

Our Time: more generations



Works from the AsAmSt 223L Asians in the U.S. Spring 2008 class
University of Massachusetts Boston

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Preface

In Spring 2008, a group of students at the University of Massachusetts Boston came together from all different backgrounds and ways of life for a class through the Asian American Studies Program called Asians in the U.S. This class was led and taught by Dr. Peter Kiang with the help of his teaching assistant Jon Iftikar. Many of the students took the class because of interest in the subject matter, to fulfill some humanities requirement, or just because it was a class that fit their schedule, but all of the students finished the class with something more. As one of the students, on behalf of my classmates, I would like to say that we learned the importance of having a voice and sharing the stories of our own voices and the voices of many whose stories have been neglected to be told. Many of these stories have ranged from being about one's family migration to an expression of how she/he feels about what their experience has been living and existing in the United States while identifying themselves as Asian American. In 1992, a different group of students taking the same class, Asians in the U.S, taught by the same professor, Dr. Peter Kiang, had an idea to create a class anthology that compiled all of the stories they had learned during the course of the semester. Our class liked the idea and wanted to do an extension, a new volume of stories that have been told, listened to, and learned from within our own experience of taking this class. We wanted to immortalize the voices that we have heard by gathering them and putting them to print for all to read from this generation and for the many generations to come.

As one of my classmates wrote:

It is the mortar between these stories that holds us together.

It is our history, we must touch it.

– Mary Shia

As we all exist together in this world, very much interconnected, it is our responsibility to listen to one another, learn from one another, and help one another find our voices and use them. Without a voice, without being able to express ourselves, we would not feel as though we can make a difference or can be an influence.

Please take the time to listen to what people have to say with an open heart and a caring ear. Please read these stories with the same.

Hope you enjoy these stories and are able to take away something from them and incorporate it into your own life.

Jane Lee
May 2009

Introduction

Our Time began in 1992-1993 when three advanced undergraduate students, Armindo Goncalves, Saveth Noun, and Richard Lee Sheehan, realized that the voices and stories of their classmates in Asian American Studies courses were powerful and worth sharing in print.

Armindo, a Cape Verdean refugee from Angola who majored in Geography, Saveth, a Philosophy major and refugee from Cambodia (who many years later was able to reclaim his given name of Heng Bun Chheub), and Richard, a local Massachusetts boy who was the second student at UMB to design and complete an individual major in Asian American Studies (following Steve Ward), all graduated in 1993. Before leaving UMB, they produced an anthology of original essays, poems, photographs, and art created by students in their Asian American Studies classes.

Naming their collection, "Our Time," Armindo noted, "We must learn to listen to ourselves before we can begin to listen to others." Saveth further explained, "My goal in producing this Asian anthology is to show that human emotion is the greatest contribution to understanding, peace and harmony in society... For Southeast Asian students, writing is also one of their day-to-day survival strategies to help the healing process." Richard added, "As a person who likes to write, I felt it was important to bring their experiences to paper and into your heart."

Richard then continued at UMB as a graduate student in Special Education, making connections between the empowering pedagogical practice of Asian American Studies courses with immigrant/refugee students and his insights regarding the educational needs of students with learning disabilities. Richard also produced a second, expanded volume of *Our Time* in 1995. A few copies of *Our Time II* are still in circulation.

Roughly 15 years later, a new generation of students in Asian American Studies at UMass Boston experienced similar feelings and motivations. The writings and images in this new volume were generated by students in the Spring 2008 course, *Asians in the U.S.* Initially organized and compiled by Mary Shia, herself an immigrant from Ireland, this new volume includes contributions ranging from international students and immigrants to U.S. veterans and U.S.-born children of those refugees whose stories were gathered in the early 1990s.

Thanks to the efforts of Mary who graduated in 2008, together with 2009 AsAmSt graduates Jane Lee and Frances K. Chow who have brought this new volume to print, this is *Our Time: more generations.*

Peter Kiang
May 2009

Contents

Khalid Abdelmoneim	<i>David Shin: My Karate Sensei</i>	10
Karland Barrett	<i>Migration/Home Stories/Images</i>	12
Jenny Bouasaysy	<i>My Grandparents' Journey</i>	14
Edson B. Bueno	<i>Interview with Langelo</i>	16
Iria Budisantoso	<i>The ABC's of Charlie Chee</i>	18
Chuong Chuigyn	<i>Homeland</i>	20
Vu Dao	<i>The Value of Family</i>	22
Phuc Diem Ho	<i>Hai Tran's Family and Working Life in America</i>	26
Chu Yu Huang	<i>A Time with My Mom</i>	28
Jon Iftikar	<i>Untitled</i>	31
Binh Lam	<i>My Mother and Family's Migration Story</i>	32
Jane Lee	<i>Untitled</i>	34
Phoebe Lehman	<i>Chenda Hou: A Story of Survival</i>	36
Pamela Li	<i>Untitled</i>	40
Harry Lin	<i>Invisible Ink</i>	42
	<i>New Journey, Same Road</i>	43

Alex Lu	<i>Meeting the Monk</i>	46
Lan Nguyen	<i>Interview with Kelly Nguyen</i>	50
Nhu Nguyen	<i>Migration Story</i>	51
VanNhi Nguyen	<i>Asians to America</i>	52
Matthew Seto	<i>Unsung Heroes</i>	58
	<i>Why am I AMERICAN?</i>	71
Mary Shia	<i>Dragon</i>	72
	<i>Glory</i>	73
Sophal Sok	<i>Untitled</i>	75
Shirley Tang	<i>The Yee's Migration to America</i>	76
Noah Teweldebrhan	<i>They Arrived</i>	78
Arum Yoo	<i>All About Mia</i>	79
	<i>Comfort Food</i>	80

Khalid Abdelmoneim

David Shin: My Karate Sensei

David Shin was born in Korea and spent most of his youth there. He came to the U.S. in 1975 when he was 15. David started learning karate from Sensei Joe Hessey. Joe Hessey is famous 1980's Karate Sensei that helped mainstream karate; in addition he was a frequent participant of ABC's wide world of sports.

David attended UMass Amherst in 1979. When he arrived his parents wanted him to get a degree in law or medicine but David instead got a degree in English because he really liked American literature. He sometimes felt uncomfortable training on campus as he would garner strange looks. He quickly got over this. In college David met his future wife Cindy which happened to be the first Caucasian girl he dated. David's parents were not against the relationship but were confused on how to react to the situation. In time David's parents were accepting of their relationship.

During David's last year in college he earned his black-belt. He was very proud when he got it. "Training for my black-belt test made me realize how martial arts had really disciplined me. Training with Hessey and engraining the mentality of no pain no gain had really helped me with my karate and other aspects of life."

David married Cindy after he graduated and now he teaches an American author course in Boston College. He eventually opened his own dojo in Cambridge, Massachusetts and still teaches there today. He says that he is grateful for growing up privileged enough to attend school and not have to worry about much. He is a pacifist and believes that everybody that learns martial arts should be responsible with what they have learned and should only resort to violence as a last means solution.

He encourages people to learn martial arts (not necessarily Karate). And says that martial arts helps people with more than just becoming healthy or learning self defense, “Martial arts can help you with your work, your relationships, and in how you view the world. The discipline one gains is enough for a lifetime. When one practices martial arts one practices the art of “self-control,” David says he will never forget where he came from and visits Korea annually with his wife and kids.

Karland Barrett

Migration/Home Stories/Images

Loc Thien Tran was born on March 22, 1983 in the communist regime controlled country of Vietnam. At the age of 7 (in 1991), Loc along with his parents and little brother left the communist controlled country to move to America.

The reason Loc and his family left, was because they were living in severe poverty with no chance for going up the social ladder. Loc's father had fought on the U.S. side and had served time in jail for his actions, so when he was released he was able to come to the U.S. with the help of a U.S. government subsidy. With no family here to help support them, Loc's family again received support from the U.S. government (i.e. welfare). Even though he was very young when he arrived, Loc would spend the next three years in a bilingual class, which according to him he didn't need. Loc would go on to spend the next 17 years in America without returning to his country of birth. It wasn't until December 2007 that Loc was finally able to return home for the first time.

According to him it was "a culture shock" everyone treated him as if he was an upper class citizen. This I have come to notice is very common in a lot of places, after all America is a first class country, so even those who are at the bottom are sometimes considered better than those in a 2nd or 3rd class country, and to be able to travel from America is a sign of possible wealth. While there Loc saw a lot of despair on the faces of those still living in poverty and rural undeveloped areas. The most Loc remembers about Vietnam before coming to America and then returning again in December 2007 is the landscape i.e. coconut trees and rice fields, water buffalo and also the traditional clothing (Ao Dai) that was worn when he lived in Vietnam.

He was a child at the time he left his Vietnam. He didn't really have any views. But since coming to America and growing up in this culture, Loc has come to realize that he has a very

different ideology and different views and beliefs than those of his parents or what would be considered traditional Vietnamese ideology. Loc has now been a U.S. citizen for over the past 10 years. He received his citizenship through his parents who had already applied and received their citizenship years before.

When I asked him where he would consider his home to be, he responded “I’m a confused kid. In Vietnam the word “home” means “Que” which refers to the place where you are born not where you live and will live. So to me the term home is not quite clear.” While Loc remains to be confused about where his home really is he does say he enjoys living in America and would like to remain living in the U.S. but to be able to travel back and forth once in a while. Currently Loc is studying International Management with plans to work in Vietnam or China in later years. Using the ideology and definition of home that Loc uses I would also be confused as my home would be Mandeville, Jamaica however I have lived the majority of my life in America and only visited Jamaica a few times in the last 8 yrs so I would not consider it my home. However I do consider myself more American at times than I do Jamaican.



Jenny Bouasaysy

My Grandparents' Journey

In 1977 my grandparents along with their 7 out of 12 children spent 2 years in an Oubon refugee camp in Thailand. The other 5 children decided to stay in Laos because most of them were married. In 1979 my grandparents were sponsored by a church to come to the U.S.

When I asked my grandmother what she misses back home she said she misses her whole lifestyle back there, her home, and most of all her kids. She said she's always wondering what they're doing or eating everyday. Before she came to the U.S. she pictured it to a beautiful "rich country." When she went back to visit for a year she said everyone expected her to build them a new house or buy them a car. She said everyone assumed that she was "rich" because she was from the U.S.

She loved the feeling of being back in her homeland but she said it also felt good to be back in the U.S. because there's nothing there for her anymore besides farming in the rice fields. She has a huge garden in the backyard and sometimes it seems like she goes on a planting frenzy to make her feel like she's still back in Laos.

When I asked her what "home" meant she said that Laos was her home because that's where she was born and raised. She also mentioned how her house in Laos was hand built by her parents which makes it more meaningful to her. However, she said that the U.S. is her new home now but she'll never forget her homeland.



This is a family portrait of my grandparents, mother, aunt (missing another aunt), and uncles when they arrived in the U.S. in 1979 after being sponsored by a church in Newton, Massachusetts.

Edson B. Bueno

Interview with Langelo



Experience in Asia:

Langelo was born in Vietnam to a family that was relatively well off. His family is of Chinese descent from Canton province. His family fled Vietnam during a shift in the government because they feared that their wealth would be taken.

During 1980s, when he was seven, his family fled by boat to Malaysia to a refugee camp there. After one year they were sponsored by the American government to relocate to Boston. He came to Boston when he was eight years old. He does not have lots of memory of Vietnam except he does recall seeing a cock fight. One sibling went back to Vietnam to visit their sickly grandparent.

Experience in America:

He lived and grew up in Boston. He had no preconceived notion of America and was both excited and scary the same time. He

recalls how everything (material) was so new. New cars he had never seen before. Growing up he was beaten by other kids because of his English and can recall many racially discriminating encounters. Vietnamese and Chinese students discriminated against him because his English was not to par with theirs. He felt he was not as American as the other Asians.

Life at Home:

He was sheltered from what the world had to offer (not just in the U.S.) and his parent pushed him to study to get a good job. His brother passed away and after that he went through a dark phase. To help him recover he wrote his story.

Travels:

He studied mechanical engineering at Northeastern University and after graduation he spent two and a half months backpacking in Europe. He visited several countries: Spain, Rome, Germany, Czech Republic, and England. The art in Rome inspired him to paint and to continue to write.

Asia:

He was discriminated against because of his dark completion and accent. He traveled to Japan, Hong Kong and Korea. In Hong Kong, he was labeled a Filipino laborer because of his dark completion. He spoke Cantonese with an American accent, and he was looked down upon. After the trip, he felt he was not Asian enough. He came back to work as mechanical engineer. He did not like engineering so he followed his dreams and opened a café in North End called Flamepoeira. It is the fusion of Capoeira and Flamenco.

Words to share with the class:

“Smile more often and pursue your heart.”

Iria Budisantoso

The ABC's of Charlie Chee

I met Charlie Chee through Alex, another international exchange student from Montréal. They were roommates in the International Fellowship House in Boston. Charlie is actually from Hangzhou, China, and has come to the U.S. to study Economics at UMass Boston. Currently, he is in his second semester.

Charlie became a tiny bit sentimental when talking about his family. He misses his family. As he is an only child, he misses his parents the most but also the extended family like his grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts. He also misses the food very much. He can adjust to the American food, but it is not as tasty! So, he cooks a lot for himself and his roommates. (In China he actually never cooked – his parents told him to concentrate on his studies and took over these kinds of chores). Shortly before his departure, he learned how to cook – a bit. He said that he has a natural talent to be a good cook - that is why it has worked quite well for him.

Charlie decided for himself that he wanted to go to the U.S. to study Economics. He had made up his mind and thinks that the U.S. system is the most mature system with regard to the free market economy. Thus, it made much sense to come to this country to learn and study the subject of “Economics.”

Before coming to the U.S., many Chinese friends called him an ABC (American born Chinese). Contrary to his Chinese peers, Charlie was curious and had the wish to move to an English speaking country. Many of his friends had never wanted to go abroad. His curiosity in going to a foreign country and taking on new challenges were due to Charlie's father's education. He taught him a lot, influenced and inspired Charlie. Having been himself a successful businessman, Charlie's father changed his profession several times during his career. (Currently he is working in real estate.) He told Charlie not to be scared by the world. One of his principles he passed on to his son is: the duty to prove one's value

for the society, which implies that one should not only strive for security and end up becoming bored by life in the long run.

His parents' education shaped Charlie quite a lot. He described his parents as being more western-oriented. They have had a more open-minded and liberal view than other parents. Also, they were more democratic in their educational approach and e.g. never beat or slapped Charlie, which is different from his friends' experiences.

Through his out-going personality, Charlie has no problem fitting into his American environment. He likes net-working and has already made a lot of friends here. Also, he noticed that he has become more mature, as he has to control his own life and be more self-reliant and self-dependent. Still, sometimes he wants to go back, especially for his parents' cooked food. But he has noticed that in general, his perspectives have changed.

Before coming to the U.S., Charlie had thought that America was a big, strong country that is quite advanced. But he had also heard about racism in the U.S. and his parents were concerned about these kinds of risks and dangers. From his perspective now, Charlie told me that he likes it here and thinks that he fits in very well. His friends in the U.S. are acting themselves, which is quite different from his Chinese peers from home. They used to switch back and forth between their different social roles to their home role. Also, he thinks that people back home judge a lot more, as the Chinese culture is more traditional. Charlie felt that it was more difficult to branch out. It was only possible to socialize within small communities (e.g. in a big high school) where a lot of gossip was going on. His experience of people in the U.S. is that they are more liberal and respect each other lifestyle choice more. He feels like you can be more yourself here. Thus, Charlie thinks about applying for an American citizenship when the time is right.

For him, home constitutes his parents and his extended family. On the other hand, he feels that home can be changed. He says: "Home is where you can have the sense of belonging." As he does not really know yet, he will see whether China or the U.S. will be his home.

Chuong Chuigyn

Homeland



The beautiful nature scenery of home back in Vietnam lingers in my mother's mind every time there is a Vietnamese commercial about Vietnam tourist sites. Before coming to America, my mother was a school teacher, a well educated person who would not stay at home because she thinks that it would deteriorate her knowledge. All that changes when she came to America. Due to language barrier and new environment, she stayed home taking care of her kids. Soon she just kept staying at home looking after her kids and telling them to do well in school. For that reason she sacrificed her desire for education in order to make her kids' lives better and feeling more like home.

My mother came to America due to the program called HO. It enable those who allied with the U.S. or working under the jurisdiction of the U.S. during the Vietnam War to come to America. My father was a commander of some sort of a platoon and was arrested and imprison for 10 years. Due to my father imprisonment, our family was able to come to America under the program of HO. My mother never did want to leave Vietnam, her homeland, the land she grew up from but due to the communists she left for America. The reason why she came to America is because she wanted her kids to have better education and the opportunity to do so because under the communist regime those who parents serve for the U.S army or ally with them will not have the benefit of getting a higher education. So she decided to come to America, the land in which everyone considered the land of freedom, the land in which people all over the world dreamed of coming to.

All that changes when she came to America, the view she once held did not exactly match with what she had in mind. It is

not as easy as everyone had told her about, what's true is that America is the land of freedom, the rights to do/say/or believe in anything you want. She felt that this is not a place for her because she doesn't feel like she belongs in America. That's how she views it at first, but as time progressed she has felt differently about America. She said "Although America is the land of the free, you have to get a higher education in order for people to respect you," I believe her words are true. Even though America is a new land to her, the thought of having a better education always stays in her mind and she internalizes that idea to her kids. She places her dreams on her kids for a better life in America and also thinks that America is where her kids are going to shine. She sacrificed her life, her whole identity, back in Vietnam in order to better her kids' lives.

For her she said "home" is where she feels comfortable in. The reason why she goes back to Vietnam is because she wanted to see her mother and relatives back home. Especially because her mother is sick, beside that, she wouldn't really be back. For me, she told me "You got nothing back home; because most of your childhood life is in America plus you were so young when you came to America you wouldn't remember anyone." She came to America and sacrificed her life to better her kids' lives. For that reason she sacrificed her desire for education in order to make her kids' lives better and feeling more like home.



Vu Dao

The Value of Family

The Vietnam War ended almost 33 years ago, but the wounds from the war still remains. April 30th 1975 is a victory day for the North or Viet Cong, whereas that day is the anniversary of the death of thousands of South Vietnamese. Today we still heard about the Vietnam War in the media through radio, television, newspaper, music, etc. This topic is never obsolete. The Vietnam War is like a ghost that many Americans shudder to think about. Many historians, Vietnamese Americans and others try to find out what happened during the Vietnam War and the reason for the loss of South Vietnam. But there is not one answer.

I had a chance to interview a military veteran whose name is Bach Deo. He is Vietnamese American and a Vietnam War veteran. Today he lives in Dorchester, Massachusetts. In 1961, when he was 21 year old, he joined in U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam. His mission was go to North Vietnam and create bases for the US army. During a mission in 1963 the Viet Cong captured him and put him in prison for 23 years, he was a prisoner of war until his release in 1986. In 1993, he came to the United States with his wife and left behind his country and his two daughters. The only things he brought with him were his broken past, his trauma, his nightmares, his 23 years in prison, and the loss and separation from his family. Fifteen years have passed since Mr. Deo arrived in the US and he has never returned to Vietnam for a visit. I ask him why he has not gone back to Vietnam for a visit and he told me "I miss my country and my daughters and I don't want to go back to a place that can give me nightmare everyday. When I escaped from communism and I don't want to have any connection with it again. Enough is enough." He continued our conversation in tears. "I joined the army when my first daughter was one year old and my second daughter was three months old, they were too young to remember who their father was. I was in prison for 23 years

and seven years later I left them again for the US. I don't know when I will have a chance to see them again. I do consider myself the worst of fathers. I did not have a chance to take care of them in the past, and now I still don't have the chance to make it up to them. I'm dreaming about the day that I can hug my daughters and my nieces in my arm, however, I think that will be my dream until the day I die." Mr. Deo is one of thousands of cases of war trauma. He connects to the theme of Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement, and when he came to the United States he had to struggle himself with his family relations. The years that he could not take care of his daughters when they were growing up he always struggle and worries about. Mr. Deo is a first generation Vietnamese American. His concept about family is completely different with the second person I interviewed.

I interviewed my boss; his name is Qui Quang Nguyen. He is a thirty-six year old dentist. In 1991 at nine years old, he came to the United States. He was one of the boat people who left Vietnam. He was born in 1972 when the Vietnam War was close to the end. He is 1.5 generation Vietnamese American. He is considered as a successful person in this country and in Vietnam. The reason I wanted to interview him was that I wanted to compare him with Mr. Deo's experience. Dr. Nguyen wants to go back to Vietnam because his parents are living in Vietnam and they do not want to come to the United States to live. Dr. Nguyen always wants to go back to Vietnam to take care of his parents. He told me "It does not make any sense when I can't live near my parents when they are getting old. When the night falls I miss my parents so much, I miss a meal my mother always cook for me and I worry for my father's health. At night it's scary when I hear my home phone ring. I worry that will be the worst news

from Vietnam that something has happened with my parents.” He continued “Everyone looks at me as a successful person, wealthy, having the American Dream. But I can’t lie to myself, I see myself as a loser. I am not able to convince my parents to come here to live with me, and I can’t leave everything here to come back to Vietnam to live near my parents. I’m a loser.”

Here I can see that Dr. Nguyen is struggling between his career and family. He said that “It’s not right, in Vietnamese culture children have to take good care of their parents when they get old, that is their highest priority, and I’m failing that mission.” Culture, responsibility, family, and career are all making Dr. Nguyen struggle with himself. This is a problem that Asian American have to face. In the conclusion, I realize that no matter what generation, first generation or 1.5 generation, Vietnamese American specifically, and Asian American in general are still struggling between culture, responsibility, and career. They may come from different backgrounds, but they still have the same issues in America.



Phuc Diem Ho

Hai Tran's Family and Working Life in American





Chu Yu Huang

A Time with My Mom

My Mom, Li Fang Li

Do you have a specific lasting memory of your homeland and or something that you miss?

What I miss the most is my family in my homeland. I am the only one in my family that is living in the US. It is an everlasting memory that follows me every time I go back to visit and leave them all to come back to the US.

What did you see in American when you first came that was similarity or difference from what you image about the US before coming and what was your reality in the US after arriving?

Before arriving in the US, I imagined that America was a very modernized and beautiful dreamland. I believed that it was a rich land, with opportunities for everyone, making it easy to achieve the “American Dream.” However, once I arrived, it was the opposite of what I thought it would be. The roads are not very clean. Even still, US is still better than China.

Can you give me a specific example of how you have changed since being here?

I have become a stronger person. My experience in the US has been really tough and I have learned from my mistakes with support from my friends.

What does “home” mean to you?

Home means family. No matter where you are and as long as you have your family, then that is where home is.



Jon Iftikar

Untitled

I check the Asian American/Pacific Islander box, but I never feel that I fit completely and neatly in that box. Always afraid someone will see and accuse. “You don’t belong here.”

So parts of me seep out and dribble down the page into that notoriously ambiguous category dubbed “Other.” But even “Other” won’t suffice, for the blank space stares up at me. A skeptical face on a blank space. “You don’t belong here.”

The product of an Asian Indian father and a Japanese mother, on paper I’m Asian American. So in the ancient mingling of continents, India latched on to Asia, and Japan settled nearby. But I’m a goateed Mexican in the eyes of my race.

So I continue on past that box. Down the page. Till I escape off the edge. Fed up with boxes.

Binh Lam

My Mother and Family's Migration Story

My mother married my father when she was eighteen years old. At that time my father was a young captain in the South Vietnamese Army fighting against the communist North Vietnamese. When my mother was twenty she had my oldest sister Khue. Later my parents had a boy named Khang who was my older brother. Khang was always sick and eventually passed away when he was a baby.

After the war ended and the South lost, my family went into hiding. The new government of Vietnam announced to all the veterans of the South Vietnamese Army that they can have a chance to rejoin society if they were willing to reeducate themselves under the new system. My father came out of hiding to start over his life but instead he was detained in a reeducation camp. My mother was twenty-four when my father was incarcerated.

My mother and sister would prepare for months in advance for a weeks journey just to see my father for one day. My father said that in the beginning when they called names of who was going to be released, he was hopeful and came out to see if his name was called. After five years of doing this he gave up hope and did not bother to go and listen for his name. He said that if they were to release him then they would come get him.

My father was released after ten years of being imprisoned. My parents and sister escaped out of Vietnam into Cambodia but were tricked out of their money and were stuck there. My family convinced some people there to take my mother and sister with them to Thailand and that my father would pay them back later. My father returned to Vietnam to borrow money from relatives while my mother and sister went first to Thailand.

My father returned to Cambodia to pay the people who helped my mother and sister. Then he traveled to Thailand to look for them. In the meantime my mother had found people who took her to a refugee camp in the Philippines. While they were in the refugee camp my mother had a second daughter named Son Ca. My mother and sisters were eventually able to leave the refugee camp and come to the United States. My father came shortly after them and I was born in 1989.

Jane Lee

Untitled

My Grandfather

Uncles

Grandmother

Father

Mother

They came from China
In hopes of more.

It started with them,
With them
Came us.

As us we must

Live to honor

Live the life they sacrificed

Live honorably,

For they sacrificed for us

To live a life to be more

More than

We thought we could be

Were allowed to be

The way they knew we would be

With hard work and perseverance.

With them lies a story,

A voice to be heard,

A story to be told,

A voice of a dream,

A story of hope,

A voice of wanting more

Deserving more

With them,
Came us
To be the voice.

Be the voice,
Find their stories,
Tell their stories,
Before the moment passes,
The opportunity gone
And the voice is lost forever
And we're left here
To guess.
To live a life of honor,
In honor of them
I hope

In loving memory of

Iu Hsiang Yen
July 5, 2007

and

Kum Sun Lee
October 13, 2007



My parents when they first got married in China
Wan Chang Gong Lee and Kum Sun Lee

Phoebe Lehman

Chenda Hou: A Story of Survival

I arrived in the United States, in 1981, that was 27 years ago when I was 8 years old. I am now 36 years old.

Why did you come to America?

To survive the tyrant Pol Pot's bloody "Year Zero" ethnic cleansing campaign, that took two million innocent lives. Before you read any further, I'm not sure if you know that the Khmer Rouge régime is of the past, it ended in 1998. today civilians are free to live, breath, laugh, and enjoy our homeland and nature's beauty without the fear of bloody tyrants and assassins either torturing or toying with you just for the fun of it (no other reason), just because they need some form of entertainment to fill that momentary boredom – senseless? Right!

After the Khmer Rouge was driven from power in 1979, they continued to fight a guerrilla war that unraveled only a decade ago. It ended with a tacit agreement to let several of the former leaders live quietly in the country.

We came to America to escape the anguish of a country's history and the chaos and crisis through it all, and one man's will to live for his three kids. My mom past away when I was an infant, because she had medical complications and my dad was in the battle fields and could not help her. My brothers and I were all in separate orphanage houses for a year and a half and my father managed to find and reunite all of us. He did what he had to do to get us to America.

What specific lasting memory of your homeland or something you miss a lot?

I think I can remember back to when I was 5 years old and until we got sponsored into America in 1981 I was struggling to survive the horror of the refugee camp. It's nothing to miss, it's an experience I want to forget and pretend I never knew of such experiences. The Khmer Rouge fighters took control of the refugee camp that I was at. The camp houses an estimated 200,000 refugees. It was controlled by the Khmer Serei rebel.

Can you give me a specific example of how you have changed since being here?

People say "It's your past that makes you the person you are today." Now I stand strong, proud, and determined to get through any and all curve balls life wants to throw at me!

What does "home" mean to you?

"Home" means more than just security, warmth, and shelter. My home is a part of me, my pride, my self esteem and my family and friends. Home gives me a sense of certainty, of belonging, of independence, but most of all it gives me a sense of identity. Without it, I am lost.

How has the reality of the U.S. been different from what you experienced or expected when you arrived?

I was 8 years old. I did not know a word of English. I didn't even know when to answer yes or no. I was enrolled in 3rd grade in a school in downtown Rochester, NY. Back in the early 80's prejudice and racism was at it's height in Rochester, NY especially between Black American and Asians. I was seasoned from the refugee camp. I had tough skin to start with. I ended up in the principles office once or twice a month for fighting and hurting other students. Once again, I find myself fighting with my fist just to survive the situation at hand.

Any other nostalgic, sentimental, important, funny, sad, ANYTHING interesting, little stories you can tell me that illustrates something important about your experience?

I lived in Rochester, NY for 16 years. I also lived in Providence RI, San Diego, CA and now live in Lowell, MA. I went to Nazareth College of Rochester. As the years go by it was like second nature to deal with the prejudice and racist remarks and naturally I learned to fight with my head and not my fist. I was an honor student and I still believe I should have been the valedictorian (I still believe prejudice had a play in it). I was in the yearly "Who's Who amongst American High School Students" publication. I was president of the junior class and senior class and since my last name is "Hou" in my year book, friends would write "Hou's the leader" I was voted most likely to succeed.

I had the privilege to travel the States and the World a bit for work. I was a banquet manager and a professional trainer. I was a sales analyst, compliance specialist, and contracts manager. Last year I went to visit my country for one month. It was an exhilarating visit but than again it still has remnants of the genocide and the Killing Fields.

Now I am a successful career woman and a single mom. I'm happy and proud I've made it this far and done this well for myself despite life's challenges and struggles. I just really appreciated the fact that I made it to the United States alive and free from a communist country. My father told me to really take advantage of this opportunity we are given and make the best of the rest of our lives here. I took that to heart and I am making my father proud.

Pamela Li

Untitled

After the Wednesday when we went to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, I wanted to learn more about it or least talk to someone who had went through it all. I remembered that my friend told me that her dad was going to the ceremony for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that day. So I decided to interview my friend's dad who witnessed it all and fought through it. He only knew a little English so it was a little tough cause of the language barrier but my friend was able to translate everything for me.

During this interview there were moments that were a little sad. For example, right after he got married to his wife, the war broke lose. As the war progressed, he had to leave his newly wedded wife behind to go fight in the war. He was gone for many years but he wrote a few letters to her, telling her not to worry. In reality he was really suffering through a depression. He missed everything he once loved and he felt so alone.

Even though they were not been married for very long, there was a strong bond between them so it made her wait for his day to return. After the war ended, he was not able to return home just yet. Since the south had lost the war, the north created "reeducation camps" for those who were against them. He was there for 8 long years before he was able to finally return to his wife. He stayed at home for 4 years coming up with a plan to flee the country. He and his wife had gotten separated when they were trying to flee. She was captured and was put in jail for two long years. By himself, he ran to the Philippines by foot, boat and cars. When he got there, he tried to find job to start a new life but it was hard.

When his wife finally got out of jail, she ran to Philippines and they finally reunited again but it didn't last very long. He knew his wife was a couple of weeks pregnant and he wanted a good life for his children. He decided to come to America and live with his family members while he tried to find a job. With success, he was able to find one that pays very well to start his new life. After a year, he was able to reunite with his wife and his daughter (my friend) in America.

Every Year after the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial was built, he would participate in the ceremony they had. He wanted to give his respects to those who helped fight in the war. The ceremony is always held on April 30th because on April 30, 1975 the north took over South Vietnam. They would have "the freedom flag" as known as the South Vietnam's flag, to remember the freedom they fought for. I thought it was really nice how we were able to go on the same day to pay our respects for those who died during the war.

Harry Lin

Invisible Ink

“Born into this society, brought up thinking I can become whatever I desired only to find out there is a limit in my potential. Excelled in elementary and middle school, then reality hits me. Friends I have associated with since childhood are now gone and I’m alone in a new desolate world not knowing what to expect.

All the noises, images, and the scents of high school overwhelmed me and made me feel like an outcast. My established label—“invisible.” Whatever I did or said, no one ever noticed. My presence was never acknowledged. Being me did not help the situation and as time went on, paranoia got the best of me.

Looking inside from outside the box, I witnessed a generation that was succumbing to the conformation of modern society where booze, drugs, sex, ass-licking, and status were more esteemed than individual growth, desire for change, and knowledge.

I saw a generation of brain-dead zombies that were constantly feeding off of the bullshit the current media dished out. I did not want to be part of the social-norm. I wanted to be different and achieve things my way using unconventional methods.

I desired one thing and that was to slap the current society silly and make them realize that change is coming and we as a whole need to guide, mold, and nurture it so the world can become a better place for our next generation to come.

In this society, government and laws are put in place to restrain us from exploding out of our nutshell that we have been encased into; we are the invisible ink that needs to unite to make a mark in history so we will be remembered one day.

Harry Lin

New Journey, Same Road

After hearing stories from others around town about how great America was and the opportunities it offered, my mom was sold to immigrate to America. When she got married on April 21, 1983 in China, her husband immigrated to America first and she landed in America in March 27, 1984.

Upon arrival to the USA, she was somewhat disappointed in comparison to what she saw in movies portraying America. Before coming, she thought America possessed advanced technologies and a beautiful city with nice people, but what she saw was Blacks, loud boom boxes, streets littered with trash and dog feces. Before boarding and leaving for America, images that were running through her head at that time were friends and family. She had mixed emotions of anxiousness, sadness, uncertainty, and happiness. After a couple of weeks in the USA, she already missed her friends and family back home because it was real hard to make friends in an already established society with cliques.

She wasn't a big fan of the American diet. She misses the food back home. The biggest challenges for her were working full-time, going to night school, cooking and cleaning for 15 family members, and raising two kids all at the same time. After arriving in the USA, she wasn't really on good terms with her husband's side of the family and there were constant arguments about chores and money. She told me that she had no one to count on especially those she thought were her family were not even helping her out much or at all. My brother and I were her joys after a hard day of work. She told me if it wasn't for my brother and I she wouldn't be where she is today.

She went back to China in 1990 and after stepping out onto China, everything seemed foreign to her. The industrial revolution had already begun. Roads that she was familiar with

were either changed, under construction or totally demolished. Buildings that she knew were no longer there. To my mom, home meant America. This was where a new chapter of her life began, the trials and tribulations she had to overcome to get to where she is today truly showed her character at times of adversity. This was where it all started for her, a husband, kids, family, and a career. All other options were lost when she made the decision to start a new life in America. She wanted to be successful and be somebody in life. She felt comfortable in China, but she knew in order to become successful, you had to be uncomfortable.

“Overcoming the language barrier was extremely difficult. After coming to America, you have to start all over again at any age. No one to count on, no families to help me out. A new chapter of my life began, kids, work, no absolute fun at all. Back in China, we would get water from the wells and we did a lot of things outside of the house. In the USA, everything is done within the household even bathrooms are private and not in public places. Everything changed when I went back to China. The roads, houses, commercial buildings, shopping malls...everything seemed so distant. The country was undergoing an industrial revolution and nothing was the same. I had to count on relatives in my own homeland where I grew up.” Home now is here in the US. Family was formed in the US. China would be an external home because when she made the decision to start a family here in the US that was when she defined home as the US and not China (external home).

“In China, even after graduating from high school it was very hard to find a job since we grew up in the farmlands. After residing in the countryside for most of our lives, we can't really find a job that we want. The government assigned jobs to us, we didn't have a choice because of communism. I don't like nor do I hate communism; we were caught in the revolution, so students that graduated in that era, never got the chance to go to college to pursue their desires.”



Meeting the Monk



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I found myself lucky to be able to interview a head monk of the Thousand Buddha temple in Quincy. His name is Ven Dr. Dhammadipa, Fa Yao in Chinese. He was

born in 1966 in Taiwan and grew up in Malaysia. Growing up in Malaysia, he attended school daily up until high school which was all government paid, like in America. Coming from a rich family himself, he was able to explore different regions of the world. As a child, Ven never thought his life would curve towards Buddha. He always wanted to travel and perhaps become a journalist, but nonetheless, around his 20's he picked up an interest in Buddhism and religious studies to become a monk. To become a monk, he explained that he had to stay and live in the temple for a month, do various training of discipline for two years, and remember all 227 rules of a monk by heart. Becoming a monk was a big deal for Ven's family: "my parents initially felt like this career path wasn't going to be that good for me, but eventually they were stuck with the fact that I am a grown man with independent desires, and they respected that. As long as I was happy with my life, they were fine with my choice."

With the wealth from his family and his interest in traveling, Ven was able to study in Europe. While there he gained a PhD in theology and religious studies. Eventually, he moved on to the origin of Buddhism in Indonesia and spent time there meditating and training with the monks there. As his training finishes he decides to come to America because of the diversity. He wanted to see the different perspectives and religious activities that America has to offer.



There are three popular main Chinese temples in Massachusetts, and the one Ven chooses to participate in is 1000 Buddha Temple, discovered 19 years ago by a Nun from Hong Kong. Ven's opinion of being a monk himself is that "it's a long process, a lot of time to find peace within yourself." Being a monk and having to wear the attire or uniform a good amount of his daily life, he feels that the "uniform being worn at home I don't have problem with, but when outside yes some people do stare and give me weird looks. It feels very awkward sometimes and I try not to raise any conflict, but I try to be very cautious because sometimes I do get angry and want to say something, but then as my religion, being Buddhist, I shall restrain my anger."



Even with so many years of training to become a peaceful person racism and discrimination still creates anger. In fact, Ven believes that "France, India, Europe don't have much Racial Discrimination as opposed to America" Ven

was explaining that one time he was on the plane with this guy who was a strong believer of Christianity. "All through the ride he was asking me questions on why I believe in Buddha and not Jesus, and being very rude and blunt about all his questions." His goal was trying to convince him that Christianity was the best religion and that he should believe in Jesus. "I feel that all religions are good for everyone in general, depending on the person. As for Christianity in my own view I feel that they are very phonetic and oppressive because they think that they are the only religion that is right". Being a man traveling all over the world he has become a very open minded person who thinks diversity is a good key in society. As a matter of fact he would like to see more multiracial monks in the temple. "Too bad ignorance has a strong hold in people's mind. I have witnessed people breaking into the temple

trying to steal and vandalize the place.” But even so there are a lot of people willing to learn and accept Buddhism. “I have seen a lot of young Caucasians come to the temple seeking for answer to their confusion and now they look at life differently, meditation allows you to think in a wider view.”

With Ven, being in this religion and a part of this temple he thinks that he can really help the surroundings, especially with the less fortunate here in America and people in Asia. In the temple there are a lot of donation boxes that are used for charity towards helping the less fortunate and clean up the temple. Also there is a small store in the temple as well, filled with charm bracelets, necklaces, and statues to be sold also being used for charity and renovations to make the temple into a better setting.



Regardless of being a strong believer of Buddhism and being a monk, Ven is married and “have a life just like everyone else the only difference is that I spend a good amount of my time in the temple and meditating.” He plays the piano, read books, and have conference meetings just like every one of us. Although no matter how busy his social life gets, he always find at least an hour and half to meditate. Ven eats meat on the occasion, “not often I only eat meat when I need it for my health. Majority of the time I eat vegetables, grain and fruits. I never eat meat in the temple. Chinese Buddhism does not encourage killing of animals for our own needs.” Some rituals that Ven has to do is, the obvious meditation daily, Chants, prayers, blessings for comforting others, and every half a month he has to do a confession. The main goal for a monk is to reach a state of Nirvana. It’s a state of peace and good karma. No matter what it is everything has an end and

every end has a rebirth. This is called reincarnation or the circle of life and death. The monk's purpose is to rid his life of Delusion, Craving, and hatred in order to have a peaceful life and good karma. Ven's last thoughts before ending this interview was hope to expose Buddhism to the American culture and people and also to resolve all discrimination and conflicts.

Lan Nguyen

Interview with Kelly Nguyen

The person that I interviewed was Kelly Nguyen. She came to the U.S. on October 13, 1998 by plane. The first time she left Vietnam was by boat and stayed in a refugee camp in Hong Kong. She doesn't remember how long she stayed in the camp. She told me that the reason she left Vietnam was because she wanted to come to the United States to have a better life. She saw some of her neighbors who had relatives in the U.S. having a better life than those who didn't have any relatives in the U.S., and so she decided to leave. She said that coming to U.S. is the only thing she wanted, and that she never thought about getting married. She said it was fate that she met her husband who was also in the camp in Hong Kong. Her first daughter was born in Hong Kong in 1993.

In 1996, her family returned to Vietnam because Hong Kong was returned to China so the government wanted all refugees to return to their home land. The government guaranteed that those who returned to their homeland between the times of May 30, 1995 and June 30, 1996 will get the necessary papers to go to the U.S. A lot of people refused to go back to their homeland because they didn't believe in the government. However, her family decided to go back and after one year, her family received the papers for the interview to come to the U.S.

She had two more daughters who were born in the United States. Since she left Vietnam, she only went back to visit one time because her father was seriously ill. Her family went back for about one month but they had to come back to the U.S. early because their youngest daughter was sick. She also tried to teach her daughters Vietnamese because she and her husband could not speak English very well. She promised to bring her daughters back to Vietnam to visit their grandmother one day if they can speak fluent Vietnamese. However, she believes that the United States is her home.

Nhu Nguyen

Migration Story

I was the fourth child in a family of seven, living in North Vietnam. Then my family moved to South Vietnam. I went to French school and completed La Deuxieme Partie du Baccalaureat. After that, I finished my B.S in Biology.

Instead of working in my capacity as teacher, I was drafted into the Army of South Vietnam. After four years of military services, I was sent to the U.S. to pursue my Master in Education at University in Athens, Ohio. After receiving my Masters, I returned to Saigon where I had a chance to work in the Ministry of Education.

In April 1975, I moved to the U.S. with the help of my then fiancée-who later became my wife. At that time, she was a secretary at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. I taught high school in New Orleans, and then worked in the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, Louisiana. I eventually had to move north to Illinois. It was over there that I resettled and worked in Black Hawk College for 9 years. Years later, I moved to Boston and taught in South Boston High School.

I feel very comfortable living in the U.S., my #1 choice. I became accustomed easily to social and cultural life in the U.S. In fact, I am happy that I could make it here to this country where I could realize my dreams, to be a free person and where I could build my own home; sweet home.

VanNhi Nguyen

Asians to America

VanNhi: Why did you leave Vietnam?

Rosemary: Things were getting very violent and very destructive. Life was being choked out of the people, especially if you were against the northern Vietnamese communist party. I wanted to leave with my husband in hopes of being able to flee this country filled with war and devastation in order to find a new place to call home, where my children may grow up and have a better future away from all this war and pain; a future far brighter than the ones myself or my husband had. We're like all parents who want the best for our children and to be able to raise them where they have a lot more opportunities to succeed in life.

VanNhi: What was your journey on the boat like?

Rosemary: When I escaped Vietnam, my husband and I were on a boat for seven days with about 200 other people. We had nothing to cover ourselves with from the weather every day like the hot sun, the heavy cold winds filled with rain, or the harsh waves that splashed us during the storms. It was also typhoon season which made it hard to travel. Getting food and water was extremely difficult. The Thai pirates would always stop us which made our journey seem longer. They always tried to raid us, take what little we had and broke our spirits.

VanNhi: Where did you go when you left Vietnam?

Rosemary: I went to Galang, Indonesia in 1985 and gave birth to my first daughter there in 1986. I was transported to Manila, Philippines in 1987. It was rough and a lot of hardship traveling by boat. I saw many friends pass due to illnesses.

VanNhi: What were the refugees camps like?

Rosemary: When we got to the refugee camps in Indonesia, we were settled in. As more Vietnamese refugees came, the camps became overcrowded and they weren't let into the camp or the country. But they were given food and water and sent back to the sea. Some of the refugees wouldn't leave and sank their boats to make the camps accept them. Other refugees stayed on their boats. People did whatever they could do to survive the journey and find a safe haven. They were very small and cramped due to the overwhelming refugees that had fled the country during the war. There were long lines to get food to eat, water to drink, and even long lines for the bathroom.

VanNhi: How long did you stay for?

Rosemary: I stayed about one year in the Indonesian refugee camps and then I was transported to the Philippines for another year. After that, I was finally sent to the United States in 1988. That was our dream right there and it was fulfilled by making it to this country. It took a very long time to adjust, but I know my children will have a better future just by being here as long as we raise them correctly.

VanNhi: How did you get to America?

Rosemary: Well after the years had passed and the time we spent in the refugee camps, we finally where able to choose a country that we had wanted to go to. After that we would begin the process of apply for it. We were then interviewed by the host of the country and then had to wait for an answer to know if we were accepted or not. They provided us with the transportation from Manila, Philippines to Utica, New York. When we got to the

United States, we had two choices of being sponsored. One was by the public where the government would sponsor us or by a private group who would sponsor us. We chose the private group who provided us with an apartment, clothes, and food for a year.

VanNhi: What was it like traveling to the States?

Rosemary: It was very scary. It was our first time being on a plane and we didn't know anyone except the people from the boats whom traveled with us and the friends we had been able to make at the refugee camps. When we got off the planes, we were then sent to have medical checkups before being able to really enter the country. The customs obviously did not want foreign diseases to be brought into the country. After that we signed up for language classes. Our sponsor would guide us and show us how to go about buying food, getting health insurance or aid, and even helping us prepare to find jobs. We were in a foreign country in which we had no idea what to expect. I was just overwhelmed and scared, but happy, very happy that I was able to make it this far.

VanNhi: When you first got here, what was your reaction?

Rosemary: I was very scared. I didn't know anyone and I was scared of what people would think of us since we came from another country. The prejudice was evident once we arrived and settled into our home in America.

VanNhi: What do you miss in Vietnam?

Rosemary: My parents owned a family business in harvesting, and all of my siblings would help them prepare the fields for planting and applying fertilizers for the crop growing seasons. My older brothers would plant corn, rice, and coffee and my sisters and I would pick the crops at the end of harvesting season. It was a great deal of work and over here, it's just so different. I miss being able to work with my siblings and being able to spend the day with them knowing that this business was going to keep our family surviving. In America, I hear siblings working together and they

start to bicker and fight. If that was me, I would be happy to work with my siblings.

VanNhi: How different is it living in America from Vietnam?

Rosemary: Finding work in Vietnam is a lot harder because you don't have a lot of jobs to choose from and my family can't grow crops in the cold winter. So it's a limited source of the little income we could make during the short season. When I arrived to America, I thought I would be able to find a job really quick, but in reality, I needed to know and understand English first to be able to have a high paying job. Trying to learn English was a set back for me when I was trying to take care of my family.

VanNhi: What kind of life did you seek in America?

Rosemary: I wanted a life away from violence and war, a life where my children may grow up safely and have a bright future ahead of them that is not pre-determined by the government. Rather it is their future and their lives to choose what they want to be when they grow up. It's great for me and my husband to watch them grow up and succeed in school. I hope they may have the things we did not when we were young.

VanNhi: How have you changed since being here?

Rosemary: When I first came, I experienced discrimination. I would walk the streets of America thinking it was safe and clear, but I would hear people mimic the Chinese language because I have black hair and small eyes, thinking I was Chinese. People don't realize that there are other Asian races other than Chinese like Vietnamese, Laotian, Japanese, and so on. People just categorize them all as Chinese. But, to avoid the discrimination, I tried to fit in and become Americanized, but still keep my Vietnamese culture.

VanNhi: Yeah, I can remember when we went to Vietnam and I was walking with my cousin and a car with guys drove by. I looked Americanized and the people in Vietnam think I have it all in America,

so they threw “chai chom chom”, fruits with spikes on the peels, at me. I felt like I wasn’t welcomed into their country when that’s my home country. But moving on, what was it like for you visiting your homeland?

Rosemary: I don’t like to visit because it brought back sad memories. In 2000, my mother got really sick and I had to go back there by myself to take care of her. My mother wanted to see her grandchildren that she has never seen before for the first time before she passed away. So I flew back to America and made passports for the kids and a month later we flew back to Vietnam as a family. We stayed for a month and on our way back to the States, she was on her death bed and died.

VanNhi: What does “home” mean to you?

Rosemary: Home is America. There’s a better life here and I can raise my children with a life full of opportunities. It would be better than the life my husband and I had back in Vietnam. I want them to grow and be successful. It’s about the children now.



Above: Rosemary
Right: Rosemary's daughter, VanNhi

Matthew Seto

Unsung Heroes

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This month celebrates the many contributions that Asian-Americans have made for this country. One area that is often forgotten of Asian-Americans is their presence in the military. Asian-Americans have been serving in the U.S. Armed Forces since the Civil War. As a veteran myself, I realized how little attention is given to those that have served before me. In June of 2000, 55 years after World War II, 21 Japanese-Americans who served in the famous 442nd Infantry Regiment were finally recognized for their heroic actions on the battlefield and were awarded the highest military award, the Congressional Medal of Honor. As an Asian-American veteran of this generation, I realized that without these brave men and women who had served before me, I would have never been able to serve myself. I believe that service to your country is one of the largest contributions a person can make, and these men and women did that. Through their actions and sacrifices, they have given a large piece of themselves that will forever be embedded throughout American history. They not only experienced the war from abroad, but also experienced the war at home in a time when they were considered the “enemy.”

My project interview is to tell the stories and experiences of this generation of Asian-Americans in the military. The interviews will deal with their experiences and will briefly cover topics such as their background, identity, discrimination, and even their views of the military. My interviews were conducted with four former Marines I knew when I was in the Marine Corps, and now they are veterans. All four of them come from different areas in the United States and are of different Asian ethnicities.

The first Marine I interviewed is Richard Sann. Richard is a Cambodian-American from Boston, Massachusetts and is currently a student here at UMass Boston. He is in his second year of

college and is majoring in Business Management. Richard comes from a refugee family that escaped from the atrocities of the Pol Pot regime. He is also the youngest of 3 brothers and is the only one in his family born in the United States. In 1983, his family migrated to the U.S. and left their refugee camp in Thailand. It was Richard's parents, grandmother, uncle, and his two older brothers that were able to come. It was also told to me by Richard that his grandmother on his mother's side had nine kids, but only one was found in the Thai refugee camp that they were in. It was Richard's uncle. The whereabouts of the rest of the family is still unknown to this day. Richard served in the Marine Corps from July 2003 to July 2007. He worked as a Maintenance Integrated Management Specialist.





The second Marine I interviewed is Pravin Chand. Pravin is an Indian-American and was born and raised on the island of Fiji. In 1989, his family immigrated here to the United States in order to take care of his grandfather. He resides in Costa Mesa, California. He currently is taking online courses with University of Phoenix and works as a Quality Assurance Technician for the Navy. Pravin served from December 2000 to January 2006. He worked as an Aviation Supply Clerk.

The third Marine I interviewed is Jonathan Eng. Jonathan is a second generation Chinese-American who was born and raised in Queens, New York. He currently resides in Medford, Massachusetts and goes to school at Bunker Hill Community College. His family emigrated from Hong Kong to the United States in the 1960's. Jonathan served from April 2003 to April 2007. He was a Tactical Data Networking Specialist.





The fourth Marine I interviewed is Tanh Le. Tanh is a second generation Vietnamese-American. His family emigrated from central Vietnam to the United States a couple of years after the war. He grew up in the Bay area of California and Worcester, Massachusetts. Tanh is currently a student at Ohlone College in Fremont, California where he resides also with his family. He served in the Marine Corps from March

2001 to March 2005. Tanh worked as an Aviation Maintenance Administration Specialist/ Data Analyst.

For many of these young men, their choice after high school was not to go to college, but to enlist in the military. Richard was one of those. He didn't know what he wanted to do in his life at the time. Richard told me he saw a Marine recruiter at his school one day and went over to him to see what the recruiter had to offer. He thought about how the idea of having skills of the military and the opportunities that it brought for him can really help in the civilian work force. He said he didn't know much about the military before he joined, but he knew that they went overseas to far distant countries and mostly likely carried weapons. He also knew it provided money for school and benefits such as medical and dental. So I ask him why the Marines. He said they presented themselves better than all the other branches. He saw how they stood out from the rest because the other branches seemed like they don't care and treated everything as a joke. They also had a firmer stance of always wanting to do business. Richard wanted to be a part of that mentality. He also didn't want to end up like his brother. He says that if he didn't join, he probably would be working some dead end job

and not be able to go to school. Jon and Tanh had similar stories also. They joined because they wanted to serve their country and they chose the Marines because they were the hardest branch and that provided them more of a challenge. Jon knew about the benefits. He just didn't know that he was going to have the job that he had. Jon wanted to join even years before the military. Unfortunately, Jon dropped out of high school, but later on went and got his GED. He knew that probably if he didn't join, he would have been wasting his life away and going down the negative route. Pravin had a different story than the rest of the three Marines. Before the military, Pravin was a troubled kid and in a gang at the time. Finally one day at the age of 17, about to turn 18, he got in to trouble with the law again. The judge gave him the option of either joining the military or to go to jail and of course he chose the latter. He decided he wanted to join the Navy first, but the Navy didn't care for him like the Marines did, so he joined with them instead. Many of these young men also joined because of financial reasons. The military attracts many of these young men and women, especially minorities, with the many essential benefits it provided. Many come from middle to lower middle class backgrounds. They serve to gain from these educational opportunities that come with it. The Montgomery G.I. Bill is one of them and now these Marines are taking advantage of it.

Most Asian-Americans in the military today are either first or second generation. Their families were immigrants or refugees at one point in time. I wondered how they felt about their children joining the military, so I questioned the Marines about it. Since Richard enlisted after September 11th, I asked him how his mother felt about him joining the military. He said, "Recruiters were telling me at that time that the war would be done with and would be in peacetime anyways. I was like I go if I have to go. I was like who cares. I was not really worried. My mom flipped out because she knew it would be inevitable and knew that some way I would end up going. She tried telling me to not join, but I still wanted to go and defend my country. My friends thought that it was honorable, but crazy because of what the media showed. They kept telling me if you join the Marines you're going to be up in the front lines. I was like yeah and all excited. They thought I was insane." Pravin's parents were actually happy because Pravin was able to get out of the jail situation and the military would probably make him a better person than the life he had before. Jon's parents also thought it was a good idea because Jon wasn't really doing anything in his life beforehand. Jon said, "They didn't really care. They were like if you join the military then join

the military. Don't mess around. Just do something." Tanh's parents were ok with it. They signed him when he was 17.

Today, Asian-Americans represent 4.2% of the military. In the Marine Corps, they represent 4.3%. I like to call them the "the Few, the Proud," following the Marine Corps motto. I asked them how they felt about being a minority in the military. Richard said, "I didn't feel really connected to the Asian community before I joined. I did when I lived in Boston, but when I moved to Hollister, a mostly white suburb, in the middle of high school, I had to learn to adapt to that environment so when I went into the Marines it was the same. I understand that there wasn't a large minority group to easily bond and socialize with so I didn't care about that because I was already adapted to that type of society. In my high school years, I was the minority anyways so understanding that going to a new environment, I was going to still be the minority." But Richard thought he kind of had to work harder than the others. Because in his work section the mentality of the other Marines was that Asians worked harder and that they were not lazy. But in his own opinion and with in his own standards, he felt he should of worked hard no matter what anyways because it was more personal. He had to work hard because of his past experiences before the military, dealing with the struggles of his family. He never felt it was uncomfortable, but at times, there were things that he had to get use to with the stereotypes of other people about him. But it went both ways he said. He says, "There were ignorances on both sides and it was good to learn from each other." Pravin's answer was similar. He says, "It is what it is. I think minorities actually get more attention, in a good way. I never thought I had to work twice as hard." Jon said, "It didn't bother me. Everyone did the same things and had the same lifestyle in the military. We had to work together to get things done." Tanh said, "It was awkward at first, but when it came to it, everyone was the same and everyone was young and 18. We all came out of high school at the time and even though we came from different regions in the U.S., for the most part everyone was like-minded. I was lucky to have mostly minorities as my leaders also."

As mentioned before, Asian-Americans only represent 4.2% of the military. The numbers are low, but their presence is there. From my own personal experiences, every unit I ever been in had about only 5 or less Asian Americans. Because of this small representation, sometimes discrimination and racism can occur. I asked the veterans of any accounts of discrimination that they have encountered. Richard wasn't really sure if he experienced any. He said it wouldn't have fazed

him if he was discriminated. But he probably would be more defensive if he did come across it because of past experiences. He said he did hear discrimination towards the Muslims because of the war. He said that other Marines would say racial things and call the Muslims stupid. Pravin and Jon said that everyone just joked around with each other. They called it “smoking and joking.” Tanh also said the same thing, but there were also many times when he encountered discrimination. He laughs when I ask him the question and he says “plenty.” Tanh goes on saying, “In Marine Combat Training, one of the instructors goes up to me and says so your learning how to use weapons to teach your VC brothers. It was kind of funny though.” Another incident happened in bootcamp when some drill instructor walked by Tanh who was working at the salad bar and says, “You Communist!” and walked away. Tanh was like, “What the fuck” and he laughs again about it. There were 2 other friends of Tanh’s, who were white and they heard it and even reacted more than Tanh did. The 2 recruits thought it was messed up how the drill instructor did that. They were like, “That’s fucked up, I think you should tell somebody.” So I asked Tanh did he tell anyone and he said no. He told me he regrets not saying anything and he should of took it more seriously. Another story Tanh told was when he was in Japan. He was on the base bus. As the driver was letting out passengers, 2 white Marines got out and tapped the driver’s shoulder and said, “Thanks Charlie.” The driver was Japanese. When the 2 white Marines said that, everyone looked around the bus. Tanh was kind of offended. “Charlie” is a radio code designation. The term was often used in the Vietnam War by American troops to point out the Viet Cong. Instead of saying Viet Cong, they shortened it to the radio codes, “Victor” and “Charlie” and then later to just “Charlie.” He also said that he seen discrimination on other Asians also, mostly name calling. Since some of them have experienced prejudice in the military and even before the military, I wanted to know how they felt about serving a country that has put them through discrimination. Richard felt that this country is a “big melting pot and has so many cultures depending on where you go.” He felt that he wasn’t just fighting a war but also the ignorance. He wanted to instill the unity that even minorities are helping to fight their war. It is all about “brotherly love.” The other 3 Marines thought that it was all the same. Racism will be everywhere and you just have to deal with it.

Being a hyphenated American can sometimes be conflicting for many Asian-Americans, especially second generation Asian-Americans. The process of assimilation can be many times influential due to the

environment in which we grew up in. My next question has to deal with the identity of these veterans. I asked the Marines: do they feel more connected to being Asian or to being American more? Richard's response was, "I felt more patriotic since I joined the military." Richard and Jon believe that they are more connected to the American culture since they were born here. Pravin also says the same thing. He says, "I feel more American than my Indian family is because I feel that I have become a part of this country's great history being in the military and in Iraq." Jon says he is more American. He says, "When you are surrounded by Western culture, you tend to lean towards the majority." Tanh also says he feels more American but he still has the Asian pride in him. There were many time he started missing Asian people. Tanh was stationed in Yuma, Arizona. He said, "I hate Arizona. Every chance I got I went to San Diego or Los Angeles where there were large populations of Asians. When you are around a lot of white folks, you tend to lose your own ethnic culture. These days I am not really articulate in Vietnamese anymore. I can't even form simple sentences. But I still celebrate it because I love my culture."

In my own personal experiences as a civilian, I remembered times when people would not refer me as an American. There are also stereotypes out there that say that Asians are not patriotic and that they don't care about this country. My next question has to deal with that and what the reasons are for it. Hypothetically, I asked the veterans: what if the United States had a war with their ancestral country, which side would they fight on? Richard answers, "I think I became more patriotic since I joined the military. If I had to fight, I guess it would be for America. I mean I adopted this culture and lifestyle. I guess if I had to carry a weapon and point it at my own people, those that look like me, then I would have to shoot if he was pointing at me. I adapted this lifestyle and call this country my own rather than Cambodia." Pravin also felt the same. He says he wouldn't mind fighting. He says he believes in the leadership of this country. Tanh and Jon's responses are a little different. Jon says, "It would depend on the situation and what we were fighting for." I asked him if he is patriotic. His response was "No." He says, "Just because you are in the military, does not mean you are more American or more patriotic. I signed up to do what I was supposed to do and I completed my service." Tanh's response was similar also. He says, "I didn't join because I was some patriotic idiot. I joined before September 11. It might sound kind of selfish, but I joined because of me." He said if America had a war with Vietnam, if

he had to he would fight for America. Because this is the country in which he was born and raised in and the only country he knows. He says he would shoot that person, if that person is shooting at him even though they are the same people. In my own curiosity, I had to ask Tanh another question, since he is Vietnamese-American and his family was in Vietnam, what he felt about the Vietnam War? Tanh said, "It was stupid and political. The Americans made an excuse to fight Communism, when they started the Gulf of Tonkin. That is one of the reasons why I am not patriotic because that is just blind."

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which sent 120,000 Japanese-Americans into internment camps. On June 15, 1942, the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry was created. The battalion performed so well that on February 1, 1943, the US government reversed the decision having Japanese-Americans in the military. A couple of days later, a loyalty questionnaire was given to the interns who were required to answer 2 questions that asked them, if they would serve in the U.S. military if ordered and would they pledge allegiance to the United States. Three quarters of the interned prisoners answered "yes" and they were drafted into the military, mostly in the 442nd Infantry Regiment. I decided to ask this question to the veterans: would they have served if their families were put into internment camps and their people were called the "enemy," even though they were Americans. Richard said he would not if he was treated that way. Pravin said, "Yes." Because he would have the opportunity to end the situation and would not have been bored sitting in camp. Jon also said, "No, because they wouldn't trust me anyways. They would probably blame me for everything I didn't do, even making it worse for me." Tanh says, "Half of me would do it just to prove to them, but the other half would be like screw that you put my people in internment camps."

The military is an organization that is structured by ranks. For the many that do enlist, usually they would start off with the rank of Private and work their way up the rank structure. As said before, the representation of Asian-Americans are very few. So if their were issues such as discrimination brought up to the chain of command, often at times, they would go unnoticed or unheard. My next question has to do with the moral and immoral codes that Marines might be put through and if so were they able to speak up anytime. Richard said, "We just pretty much talk within the ranks. If you talk above your rank, then you probably would be quickly silenced. The higher ups would keep that mentality around you. If there were any problems, we were supposed to

go with in our own ranks.” Pravin responded, “You follow the rules just like everyone else. You had to listen to whatever the higher ups gave you to do.” Jon said, “Yes. I know I did if I didn’t like something. You just had to be tactful about it.” Tanh said, “Yes I have and I was punished for it. I was doing my laundry and I saw the sergeant who was suppose to be on duty sleeping. So I woke him up and kept waking him up to go back on duty. I got yelled at for it.”

Since September 11, many servicemen and women have been sent to the Gulf. Many even have done 1 or 2 tours over there. Now that I am back as a civilian, every time I tell people I was in the military, they start asking me what are my feelings of the war and start talking politics. I think as a veteran, many people always perceive you as an extreme right-wing, conservative, brainwashed, pro-war, pro-bush type of individual. I have to say this is not always the case. The military is as diverse as any other institution out there and we all have our own beliefs and opinions. So I had to ask the veterans what were their feelings about the war. Richard believes that we should stay in the fight. He says that there are a lot of men and women who died over there including his friends and he doesn’t want to believe that they died in vain. Pravin believes the same. He thinks that we should stay over there and keep fighting the terrorists. Jon’s response is “stay in and continue the fight, because if we pull out now and the country goes into turmoil, there might be a civil war and then it would be chaos.” Tanh speaks differently. Tanh thinks the war is unjust. He says, “We shouldn’t be brainwashed in believing that we should be there.”

For many servicemen and women, 4 years in the military can bring in a lot of good memories as well as bad ones. Many of them make a lot of sacrifices that we ordinary Americans often take granted for. I asked the veterans what were their best and worst memories in the military? Richard said the best thing he remembers of the military is all the amazing people he met. Then I asked him, what was the worst thing he remembers of the military? Richard gets a little emotional talking about it, but he goes on. He says, “The worst thing would probably be not seeing my buddies that went over with me not come back. They were stationed over in a different part of Iraq and they went over to my base for resupplying. Also they needed to replace the mortar wheels on the tanks. So we did the maintenance for them and then they left. I didn’t see them for a month or more. Then one day my Commanding Officer came up and said there would be a formation this morning. It was weird because we usually don’t have formation. That formation

felt weird for me. I thought it was promotions. Then the CO told us that we lost 2 guys in the mission and he told us how it happened. I found out it was my friends. They were on a tank and their tank hit an IED (Improvised Explosive Device). The whole crew got out of the tank then they were put back on Humvees and sent back to base. The Humvee was under fire and it blew up. My buddy who was part of the platoon who was driving in the back of them was able to record some of the incident. The first time watching the video was kind of hard. My buddy noticed a hand from the wreckage, but he couldn't do anything about it but protect the area. They just saw a hand popped out from the carnage. My buddy who was recording felt bad that he couldn't do anything. The video kind of traumatized me. I still remember it. I still remember of how much an impact they were in my life." Pravin's favorite memory was coming home from Iraq. His worst memory was being in boot-camp during Christmas time because he missed home. Jon's favorite memory was in Thanksgiving of 2004 and he was deployed to the Philippines. His unit had to work that day. There was a day and night crew and the night shift were working. Jon was on day crew. He and other Marines brought all the food to the shop to eat with the night crew. They all spent Thanksgiving there. Another good memory of his was also in 2004. During the Southeast Asian Tsunami, he was able to help and send supplies to those who were in need. Tanh's says his best memory was when he left MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Stations) to go on an airplane for boot-camp. He called it, "The Great Adventure." His worst memory was during his first 5 months in the fleet (means "workforce") and in Arizona, he realized where he was and where he was going to be for the next 4 years. He said he kind of broke down. He was, "stuck in this shithole and all alone on base." Another memory of his, not good or bad, was when he was in Iraq and he almost got killed. He tells me the story of how he dodged IEDS (Improvised Explosive Device). He and his friend head out to look for AK-47's on base. Stupidly enough, not knowing that they stepped in an area where there was supposedly IEDS (Improvised Explosive Device) all over the place. They were later told to leave the area by the combat engineers who came to the area to dispose of the IEDs Tanh laughs about it.

The military can sometimes be the best of times and the worst of times. I ask the veterans if they had any regrets of being in the military. Richard answers, "I am glad that I did it. I experienced so much. I did a lot in 4 years in what other people probably would have never experienced. I made some amazing friend. I created better work

ethics, which helped me sustain my discipline in school. What I done in my 4 years is what makes me now.” Pravin was also glad that he did it. He describes it as, “a beautiful thing.” Jon also had no regrets. He said he met a lot of different people and traveled a lot. He loved his work environment and the camaraderie that came with it, even though the pay was bad. Tanh felt the same also. He says, “Everything that happened up to now, all the people I met wouldn’t exist if I didn’t join.”

There are so many things that servicemen and women go through. A lot of them don’t always have the final word on what they want to say, especially these days when you have the politics and the media influencing the minds of the people. This section is for the veteran’s final words and what they want people to know about the military. Richard says, “I want the public to acknowledge that coming from war, there will be a lot of stress. It doesn’t go away easily, especially wartime stress. I am sure my mom has it too. It is called post traumatic stress disorder. I know sometimes she is unable to sleep and now the same goes for me some times. Certain noises may cause people to react. The other day the fire alarm rang at school. I was about to jump up and get everyone out of the building. The fire drill reminded of me of Iraq on base, when there were mortar attacks. The base alarm would go off and then everyone would have to go behind this area and get their body armor. So there is going to be a lot of stress. So give us the benefit of the doubt. But don’t be scared. We are just trying to fit back in. It’s always an on going process.” Pravin says, “Don’t always make assumptions about us. Don’t always assume you know more than us. Because no matter how much you think you know about the military, even if your friend or family member was in the military, if you heard stories from them, unless you were a Marine yourself, don’t say what the Marine Corps is or isn’t. I am just tired of people talking so much crap about us. If you want to change things, run for president. We have too much media influences.” Jon says, “The military is what it is. If you do decide to join the military, read the fine print and make sure you get everything they say you will get before you sign. Know what you are signing up for.” Tanh says, “Serve your country if you want to serve. Don’t be brainwashed though. Do it because you want to do it.”

My project was to help people listen to the stories of Asian-Americans in the military. It was created to help recognize their contributions to American history. Asian-Americans have been serving in the U.S. military since the Civil War and still to this day, we are still serving. When I was growing up, I never really had the chance to read

about Joseph Pierce, Edward Day Cohota, William Ah-Hang, Daniel Inouye, Francis Wai, Young Oak Kim, Rudolph Davila, and many other Asian-Americans in the military. I never knew that they existed. This interview is to let people know that we're here. As you have read from the interview, we are not the model minority. We all came from different parts of the world and even different parts of the United States. We all have our own different opinions and beliefs. We don't all agree in the same things, but we all chose to join the military, even if it was for our own personal reasons. With those reasons came sacrifices. Sacrifices that not many people can make, but we did.

RIP – SPC. Roger G. Ling (U.S.Army)
04/18/1983 – 02/19/2004

Matthew Seto

Why am I AMERICAN?

I was once born as an AMERICAN
A second generation
I grew up with the same fundamentals and ideas as any AMERICAN
When I was young, I knew know better
I thought my family was living the AMERICAN dream
When they left the stormy weather
of their homeland
For a better place called AMERICA
But yet now, their stories have taught me
Like Kennedy said,
“Ask not what your country can do for you.
Ask what you can do for your country.”
AMERICA is a melting pot with too many cracks
to even try to keep a hold on these Asians, Hispanics, and Blacks
I am the minority
My facial features
is not the thing that reminds me
It is the AMERICAN people
Those that have insulted
Imitated
Profiled
Stereotyped
Discriminated
And made me their common enemy
This is my freedom of speech
The AMERICAN dream is mine
if my voice dies with it
then the lady of liberty is blind
So, Why am I AMERICAN?
Because We the People means everyone
That means every woman, man, and child
And every second-class citizen

Mary Shia

Dragon



Mary Shia

Glory



Sophal Sok

Untitled



Shirley Tang

The Yee's Migration to America

My littlest aunt said that her meaningful and important migration experience was to be able to see freedom and a better future, where she could build a better life for the family. In china there was no future for the young kids, our next generation; where as in the U.S. the kids had a future and their parents could plan for this generation.

She immigrated to the U.S. in the 1980's. My grandpa's dad [great-grandfather] brought them here. The process took about 5 years.

What specific lasting memory do you have of your homeland, something you miss?

I was young when I left, about 10 years old. I miss the family, friends and cousins I left behind.

What specific similarity and difference have you found between your image of the U.S. before coming and reality in the U.S. after arriving?

When I was in China everybody wanted to come to America. They said it's "gam-san" golden mountain meaning the term gold in America is like its wealth. In America no matter how poor you are you will have no money worries, no worries about being poor, the whole mountain is full of gold. You will find money even if there is no food, America is different.

What did you find that was totally different from the “gam-san” story you heard in China?

If you don't work you don't get the money. Also that there is actually work, where it's actually not true, everybody most likely starts out working in restaurants for 14-16 hours and only get one day off. If you are working in an office it's much easier, but not as easy because then you need to look for a job and finding a job is hard work, especially if you don't speak English - it's a problem. Being able to speak English is a priority here in America.

What does home mean to you?

“Home” means warm feelings, trust in my family and being able to relax and be comfortable. I don't know what to say, but America is now my home. I'm an American citizen now. I don't see China as my home, America is now my home. After work I relax and am happy. If anything happens to my family I will fight for them, I don't want anything bad to happen to them.

Noah Teweldebrhan

They Arrived

They Arrived with two pairs of luggage

They Arrived with 200 dollars

They Arrived with an unbreakable love for each other

They Arrived with hopes of discovering a new life

They Arrived to start a family

They Arrived so their children could find an education like none other

They Arrived and were ridiculed for their broken English

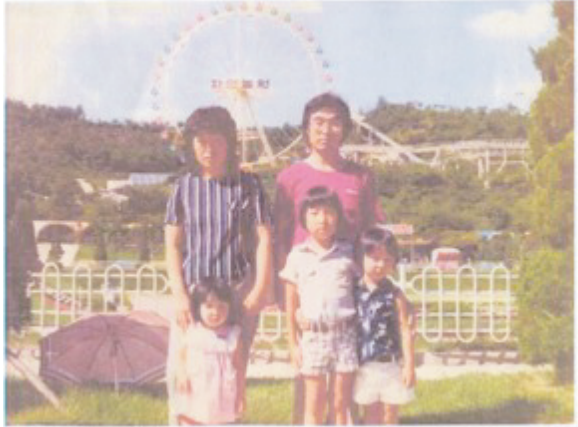
They Arrived to a section in town deemed “dangerous”

Nonetheless, they Arrived to a land of opportunity and prosperity

YES, WE HAVE ARRIVED!!!!

Arum Yoo

All About Mia



My name is Eun Mi Cho but they call me Mia.

I was born in DaeGu in South Korea.

I am studying fashion design.

My favorite food to eat is dark, dark chocolate.

And pet peeve is Arum's nagging and ordering a sausage egg and cheese breakfast sandwich.

To me home is where my family is, a place where I feels safe with lots and lots of Korean Food.

My dream goal is to become a fashion designer in America.



Arum Yoo

Comfort Food

I thought about interviewing a Korean nail salon owner, my Chinese general manager at work, or even my boyfriend's parents who manages and runs a Chinese restaurant in New Hampshire. But when it came down to what mattered to me the most it was my very own history. I decided to interview my dad as an entrepreneur. One thing led to another in our long conversation over the email and phone. It started simply as from how our family ended up in Guam to as far as my great grandparents experience and their history during the Korean War.

After graduating from high school my dad decided to enter a technician school. He remembers attending a technician school was comparable to entering college today's standards. After taking some basic skilled tests, my dad had placed into a higher level where he was given the option of studying to be an auto mechanic or an electrician. "It was a very hard decision", "this was what I was going to do for the rest of my life", were my dad's words. Because he didn't want to handle car oil for the rest of his life he decided to be an electrician and till this day he doesn't regret making that decision. My dad recalls his construction company recruiting several of their men to work with Harmon Corporation from Guam to reconstruct the American army base in Korea. My dad had been recruited. My dad recalls how strange it was for "what seemed to be" a black or Spanish person identifying themselves as an "American." They looked totally different from the American military guards that were stationed in Korea during that time. My dad had been recruited a second time, this time it was from the Harmon Corporation itself, wanting to take my dad to Guam. My dad signed a two-year contract and had no choice but to leave my mom, older brother Hwan and me behind in Korea.

In the year of 1991, my parents decided to move our family to Guam for one reason and one reason only and that was for a better opportunity for our family. My dad shares that he was afraid, he was afraid whether he was going to be able to find an apartment for us, afraid of the language barrier and the discrimination that we might had to endure and face, he was afraid of starting new in America. He said mom and dad started off with \$2000. That was all we had. “\$2000 was better than nothing, there were many others who started less than what we had,” was my dad’s reply to my reaction. He laughs about it now and wonders how mom and he managed to get everything settled.

One of my most eager curiosities was why our family loved Vietnamese noodles so much? When I was about 6 or 7 I remember almost every Saturday mornings my dad would take us to the flea market in Tamuning. It was my favorite time of the week, since Hwan and I stayed home all throughout the week while dad and mom went to work. My dad would always buy a record or two at the flea market; it has always been a hobby and a sense of pleasure for him to collect good quality music. After our families “shopping spree” at the flea market, my dad always took our family to one and only one vendor to eat our Vietnamese noodles. I remember one morning, the line was especially long and my mom insisted we go to another vendor. My dad insisted we wait. Dad, mom and Hwan always got their own bowl of noodles, while I shared with the rest. The flea market soon was shut down by the government due to environmental and other health issues.

One late afternoon after church service, my dad didn’t drive our family straight home. He drove to a building near the ruin flee

market to a restaurant called Mary's. I overheard my dad telling my mom in the restaurant it was the same owners from the flea market we had always gone to, but the grandmother who had been the sole maker had passed away and her son had taken over the business. My dad always complained it wasn't the same anymore. Till this day our family has not betrayed or turned our backs to Mary's Vietnamese restaurant, rather it evolved into our family tradition and my very own comfort food.

What made this place so significant to our family? I asked my dad for the very first time if he was a Korean Vietnam Veteran. His answer was no. I was somewhat disappointed but at the same time relieved to hear his answer. My dad did not leave me disappointed though. My dad did not have to go to Vietnam because the war had ended a few years before he was enlisted to the Korean Army. He revealed his emotions that he himself felt very fortunate not having to enter into an unjust war but expressed his deep sentiment for his long-lost best friend and brother who had never returned from the war. His best friend who he looked up to and referred to as his own brother wrote many letters to my dad expressing his deeply affected emotion by the war. My dad recalls remembering two things his friend has said before he never heard from him again. "Whether we are Vietnamese, Korean or even blue eyed, green eyed...we all cried the same, screamed the same way, bleed the same color; we were no different from each other." Finally the last thing was if my dad ever had an opportunity to try Vietnamese Soup Noodle, it was the best invention ever made next to *Nangmyun*.

Our Time: more generations

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Edited by Jane Lee, Mary Shia, and Frances K. Chow

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