time. My sister and I are very close because we both lived through some hard times together. She suffered more than I did because she was the oldest but even being the youngest did not help much because my dad still favored my brother. After my sister moved out to go to U.C. Berkeley I wasn't able to see her often. I felt very lonely because she was the only one in the family that I could share my secrets with. I couldn't tell my brother anything, because he is a guy and will not understand my problems. Besides he was very spoiled and I hated him then. He got away with everything because my parents would not beat him. They only talked to him and told him what he did wrong and that he shouldn't do that again.

I remember when we were young, my dad, my brother and I went to Woolworth to buy a skateboard for my brother. I saw this big cute doll that I wanted but my father said, "You are too old to play with dolls"! I was only eight years old! I felt very bad but I didn't have the money to buy it for myself so I just forgot about it. It was a moment in my life that I can never forget because he bought the skateboard for my brother and would not buy the doll for me, even though it was cheaper than the skateboard.

However, as time went by, my dad mellowed out with age. Our family relationships became closer and we started to have better communication within the family. My dad would sometimes discuss his plans with us, he even began to treat us three kids more equally. Now, he doesn't favor my brother that much any more. I guess it's because we are all growing up and because my sister and I treat him better and care for the family more than my brother.

There are times I suspect that my dad treats us so nice because he feels guilty of what he used to do to us and he is afraid that we might not care for him when he gets mom's. I don't really care what the reasons are, I'm just happy that my family is getting along better. We occasionally have a family outing when my parents have a day off together, which is very rare. It is only on special times when we go out for dinner. Our family hardly does anything together because of our different schedules. Usually, the only time that our family is together is at night in the living room watching television.

It is hard for us kids to have much to say to our parents because of the generation gap. We do communicate but only on very basic subjects, nothing personal or emotional. Being unable to share my feelings with my family, I ran to my friends for support and comfort. This shows the gap that exists in our family. I remember when I first started dating, I did not even dare to tell my parents because I knew that they would not allow me to continue my relationship. Whenever I have problems with my boyfriend, I would go to my best friend and cry on her shoulder. My parents never knew about this relationship even after we broke up. I would not even tell them about it now even though it was seven years ago. My mom never talks to us about sex or anything concerning that subject. It is very disturbing for my parents to speak to us about that forbidden subject. I grew up not knowing anything until we had to take a family life class in high school. Even then I was kind of guessing on some of the things that were presented. I felt stupid because everyone seemed to know what the teacher was talking about. I couldn't figure out why my parents did not talk us about this topic. I thought it was very natural and important for kids to understand sex before they get into trouble. It made me feel as if my parents did not care about me because they did not care enough to inform me about the subject. However, now I

begin to realize their position. It is hard for them to talk about this subject because for them this subject was prohibited. I guess my way of thinking is more Americanized while my parents are still far from being Americanized.

Disagreements between parents and their children are very normal. I remember one big disagreement that occurred between my parents and myself. It was during my sophomore year in high school. I reached the point in my life that I wanted to stay out late and party with my friends. My parents would set a curfew of 11:00 PM for me. I thought that was the most unreasonable thing to do because it was still too early to end the fun. We had huge arguments almost every night. I was very reluctant to listen to them but I had to give in because they're my parents and I was still living at home. I still insist that I was right and that my parents were being old-fashioned because we are now in America, not China. All the kids were doing the same thing and their parents let them. I didn't feel like talking with my parents for a long time. Somehow in my mind I knew that they were only trying to protect me but I wouldn't admit it to myself that they weren't being so unreasonable. As I grow older I begin to understand why my parents did some of the things that they did.

As everyone got older, I feel as if we are all closer to each other. There is more communication between the two generations. My dad has changed the most, he seems to have become another person. He talks more with us and he is willing to share some of his problems with us.

This closeness is new. I remember about three years ago, my dad had an operation. I didn't feel anything at all. I wasn't worried nor was I anxious to see or know how the operation went. I went visit him in the hospital, he was lying there very helpless and weak. I didn't even talk to him very much because I didn't know what to say to him. I didn't feel like hugging him. I just stood there looking at my mom holding his hand and crying. I didn't see what was the big deal. All that time I just felt like leaving and going home.

Looking back, I am deeply ashamed of myself. I knew that he must have been very hurt and disappointed in me. I guess it was a way of getting revenge on him because of the way he used to treat us. He never showed any affection toward us. I didn't show any affection toward my parents either but I did with my close friends. I would sometimes go out of my way just to show them that I cared and treasured their friendship. I just couldn't do it towards my parents. However, I am now learning to treat my parents, especially my dad, in a loving way. I guess our family needs to learn to show more affection toward each other.

As I grew older, my parents weren't as strict. They wouldn't complain as much about me staying out late with my friends or even about me having a boyfriend. I

remember my last boyfriend, I brought him home one day when my dad was home. I introduced William to my dad and they talked for a while, then we went out. The funny thing was that my parents even wanted to go with us to Carmel. I was worried in the beginning about how my parents would react to William but after that trip my parents liked him even more. One thing that surprised me was that my mom came to me one day and asked me how William and I were doing. She also told me that she thinks that he is a very nice and smart guy, and that she approved of him. So I asked her if he meets my dad's approval. She just smiled and said, "He didn't complain to me about William. I think he likes him."

I was very happy to hear that. From then on, I felt comfortable talking to my mom about William and also about other guys, which was never a topic of our conversation before. After we broke up, my mom and sister were very supportive. I don't know how I could have lived through that time without them. My sister began to ask me to go out with her whenever she went out with her friends. She didn't want me to be left alone and think about crazy things. My dad even asked me about William. He asked me if William had ever treated me badly. After that, I realized that my parents, sister, and brother really did care for me a lot. Now I'm beginning to feel the support of my family.

In our family now, everyone is more open with each other. We still don't have the courage to tell our parents all of our problems or all that's going on in our life but at least we joke around and talk more than before. We have more activities going on in within our family. We will go to see a movie when we have time and go out to dinner on certain Sundays when everyone was home. My parent sometimes go to Reno together and leave us home. Actually we won't be there but will go out on the town, painting it red. I'm very glad to see that my parents spending more time alone because my father used to work seven days a week, twelve hours a day. We never had time to see him nor talk to him. Now, he's not working as much and he has Sundays off.

Looking back, I am surprised and happy about how my family has changed. I still remember a lot of the things that happened in the past but I don't hate my father anymore because I know that he has changed. Everyone make mistakes in their life time. I know that I make mistakes also, so I learned to forgive him. The important thing is that he knows that he was wrong and changed for the better. Now I really enjoy staying with my family. I've grown up and realized that family is really an important source of support and an important part of my life.

Isolation Versus Community in the Small Producer and Dual Wage Earner Families by Shirley La (4)

Many immigrants face hardship and humiliation coming to America seeking a better life for their families. The hardships don't end when they arrive because they have to find ways to survive in the new world. They have to work twice as hard, learn a new language, and try to adapt to a new culture. The resulting strain on family life is well-known and reveals the high personal costs beneath the surface of the economic success of Asian immigrants. In "Split Household, Small Producer and Dual Wage Earner: An Analysis of Chinese-American Family Strategies," Evelyn Nakano Glenn (5) has argued that the small producer family is better off than the dual wage earner family in America. My paper discusses points she wasn't aware of and explains why the small producer family is not necessarily better off in terms of family life concluding with a discussion of the importance of ethnic community as a factor in maintaining a healthy family life.

E. N. Glenn talked about the small producer family with a close integration of work and home life, but I feel that the case of the small producer family with a separation of business and home is equally important. She described the small producer family thus:

These early families were started primarily by small entrepreneurs, former laborers who had accumulated enough capital to start a small business alone or in partnership. Due to occupational restrictions and limited capital, the enterprises were confined to laundries, restaurants, groceries, and other small shops. During the period from about 1920 to the mid 1960s, the typical immigrant and first-generation family functioned as a productive unit in which all members, including children, worked without wages in a family business. (p. 39 & 40)

On the daily pattern of family life, she wrote, "The work day of the parents with four children started at seven in the morning and did not end until midnight, six days a week. Except for school and a short nap in the afternoon, the children worked the same hours as the parents, doing their homework between midnight and 2:00 AM. Each day's routine was the same." (p. 40)

My family of six is a small producer family which owns gift shops in the Mission but lives in the Richmond District, unlike the families Glenn describes in which residence and business location were the same.. My parents open the gift shops at 8:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. while we four children go to school at 8:00 a.m. and return home at 3:30 p.m. The reason why the business is separate from our home is because my parents wanted us to live in a better class neighborhood. Though this neighborhood gives us more opportunity to adapt to American society, we can only interact with our parents on our weekends at the shops. On weekdays, we go straight home after school rather than commuting to the shops to be with our parents.

Because my parents work seven days a week, we don't have any Sunday family quality time like we used to when my parents had one day off each week from their wage jobs.

Another example is the Wong family. Their daily routine is similar to my family's. The parents work everyday because their Sun May Supermarket has to be open seven days to make money in Oakland Chinatown. Like us, they also avoid the crowded apartments in the low-income Chinatown district by living in a quiet, white outer district with nice houses and good academic schools. Their two children help out on weekends and attend college in Hayward on weekdays. Like our family, the Wong children are more able to adapt to American culture than the parents, who spend most of their time in Chinatown. However, their family does have some time together on weekends when their children help out with the supermarket.

The Kha family provides an interesting example of the contrast between the small producer and dual wage earner family. The results are the opposite from what one would expect based on E. N. Glenn's article. Mr. Kha began as a partner of Mr. Wong at Sun May Supermarket. After a year, Mr. Kha changed from an owner-partner to Mr. Wong's employee because he felt that his family was drifting apart. As an employee, Mr. Kha notices that his life is more fulfilling and less stressful than Mr. Wong's. He says, "My children were always complaining about working too hard and not having the time to even spend the money that we work so hard for." He is currently working for Mr. Wong six days a week and has a regular schedule. Unlike Mr. Wong who works overtime a lot and constantly worries about the business, Mr. Kha doesn't have to worry and knows the exact time he will be home with his family.

In other words, a small producer family with a separation of business and home life has the same problems E. N. Glenn described for the dual wage earner family. This separation of business and home life also creates a separation between generations in the small producer family. They are like the dual wage earner family because of "the complete segregation of work and family life. While apart they inhabit totally different worlds. The parents' lives are regulated by the discipline of the job, while the children lead relatively unstructured and unsupervised lives, often in the company of peers whose parents also work." (p. 42) The parents are usually too tired from working overtime and worrying about each day's business to discuss their children's day. Like the children in the dual wage family, the children in the small business family complain that their parents are not around much and, when they are, are too tired to talk. As Mr. Wong says: "Having a supermarket is hard work because as the owner, I have to know all the tasks to supervise the workers and work twice as hard to have my business flourish. I constantly worry about tomorrow's business day and try to come up with ways to have the next day's

business better than the previous day. So when I come home, I just want peace and quiet." My family also doesn't talk about how each other's day went. Whenever we get together, we talk about how bad business is going this week, how we can improve it in the future, and where is a better area to open another shop. If any of us are having a bad day, it is rarely discussed.

Since the parents are also not around to speak to the children in Chinese, the children also lose the ability (or willingness) to speak Chinese, and communication becomes very difficult in the family. I recall one dinner with the Wong family when I had to translate between Mr. Wong and his son Kevin, who currently goes to college in Hayward. They didn't understand each other much and seemed like they were in two different worlds. Since his father was Buddhist, Kevin tried to persuade his father to convert to Christianity; but Mr. Wong was only interested in knowing whether Kevin will take over the business after he retires in three years. The small producer family with a separation of business and home are heading for the same separation between generations as the dual wage earner family described in E. N. Glenn's article.

Nevertheless, although the children of small producer families are usually unsupervised on weekdays, they are not as rebellious and violent as the children of dual wage earners. Their participation in the family business on weekends makes them realize how hard their parents are working to raise them. Instead, they learn to be self-sufficient and help their siblings out in place of their parents, much like E. N. Glenn has described.

All members contributed to family income and domestic maintenance, including the children. The divisions of labor by age and gender, with gradations of responsibility according to capacity and experience. Elder siblings were responsible for disciplining and taking care of younger siblings, who in turn were expected to defer to their older brothers and sisters. (p. 41)

Their experience on weekends teaches the children that they have to help the family out as much as possible. In my family, each person has a role or duty. My sister Janet currently takes my mother's role as housekeeper. She cooks and cleans while taking care of my youngest, one year old brother, Richard. As the oldest child in the family, I take the role of the son in the house. I have to take care of the documents for the rent, bills, taxes, etc., as well as pick up my brothers and sister from school and tutor them at home. In spite of the separation from their parents, the children in the small producer family learn on weekends that keeping the family intact is extremely important for their parents who work so hard to give them a better life in America.

I agree with E. N. Glenn's research on the dual wage earner family. Ever since the 1960s, Asian Americans have better opportunities to survive in America because of the Civil Rights Movement. Although they are less discriminated against, Asian families still must work hard to gain political security, economic opportunity, and educational advantages for their children. Dual wage earner families who started in low income areas are now living and working in higher income districts. As E. N. Glenn said:

The dual wage earner families move into previously restricted neighborhoods. Among these socially mobile families, the parents still shop and visit friends in Chinatown; but their children tend not to have ties there. This group tends to live in white neighborhoods and to have little connection with Chinatown. (p. 41)

Because the parents and children in the dual wage earner family are separated for most of the day, I agree with E. N. Glenn that they live in two different worlds and lack sufficient communication skills. "The parents' fatigue, the long hours of separation, and the lack of common experiences combine to undermine communication." (p. 42) Mr. Dung and wife, for example, started out in 1980 as a waiter and a waitress in a Chinese restaurant. They can finally afford to move from the low income Chinatown area to the higher-class white neighborhood of the Sunset District in San Francisco because Mr. Dung has a full time page position in the Chinatown Public Library and Mrs. Dung is a manager in Payless Shoe Store. They don't get off work until 7:00 p.m., so their two children, Johnny and Thomas, who are in Giannini Middle School from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., are hardly supervised and are left alone "in the company of peers whose parents also work." (p. 42) Even though the Dung family is able to be together on Sundays, they rarely participate in Chinese cultural events because the parents need their rest and the children have homework. Thus, because Johnny and Thomas no longer interact with other Chinese kids, lack experience of their culture, and seldom go to Chinatown, they have a difficult time communicating with their parents just like the children of small producer families with a separation of business and home discussed above.

As mentioned above, the children of dual wage earner families have difficulties communicating with their parents. Johnny and Thomas complain that their parents are usually too tired to talk to them, and they don't have much to say to each other. They said, "When we asked them about World War 11 and the Chinese Revolution to do our school projects, our parents just said they don't know any history at all. We felt that they were lying to us." As E. N. Glenn explained: "This refusal causes blocks to intimacy between parents and children since certain topics become taboo." (p. 42) Isolated from the community as well, the children adjust to American wavy and learn English much more quickly than the parents. Over the years, the parents and

children are no longer able to speak the same language, and this reduces the quality of family life.

An important difference I notice from the small producer family with a separation of the business and home life is that children in dual wage earner families don't have the experience of working with their parents and understanding this struggle for a better life. E. N. Glenn explained the importance of this point: "The absence of a close knit family life among dual worker families has been blamed for the eruption of youth rebellion, delinquency, and gang violence." (p. 43) With the communication gap that developed over a period of years, the parents complain that they have lost control over their children. They need to understand that children left unsupervised and undisciplined are more likely to do rebellious things to get attention, follow their peers, and engage in dangerous bets to fit into their group. Since I visit the Dung family once in awhile, I see how Johnny and Thomas rebel against their parents. They talk back at their parents, get into fights at school and in the neighborhood, and hang out with white kids who are sometimes caught with cigarettes. Because the Dung parents are not around after school, they are not able to observe their sons and just have to believe them when they promise, "It will not happen again."

The community environment, however, makes a big difference for the dual wage family. Before they moved to higher class white neighborhoods, most of them started out living in the Chinese community. Living in Chinatown gave them the opportunity for less difficult adjustments, finding jobs, using bilingual services, and shopping in Chinese speaking stores, etc. Although E. N. Glenn pointed out the importance of kinship networks in chain migration, she didn't quite see the importance of the community dimension of dual wage earner family life. In fact, closeness within the community can reverse the relation between small producer and dual wage earner families in terms of integration of family.

Living with other Chinese/Vietnamese families in an apartment building in the low income Mission District, I find that my early years in a dual wage earning family were more fulfilling and happier than my current isolation from the community in a white Richmond neighborhood. Even though my father didn't get home until 8:00 pm from his butcher job in May Wah Supermarket, my mother was always around for us because she brought her garments home to sew. My friends whose parents were also supervised by my mother at my house while their parents went to work-. When ever my mother had to stay at the small garment shop to do her sewing, other mothers in the community would help take care of us and other children. These ties between families within the ethnic community helped discipline the children keep their language and cultural values.

One reason the integration of generations is so strong in the community setting is the maintenance of Chinese language. Many families send their children to Chinese schools and stress the importance of their native language. Unlike the isolated children of many dual wage earner families, my two brothers, sister, and I went to Chinese school after public school three days per week. Not only were we able to learn Chinese, we hung out with other children with similar values and discipline. However, although I am able to communicate with my parents better than Mr. Wong's son, Kevin, I feel my family has now lost some of our ability to communicate since we became a small producer family. Before, my mother was always around to ask us "How was your day at school? What do you like to have for dinner?" We were able to tell her the about the stars we achieved for good academic performance and conduct. Praise from a parent greatly influences a child to always try hard and achieve something. My parents had Sundays off to take us to the movies or Golden Gate Park, and other cities like San Jose, Oakland, Daly City, etc. Now, however, because my parents have to open the gift shops everyday, my youngest brother, Richard, doesn't have the same family quality time like I did. He, currently, doesn't speak Chinese fluently although my parents tutor him, and this enhances their communication. Understanding how hard our parents work to raise us, we always try our best to fulfill Richard's needs and encourage him to feel free to talk to our parents.

The Kha family illustrates the effect of change in the opposite direction from small producer to dual wage earner family. As part owners of Sun May, everyone in Mr. Kha's family had to help out; they worried about the business more than about the family and didn't have much family quality time. But now as an employee of Mr. Wong, Mr. Kha says, "Seeing Mr. Wong grow older each day with worries and stress from the business, I feel sorry for him and try to help him as much as possible. In a way, I am glad that I, at least, have the time to spend the money I make. I also have more time to watch out for my kids, like their school work, and spend Sundays barbecuing with my family and other Chinese neighbors." Also, Mrs. Kha brings garment work home to sew and the Kha children learn to speak Chinese fluently. Since they live in the Mission District near their relatives - uncles, aunts, grandmother, cousins, the Kha family have very strong traditional Chinese values and are very close to each other in terms of family communication skills.

Coming to America, many immigrants have to find ways to adapt to the new place. They have different ways of interpreting happiness and success. Some feel that living in a white neighborhood is the success while others feel that keeping their Chinese culture is the key to success. However, they have to work twice as hard to survive in a new country. In Evelyn Nakano Glenn's analysis of the immigrant family, the small producer family appeared to be better off than the dual wage earner family. However, her analysis did not consider the possibility that the small

producer family isolated from the immigrant community might have similar problems to her dual wage earner families. The experience of some recent immigrant families described in this paper shows the importance of community from the other side as well. Dual wage earning families with close community support have a better quality of family life than either dual wage earner families or small producer families isolated from their communities. Thus, although the small producer family has some benefit from the participation of all family members, analysis of family structure should not be done in isolation from the community.

Notes

1. Quoted in Marizo, Peter. 1976. *A Nation of Nations: The People Who Came to America as Seen Through Objects, Prints, and Photographs at the Smithsonian Institution*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers. pp 320
2. Names have been deleted from this account at the author's request and the initials of the author are a pseudonym.
3. At request of the author, names have been changed and some material has been deleted.
4. This paper was written as a special study project in AAS 699 for Dr. Ben Kobashigawa at San Francisco State University. It is a commentary on an article by Evelyn Nakano Glenn, based on personal observation and interviews with the Kha, La, and Wong families in spring, 1995. the text has been very slightly edited for clarity.
5. Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1983. "Split Household, Small Producer and Dual Wage Earner: An Analysis of Chinese-American Family Strategies" in *Journal of Marriage and the Family* no. 45, February 1983, pages 35-46. All page references are to this article.

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