

Chapter Five

Immigration after 1985

More recent Asian American immigration experience has shifted in subtle ways while also remaining very closely related to patterns established between 1965 and 1985. Amendments made to the immigration laws in 1990, related changes in welfare laws in the mid 1990s, and economic/political circumstances have all served to produce changes in immigration from Asia. Large numbers of immigrants have continued to arrive from Asia but the character of that immigration is shifting.

As the numbers of immigrants increased into the 1980s and their origins became primarily non European, political pressure for revision or replacement of the 1965 Act grew. A variety of proposals were presented in Congress during the 1980s, some of which were overtly intended to restrict immigration from Asia and Latin America while favoring European immigration. None became law but in 1990 a new immigration act was passed that made important changes in the system created in 1965. The Immigration Act of 1990 retained most of the family based entries, increased the availability of professional and employment based openings, and created a new "diversity" category for immigration from nations which have not sent large numbers of immigrants to the United States during a previous five year period. The diversity category was created, primarily, to deal with complaints that the emphasis on family relationships in the existing law had served, over time, to make European immigration difficult. The 1990 legislation also put a yearly cap on all immigration entries, although the number was higher than actual existing entries. The net effect of the 1990 Act was continued heavy immigration from Asia and Latin America, coupled with some increase in immigrants from Europe and other regions.(1)

The Immigration Act of 1990 did not address the underlying hostilities and reservations about immigrants generally and those from Asia and Latin America in particular. Continued calls for reductions and changes in immigration produced amendments to the immigration laws in 1996 which serve to make it harder for families to sponsor relatives but left unchanged the basic structure of the 1990 act. A realistic reading of the social and political climate indicates continued political controversy, with renewed calls for significant limitations on the total number of immigrants, coupled with suggestions for new criteria for entry less favorable toward Asia and Latin America.

Regulations have increasingly favored immigration by more educated and well to do persons while making immigration by those of lower economic status more difficult. A range of business and job related entry categories has brought a new generation of professionals as immigrants who can start new chains of family based arrivals and large numbers of immigrants have come from new regions in Asia.

Refugees from Asia have declined in numbers each year and the period of large scale refugee movement from the region has been over for some time. After 1985 increasing numbers of arrivals from Vietnam and other parts of SE Asia came not as survivors of troubled refugee journeys but rather through the “Orderly Departure Program” and other more “normal” immigration processes. Once in the United States, they tended to join relatives and communities already here rather than being placed in isolated, mainly non Asian American communities. In this manner their experience with immigration and adjustment become more like that of other Asian immigrants. The accounts that follow include a description of the experience of one such family. In contrast, there is the experience of Amerasian children and families from Vietnam, some of whom were able to come to the United States when the U.S. government finally acknowledged some responsibility for the children of U.S. military personnel who had been left behind in Vietnam by their fathers. A second account of immigration from Vietnam reflects the experience of one such family.

The 1990s saw a very significant rise in immigration from India, particularly high tech professionals, with resulting changes in the regional distribution of South Asian Americans in the United States and the social character of their communities. As part of this change Asian Indians have become a major part of the Asian American population of the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as nationally, producing further diversity in an already diverse population.

The origins of Chinese immigrants have become more varied as as increasing numbers arrive not from southern China but from other regions in China as well as from Taiwan and other parts of Asia. This has changed the the social and cultural character of many Chinese American communities, especially as many new arrivals are well educated professionals.

In the case of the Philippines, there has been a continued pattern of professional immigration and associated family sponsored chain immigration but the removal of the Marcos regime has changed the political context of immigration somewhat. A lively account of newer Filipino immigration is one of the accounts in this chapter.

While there is a long history of international students from Asia in the United States, the period from 1985 has seen an increase in the number of students from

Asia and the development of a new category, sometimes called “parachute children,” who come from well to do families in Asia and are sent to the United States for high school and sometimes middle school while the family remains in Asia. Sometimes this process involves formal arrangements with private boarding schools but often the arrangements are less formal and the children live with guardians, real or fictive relatives, and in some cases by themselves during their high school years. While “parachute” students are only a small portion of the international student population, their experience is interesting, so an account of international/parachute children student experience has been included makes an interesting comparison to the immigration of families.

The general patterns of immigration that were established after 1965 have continued as family based immigration, while financially more difficult, remains the single most used basis for immigration. The accounts that follow are not dramatically different from those for the period between 1965 and 1989 but do reflect many on-going changes as well as continuities. They do not fully reflect the shifting patterns of origins in Asia, including immigration from Taiwan, South Asia, and the increasingly varied arrivals from China. These will be added as good accounts are acquired.

Three Generations: China to Vietnam to America by N.V. (2)

This paper emphasizes my mother's family because my father was unable to tell me much about his family. My family experienced several migrations over generations due to economic and political causes. The migrations go back to my grandparents in China in the early 1900'.

My father did say his family wasn't as rich as my mother's and that my fraternal grandparents were born in Canton, China in the early 1900s and were married through an arranged marriage. Their primary language was Chieu Chau and they didn't own any property. They were farmers and nothing else. My father was born on July 1, 1941, and was the fourth son in the family. He had 9 brothers and sisters, excluding several that died as infants. In the late 1940's, when the communist party came into power, my father's family was forced to leave China and settle in Vietnam. In Vietnam, my grandparents opened their own business, selling home items and candies. My father spent most of his time helping the family's business and going to school, learning Chinese and Vietnamese and some history and math. My fraternal grandfather died in Vietnam in 1981 and my grandmother, the only grandparent I knew, died in the United States in 1993.

My mother said that her side of the family started out rich and gradually became middle class. My maternal great grandfather was wealthy merchant in Bei Xan

Yang, China. He owned cattle, several acres of farmland for rice crops, and many people knew him as "Xi Tai Ye", the fourth greatest man. He had fifteen children, eleven sons and four daughters. With so many in the family, there was no need for servants or maids. Some of the children helped out with the rice plantation and others went to Vietnam to work and sent money home. Females stayed home to care for the plantation, picking crops to be sold into the markets while the men went to Vietnam to start a business and send earnings back home

My maternal grandfather, the youngest in the family, was born on November 2, 1900. He was a twin but both his twin and his mother, my great grandmother, died during the delivery. As a son, my grandfather was educated and followed his older brothers' feet steps. He didn't do any housework or help with the rice plantation. A teacher was hired to teach my grandfather spoken and written Chinese, martial arts, and business techniques.

In 1911, at the age of 11, my grandfather went to Cha On, Vietnam with his second, fifth, and ninth brothers to work. At the time, it was easy to make money in Vietnam. My grandfather and granduncles started out with a typical snack store, selling candies, cake and tea, and seven years later when they had enough money, they started a rice plantation. They harvested the grain and took it to Saigon. My grandfather learned how to speak Vietnamese to communicate with other people.

In 1918, my grandfather returned back to Bei Xan Yang for an arranged marriage. My grandfather didn't have a choice because it was the parents' decision to decide on their children's future husbands or wives. The wedding was huge. Many people were paid to prepare for the wedding, setting up food and decorations for the house. Everybody knew that Xi Tai Ye's youngest son was going to get married, and they gathered around to see. Four men dressed in red clothes carried my grandmother on a red carriage, and the other men carried lanterns with the family's last name written on them. On the way to the rice plantation, the crowd walked through the neighborhood, blowing trumpets while my grandfather rode on a horse that had a red bow tied around his head.

After six months of marriage, my grandfather returned to Vietnam to continue his business. My grandmother wasn't allowed to leave because she was supposed to take care of his parents. She didn't do much labor but conversed with my great grandparents and helped with food preparations on special occasions like Chinese New Year, when the family spent time together, prayed, and welcomed friends over to eat a variety of foods such as roasted pig, duck, and deserts.

During the time when my grandfather was in Vietnam, he was forced to marry to an eighteen year old woman in order to open a bigger business under the

Vietnamese governmental regulations. When my second granduncle came back to tell the family in China that my grandfather was getting married soon, my grandmother, who was pregnant at the time became extremely furious. She decided she to go to Vietnam immediately to see live with my grandfather. Several days after the marriage to the second wife, my grandmother arrived to Cha Om. My grandfather didn't say anything to her nor was he angry with her. My grandmother intended to stay in Vietnam, but she had to return to China to take care of her in-laws. She adopted a male infant and took him with her to China because her daughter died when she was giving birth. Three years later she left her adopted son in China to be educated and reunited permanently with my grandfather in Vietnam, letting other other family members take care of my great grandparents. Between 1922 and the 1940's, she had several children in Vietnam.

In the late 1940's, the family's financial status started to collapse. The communist party led by Mao Tze Tung came to power in China. Poor people who tried to borrow money from the family, and were rejected, went to the communists and said, 'The ____'s plantation in Bei Xan Yang is the wealthiest. The plantation exceeds to several acres. You should take over their property because they don't help poor people like us. They aren't kind or good.' As a result, the communist party confiscated my great grandfather's property, his rice plantation, and valuables. The family was forced out of their home. Some were scared, escaped, committed suicide or were captured to do labor. At the time, my grandfather didn't know what was happening in China. It wasn't until my granduncle, my grandmother's adopted son, took his family to Vietnam some time later that my grandfather heard the devastating news.

My maternal granduncle had intended to come to Vietnam for my grandfather's support but years earlier, starting in 1945, France invaded Vietnam and my grandfather's business had declined. My grandfather ran to Saigon and left his wives and children behind. My grandmother was pregnant with her eleventh child and was depressed that there was nothing left. My mother was born on December 24, 1946 when everything was a mess and there were no hospitals around.

My grandfather's second wife realized that there was no point in staying with the family. She ran away with the jewelry that she had saved up and married another man. My grandmother's sister saw that nobody took care of her sister, nephews and nieces and felt sorry for them, so she decided to take them with her to Vinh Long City in 1951. During the time, my mother lived in a house made out of bamboo leaves and had to carry water home because there was no well near their home. The neighbors had more money than my mother's family, so they didn't want to help our family. Everyone just did their own thing and minded their own businesses.

In 1954, at the age of 8, my mother attended school Unlike earlier generations in China my mother, a female, had an opportunity to become educated. She learned math, history, Mandarin and Vietnamese without paying any tuition fees. My mother said that only poor and good students didn't have to pay for school and were allowed to borrow books. My mother was one of those students. She remembered going to school wearing the school uniform made out of cheap fabric. The richer students' dresses were made out of silk and hers was made out of rough and dull fabric. She attended school from Monday through Saturday. When my mother was in school my grandmother worked as a maid and baby sitter to help provide food and money for the family.

Several years later my grandfather came back and dried tea for people for about 7 to 8 years. In 1965, my grandparents decided to try to sell grounded peanuts, candies and pastries. Since there was no governmental assistance and the children were old enough to work, my aunts, uncles and mother started to work and provided money for their parents. When they saved enough money, the family built a better house with corrugated metal walls and roof.

In 1969, when things were beginning to improve for my mother's family, another tragedy struck during the Vietnam War. It was February 3, 1969, New Years day. People didn't know that something bad was going on because they thought that the gunshots were firecracker sounds. My uncle was visiting at a friend's house near our home in Vinh Long. Bullets were shot into the house, killing my uncle. My maternal grandfather at that time pushed my uncle's body along, while the whole family ran away from the Communists. They ran to the forest where no food was available. After several days my grandfather had to bury my uncle there in the forest

In July 1969, when things had calmed down a little, my mother was heading to school to teach Mandarin. She had to buy a bus ticket, there were three different buses, yellow, red and white. My mother had bought a yellow ticket, but she traded for a red ticket because she said that red was her favorite color. Later the yellow bus came and drove over a bomb. The entire bus blew up, killing about 70 people. She was lucky that she exchanged her ticket for the red,one, or else she could have been killed.

In July 18, 1970, my mother married my father in Chau Doc. The marriage was arranged, my grandmother went to Chau Doc first to see if he would be the "right" son in law. My maternal grandmother care my father was rich or not because it wasn't that important to her anymore. My parents' wedding wasn't very big because my father's family didn't have much money. The elders from my father's side came with 4 trays of wine, tea, cake, and candles to bring my mother to Chau Doc. My father didn't have enough vacation time to come to pick my mother from Vinh Long

himself. He had been serving in the army since in 1963 when he had been drafted by the government. My father went back and forth between the army and home until 1974 when he was discharged because he had several children at home and had bad vision problems.

My mother gave birth to my oldest sister in 1971 and still had to take care of her in-laws. My mother quit teaching Mandarin because she had to cook, clean and wash clothes for my father's entire family. During the time when my mother was living with my father's family, she was mistreated by her mother-in-law and sister-in-laws. She had to dry clothes when she was pregnant and whenever my father tried in any way to comfort my mother, he would get yelled at. My father said that he had to care more for his mother than his wife. Besides this, the family had to speak Chieu Chau more than Vietnamese at home. My fraternal grandmother got furious when any of them spoke Vietnamese because she said that they weren't Vietnamese.

In 1978, Cambodia attacked Chau Doe City. Many people died so my mother decided to let her only son go with my third uncle's family and leave Vietnam. I don't know why my parents chose my brother but my family always cared and loved the males more than the females in the family. My uncle didn't have enough gold to get on the boat so, in exchange for my parents' giving him enough gold, my uncle agreed to take my brother with them. My uncle and his family went illegally on a large boat along with other families who wanted to leave immediately. They ended up in Malaysia.

In 1980, an American family in Ohio sponsored my uncle's family and brother to come to the United States. My uncle's family was on welfare a while until my uncle found work as a chef. My uncle petitioned for our family to come to the United States in 1984. My family was excited but it wasn't until 1985 that we were approved to come. Due to a flood in Chau Doc City, we did not leave until later. On September 2, 1986, we got on an airplane and headed to America. On the way, we stopped in the Philippines to learn to speak and write some English, one of the requirements for us to come to the United States. Finally, May 13, 1987, our family reunited with my uncle's family in San Francisco, California.

When we arrived, my parents could no longer own a medicine store and my mother couldn't teach Mandarin because they needed some certification or licenses to do that and they couldn't speak proper English. We had a hard time adjusting and settling in. Because Vietnam's climate was very warm everyday, we were very cold most of the time, wearing thick coats when it was summer and becoming ill often. My mother said that people looked at us awkwardly because they didn't understand why we wore such heavy clothing. There was a diversity of people which we hadn't encountered in Vietnam. The first thing that came to my parents' minds were how

were they to make a living here and where should they start. Additionally, there were many robberies and crimes. My parents said that in Vietnam, they didn't worry that their neighbors would come into their houses. They would leave their doors open and nothing would be stolen. Everybody living on the same block would recognize each other's family and they would often come over to have chats and dinners together. Now, my parents would never leave our doors open and rarely have conversations with anybody.

When we arrived my uncle helped us to enroll in school work and find a place to live. My parents worked at a Muni Station where my uncle and aunt worked, helping to clean the vehicles. My parents kept the the same job until they retired several years ago. My uncle took my parents to 135 Van Ness to enroll my sisters and I in the public schools. My parents said that they didn't have any worries their children's ability to attend because of financial problems. My sisters and I were able to attend school under any circumstances. Unlike my grandparents and parents, my sisters and I didn't start out learning several languages and we studied more than just history and math.

I was born in Chau Doc in 1981 and came at the age of 6, so when I started first grade in the United States I was scared. I didn't know what to do or where to start. Everybody was so much bigger than I was, and I was afraid that they would beat me up. I sat in the back of the classroom, quietly folding my hands. Nobody wanted to be friends with me except for this one Vietnamese girl, Linda. She was born in the United States and helped me to adjust to the new school, introducing me to her friends and helping me to improve my English speaking skills.

We have lived in several places during the past 14 years. We started in an apartment on Stanyan Street, in 1988 we moved to Cook Street to live next to my uncle. Later, we rented house on Silver Street and in 1996 we settled on Dartmouth Street. The apartment on Stanyan had only two rooms, and we had to accommodate seven people, so three children slept in one room and the other two children had to sleep with my parents in the other room. My mother washed clothes with her hands and the lights were pretty dim. The hallways were narrow and there were many roaches

We moved to Silver Avenue and Dartmouth Streets because my older sisters graduated from college and started working. On Dartmouth Street, my sisters and I share two rooms and my parents had their own room with their own queen sized bed. My sisters became Medical Assistants and worked in the hospitals and doctor's offices. Now I'm trying to get an accounting degree at SFSU. In 1999 two of my sisters bought cars so now the entire family that rode a motorcycle and he wasn't able to bring the whole family along.

Besides moving into different places, our traditional Chinese weddings have changed somewhat. My brother didn't want to have the tea ceremony or have the male side of the family carry trays and a variety of other foods to pick up the bride. Although my brother just went to City Hall to sign his marriage certificate, my sisters tried to follow my parents' footsteps in getting married. In 1999, when my oldest sister married, my mother wanted to have a Chinese traditional wedding. My mother required that my brother-in-law bring roasted pig and twelve trays of a variety of items such as two boxes of tea, a pair of wine and incense. My brother-in-law had to have his side of the family come and take my sister to his family to pray and perform the tea ceremony. His parents also didn't come to see and pick up the bride. When my second sister gets married in November of 2001, my mother wants her to do the same thing as her oldest sister. Unlike my grandmother and mother, who were required to live with their in-laws, my oldest sister, is currently renting a house with her husband and only drops by her husband's family every two weeks.

Our family is gradually changing. My sisters and I are still close but my brother has drifted away from the family, maybe because he left with my uncle when he was five years old. Several years ago, my father was walking up San Bruno Avenue and my brother drove by without even greeting him or asking if he needed a ride. Last year my sister asked him to come to the house for my father's 60th birthday party and he said he might not have the "time" to come. Now he doesn't even call to ask how the family is doing.

Chieu Chau is less spoken in our family after my fraternal grandmother passed away 8 years ago. When she was alive, she would always yell at my sisters, brother and I for speaking Vietnamese. I remember that she would always say, "Xi Ah Nam Qui", meaning dead Vietnamese ghost. She said that we weren't Vietnamese and we should only speak Chieu Chau in the house. My parents still talk to their friends and relatives in Chieu Chau. My oldest sister, Lynn one that speaks Chieu Chau well, the rest of the siblings, including myself, stumble to find the right words. When my sisters and I speak with our relatives, we combine a variety of words in English, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Chieu Chau. Sometimes our relatives give us a blank look because they can't comprehend what we are saying. I never went to school to learn Chinese or Vietnamese but I learned to read and speak Mandarin watching movies and remembering Chinese characters on the TV subtitles.

My mother believes that the most important continuities for my great grandparents, grandparents and her are customs and language. My mother says that even though we changed how we pray on Ching Ming, Lunar New Year, and Moon Festival, we do celebrate and pray on those special days. We just don't have the same varieties of food because my mother said that she has forgotten some of

the foods that were needed on those occasions. She thinks the most important changes are the different places that they settled in because each time they had to learn how to adjust and make a living.

For myself, I'm glad that my family stuck together side by side, and tried to keep our traditions, even the Chieu Chau language. Currently my family and I are speaking Chieu Chau to my five week old nephew, so that he will not forget our family's language. I think the most important changes are how we get married and the way males and females in our family are treated. My parents no longer love my brother more than my sisters and I. My grandparents and parents didn't have a choice about the person they were to marry. In my generation, my parents do not force any of their children to marry anybody. They say that decision should be up to us. We can marry with a White, Black or Mexican person if we prefer because that is our life. Also, in my grandparents' generation, only males were only allowed to go to school and earn a living but later in my parents' generation, females were also allowed to go to school and work.

Searching for a Father by Thao T. Nguyen

Looking at the blurred and smudged picture in my hand, my eyes dimmed with tears and my throat felt constricted without an explanation. I tried to wipe my tears and stretched my eyes to look at the bleary picture. All I could see was a handsome Caucasian man embracing a tiny Vietnamese woman in my photo album. Unfortunately, I was never lucky enough to call him "Daddy."

I sat down and tried to write about my family's immigration experience. I knew why I had come to the United States of America. I immigrated to this country to find my lost father. I immigrated to this country to be accepted as an Amerasian.

To begin the story of my immigration journey, I needed to know my Mother's family history and how she and my father met. So I wanted to ask her about my dad and her relationship with him and it was the hardest thing I have ever done. It was like to opening-up an old wound. Finally, I went to the kitchen, where she spends her time making the best food she can for her kids. She loves to cook. She puts all her mind and energy into cooking, I guess. Only in her early fifty's, her face shows many wretched wrinkles on her forehead. I always wondered if each of those wrinkles held a memory that I could never find out. My mother is not a revealing person and she's never willing to disclose her feelings to anyone, even to me, but I asked her permission to interview her. She hesitated and began her story.

My mother was born and grew up in Cu Chi, a small rural town near Saigon where she lived with her parents and ten other brothers and sisters. They farmed and raised livestock for their living. Cu Chi was described as one of the poorest rural areas in South Vietnam, but the communists claimed it had "Poor land but heroic people." The city of Cu Chi seemed to have no future. War had played a prominent role in this city. Modern conveniences were few and many lives had been lost. Therefore, she decided to move to a small city called Nam Vang, located in Cambodia, at the age of thirteen. A middle-class family took her in and gave her a job as a nanny, looking after the family's children. She lived with this family for seven years.

When she had saved enough money, she left Nam yang and went to Saigon for better opportunities. At that time, she married her first husband through a marriage arranged by her parent. Before she married him, she had never met him. After two years of struggling with her marriage, she decided to divorce him because he was seeing another mistress while she was pregnant. So she went away from that bad marriage and moved to another city, Vung Tau to give birth to my older brother from her first marriage.

I asked her "How did you meet my father? Did he treat you right?" She looked out the window, pondered and said softly "It has been twenty- four years already", then she walked to the dining table and began her story. She told me that my father was an American of German ancestry. He came to South Vietnam in 1968 when the United States government was sending soldiers to protect Vietnam from the communists in Southeast Asia. My dad was a high-ranking officer in the United States Navy. His base was in Vung Tau, a city known as a tourist attraction. Vung Tau is located in the far south of Vietnam surrounded by beaches and coconut trees.

My mom recalled that she met my dad on a hot summer day on the beach in 1968, after which they dated for one year. She told me that during that time, she had to struggle to communicate with my dad in her broken English. They got married after one year of romance and happiness. In the mid-summer of 1972, my mom was pregnant. She described to me that how happy my father was as a first time father. Unfortunately, two months after mom was pregnant daddy was forced to leave Vietnam because the United States government was pulling their troops out of Vietnam. My mom described to me how sad they were the last week that daddy was in Vietnam. She said "Daddy and I could not sleep for the whole week." He wanted my mom to go back with him to America.

My mom explained that because she was the oldest of ten other children, and my grandmother was sick at that time, she could not leave her family behind to immigrate to the new country where she did not have any relatives or friends. "The

last time I saw your father was when he got on the airplane at Saigon Airport," she lowered her voice. I was born seven months after my father left Vietnam. At that time, my mom contacted my father through letters. She promised my dad that one would join him later, when I got older. Unfortunately, on April 30, 1975, the communists took over Vietnam and my family lost contact with my father. My mom said that after the communists took over South Vietnam, people in the country were prohibited from contacting anyone in a foreign country.

From 1975 to 1976, Vietnam was in chaos. She explained to me that during that period, people were afraid that the communists would kill all the Amerasian children, so she shaved my head because I had light brown hair, and she hid me in the house for more than six months. She was terrified to tell anyone about having an Amerasian child.

In 1979, my family and our relatives tried to escape from Vietnam by boat. We paid gold to the boat owner to take us across the sea of Malaysia. During our conversation my mom asked me "Do you still remember me telling you to lie down while the communist coast guard was firing guns at us ? I answered her that I still remembered and I will remember it for the rest of my life. It happened when I was six years old. It was a rainy night when our boat slowly headed toward the open ocean. Unfortunately, we were chased by the communist coast guard. When they saw our boat, they started firing guns at us. Luckily, we were able to get away from them and went back so shore. We then resumed our lives in Vung Tau as normally as possible.

At the age of ten, I attended fifth grade in a Vietnamese public school. My mom' successfully ran a restaurant in downtown Vung Tau. We had a big house not far away from the beach. It was comfortable enough for my family and my youngest Auntie's family to live together. We lived a comfortable life. Because we lived in the city of Vung Tau, electricity and running water weren't a problem. However, I had to struggle with my looks and my identity growing up in a society that discriminated against Amerasian children. As an Amerasian, I was treated differently under the Vietnamese communist government. For example, Amerasians were not allowed to pursue their education in college, because they were restricted to the high school level only. At school, I was teased by classmates. I also was made fun of by the kids on the street. They usually called me "My-Lai" (mixed). Moreover, they intimidated and made racial slurs at all Amerasians, such as "All Amerasians should go back to your country," and "Amerasians are the leftovers from the war," or "unwanted children."

Finally, in 1987, when I had just graduated from middle school in Vietnam, my family received a notice from the government. It stated that we could go to America

under the ODP, which means "Orderly Departure Program," sponsored by the American government for Amerasian children in Vietnam. Before we could go to America, we needed to go through many different kinds of paper processing. First, we went to the tax department to declare that we did not owe any taxes to the communist government. Second, we were required to be interviewed by government workers. Third, we had to go in the hospital in Saigon for a medical examination. The medical procedures would take up to six months to complete. We commuted from Vung Tau to Saigon by bus. It took two to three hours to get there, so we decided to stay in one of my Auntie's house during the medical examination. We had to go through all kinds of tests such as blood tests, lung x-rays, and immunization shots. Needless to say, my mom had to pay under the table either by money or valuables to the workers in the Immigration department to speed up the process. Otherwise, they would delay the paperwork and give us problems. Finally, I went to school to say "good-bye" to my teachers and friends, and withdrew my name from the school records. Before we departed from Vietnam, our relatives and friends held a departure party for us. We finally gathered for the last time. That was the last time I would see my uncles, aunties and friends. Everybody wished us the best future in the foreign country.

We left Vietnam by air on January 1, 1987, and arrived in Bangkok, Thailand. From there, we were sent to a "Transit Camp." I remembered the first English phrase that I saw was "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year," but I had no idea what it meant. We stayed in the camp for a week, sleeping on the floor. We had to share a public bathroom with over a hundred other people. Each morning, we had to go to get in a long line, for our turn.

We then transferred to Bataan Camp in the Philippines. It was a small camp surrounded by mountains. My family was assigned to share a little wooden house with another family. The house was very small and packed with eight people. My family slept on the upper level where we had little room to sleep in. During that time, I went to school to learn the basics of the English language. We went to church on the weekend. Before we could go to America, we had to go through more paperwork and another physical examination. Luckily, we were sponsored by my mom's friend, who lived in San Francisco.

We finally arrived in San Francisco on July 13, 1988. When we stepped off the airplane, we were shocked by the size of the airport and how modern and technological it was. My mom and I struggled to step on the escalator. At that time the weather seemed very cold to me, even though it was in the Summer. From the airport to our sponsor's apartment, I admired how beautiful the city was, especially the many tall commercial buildings in downtown San Francisco. However, we had to

share a small studio apartment with our sponsor for a month. After my family got help from the Social Services Department, we received AFDC. We then rented a small studio apartment on Leavenworth street in the Tenderloin. During that time, we were struggling with the new culture, the language barrier, and many other adjustments.

When the fall began, I took a placement test which determined my educational level at Newcomer High School. My brother went to work as a dishwasher in a restaurant. After three months, his AFDC was cut. My mom went to school at night.

The family lived in fear, and gathered nightly to cry. This ritual was done because we felt out of place and left out of American ways and culture, not to mention the language barrier, and most importantly, the food. My first lunch at school was a burrito and milk, not a common food from my country. I wanted to cry because the food was so hard to eat and it was difficult to adjust to the new school environment. Today, my family slowly adjusts to the American culture. During my years in the United States, I have searched to find my lost father. Unfortunately, there have been no results, but I keep trying. After three years living in the Tenderloin, we moved to a three bed rooms apartment in Richmond, where our lives have been more comfortable. My brother is currently attending Academy of Art majoring in fashion design, my mother works in a restaurant as a helper, and this is my third semester in San Francisco State University.

At the end of the conversation, I asked my mom where she preferred to live. She hesitated, then answered me in a loud clear voice, "America, definitely, don't you think?" I responded quickly with "Yes, of course." She then lowered her voice with "at least the toilets flush!". We looked at each other and laughed out loud. At moment all the wrinkles on her face disappeared and her youth became apparent to me.

On My Immigration by L. Lao

On the 22nd of May, 1994, at eight o'clock in the morning, just before the intense heat of the day could fry and boil the people of Cebu, Philippines, I sit in the Mactan Airport lounge itching my ass off under a very hot wool skirt and blazer suit. The lounge is a huge cavernous place with huge open windows and wooden blinds that try to keep the heat of the day at bay. Across the lounge just adjacent to the windows looking out on the tarmac stands a Santo Niño in his red garments, his brown jolly face granting safe voyage to travelers. May 22nd is a special and exciting day for me and I gladly suffer the itchiness and the hotness of the wool on my skin. On this day we depart Cebu, my home for almost eleven years, for America, most specifically the United States of America and I can feel the proverbial butterflies in my stomach,

though I rather suspect that it's gastric acid that is causing that odd sensation. We are not going to the U.S. for a visit, we are going there to live, hopefully permanently. We are immigrating. Yes, after years of waiting we are finally going to the United States, to adventure, to a new life (I don't know how "new" it will be).

I like my younger sister who sits next to me, who I'd bet is also sweating and itching her ass off under that smaller replica of my suit despite her calm and still figure which contrasted to mine. My mother and my two year old brother, sitting on my grandmother's lap, who came specifically from the U.S. to escort us to the U. S. are excited to go. Who wouldn't be excited to go . Ah! the United States the land where Mickey Mouse lived, where Disneyland, that oh so fabulous wonderland, that I have heard enviously about for almost half my life is located, and where the streets were paved with peppermint candy canes and M&M's chocolate. Well, we are also looking forward to going to the U.S. because that means that we will be closer to my father. You see my father went ahead of US. Three months ago he left for the U.S. so that he could find a job and a place for us to stay when we finally reached there. We really miss him, at least I do. We are a very close knit, nuclear family. We have never been separated from our parents much less , our father who was the bulk, the being, the core of our family. Heck! the man was "The Family". Anyway, like us he also left Mactan Airport in the morning to go to Manila International Airport, which I think they renamed, to catch his flight on Northwest Airline with a ticket which he bought under the "Fly now Pay later" package like us. The "Fly now Pay later" package was a plan designed for people who like us could not pay the entire amount of the trip. Like the name implied, the passenger could make a down payment on the cost of the trip and then later on pay every month the agreed upon installment price until the whole cost was paid in full.

My father's port of entry was Los Angeles with a stop over in Japan, just like the trip we are making. He stayed with my Aunt, his sister who lived in Tucson, Arizona with her family. We had a letter from him recently that said that he was unable to find a job in Arizona and so has moved to California because he had a friend and her family living in Suisun Valley who he could live with while he tried to find a job. Looking for a job, he said in his letter, was hard to do. His friend was not living in the city and like Tucson the local job market was small to nonexistent. He commuted to San Francisco, the city they worked in, with his friend and her husband. It was a three hour drive, waking up at three in the morning to catch the traffic. I think that my father found the commute tiring, drab and too long given that he came from an island where one could cruise around and circle the island in about three hours . Last we had heard my father was living in a hotel at Broadway Street in San Francisco. At least this would put him more closer to a job market and increase his chances in getting a job.

Well after two hours our flight is called. Carrying our excessive carry on luggage, two bags for me, one for my sister and two for my mother, we trudge out to the hot and dusty tarmac, the wool irritating my skin further and sticking to my sweaty body with the brightly sun beating down no help at all. You may wonder why I'm wearing this uncomfortable outfit and am burdened down with heavy luggage. The luggage contained what we term "pasalubong" or gifts a visitor or traveler brings to their host or home. There were embroidered dresses and packets of dried mangoes, our island's delicacies to "gift" our American cousins and my aunt. It's kind of bad manners to arrive empty handed. We girls were "forced" to wear the outfit because we need to look as presentable and as un provincial like as possible. Never mind that the wool and blazers were hot we'd be thankful for it later on when we reach the U.S. because it would be freezing there, or so we heard, our grandmother didn't see any point of contradicting that lie.

The trip from Cebu to Manila is uneventful. I get kind of airsick. The close space of the small plane makes me wish that I was still riding my uncle's jeepney, a kind of passenger truck remnant of those GI army trucks left from W.W.II, with my maternal cousins aunts and uncles. It was a jolly ride, I who am prone to motion sickness as I discovered when we went to Manila for the interview on the boat, was not even sick once. From reading what I've written so far you'd probably wonder why we waited for so long and why I'm so excited and making such a big to do about coming to the U.S. Well, let me tell you why. It's not just anyone who can go to the U.S. to visit, much less live there permanently. In the late 1960's my father applied for a third preference visa reserved for professionals wanting to immigrate to the U.S. The Philippines, especially the city of Cebu, during that time didn't have a place or room job like for young professional college graduates. After being fed myths about the U.S. as the land of milk and honey my father, like a lot of young professionals, wanted to immigrate to the U.S. He figured even if the U.S. did not prove to be the utopia world it is famed to be at least it would have a much bigger job market and better opportunities than the Philippines. His application was put on hold, my mom says it was because of Vietnam war and immigration. I'm sort of confused in this but according to my mother that's why it took so long for us to immigrate. (Editors note: Vietnamese refugees did not take spaces from regular immigrants, more likely in this case the third preference category filled up.) My father lost interest and it was many years later, after three kids and marriage to my mother, that he showed interest in following up on his application. So with that in mind he went to the consulate. Neat and combed, trying to look as good as we could, we went to a local photo shop to have our pictures taken for our files and passport. In the later part of the school year the embassy in Manila called us for our physical and interview and so we had to leave Cebu City to go to Manila. Excited, because this was our (the children) first trip anywhere, we boarded a ship where we shared a cabin full of people. I spent the whole of the trip in the cabin sick as a dog and,

pardon me but, puking my guts out. It was a miserable trip for me. Aside from minor happening in where we thought our younger brother went over board the trip was uneventful.

In Manila we went to the consulate and did some sight seeing. Since we were minors only our parents were interviewed. My mother was impressed. She and my father were interviewed by this very beautiful, statuesque, and impressive Black woman. They were at awe as this was the first time that they had seen a real African American. I think they were kind of shocked to see someone darker than themselves be so Americanize. They were asked if they could speak English which they could as they were both college graduates. They were asked other basic questions like where they lived, what they did for a living, and who could they claim would be responsible for them when they arrived in the U.S. We were given a physical examination to see if we we were healthy enough. After a minor incident in where we were told that the pictures for our passport and files were wrong we were given leave to immigrate.

After landing in Manila Airport we dash madly to the International Airport eight blocks away. Finally we are airborne again and during the night we encounter severe turbulence that sends me puking my guts out and feeling as lousy as ever. After a brief stop in Japan, Tokyo we arrive at the Los Angeles airport for our port of entry. The wool suit is sticking like tape to me now and still as itchy as ever. The day is typical, nice, Southern California weather with blue skies and sun and people around me wearing loose, airy and comfortable clothing which I envy. I see my first "Americans" and they are personified by a Ken and Barbie couple, the woman wearing white shorts is tall with long blond hair, fair complexion wearing sun glasses. The man is taller, tanned, wearing long white pants and polo shirt with dark sun glasses shading his eyes and his thick glossy black hair parted to the side. It is a beautiful, picture perfect, awe inspiring site I'll never forget and probably will never see again. This is America to me. After customs, we board yet another plane and arrived in a place whose warm climate rivals that of the place I just left.

In Arizona I meet my American cousins that I have never seen before until today. They are wearing cool clothes that make me wish I never saw that wool suit. We practice our unpracticed and grade school halting English and stay for three months, then leave for San Francisco to join our much missed and beloved father, making sure this time that we do dress for travel in cool clothes.

My father had found a job with the Newspaper Agency here in the city as a bookkeeper. He said securing this job was a matter of luck. True, he graduated from a much respected University but that was years ago and he is now 37 years of age and hadn't that much of work experience required for a "U.S. job". We live in the

basement of another Filipino family's house. There is only one bedroom for my parents and we, children live in the living room of sorts. My mother takes us to the education center downtown to enroll in school. There we are evaluated to see what class level we would be enrolled. My mother says that a lot depends on this interview and to be nice to the interviewer. The person who interviews me is a plump Chinese lady. My mother said be nice so I always smile at the interviewer and always give her a vacant, yet I think sweet, smile after every answer which forces her to give me a smile back. So the whole interviewed revolves on the two of us smiling inanely at each other the whole time. They promote me one grade level higher than what I was suppose to be and my younger sister being smart two.

My sister and I find school to be easier than the private Catholic schools we attended since forever. All the lessons are a breeze and a repeat of what we have learned before. I hang around Filipino immigrants like me because they were not snobbish like other kids. I speak English to them because I have difficulties in speaking their dialect of Tagalog and they do not understand my dialect. My sister has trouble finding Filipino friends because she couldn't speak, much less understand Tagalog, and she says that the other Filipino kids were snobbish and high in step. The English language barrier is not a problem for us. For me the only language problem I have is the slang. You have to use slang to be at least "acceptable" in this society if you don't want to be ostracized for being a foreigner which even though I am I don't want to be categorized as. I don't know that "bad" was the slang for good and "cool" did not mean not warm or hot but rather in fashion. Then there is the use of "bad language" freely used. I hear a girl call another girl a bitch at first angry and after the name was spoken they laughed. I don't know what bitch means so I use it one evening at the dinner table when the family is eating dinner together, my sister and I were squabbling and I call her that. I will always remember the quiet that descends on the table and my father's angry red face and my disgrace of being ordered from the dinner table after everyone regains their composure and shock.

We stay in the basement for the school year until my parents find a house in the Bernal Heights district for \$600.00 per month well within their budget . Now, I go to another Middle School, Luther Burbank where I do not hang around Filipinos, instead I hang around this red haired girl and two Hispanic girls. I learn how to sneak a smoke, stand back and witness my friends shoplift, spout out more "bad" or curse words, I find out that there are fashionable clothes like Guess and Addidas and there are dorky clothes bought from JC Penny and Mervyns, and I learn the word "Flip". To my friends I was a "Flip" (a derogatory slang for dirty ignorant Filipino) and a "FOB" (Fresh Off the Boat, another derogatory word for an illegal). I try not to be what they call a FOB. and so beg my mother to buy me Guess pants at the exorbitant price of \$55.00 a pair. I lace my sentences with curse words and add

words like cool, bad, man, bitchin, and like to every other word. I also begin to be like my friends in making fun of other Asian and Hispanic kids calling them "wet backs", "flip", "chinamen", "fobs", and started to think and call myself a "Flip" just so I was accepted. After I graduate from Middle School I go to high school and my parents buy their own house, and after my father reprimands me for using the word "flip" and being to be such an uneducated ignorant. I discover the folly of my ways, repent, and change them.

Since we joined my father in San Francisco family life has never been the same. Our parents who we saw everyday, every time and everywhere because my mother was a housewife and my father had his own business in the Philippines, have nine to five jobs. My mother who found work as a receptionist/secretary at a day care center and then becomes a bookkeeper for the California State Diagnostic Center and comes home at five in the evening with my father. The weekends which were always reserved for family outings are now spent either cleaning the house or going to the mall. We do occasionally go out together.

Who would have thought that the adventure for a new life that I so anticipated that one hot morning itching and sweating under that wool suit literally meant a new life?

Parachute Children and International Students by Anon. (3))

I came from Macao as a international student at the end of middle school in July, 1997. This is my fourth year in San Francisco and during these years, I have learned many things about life, the real world and relationships among people with different cultures.

I come from a middle-class Chinese family with parents and an elder sister. My dad is a businessman and my mom is a housewife. Like many families in Macao and Hong Kong, we adapt both the Chinese and Western cultures. I think that Macao is a very unique city because of its former colonial status, it captures the very essence of both the Portuguese and Chinese features, which blend together in a way that makes members of both nationalities feel very comfortable to live in. Not only do we respect our counterpart's culture and life style, we also adapt and exchange. Almost every Portuguese in Macao can speak Cantonese fluently, they eat Chinese food and celebrate all Chinese festivals like we do. Starting when I was young, my parents took me to Portuguese restaurants and museums and I was introduced to their Portuguese friends. Beside the Portuguese, our family also adapts other Western cultures. My parents enrolled me in school that teaches all subjects in English starting in middle school and we watch Hollywood movies all the times. So at at an early age, I was exposed to different cultures besides the Chinese and I

learned the importance of mutual respect and acceptance among people with different origins.

In the last year of middle school in 1997, my parents decided that I should go to San Francisco to study. They made the decision very rapidly because at that time there were suddenly many kidnappings in Macao, which was very unusual for our usually peaceful city. One of the victims was a daughter of my father's friend, so my dad was very worried about my safety. Coming to the U.S. really was not my choice but there seemed to be no alternative. So I came here in July that year.

The most difficult adjustment for me at that time was the new language and school experience. Here in the U. S., I have to speak English in almost all situations, while I only had to speak during classes at school in Macao. Although I was used to be taught in English, I found it very difficult to understand what the teachers and other people said. I found they were talking so fast and with slang that I could not follow. I was also used to listen to British English, which made it even more difficult for me to understand them. Since the high school I went to didn't offer any ESL program or language assistance, I could only overcome the language difficulty by speaking more at school. At home, I would watch and listen to the American channels, instead of the Chinese ones, to order to learn their daily languages.

Moreover, the styles of assignments and school expectations here are also new for me. In Macao, we were expected to memorize all the materials that were taught from word to word. The questions in the tests and exams were directly from the books and we needed to write down every single word we memorized. What's expected here is very different. The assignments here are mostly readings from which I need to reflect on and make connections with the real life. This was a big challenge for me at first since it was all about critical thinking, which I was never trained for. Thus, instead of memorizing passively, I spend a lot of time to do the readings and try think very carefully about the materials. I also started taking notes for all my reading assignments, in this way I convert the readings into my own words, which enables me to understand better and actively "learn" the materials.

Other new types of assignments have also affected my habits and relationship with people. Since I am often assigned to do research projects, I start reading the newspaper and magazines from a variety of fields, this new habit makes me aware of what is happening around the world. In turn makes me concerned about those who are less fortunate than me. Now I donate money, food and clothes to charities each year. On a daily basis, I have got rid of my habit of leaving food behind when I eat, which I had done to since I was young. I believe it is a very important change for me.

The living situation here is another big change. In term of space, the living situation in the U.S. is much better than the one in Macao. Here I live in a much bigger house and have a large room of my own. but in terms of quality the situation here is worse compared to the one I used to have. Living without parents I believe is the most miserable adjustment I have made. I started cooking for myself, doing all the housework and laundry, going to school, markets, banks, and physician visits all by myself on the bus, which I had never done before. Also, food here is usually too heavy, greasy and sweet and what's worse is that I don't really know how to cook, so most of the time, I choose to eat instant noodle and breads, which are things that I seldom eat in Macao. Many daily activities are very inconvenient because of the long distances. Macao is a very small city, I can reach all places by walking or taking a taxi. Here, I have to take more than one bus. I can't take a taxi too often because it is so expensive and places are too far away. Sometime there are places that I can't reach by buses, and I can only wait for my friends to give me a ride, which I feel bad about because its too bothersome for them. I think transportation here is very frustrating and a waste of time.

In spite of the fact that I have made sacrifices, I did gain something from changes in other aspects, like my social life and values. I realize that I became a more easy-going and friendly person. Before I came here, maybe because I was spoiled by my parents, I used to be very proud and self centered. In addition, I was only exposed to "certain class" of people, I would only choose to make friends with them while look down upon those who are in the 'that class". Before, I would only make friends with those who have the same interests and when we gather, we talk about brand names, fashions, who got what, etc. Our family situations allowed us to pursue such things and I was very materialistic at that time. But after I came here, especially after I came to S.F. State, I met more people from different social backgrounds and got to understand them more. Although many people here dress much causally and don't really concern about brand names, I learned that it may be because their family situations do not allow them to or they are simply not interested in it. At the same time, many have to work to support themselves, which makes me ashamed of myself since I have never worked before. They make me realize it is wrong for me to look down upon them as before. Now I feel comfortable making friends with people who aren't concerned about brand names and fashion because we have much more to talk besides those things. They have made me become less materialistic now and place value more value on things that are significant and lasting, like family, friendship, knowledge and health, which I think is the most important change for me

After spending almost 5 years in the U.S., there are something that still remain unchanged inside me. I know that my feeling about my home country has never changed. I still believe Macao is the most unique and best city in this world and it is the only home where I belong. In addition, my attitude toward people from different

cultures has not changed either. Ingrained by the way I was raised, I respect and accept the different cultures that people practice here. San Francisco is like a magnified Macao in term of its cultural makeup and I easily got used to it. Nevertheless, I still prefer to make friends with Chinese and other Asian people, feeling that our life styles and backgrounds are more similar and makes us feel closer and easier to understand. I still talk to my Chinese friends in Chinese because I feel it is so awkward to talk in English while we are all Chinese. Furthermore, now I still watch TV programs, listen to songs and read magazines from Hong Kong and Japan like I did in Macao. They are all important continuities because they relieve my homesickness and give me a sense that I am always a Chinese from Macao.

In exploring the cultural changes after coming to the U.S., I interviewed two other international students to get a broader picture. The first person I interviewed is called Linda. She also came from a Chinese family in Macao with parents and three sisters. Her dad is midlevel government worker and her mom is a housewife. Unlike my family, they have less contact with the Portuguese culture and do not have any Portuguese friends.

Like me, schooling in the U.S. was her family's decision, not her own choice. In the summer 1996, Linda and her parents came to San Francisco for visit. They have a distant family relative here, who was her grandaunt, and they stayed at her house during their visit. At that time, Linda was in the second year of the middle school and was not really doing well. Her grandaunt saw that it was a good time for her to start high school here, which she thought might help her education. She offered to take care of all her expenses and asked her to stay here. Their parents accepted this offer at once. They considered that since her two elder sisters had done so poorly at school and gave up education at a very early age, they could only get some low paid unskilled jobs. They didn't want Linda to end up with the same situation. They believed the U.S. offered a better opportunity both for her education and future. Hence, Linda was literally forced to stay here since then, without any preparation and any sense of what her life would be like.

Compared to me, her experience was more difficult. First, because of her illegal status (she came with a tourist visa), she couldn't go back to Macao during vacations. So she has never gone back to Macao for these seven years. She told me how badly she missed her family and friends at home. In addition, since she was doing so badly at school in Macao, she had a poor academic and English foundation and she found it extremely difficult to deal with the language barrier. She told me that the public school system here was so much looser than the one in Macao, so she cut classes all the time and had no interest in studying at all. She said that unlike Macao, the public schools here gave total freedom for their students and didn't

expect anything from them. Neither did they give much homework or many tests, nor did they force the students to study and get good grades. In adapting to such free and loose education system, she wasted four years in her high school without really learning anything, not to mention overcoming the language difficulties. After she went into college, she found that she was assigned much more homework and readings and she could only get into classes required for graduation after she had passed the remedial ones. She started working very hard in order to catch up. She was amazed by the various kinds of academic assistance provided in the campus, which was absent in Macao. Moreover, she found that teachers here, unlike those in Macao, were very willing to help their students and answer their questions, which made her feel more supported and closer to her teachers. Because of this she became comfortable asking questions and participate more in classes, which she believed was the most significant change in her school experience. This also helped her to overcome the language difficulties and learn a lot more from the courses.

In term of living situation, she also said that having a bigger room here is the only thing she appreciates. On the other hand she felt that technologies here are old fashion and that people do not demand things with better quality. In Macao, the usage of cellular phones had been very common among people for ten years. It was common for every family member to have their own cellular phones and even in middle school at that time we also had our own cell phones. But when she first came here she rarely saw people use cell phones and even when she did their phones were too big and out fashion compared to Macao. She also noticed that various high tech entertainment devices were not common at that time either, which made her think that life was very boring here without such entertainment assessments. Later she found that most people here base their lives less on materials, instead, they like to do something outdoor like go to the parks, go hiking, biking or simply stay at home making some deserts or enjoy gardening when they are free. This is the difference in life styles she sees between people here and in Macao that she still can't appreciate.

She had worked at several restaurant and offices during these years. From those experiences of working with different people, she learned that being patient, considerate and helpful were the most important elements in maintaining a good relationship with others, no matter what cultural backgrounds they are from. Yet, she still prefers to make friends with only Asian for the same reason I have.

Even though Linda has adjusted well in some aspects, she still feels a sense of being "a stranger" here. She can't appreciate and accept many life styles and cultures of the American, even after spending seven years here. She told me she still has a racial prejudice towards the Blacks and Mexicans, that they are very rude and unapproachable. At the same time, what hasn't changed inside her was again her feelings for Macao that it was the only home for her. She wants to leave the U.S. as

soon as she graduates from university. She believes that her feeling for her home country is the most important continuity that makes her feel proud of being a Chinese.

The second foreign student I interviewed is called Diane Kim. She came from a middle-class family in Korea with parents and no other sibling Her dad is a businessman and her mom helps as a secretary in his company. Their family still holds a mild hostility towards the Japanese for its colonization and is reluctant to make any connection with the Japanese. Like many other Korean, they are Christian.

Unlike Linda and myself, Diane chose to come to the U.S. for schooling herself. She was influenced by her aunt who got a BA degree here and told her that the U.S. was a great place for study. So she decided to come to San Francisco for schooling in 1996 and arrived in the following summer as a freshman in high school. At that time, her mind was full of those images that the U.S. was full of fun and a country of freedom and variations.

When she first came here, she was delighted by her new school experience. She said schools here offered many of opportunities for her to develop her own ideas and skills through their teaching methods, types of assignments, and extracurricular activities. This is very different from what happens in Korea, where she was only expected to focus on academics and nothing else. Now, besides studying, she joined the music club, art club, and the basketball team during her high school years. She studies as hard as before, so despite the new type of homework that is assigned, she has been doing very well ever since the first year. In addition, she has gained from her achievements in other activities. Her art works have been highly appreciated and have been exhibited on several occasions, because of her skill, she was accepted by an art school where she continues studying art. She also represented her high school for basketball games for several seasons and was been the sole pianist for all school ceremonies. These changes in school experience are the most important from her point of view.

While being so successful in adjusting the school experience, she has also made a lot of friends and enhanced her social life. Back in Korea, she seldom had any opportunity to contact people from different cultures. After coming here, she meets people from all over the world and is willing to make friends with them, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. She told me that she has African American, Chinese, Taiwanese, Spanish and Caucasian friends. The most important change is that now she also makes friends with Japanese, whom she was hostile to before. Of course, she still makes friends with other Korean. With her friends here, she can do a lot of things that are not allowed in Korea. She goes to parties and pubs, she drinks and

goes out at night. These changes in her social life make her feel the U.S. is a nation of freedom. In spite of this, at home, she still respects and behaves the way that her grandmother expects. She said that adapting to the life style here does not mean she can abandon the values and customs she used to have. She still appreciates the diligence and the more conservative traditions of Korean and she still believes her family is always her priority. This is the most important continuity from her point of view.

Before coming to the U.S., she had taken English courses and studied very hard in order to prepare for the change in language. She picked up the new language pretty quickly. She speaks English in all occasions except at home and with her Korean friends, at those times, she would speak her mother language. At home, she still watches Korean videotapes and listen to Korean songs.

She lives with her grandmother, who has immigrated to the U.S. almost ten years ago. Her grandmother takes care of her everyday life, which she thinks is a blessing in moving to a new place. Moreover, Korean Christian churches here also provide a strong social support that makes her feel easier about her adjustment process. She still goes to the church with her grandmother every Sunday, from which she can feel the strong tie of the Korean community. She claims that Korean here are much more united, that makes her feel secure and warm even though she is away from home. So, overall the living situation here is no worse than the one in Korea

Notes

1. Public Law 101-649
2. Names of persons have been deleted or changed at request of author, title is by the editor.
3. All names have been changed at the request of the author, who prefers to remain anonymous. The title is provided by the editor.

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