Chapter 1

The Chinese

Chapter Preface

In this chapter, we first encounter two American-born Chinese American women, Beth Low and Lisa Wang, who were born in the 1910s and 1920s in San Francisco and Boston respectively. As noted by writers of Asian American studies, the first American-born or the second-generation Chinese American women entered into the Chinese American demographics in the 1920s.[1] As reflected in Beth and Lisa's life history, the second-generation Chinese American girls had received high school or college education, entered the work force, and began choosing mates of their own choices. From the stories of Bella and Lisa, we see the family structure of the early Chinese immigrants, in which the husband worked as the primary provider for the family while the wife was in charge of the family's daily maintenance and supplemented family income by working in sewing shops. The early Chinese immigrant families tended to be large as a strategy to cope with the uprootedness of the immigrant life. We also learn about the early Chinese American community operation—how the Chinese Six Companies, the immigrant community self-governance structure established in 1862, dominated the immigrant society through, as the example demonstrated here, operating Chinese language schools.[2]

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[1] Huping Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1998), 95; Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 109.

[2] For information on the Chinese Six Companies, see, for example, Ling, *Surviving,* 47-48; Ling, "Governing 'Hop Alley': On Leong Chinese Merchants and Lborers Association, 1906-1966," *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Winter 2004); Him Mark Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System." In *Chinese America: History & Perspectives, 1987*. San Francisco: Chinese Historical society of America (1987): 13-51.

For the women who braved the Pacific Ocean and landed on the new shore, their life history reveals the multifaceted dimensions of their immigrant experiences. Ling Ng, Erin Zeng, Gena Chen, and Liz Sing came from various geographic regions of Chinese populations—China, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Taiwan during the post-WWII era. Ling, Erin and Gena, all came from families of Chinese intellectuals—educators and musicians. The educational privileges of their families enabled them to have a head start in their academic and professional training in the United States. Yet, they all encountered the universal difficulties for most new immigrants—language barriers, emotional loneliness, and academic stresses. With advanced academic degrees, these women were able to find employment and enjoy a life of "model minority,"[3] while enduring the subtle forms of racial prejudice and discrimination. Liz Sing and her parents came to the United States from Taiwan in the 1980s. To escape the stiff competition in the Chinese restaurant business in the major cities, the Sing family settled in a small Midwestern town to open a restaurant. Although in a remote community, Liz's experience of running a Chinese restaurant typifies the hard work, long working hours, and the consequent isolation from community activities.

As Chinese Americans' socioeconomic conditions improved in the last decades of the 20th century, interracial marriage in America became more visible and acceptable.[4] At the same time, the normalization

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[3] For further readings on model minority, see, for example, Keith Osajima, "Asian Americans as the Model Minority: An Analysis of the Popular Press Image in the 1960s and 1980s," in *Reflections on Shattered Windows*, Edited by Gary Y Okihiro, et al, (Pullman, Washington: Washington State University press, 1988), 165-174; William Peterson, "Success Story, Japanese-American Style," *New York Time Magazine*, 9 January 1966, 20-43; Bob H. Suzuki, "Educational and the Socialization of Asian Americans: A Revisionist Analysis of the `Model Minority' Thesis," *Amerisia Journal* 4 (1977): 23-51.

[4] For works on interracial marriage, see, for example, T. Labov and J. Jacobs, "Intermarriage in Hawaii, 1950-1983." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 48: 79-88; S.M. Lee and K. Yamanaka. "Patterns of

of the Sino-U.S. relationship and the growing globalized world economy also brought men and women of different cultural and racial backgrounds together. As a result, interracial marriages occurred not only between native-born Chinese Americans and other groups of Americans, but also between American-born white males and China-born females or vice versa when Americans studied or worked in China and fell in love with the local Chinese. Martha Reeves' marriage reflects the interracial romance sprouting out of the transnational cultural and economic soils. For Martha, the interracial marriage enabled her to come to America, an opportunity aspired by many Chinese youth as well as a social stigma attached to her marriage—she was frowned upon by her country fellows who thought she married an American in order to emigrate to America. Martha's story tells us that an interracial romance sparked when two individuals who happened to belong to different racial groups were attracted to each other because of common interests.

In the field of higher education, the young Chinese American women, either foreign-born or native-born, shared similar characteristics of aspiration, individual drive, strict self-discipline, and familial values of Asian traditions, yet encountered somewhat different college experiences. Rita Chang came from

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Asian American Intermarriages and Marital Assimilation," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. 21: 287-305; Huping Ling, "Family and Marriage of Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Chinese Immigrant Women," *Journal of American Ethnic History,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (winter 2000): 43-63; Maria P.P. Root ed. *Racially Mixed People in America*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1992); Paul R. Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); C. Stephen and Stephan W. "After Intermarriage: Ethnic Identity Among Mixed Heritage Japanese Americans and Hispanics," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 51: 507-519; Betty Lee Sung, *Chinese American Intermarriage* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Center for Migration Studies, 1990); Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Morrison G. Wong, "A Look at Intermarriage Among the Chinese in the United States." *Sociological Perspective*. 32 (1): 87-107.

Taiwan to pursue a higher education in the United States in the 1990s. Unlike their predecessors who came to America decades ago and had to struggle both academically and financially,[5] the Chinese students in the 1990s were from more affluent families in Asian countries and could therefore concentrate on their academic works without worrying about making ends meet. Yet they still had to battle language barriers, unfamiliarity with American culture, and unfriendliness from American peers. On the contrary, Sandy Lee, the native-born Chinese American college student, enjoyed a complete social integration with her white peers. This difference indicates that cultural differences, rather than racial prejudice, more often prevent different racial groups from merging into one.

1. The America-born Women

Beth Low

Bella Shaw was born in 1917 into an immigrant family in San Francisco's Chinatown. She grew up in San Francisco and had a high school education. Married to a Chinese professor of economics, she has been a housewife and mother of three sons, all of whom have advanced degrees, living in a small town in the Midwest.

I was born in 1917 in San Francisco and grew up there. Being in a city like San Francisco, we went to public school in the morning and early afternoon, and Chinese language school in the evening. In

[5] For works on Chinese students in America, see, for example, Huping Ling, "The Changing Patterns of Taiwanese Students in America and the Modernization in Taiwan," in *Modernity and Cultural Identity in Taiwan,* ed. Hanchao Lu, (River Edge, NJ: Global Publishing Co. Inc., 2001), 179-207; "Chinese Female Students and the Sino-US Relations," in *New Studies on Chinese Overseas and China*, eds. Cen Huang, Zhuang Gutu, and Tanaka Kyoko, 103-137. Leiden, Holland: IIAS, 2000), 103-137; "A History of Chinese Female Students in the United States, 1880s-1990s." *The Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 81-109.

the Chinese language school, they taught Cantonese, so we learned Chinese in Cantonese. The Chinese language school was run from five to eight p.m. Monday through Friday, and from ten a.m. to one p.m. on Saturday. We paid $1.00 a month for tuition. I went to *Nanqiao Xuexiao* (the South Bridge School). The School was built by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in that district. Since the Association owned the property, income from the property was used to build a school. The association also did other charitable things. Now the school is free. The all-male Board of Directors was selected by the Benevolent Association, and met several times a year. The school teachers, however, were both men and women. Some were students who went to school during the day, then came back to teach after their classes. Some of the Chinese language schools were connected with the Methodist Church. The Catholic Church also had a Chinese language school. While the Chinese schools usually went up to the high school level, the classes were got smaller and smaller, and so I quit in Junior High. You do whatever the others do.

My father was a merchant when he came to America in the early 1900s. Then he worked for the First National Bank. He was selling drafts to Chinese merchants who bought and sent them to China to buy merchandise. The bank closed in the 1930s during the Depression. So my father, then in his 50s, took an early retirement and received a pension.

My mother was born in China. She came here a year after the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. There were seven children in my family, four boys and three girls. My mother and about a dozen other women worked at a sewing shop with machines set up on a rented floor. My mother worked there during the day, then came home to cook lunch for us. Hours in the shop were very flexible, and there were no time cards. They were paid by the piece. The pay was very low, but the work kept them busy.

There were two opera houses in San Francisco then. Before the age of movies, they held performances in the evenings, especially on Saturday nights, which women and older people often attended. *Cantonese* opera troupes from China performed there. The shows usually started at 7 o'clock, and admission was $1.00. If there were seats left, they would sell tickets for $0.25 until 9 o'clock.

Early immigrant women often went visiting friends. My mother went anywhere she wished at any time; she and the majority of women her age had natural feet. My mother was very independent. She didn't know English, but she would walk or take the train downtown to do shopping or to Oakland. Streetcars and cable cars were public transportation in those days. She had relatives, including my uncle and cousins, in San Francisco. My mother was illiterate, but she was outgoing. My father could write and read in both Chinese and English; he was better off at that time compared to most Chinese. In the 1930s, people earned $1 a day. If you could support your family, you were fortunate. The Chinese in San Francisco all had big families; five, six or nine children in each family were common. People of my generation, on the other hand, have smaller families.

My parents treated boys and girls the same. We didn't conflict with our parents; we just followed the tradition. Usually parents had the say. Although we had our own opinions, we considered our parents' ideas more important. My father and mother were from a village near Canton, so was my mother. Back in China, people usually lived in villages. Because all their relatives were in the U.S., my parents never returned to China. Additionally, it was not easy to go back once they had children. We spoke *Cantonese* at home. I learned sewing from mother and also took sewing classes at junior high. Sewing is like a hobby to me.

I didn't start dating until I met Dr. Shaw (my late husband). Most of us married Chinese. Interracial marriage was not popular then, though there were some interracial marriages during the war. In San Francisco there was a big Chinese population, so there were plenty of Chinese boys to choose from. We preserved Chinese traditional holidays, which were more traditional than those in China.

The first time I went out of the town was when I was at Cal. State. I felt different and depressed. However, I soon found a job that took the pressure off. Chinese students would come to our place on Saturdays to play bridge. After playing, we went to a Chinese restaurant together. There was a Chinese student association and there were always a lot of things going on.

Like many women of my time, I didn't go to college. In 1935, I graduated from high school at 18. After my graduation, I went to work during the Depression. You were lucky if you could finish high school. But being with my husband and his colleagues helped me. After the war, many people went to college assisted by the G.I. Bill. With soldiers returning after the war, college and university enrollment exploded.

My husband and I met in San Francisco. His uncle was operating a jewelry shop. He first arrived in San Francisco and studied at the University of California for one semester, then transferred to Stanford and stayed there for one year. After that, he went to Oregon State University for his M.A. in agriculture. He worked in the Office of War Information in San Francisco during World War II because at that time China and the United States were allies. For several years until he finished his M.A., he worked as a language technician. He was doing translating and broadcasting (he went to the University of Beijing and could speak Mandarin). We dated, went to movies, walked around downtown, window-shopped in the evening, and enjoyed the walking. He was very versatile, having an interest in many subjects.

We married in 1946. My husband was then studying at the University of Wisconsin for his doctorate in agricultural economics. Our wedding, a civil ceremony in front of a judge, was in San Francisco's City Hall. Afterward we went to Santa Cruz for a few days. From there we took the train to Boulder, Colorado, stayed there for a few days, and then went to Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, I worked for a wholesale company, running a book keeping machine. Before I was married, I used to work for an insurance company in the accounting department, so this was something I had done before. I worked full time as I hated to stay in the apartment alone.

After my husband got his Ph.D. in 1950 we went back to San Francisco because it was hard to find a job. A year later, his advisor in Wisconsin called and told him that they had received a grant from the state. So we went back to Madison in 1951 and stayed there until 1954. That year, his advisor told him of an opening at the Northeastern State University. A professor had retired suddenly and they needed someone right away. Dr. Ryle, President of the University, called him, and my husband was hired.

We came to Marysville in January 1954. Marysville was different then from now. Campus was different and smaller. We didn't have the Student Union, Pershing Hall, and Centennial Hall. Dr. No-Yong Park, a Korean American lecturer, was there before we came. In the 1940s he taught one or two years at the university. Then he lectured. He was outgoing and funny. After we came, Mrs. Dun also came. We lived in an apartment on Elson Street. We later rented a small house near First Street and Mrs. Dun rented our apartment. Our friendship started in 1954.

I didn't work in Marysville because there were few job opportunities in a small town. In 1956, our first son was. After four years, we had two more boys.

We were active participants in University activities every year. Before school started in the fall, the University had a banquet in the hallway of Kirk Building, where all the activities occurred during Dr. Ryle's presidency. Besides the annual banquet, there were the Lyceum program, basketball, football, etc.

We didn't have a car until we moved to Grim Court in 1967. Before 1967, we lived in three different rental houses. Rent was very reasonable, $65 for our first house, $75 for the next, and $85 for the third. We didn't have the College Park, Bell area then. We didn't have town and country. We didn't have any fast food on Baltimore Street. For $1.50, you could get a good meal at a restaurant called The Old Trading Post. The Traveler's Hotel had a dance hall where you could have banquets.

Now I prefer to stay in Marysville, where I am used to living. Usually we cooked Chinese food. Lunch was usually noodles. For dinner, I had rice dishes. We also had American dishes--roast beef, for instance, once or twice a week. Because my children didn't like rice all the time, I cooked Cantonese food. Dr. Shaw didn't do the cooking. In Oregon, he lived with some students who did the shopping and cooking. But after marriage, he didn't cook unless we had company, then he would help me. We speak Cantonese at home. Dr. Shaw was gifted academically; after being born and raised in Canton, he went to Beijing University after he passed the entrance examination in 1930s.

My oldest son's wife is a Korean American [while the other two daughters-in-law are white Americans]. They both went to University of Missouri and met there. They married in 1980. He has a M.B.A. My daughter-in-law has a M.A. in textile and clothing. My second son went to University of Missouri and received M.S. in electrical engineering in May 1992. He is going to a Ph.D. program. He met his wife in St. Louis. She came from Kansas City and went to Washington University for a master's degree in physical therapy. They married in October,1989. My third son went to Michigan for undergraduate, where he met his wife, a software engineer for Hewlett-Packard. They married on 13 June 1987, in the St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Hastings, Michigan.

Lisa Wang

Lisa Wang was born into a Chinese tea merchant family in Boston in 1925. She has a master's degree in Oriental Studies at Yale University and was married to a prominent Chinese American scientist. She has three children whom are all professionals. She was a retired librarian from Shrewsbury*, Massachusetts at the time of the interview.*

I was born in 1925 in Boston. My father was a tea merchant from Guangdong. He first arrived in San Francisco at the turn of the century. Later he moved to Oakland, California. He then went to Boston, where he was one of the earliest Chinese in the town. My father started as a bookkeeper, but he did well and later he owned his own tea shop. He made enough money to get married, and soon became the first Chinese to buy a house in Boston.

My father spent many years saving enough money for his marriage. By the time he had enough money to support a family, he was already a middle-aged man. He went to Guangdong, China to marry my mother when she was sixteen, twenty-seven years his junior. My father spoke *Toishan* (*Taishan*, a variation of *Cantonese*) dialect, while my mother spoke *Sam Yap* (*Sanyi*, a variation of *Cantonese*) dialect. It seems that she came from a middle class family. Thereafter, my mother's family had a slightly higher social status than my father's. My mother was eager to come to America. Influenced by her parents and other people,

she believed that America was a great place. My father treated my mother very traditionally and my mother listened to him all the time.

There were nine children in my family, six of them girls. My father knew he was alone in this country, as he did not have any relatives here, so he wanted to have many children as security for his old age. My mother sacrificed her whole life for us. She stayed at home to raise children and she cooked for the family. Every morning, everybody had to have an egg, because she thought eggs were important for growing children. When we grew older, my mother worked at a sewing factory for ten years. Before she died, she learned to read and write simple English.

My father didn't want us to speak English at home, so I spoke *Cantonese* with my parents. To preserve our Chinese language, we went to a Chinese language school after public school, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., five days a week, and 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday. We went to Chinese school until we were tired of it. I graduated from the 6th grade. I remember I had a very entertaining Chinese teacher. He told us Chinese fairy tales. I compiled these tales and had three books published later. In addition to the three Chinese fairy tales, I also published two Chinese cookbooks.

The girls were older than the boys in my family that might explain why we girls all had an education. My father sent us to schools in Boston. We all got scholarships to go to school. I went to a girl's high school in Boston and got my bachelor's degree from Simmons College in library science. I also earned a master's degree in English from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1967. I got another master's degree in psychology counseling from Annamarie College, in Paxton, Massachusetts in 1982.

I met M.C. Wang when I was working for my master's degree in Oriental Studies at Yale University. He was sixteen years older than I. He got his bachelor's degree from Qinghua University in China. Then he went to Edinburg University in Scotland for his master's degree. He got his Ph.D. from Cambridge

University the following year. When he met me, he was working in experimental biology at the Worcester Foundation in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

At that time, I was dating two Chinese boys of my age. They warned me against trusting this man and that in time he would not be nice to me. But M.C. Wang was older than they were and, therefore, more sophisticated. He phoned me everyday and came to visit me every weekend. He told me: "You are so expensive." I asked him why. He said: "I spend so much money on telephone and trains." He also told me, "If you marry me, I will take you to Europe." So he finally won.

From the beginning of our relationship, he took charge of everything. Wherever we went, he arranged plane tickets. I just followed him. He was a male chauvinist. He treated me like how my father treated my mother. Because of my upbringing, it was easy for me to accept this. My mother used to say, “Never fight with men."

Now, because my husband has died, I am more assertive. He died in 1991 at the age 82 without leaving a penny for me; he donated all his money to China. A part went to Qinghua University where he went to school, a part to an elementary school, and another part to a museum in his name.

In 1950, Primer Zhou Enlai called for Chinese overseas scholars to return to China to participate in constructing a new China. M.C. Wang considered going back. But when he looked at me, he changed his mind. He said:" Living in China with three small children will be too hard for you; you cannot take it." Therefore, he always felt he owed China. He continuously sent money to China. He donated money to build a primary school in his hometown, in suburban Taiyuan, Shanxi.

My husband was very liberal. He was for Chairman Mao. He believed Mao did a great thing in unifying China and kicking out foreigners. He never liked Chiang Kai-shek. He thought Chiang was too selfish and did not care for the common people.

We went to China in 1972. Premier Zhou received us. I thought Premier Zhou was very charming. He asked me what kind of work I did. I said I was a librarian. Then Zhou replied: "Chairman Mao was a

librarian at Beijing University." He made me feel that he was my old friend. He asked me what I liked about China. I told him my favorable impressions of China. Then he asked me what I disliked about China. I said: I don't like people spitting on the ground. Premier said, "We can try to take care of that." Therefore, people around us did not spit any more; however, spitting remained a disgusting habit of some people. My husband went back China several times. As for the Tiananmen Incident, my husband did not agree with the students. He thought students should be more tolerant. He said: "Only foreigners welcome a China with political turmoil."

I have three children. They are all professionals. My eldest daughter, 40 years old, is a chairperson in the department of Anthropology at Sweet Briar College, Virginia. She and her husband are both anthropologists, and they have a five-year-old daughter. She leads a busy life and works hard. Every summer she goes to Greece to do field work. In 1997 she received a $136,000 grant to do research in Kazakhstan and another $20,000 grant to write a book.

My son was trained as a lawyer. He is now at a foundation which gives grants for worthy causes. My younger daughter was my husband's favorite child. Now 36, she has been engaged twice, but never married. She has two master's degrees from Berkeley -- one in civil engineering, another in architecture. She works for the government, and is in charge of twenty men in her place of work. She has no desire for me or anyone else to arrange a marriage for her.

I was head librarian at the Shrewsbury Public Library in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts for five and a half years. Then I worked at the Shrewsbury School as a librarian. I am now writing a biography of a famous person from Shrewsbury.

2. Foreign-born Women at Work

Ling Ng

Ling Ng was born into an intellectual family in Beijing, China in 1931. She migrated to the Philippines with her parents in 1941. She came to the United State to obtain her higher education in the

1950s and then returned to the Philippines to get married to a wealth Chinese Filipino factory owner. She came to America again in the 1970s to accompany her children who were attending colleges in America. While her children returned to the Philippines after graduation, she stayed and became a guidance counselor of the public school in a small town in Missouri at the time of the interview.

I was born in Beijing, at that time it was called Beiping, on April 1, 1931. When I was born we did not have a western calendar; we only had a lunar calendar, so I do not know what month it was in solar calendar, but I know it was 1931.

I don't know the school my parents went to, but they were trained as teachers. My mother had been a teacher since she was sixteen. Her father was one of the founders of the Peking College of Chinese Studies. The other founder was a Presbyterian, Dr. Petit. The school actually started in Shanghai, but it moved to Beijing. It's a Chinese culture, language, geography, and history school for foreigners. My father and mother both taught there, and that's where they met. They married, and I am their only child.

At the school where they were teaching, they were not allowed to speak English. There was a method that after three months of learning you can speak straight Chinese. My father was a teacher first, then he became Assistant Dean and Dean of that college. Their students were adults: Japanese, French, Germans, Americans, and Russians. They were missionaries, employees of oil companies, government officials, and military men. They came to China and wanted to learn about the Chinese and their language. My parents were very good at their jobs.

We have always had maids. In our home it was my parents, the maid, and me. We did not flaunt it, it was just comfortable. My parents were very strict with me. I still remember my mother saying things like, "Oh my, don't speak unless you're spoken to," or, "you're never allowed to sit when you have *zhang-bei* (senior) in the room." To be proper, proper, and proper ... it was just very strict in the old-fashioned way.

I attended an all-girls private school in Beijing then. We wore uniforms, we were clean, and we walked or bicycled to school. I really liked it because my school was near a park. We went there every

afternoon to have fun. I was very happy as a little girl in China. I loved the seasons. I loved my cousins; we had fun every weekend. It was a happy time.

The curriculum at school was terrible! I went to school from morning till evening, and then I had lots of homework. I was not a good student. My parents were so strict that I remember very clearly that I was punished. Everyone would go outside and play, but I would stay in and practice calligraphy. I remember my desk. I had my own room, and under the desk I had all the ink and other stationary. I remember that, as my punishment, I had to write six or eight pages of calligraphy. Oh it was terrible, I cried all the time. Well there was *guo-wen* [Chinese language], there was *maobizi* [Chinese calligraphy], and there was history, geography, and physical education. Oh it was hard, and we had to memorize many things; but I learned a lot. It was good, old-fashioned teaching. I studied the Chinese language from the time I was in elementary school. My father also taught me with flashcards. I had to learn 30 in a week; if I learned then I was rewarded, and got spanked when I couldn't remember.

I lived in Beijing from 1931 to 1941. Because of the Japanese occupation of China, my parents were called to start another school, a branch in the Philippines. They were not the only ones invited. There were Min, Chou ... about six or seven teachers. My father was the principal. He was the leader, and because they were not allowed to bring family, he took only those people who were willing to leave their loved ones. My father was the only one who was allowed to bring family along.

Four church groups sponsored and invited him: the Presbyterians, Methodists, Congressionals, and Baptists. Their boards supplied transportation and all other expenses. My parents and other teachers taught the missionaries from these churches in the Philippines. They became exclusively teachers for missionaries. This was their chance to flee from the Japanese, but they thought they could still go back to China someday.

Life in the Philippines was not good. It was there that I began to learn English. I had a private tutor, an American with a Chinese name. My father gave all the students who came to his school Chinese

names. Her name was Fern Harrington, so my father said "Han" for Harrington and “Feng” for Fern. Therefore, her Chinese name was Han Feng. It is a very meaningful name. When I first went there I was a big girl already, 8 or 9 years old, but I was put in grade one with all the Filipinos. Since my private tutor taught me English, I knew how to say "good morning" and some other phrases. She used a catalog, Sears or Montgomery Ward, as a textbook. She taught me by using the pictures in the catalogue.

She was my father’s student and a Southern Baptist missionary. All these people that have taught me or helped me grow were missionaries. I am a product of missionaries. One taught me to type, one taught me English, another taught me to play piano, to sing, and to sew. I had almost a completely Western education. I was passed mainly from auntie to auntie. I was like theirs too because I was the only child at the school and they all loved me. However, my father said, “you must teach her, don’t spoil her.” He was very strict, so strict that when I started to speak English, he told me that I speak Chinese at home so that I would not forget the language. When I was little and started learning English, I disliked it at first, but soon grew to truly enjoy it.

As I was so young, I just played and went to church and followed the missionaries. They were my role models. In the war and in the concentration camp, all the women and children were put together. I didn't learn much because I was with my mother, and she was put to work. So I played with all these other Fujianese and Cantonese, then I began to speak *Cantonese* and *Fujianese* because they could not speak Mandarin. We were together for a year, so we became friends. We were freed in 1942, and my parents then taught the Chinese the Chinese language. The missionaries were still in the camps. The churches could no longer support them, so that was their livelihood. My father had a lot to do with teaching the Chinese teachers how to teach their children in the Philippines.

In 1946 we went back to China after the Second World War was over. My father was asked to go and teach when everyone returned. They had about two hundred teachers, and maybe two or three thousand students. The students were not just missionaries; they were U.S. Standard Oil, military, and

embassy people. My father taught at a Chinese language school for foreigners in an old hotel building at Beiping. My parents had a bedroom, I had a bedroom, and we had a kitchen. It was enough for us; it was very nice. But we couldn't have any company!

In 1949 we went to Qingdao, Shandong province, and took a plane to Shanghai. We stayed there for several months and were guests of some southern Baptists. We were there through Christmas. On January 1, we left for Baguio, Philippines. At this time they were employed by the foreign mission board of the Southern Baptist convention until they retired, so they were teaching and helping missionaries. My mother and some missionaries started the Chinese Baptist Church in Manila. My father and the Chinese started the Baguio Baptist Church.

I did not decide to come to the United States, my father decided for me. Miss Harrington was determined that I would come to the U.S. for college; I guess she thought I had the potential. She told my father she could help me get a scholarship. I was not deserving of a scholarship. My father asked me if that was what I wanted, because I could go to the Philippines Women's University in Manila. But he felt that since the Philippines wasn't "Chinese" Chinese, that "American" America would be better for me. And since my parents weren't rich, they weren't sure they could pay for my college. They asked me if I would like to teach, which I did. Fern Harrington had graduated in the 1930's from NMSU (Northeast Missouri State University) at the top of her class. She wrote to Dr. Ryle and he said he would give me a full scholarship for as long as I wanted to study. I only had to pay my room and board, and at that time it was less than $50 a month. My mother did not want me to go, but my father said that four years would go by very fast.

I lived in the dorm. My parents sent me money, but I worked in the dorm switchboard and also in the library. That gave me money to buy toothpaste, shoes, etc. My father wouldn't allow me to work in a Chinese restaurant. He said you may work in the library, the dorm, or work as a teacher, but there were certain things he wouldn't let me do. So in the summer I worked in camps, all religious camps.

My first year was so hard. I flunked every English test. I didn't have the background. I was so embarrassed, but I knew I had to hang in there. The last test was on punctuation and I not only passed it, but also passed with flying colors. So, the teacher said "Good for you Miss Ng" and he passed me for the quarter. At that time we had the quarter system. I had classes with Dr. Park, Dr. Ruth Towne, Dr. Kohlenberg; all these teachers were wonderful and so kind to me. I worked very hard, and did the best I could. I have the education I do today because of my parents, NMSU, and the missionaries. They were all so good to me. I never experienced any prejudice.

There were two Oriental students, myself and Suzy Wong from Hong Kong. But she was only here for two years and then went to New York. So I was the only Chinese. If you look in the yearbook in 1955, at that time we had the largest number of students in the international club ever; there were about thirty members, and I was the only Chinese.

Dr. Park was an older gentleman who taught in the social science division. He was very smart and was a good teacher. He had a really good sense of humor. He was very funny and both he and his wife were very kind to me. She wrote me not long ago. She's in Oceanside, California, but she really misses Marysville. I also had Dr. Zhou as a professor. Dr. Zhou, Dr., Towne, Dr. Wade, and Dr. Nobb all taught me. Dr. Nobb, who has since passed away, was my advisor. I had many other professors. I really learned when I was there. All the teachers helped me learn, even now. Dr. Carol Jones, Dr. McNeil, they are all wonderful. This is what I really appreciate about this school.

I did not really have any bad experiences. I made some beautiful friendships and dated. I went out with two American men, but my father's teachings were always in the back of my mind. I had a good time, but I never thought about marriage. It was fine just to be friends, because I knew I eventually wanted to go back home. When I was young my father had so much influence over me. However, as I got older it was my mother who had more influence.

We were a very traditional family, but my parents were very democratic for Chinese. They quarreled on bad days, but they considered each other equal and had a lot of faith. They prayed. They did not go to church, but they were very religious.

I returned to the Philippines after I graduated from NMSU. Dr. Ryle offered to let me stay and get my master's. That is one of my regrets because I could have finished it in one year. But my father wanted me to come home, and I was homesick. I went back and taught at the Chinese school, Grace Christian, for two years. Then I taught at an American school in Baguio. It was called Brandt School, an Episcopalian school, kindergarten through grade twelve. And then I got married.

My husband and I knew each other for ten years. We met each other in 1949 and married in 1959. I think he had the idea of marriage before I did. We had a difficult time because he is from a *Fujianese* family, a huge family with fifteen brothers and sisters, and two mothers (his first mother died and he had a stepmother). However, my father respected my husband's father very much because he knew he was fair. His father was a businessman; he owns something from the north of Luzon to the south of Mindoro now. He was a *Shouling* [leader]. Ng is a huge family; he is well known, very rich and very famous. But he himself is a very upright person, so my father considered it a good match. His only consideration was that we did't live with anybody; he didn't think I could deal with all those in-laws. And so there was a very big ceremony. The engagement was something; there were a lot of banquets.

My husband graduated as an architectural engineer and civil engineer from Magoa University in Manila. Magoa is like the M.I.T. of the Philippines. He's brilliant. He studied very hard and learned business from his father. His father came from Fujian as an assistant cook when he was sixteen. He was penniless when he came to the Philippines. He saved and taught himself; by the time I married my husband, he owned lumber companies, and grocery bins with rice and sugar cane. His first wife gave him thirteen children. The thirteenth is an ear, nose, and throat specialist; he works in New York. When my mother-in-law was pregnant with the thirteenth, his name is Victor, she had cancer with a tumor the size of

a coconut. The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country because it was occupied by Spain for 350 years and by Americans for fifty. She had to make a choice, and because they were Catholics, they would sacrifice the mother to save the child. And that's what they did. And today, at the University of Santo Thomasio, her tumor is in a jar; I saw it. After his first wife died, my father-in-law chose a second wife, and he picked the one who could cook. It's because he knew the kids had to eat, never mind if they're dirty. She was the daughter of a man who gambled and lost, and she was sold to my father-in-law. It's very sad but true. She gave birth to seven, but five of them died in various ways, mostly from illness. So there are only fifteen children in the family, and my husband is number six.

When we married, he was the purchasing agent for his father. He would buy goods for the store, doing accounting, etc. Although he graduated as an engineer but never practiced that. After we got married my father-in-law gave him some money and he built seven factories. He started with State Steel, two of those. Then he built Philippine Rope (two of those factories) and Cable & Wire factories. Because of his family support he could go to Japan, Italy, and Germany to buy machines. At first it was a process of trial and error, but gradually he became very good at it and became a successful businessman. He's semi-retired now, he had two strokes, but he's doing well, thanks to the support provided by his large family .

I have two children. Our daughter helps her father in the factories. Our son has his own business. They all live in Manila, but they came to the States for college. My daughter went to school in Tennessee at Carson-Newman, a Southern Baptist college, and then transferred to Furman, another Baptist university. My son also studied there. He then came to NMSU, but he didn't graduate.

My daughter went into elementary education when she was in college. My son declared this, that, and the other major, but he didn't finish school. He left with one year remaining. My children liked the lifestyle better in the Philippines because they live like a prince and a princess. Here you have to do your own laundry, you're not the boss. Back home my daughter opens her mouth and everybody jumps.

I came back to the United States when my children were here during college. Actually I came back in 1981 because I was checking on them. I only came in the summer and went back when school started. I did that from 1981 to 1984. Then I said to myself, “I'm coming here every year, I might as well be going to school.” I talked to Dr. Towne and she wanted me to do a Master’s degree in social science. I ultimately decided to do counseling because at home, I felt like I needed to find my place. So I started and kept at it. Meanwhile my son and daughter went back to the Philippines and I stayed. My second time here was wonderful. I learned and thoroughly enjoyed it. I can now say I'm more self-assured, useful, and independent.

That was my major reason to stay, but I also wanted to take care of my parents. My parents, after living overseas for so long, did not want to go back China. They were not willing to live under that system and there was no home for them there. They had retired and had been living in the Philippines for all these years. After their retirement they went to Taiwan and lived there for more than ten years because it was the next best thing to China. They had their retirement fund, and that took care of them very well. They didn't think they could survive in China. They didn't think it was the same China they left, but Taiwan was more or less the same. They were happy there and made a lot of friends, mostly Christians. Every year they would come visit me or I would visit them. They were very able. However, I wanted them here because, as I was applying for permanent residency at the time, I could not process my papers going back and forth. At that time, I could not fly anywhere. I wanted them to come here so I could take care of them.

I think it was in 1985 or 1986 when they got here. I was going to school and took care of them. It was then that my mother's health started to fail; she had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She died five years later and my father died seven years later. He was bed ridden for the last year and a half.

I graduated in 1987. It took two years for me to finish my master’s program. I didn't start on my degree until January of 1985 and graduated in May of 1987. I worked in town for Living & Aging Concerns Inc., a counseling office. Many summers, I also worked on campus for Upward Bound. I did these while I

was in school, and I also taught Chinese cooking at the Vo Tech, a vocational school in town. I did various things to make money. I didn't want to depend on my husband, although he will still give me money, all he asks is how much. He's like that, very kind, very gentle. There's really not much difference between my husband and I. It's just that my parents could not go to the Philippines to live because the Chinese could not live there. I needed to take care of them, and so this was the logical place. I couldn't work on my master's in Taiwan. I think there is some conflict between my husband and I as far as raising the kids; just ordinary husband and wife things. I do not want them to live like a prince and princess; I want them to know the dignity of work. He calls and we still talk, but circumstances require that I stay here.

I never really applied for a job, and I didn't have to have one. But once you get a job you can process your papers faster. One summer after I came back, there was a message on my answering machine from Mr. Burns, the principal at the local school. He said, "Mrs. Ng, we need a counselor in La Plata schools." I had known that they needed a counselor, but I never thought they would ask me. He said, “The university placement rated you very highly. Would you consider coming in for an interview?” So I called and got an interview with the principal of the high school and principal of the elementary school. There was no application, no resume, and I was hired on the spot. Normally they advertise nationally when hiring someone, and they also go to different colleges on interviews, but the board voted and I was picked unanimously.

I am the guidance counselor for grades K through twelve. In the elementary school, it is a lot of teaching, curriculum, getting to know the kids, and helping coordinate career days. In the high school it is more complicated. It is a lot of career days and exploration, and they have to know what they're going to do after high school. I help with financial aid, scholarships, and college visits. I coordinate the recruiter meetings. I also go in the classrooms. I do a career planning profile for the lower grades. I like to bring in some character when I teach, practicing responsibility, honesty, and respect. I do a lot of correspondence work and public relations. I also visit with the parents and help the principal. I feel that I just listen. I've

made friends with everybody, especially the teachers. I talk to them, listen to them, and serve as a resource. Every day of my job is varied. I try to get fee waivers. I give tests to special education students. I do all the I.T. tests and gifted tests. We have a testing schedule to follow, we have things on the calendar, but day-to-day, it's up to me. This is a wonderful system here; they just give it to me. I do as little or as much work as I want. My office is usually always open, but during the summer the door is closed because this room has air conditioning. They treat me very well. I like them all and I think they like me.

There are cultural barriers, but I always give them the benefit of the doubt and do what's right for here and now. One of the lessons I received at university was never to impose my beliefs and my values. However, for the little ones I do tell them. I think they know through human nature the difference between right and wrong. To cheat is wrong, for example. As human beings we are by nature sensitive, we have a sixth sense. This is what I do; I carry myself and let them see it. You cannot say one thing and be something else, it just doesn't work. I am me, and this is me, that doesn't mean I'm perfect. However, I think by my actions and the way I respond, they know what I am made of. So they know the things I approve, and the things I don't. I never have to say, "this is wrong, you shouldn't smoke, you shouldn't drink," they know that. I feel you don't have to say anything; we just behave the way we should behave. If people are smart they will see. I have never encountered a situation where parents or students think that I don't know where they're coming from because I am Chinese. Truly, I've never been treated so kind and been so accepted. I share, but I don't give advice because I'm not in their shoes. But if they ask me, I'll make suggestions because there are always alternatives to a problem.

I have many friends here. All my friends are my age or younger, and we get together often. Most of them are female unless they are husbands. I am married and I have a husband so I do not have male friends unless they are professional friendships such as my superintendent. I belong to the 1st Baptist Church, but I don't go every Sunday. I have church friends, school friends, professional friends, neighbors, Jen and her family.

Jen runs a farm with her sister and co-owns three Subway sandwich stores. I have known Jen since college and we are best friends. I invited her to live with me because I cannot live by myself. We cook together. I want to try to be on my own, but I'm not used to being alone. We each have our own jobs; she runs Subway and farms. She graduated from the university with an agricultural degree. She can do anything: build a house, weld, and plant. She is a very capable person. She can do crafts and paint, and she can fix cars. That's why I live with her, because I don't have to do much. It is not easy to keep a strong friendship all these years. She's been to the Philippines and to Taiwan; she helped with my parents, with my children. She is seven years younger than I.

We used to own a grocery store, More-of-Ling, in this town. It was on Jefferson Street, by the post Office. She and I tried to run it; we tried to keep busy. It sold just canned Chinese food, Chinese crafts, and Chinese cookware. It was a very nice store. We had it for two or three years. A lot of our stuff was sold to Gatsby's. We sold it when I got the counseling job because we did not have time to go to Chicago or San Francisco to buy supplies. We went to buy our products in person because we wanted to make sure what we got was fresh and right. A lot of Chinese are not very nice. The store was not profitable; we broke even. It was more of a service. However, because we were teaching Chinese cooking and we could buy wholesale with a tax number. We could not do it again, we do not have time to shop. We wanted it clean, neat, classy, and inexpensive. It's hard. We went as far as California, as near as Chicago and St. Louis. We had fun, but would not do it again.

That’s not the only way you can be rich. My husband is a multi-millionaire. My father's teachings are very strong, and I believe that whatever your calling is, is what you'll do. I believe in integrity. Jen and I are thinking about what we'll do when we retire and we think we'll do crafts. She's started already. We want to make things that are useful, that will not just hang and collect dust. So we're thinking and exploring. We'll ask for a fair price, we don't want to make a killing.

I will get my citizenship soon. I have a green card now but I don't have a passport and I cannot vote. But I want my citizenship for two reasons. One is that I want my children to have a chance to come here, if they want to. Right now they don't want to. But what if in their 40's or 50's they want to come here? My husband can leave them zillions; I don't have that. So I will give them another option in life. That's why I'm here, to serve my children and give them something if they want it. They can't come to stay. They can come as tourists. But if they want to come permanently, they have to wait for a quota. With a quota, such a wait can be endless; from the Philippines, it's just too long. Because I was born in China, it was easier for me. My husband does not want to come here, he has no desire. He has already traveled the world, so have my son and my daughter. They have been to Africa and the Middle East.

I miss my kids more than anything. I miss my daughter; she's in my blood. She is 30. I call her, and she calls me. I think they want to get married someday. I miss them, but it is worth it. They said to me, “Mom, after you get your citizenship, you negotiate with us, because we do not want to go.”

I like this area. For instance, this morning I went to renew my driver's license and people call me by my name. I went to the restaurant and they knew us. It's so easy to do things; they trust you. Sure I’ve thought about moving; I like the Southwest, Arizona. I've been to Mesa and I love it. I like California too but it's too crowded.

The thing I like best about this town is that it is a college town. It is more invigorating and you have things to do—go to bookstores or eat out. I eat out at Thousand Hills, Country Kitchen, and Best Western, and then Manhattan sometimes. We go to the Wooden Nickel as well.

I also like the small town where I am living now, because it is very quiet, very peaceful, and because I am getting older. I think I'm the only Chinese here. There are two Filipino ladies; there might be a Mexican gentleman. I've lived here now for four years. I used to live in the university town but I decided to move here. The residents here are mostly involved in agriculture, but many of them also work in other nearby towns. They work in the hospitals, in the school system, in the factories, and in the nursing home.

There's not really anything I don't like about this area. Well, I don't like the winters. I don't like the extreme heat or the extreme cold. That's why I like Arizona. While Arizona in the summertime is 105 or 110 degrees, it's different because it's a dry heat. Other than that, there's really nothing that I don't like. I'm a person that is easily content, easily satisfied.

I also have my depressions, my moods. Well, one person I give credit to is my roommate Jen, she analyzes me and we talk about it. I'm a very talkative person; I'm very honest. So I will tell her, "I resent you, I do not like it because I feel it should be this way, this way, this way." I can communicate, so we work it out. I do have very sad times, when I miss my daughter. But then I just pick up the phone and call her, and tell her, "right now I miss you so much." I never feel stressed about my job; I just love it. I get tired; however, it is a good feeling. I am so content and satisfied.

Erin Zeng

Erin Zeng was born into a family of educators in Hong Kong in 1938. She came to America for her higher education in 1955 and later became a successful Chemistry professor at a Midwestern university. She was married to a Euro-American, her colleague in the same department.

My father was a *Hakka*, growing up in the backward countryside of Mei Xian, in Guangdong Province. It was so mountainous that it was hard for people there to get to any nearby town. My father was very bright. When he was a teenager, he met a missionary, who found out his talent and encouraged him to go to university. He later attended Fu Jiang University in Shanghai and got his degree in Chinese literature. In 1930, he went to the United States and worked on his Ph.D. in education at Stanford University. He got his degree in two years.

Then he returned to China. He held positions in several leading Chinese universities. He was the Dean of College of Art at Qinghua University. Later, he started South China College in Hong Kong in 1936. During the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, he moved his college to China. Before the Communist

Party took over in 1949, he moved his college to Hong Kong once again. He became a professor at Chung Chi College (the current Chinese University of Hong Kong). He wrote many books on elementary, high school, and university education. He wrote university textbook *Da Xue Zhong Wen* [Chinese language for university students], which was used in many universities in Hong Kong and many other southeastern Asian countries.

My mother was born in Shanghai. She received her college degree in sociology from Denison University in Ohio in 1930. Then she returned to China and met my father on the ship. They got married in 1931 or 1932. She taught college English for all of her life.

My parents worked very hard. They were so busy that they did not have too much time to spend with us. My father was busy traveling to raise funds for his college and my mother was busy making a living and raising children. Those years were full of turmoil. We moved a lot.

My mother later became the Dean of the Women's College at Chung Chi College after my father died. In 1960, my mother came to the U. S. to live with me. She worked in the library at the University of Chicago for four years when I was a graduate student there. She followed me to the UC Davis, where I was a Research Associate and Lecture in Chemistry for two years; however, she was too old to find a job there. My mother got her U. S. citizenship in 1965. She died in Oxford, Ohio in 1986.

My brother was born in 1934. He is four years older than I. In 1950 he graduated from high school in Hong Kong, then he went to Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. During his university years, he went to Hong Kong to visit my family and my mother went to China to visit him. After graduation, he was sent to Changchun, Jilin province. As soon as my mother got her citizenship, she began to work for my brother's visa. The visa was ready five or six years before my brother came to America, because he had trouble getting his passport from the Chinese government. In 1978, my mother was very ill, which allowed my brother to get a passport. He came to the U.S. alone in 1981. His family (his wife, a son and a daughter) came later in 1983. He had a hard time at first, but he received his Master's degree in geology at this

university. Later he found jobs: first in Toledo, Ohio, then at Stanford University. Now he works for an optical company. His wife learned English and driving since she came here. She is working in the same company as he does as a technician, making about $25,000 a year ($7 hourly pay), which would be equivalent to a bachelor degree holder's pay. If the company needs her, she works ten hours a day and some hours on the weekend.

My niece attended the university here for a year; she had a hard time adjusting. Then she went back to China to enroll at Fudan University in Shanghai and earned her BA there. Later she got a Master's degree at a university in New York.

I was born in Kowloon, Hong Kong, on February 8, 1938. Because of the turmoil during the World War II years, I didn't have a formal education until 1949 when I started high school at Pei Ching High School, a well-known Chinese high school in Hong Kong. Before my high school years, I had never learned English.

I came to the United States for my undergraduate work in 1955 when I was 17 years old. My father paid my traveling expenses with the royalties from his books. My benefactress Alice, who was the mother of my mother's close friend, gave $18,000 to Berea College, Kentucky, which was enough for four years schooling. Berea College has very good reputation and it is very hard to get into it, but the tuition is very cheap.

In the first year at Berea, I was very shy, because I could not speak English and I looked different. Berea had an international reputation and there was a large racial element. But I was the only Oriental there. There was also an Indian fellow. When we ate in the dining hall, sitting in the round table, I was speechless, just smiling. But I could get along with my classmates and roommates and did not feel lonely, for I was so interested in what I saw and so busy studying that I did not have time to think I was lonely. My childhood experience also helped me. We traveled from place to place when I was little. I can speak five Chinese dialects. To me, coming to America is same as coming to a new town. I passed the entrance

exams. I was behind in English, but I got high scores in math and other science courses. I had to take a 100 level English course. The difficulty in English made me very busy.

I stayed in Berea from 1955 to 1957. Then I transferred to the University of Chicago, which was close to where my benefactress lived. Using the money from my benefactress and the money I earned over the summer, I was able to support myself. Entering the graduate program at the University of Chicago, I got a scholarship. I never felt that anyone discriminated against me. I was always the only female in my class. I was treated like a queen. I felt I was special.

I was well treated until I earned my Ph.D. I had a hard time finding a real job. I was post-doctoral research associate and instructor in Chemistry at Illinois Institute of Technology for two years from 1963 to 1964, and research associate and lecturer in Chemistry at the University of California at Davis from 1964 to 1966. After that, I was a research associate and visiting scientist at Argonne National Laboratory, in Argonne, IL, from 1966 to 1969. I felt Argonne was an ideal place for my research, for the equipment there is advanced. Unfortunately, the government cut off the funds and I had to look for a job somewhere else.

I found my first real job at this university in 1969. I met a professor from the university when I was at Davis. He was interested in my research. Later he invited me to give several seminars at the university. The search committee then decided to hire me as an assistant professor. Four years later, I was promoted to associate professor without any objection.

I feel that in scientific fields, the scientists are very fair in value judgment and recommendation, whereas in the humanities and social sciences, there is a greater human factor there. If you are a woman, if you are a Chinese, you have to work harder. It seems that there is no prejudice there, but every little element can add to the difficulty.

When I teach graduate level, no students complain about my accent. But when I teach freshmen level, these freshmen would say: I don't understand her, she has an accent. They could have understood me with a little effort, but they don't want to make any effort! If I am in a good mood, I would just laugh at

these evaluations. But this could be a source of depression. Language is the major source of hardship for me. I have to work harder than my peers. I am upset that I am still criticized after I made a great effort, whereas some of my colleagues even don't prepare before their lectures. You are fighting a battle that you can't ever win. Like my niece and nephew, when they speak out in the class, everyone looks at them carefully, questioning in their mind if they can speak English. Even if you could speak perfect English, they still feel it different, for they look at you differently. You are socially handicapped.

I met my husband Mark in the Chemistry department here. We are both physical chemists. At that time, I was 31 years old and thought I could never get married. When my mother found out about our relationship (she lived with me), she could not be happier. She did not mind the racial difference, as long as this man is nice. Mark is a very nice person. He came from a farmer's family. Unlike my mother, his parents didn't have any knowledge of foreign cultures, but they were all very nice. Mark introduced me to his family and relatives. We got married in 1971 when I was 33, and he was 31. We didn't have a ceremony. We thought we were old, so we didn't want to tell friends and relatives about our marriage.

I am very happy about my marriage. I became a U.S. citizen in 1973, two years after we got married. I never judge people based on racial background. If you work with somebody, then you might develop a relationship with him, which is what happened to us. My husband appreciates Oriental culture. He has a great knowledge of Chinese history and geography. He made the whole transition a smooth one. I have no problems adjusting to a white American man, for I am totally Americanized, but I feel that I understand him better than he understands me. I have been a foreigner among natives; he has never been in the same situation. The first five years of my marriage were very difficult. There were all kinds of adjustments with work and family. Then both of us felt we should not have children.

I like American men. They would make better husbands and fathers than Oriental men. They are capable and hard workers. My husband could almost do everything, physically and mentally. He can fix

everything. He knows almost everything. Sometimes, I feel sorry for my husband; he is working all the time, doing all kinds of thing for other people. He never refuses other people's requests.

I am very Americanized. When my brother came, I had to learn to adjust to him. But my judgment and sense of value are still Chinese. I have a Chinese attitude. I am proud of my Chinese culture. I would be upset if somebody thinks I am Japanese. I think I am very fortunate to be Chinese. I think Chinese culture is still at the top of world civilization, except for classical music and science, which are pretty western-oriented. I like Chinese culture, but I also appreciate western classical music and science.

I appreciate some American characteristics: generosity and encouragement to speak out. On the other hand, I consider superficial values to be a bad feature of American life. For example, in political campaigns, people's judgments are sometimes very superficial. I am very interested in American mainstream politics. I voted every year. I sympathize with the two cultures.

Even though I am Americanized, I don't feel I fit into American society. I don't think I fit into the professional situation in a deep sense. Superficially, I fit. I don't fit into China either. I can talk to my husband about my feelings, but he is not my entire world. I have to face students, my job, and other problems. When I faced age problems, I was also unhappy about my teaching. Students demanded that exams be easier and easier. The national education level is dropping. At this time, I sometimes feel as if I have no spiritual and moral support system.

Gena Chen

Gena Chen was born into a family of professional musicians in Taiwan in 1946 and trained in the United States as a concert pianist. Married to a prominent Chinese American scientist, she has two sons. She taught at Peabody Observatory, Baltimore, Maryland and then moved to St. Louis with her husband in 1998. She has lived in St. Louis since and teaches piano at her own studio.

I was born in Hongzhou, China, on January 3, 1946. When I was six months old, my parents, who both went to music school (my father was a violinist and my mother a soprano), went to Taiwan to look for

jobs and never had a chance to go back. That was how we stayed in Taiwan, even though that was in 1946, three years before the communist takeover in 1949. My father got a job in Taipei Symphony Orchestra and my mother taught music at a high school. They liked their jobs and settled down. Why did they choose Taiwan over other places? I think one of their professors went to Taiwan and recommended them to go there.

My paternal grandfather, Chen Shizhe , was born in 1891 in Nanan County, Fujian. He was a revolutionary and joined Sun Yat-sen's 1911 Revolution. He was very well-liked by the local people. In 1925 he was arrested and executed by a Chinese warlord. My father, who was then five, and his sister, who was eight, were raised by their mother alone. After my grandfather died, people in his county erected a big monument commemorating him for what he did for the area. During the Communist regime, the whole monument was knocked down. In 1989, my aunt, my father, and some relatives made the government donate some money to rebuilt the monument. When the new monument was erected, it was a big event, a big celebration, and a book was written about my grandfather.

My maternal grandfather, Xie Touba, was an artist. He was born in 1902 in Xiamen, Fujian. He was fond of drawing at an early age. In 1919, he went to Philippines, studying fine arts at Philippine University. He graduated in 1925 but continued to study painting at Philippine University. During the afternoons and evenings, he taught at local Chinese school. In 1928, he was sponsored by his cousin, who resided in Vietnam, to go to France to study western painting. He enrolled in a fine arts college and graduated in 1934. It was very unusual that he went to Paris for ten years when he had family in China. Then he returned to China, taught at Fine Arts Academy of Xiamen, Fujian Normal School, National Academy of Fine Arts at Hongzhou, and Fujian Normal University. He served as Dean of *Hongzhou Yizhuan* [National Academy of Fine Arts of Hongzhou]. He passed away just two years ago. I have a large scroll which was presented to him by one of his students at his 90th birthday celebration. People say "Bei Xu Nan Xie", Xu is Xu Beihong (a famous painter of Chinese style), Xie is Xie Touba. He had many

students who guided the art world in China. I also have a painting, which I have had for over ten years, created and sent to me by one of his students who went to Taiwan. When we moved to St. Louis, we hang it up in our home.

My father, Chen Dunchu , was born on November 20, 1920, in Fujian. He graduated from National Fujian Music Academy in 1940, specializing in violin. My mother, Xie Xueru , was born on May 22, 1926 in Hongzhou. She also studied at *Fujian Yizhuan* [Fujian Academy of Arts].

In the 1950s, even though Taiwan was not very prosperous, we did not feel poor. We had all we needed. We had two servants who were from the countryside, one taking care of the kids, the other doing household chores. It was quite common for people to have servants. My father worked at the Taipei Symphony Orchestra as a violinist. He later became concertmaster and conductor. Later, he did not want to conduct, and so he became manager for the Taipei Symphony Orchestra for many years. He did many things for the orchestra, one example being the Taipei Music Festival. It was very successful. President Li Denghui was Taipei's mayor at the time. President Li was a very serious classical music lover. One of the things they did during the Taipei Music Festival, rather than traditional concerts, was that they promoted a lot of traditional Chinese music, and folk Taipei music and opera. At the Taipei Music Festival, President Li translated for Faust, the German Chancellor, a huge work, from Chinese to German. His German must have been excellent that he could translate the whole opera into German. President Li had his early education in Japan, and it was probably there that he learned German.

I have four siblings, and I am the oldest. Next comes my brother, Chen Langu, born in 1950. He is four years younger than I. I have two sisters, Chen Hongqi born in 1954, and Chen Baiqi born in 1956. We all work in the music world. My brother is a violinist, educated at Yale and Columbia University. Both of my sisters are cellists. One also graduated from Yale, the other from the Music School of New York. In the last generation, children did not have a choice to do what they wanted to. They all listened to their parents. That was what happened to us. Our parents made the career choice for us. At least I know my parents

made the choice for me and I like it very much; I do not know about my siblings. Between the siblings we had a large age gap. When I came to the States, my brother and my two sisters were very small. My brother and I are five years apart, and my brother and other sisters are another five years apart. I came here when I was 17. Therefore, I do not know if they fell into music willingly or not. However, they are all doing very well.

My brother just came back from Beijing. The first time he was there, he could only stay for two days to give a lecture. Some of my mother's teachers had retired from *Beijing Yinyue Xueyuan* [Beijing Music Academy], but he met some of my parents' teachers. They were very moved seeing their students' child now lecturing at *Beijing Yinyue Xueyuan*. I am really happy that people of both sides (mainland and Taiwan) could come and go very easily. My mother did not see my grandfather for about thirty years. When they met, it was very emotional for both of them. My mother went to China every year and every time she went, she just stayed at home to give my grandfather company. My grandfather was living in Fuzhou and passed away three years ago. My grandmother had died several years earlier. This is a historic tragedy for all the families. However, it is getting better, so I am very encouraged. I know I have a lot of aunts and uncles in Mainland China, scattered all over the country. They [the government] sends you to work in a certain place. I am not very familiar with my family history, because my parents did not want to talk about it before. I think now they are more open to say things. However, one of my aunts did go to Taiwan to visit with my mother five years ago.

When I started playing piano at six, I had a lot of practice, about two hours everyday, very regimented. Practicing was part of my daily schedule. Because we lived in the staff housing area for the symphony people, all the children there were practicing music. Therefore, you do not question when you hear your next-door neighbor practicing. It was, in a way, a very good environment. You do not feel you are left out because everybody was outside playing [some musical instruments]. Every day, I was at home practicing. I had a very nice childhood. My practicing did not affect my academic work; I did very well at

school. I went to Taipei First High School. It was very hard to get in. After junior high, my parents already realized that my life would be going toward musical direction and that the high school work would hamper my practice time. However, I did take the "*Liankao,*" the high school entrance examination, and I did get into high school. I then went to *Taipei Yizhuan*, Taiwan National Academy of Arts, to concentrate more on music. There I had fewer academic demands, and more time to practice. *Taipei Yizhuan* was like a high school. Most people went there after junior high, at 15, like me, but others went after high school. It is a five-year academic program, focusing on music in my case. They also have arts-related subjects, such as painting, fine arts, and movie making. It is not equivalent to a BA; instead, you get an art diploma. I stayed there for two years and then I came to the United States.

I first came to New England Conservatory of Music in Boston in 1963, when I was seventeen. At that time in Taiwan it was true and it is probably still true that you can not come to the U.S. as a undergraduate. I was the second one from Taiwan, after the government enacted a new law, called "*Tiancai Ertong Chuguo Banfa*" [The measure for Talented Youth Studying Overseas], to encourage talented musicians to go abroad after rigorous exams. They say you should go to develop your skill rather than wait until graduate school. I received permission from the government by taking a lot of tests to prove that I was worthy. I got four scholarships. At that time, the Taiwanese government only encouraged graduate students to study overseas. If you were a male, you could go overseas only after you served in the military.

I was quite prepared when I came to America. Other than English, where we had to study Shakespeare, no courses gave me a hard time. I had no problem at all with musically-related subjects. Because my foundation in Taiwan gave me a jump-start, I was much more prepared than a lot of my classmates. Before I came to America, I learned two or three years of English in my regular high school English class. However, the Boston accent gave me trouble. I did tape a lot of lectures. I also had a lot of

helpful classmates. I would listen to lectures several times. I would study my friends' notes and my notes and usually I ended up having better grades.

How was life besides academic work? I had no life. It was academic work and practice, period. I was probably very naïve, unlike many American girls or boys at seventeen. I had never spent a night away from home before then. I had led a very sheltered life and did whatever I knew how to do, which was study and practice. I basically did the same thing in America, except everything was in English. I was not very different from what I was in Taiwan, but I did miss my family. I really realized I was away from home when I went back to my dorm and saw that my bed was still not made, because the servants made my bed at home. That was first time it hit me hard. I was sad for a while. However, after a while, I was okay. I just accepted it and did the best I could.

I stayed in Boston for five years. After I graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music, I went to Mills College in Oakland, California, which had excellent teachers there. It was a good time. It was during the Berkeley turmoil, and so I experienced things like sit-ins. I did not participate, however, it was an exciting time for a young person.

Did I have any social activity? In Boston, I participated in Chinese student choirs that are found at several colleges in Boston. I did the same thing at Berkeley. There was a choirs company for the Chinese students there. My life was still mostly work, study, and practice, however. I do not think I was a very social person. As I get older, you may see me gradually becoming more outgoing.

I met Frank in Boston. He was at MIT; there was a student activity and we met there. We met again when we were at the UC San Diego during our separate careers. I did not know he was there, but. when we met again, it was good. We started dating. I was in a Ph.D. program and had my committee proposal prepared, but I did not finish my Ph.D. degree. I was probably one year away from finishing it, but my focus was not on a career then. Because Frank had to do his postdoctoral studies at Johns Hopkins University, we moved to Baltimore. We wanted to have children and I had some health problems.

Otherwise, I might have finished my program. I do not regret what I did. I know I can still go back to finish it, but it is not that important to do it, because I like what I do now. I knew I always wanted a family. I think my generation is cross between the old traditional values and the new options. Some people are very torn because they could see both sides. However, in my case that was not a problem, because I know I am not idealistic enough to pursue a performing life. I always wanted to have a family. I knew that kind of life could not accommodate a nice family life. It just worked out well in my personal case, even though I did have a choice, because I chose not to go the other route. I still have a professional life and I enjoy it very much. I can make a direct influence on a one-to-one basis. People I am fortunate to have worked with over long periods of time say that I have made a huge difference in their lives. I find it very rewarding for me personally, and this way I do not have to be torn between family and career. Hopefully I do both well. You can only try your very best and deal with whatever is given to you.

When my children were younger, their demands on my time were not as great, so I continued to give recitals. When they got older, they became involved into all kinds of activities. With these factors, in addition to my teaching, it became unrealistic to keep a set schedule. I have two boys, Gregory is 21, and Jeffery is 20. It has been a long time since I have seen them; when they do come, it is only for short periods of time. They are both in California. They are involved in the liberal arts; they are not going into science or music. One is interested in business area, the other is interested in law, but they may change.

Gregory has a girlfriend, Michelle, a very nice girl. Michelle is white. He was, like me, a late-bloomer. He never dated in high school. I think this is his second girlfriend. His first relationship did not last very long. Gregory and Michelle have been dating for over a year. I do not care what race his girlfriend or future wife is, as long as they have the same values, they are good people, and good for each other. I am sure I have preferences, but it is not up to me. I do not let them know what my preference would be. I always tell them they have to find a nice person that is good for them, that is more important. But my second son told me, without me asking him, that he definitely want to marry someone Chinese . He

is not dating seriously but somehow got this idea. My sons are so close to each other in age and come from the same family, yet they have different preference.

They both speak Chinese fluently, though they cannot read and write Chinese as well. But they both went to Chinese school and they took Chinese in college. They grew up in Baltimore, where we lived for 22 years before we came to St. Louis. There were Chinese language schools there. My husband was very active in all these affairs. He was the chairman of board for the Chinese language school for eight years. The Chinese language school was just taught one day of the weekend for two hours, just like the Chinese language schools here in St. Louis. I think in D.C. there might have been more intensive Chinese language schools, but not in Baltimore. My husband insisted that we speak Chinese at home. He is very good in this way. He came here to America at the age of five, so that is even more incredible. I have a very nice, very admirable mother-in-law. When they (my in-laws) came, they were the only Chinese family in Denver. They came to the United States in February 1948 with their two boys: one five, one three. They both had student visas, which I thought was highly unusual. Usually one spouse would come and the other would stay behind. I guess my mother-in-law is a very capable person. She was born at the wrong time, thirty years too early. They stayed in Denver until my husband went to college. My father-in-law had another job, so they moved to Buffalo, New York, then retired to Fremont, California. They are involved in math or chemistry, more traditional Chinese subjects. They are very interesting to historians. My mother-in-law would give daily Chinese lessons in history and geography. She was very persistent. Before her sons were allowed to go out to play with their friends and do their regular homework, they had to learn Chinese. They had to go through each book made available to them, I found my husband's drawing of what provinces the Changjiang flows through. My mother-in-law did not work when her children were young. When they were older, she taught at a high school for sixteen years. All three children--although the youngest one, Jerry, was born in U.S.--speak perfect Chinese, which was unusual for that time. My husband speaks Chinese with a Peking accent, while I speak with a Taiwanese accent. His family was

from Jiangsu province. But his parents went to Nankai Middle School, a boarding school in Tianjin. Then they went to *Xinan Lianda*, the Southwest Associated University during the Sino-Japanese war.

Am I a strict mother or a lenient one? I would say half-and-half. I am not very strict in a traditional Chinese fashion. We usually talk about reasonable discipline when we need to. I even do not remember if they had to sit in time-out or were not allowed to watch TV, though my children probably remember. Even if it did happen, it was very rare. They did not go through a teenage rebellion. They were okay, not as bad as people predicted. I think my boys and I are as close as possible. Being boys, they tell me things that they think I need to know; no more, no less. They write e-mails, they know to call every Sunday. They do not discuss problems they had with me. At their age, they make decision and then they tell us. Sometimes they ask our opinion, but we do not tell them what to do at this point. My husband is very westernized in this way. Sometimes, between him and me we have different ways of looking at things, and he is very democratic. I think it's too much; just let them decide. It's definitely not the Chinese way. He has high standard such as honesty, integrity, and a sense of civil pride, which he wants to instill in them. Choice of lifestyle is a personal choice. It's up to them.

I didn't participate in any social organization. I was very busy with Peabody where I taught and I had a lot of responsibilities. I taught part-time at first, and gradually I became full-time as my children's demands lessened. I also participate in a lot of statewide or local music clubs and organizations.

I taught one-on-one at Peabody, I also taught classes, called enrichment classes. That's a repertoire class, teaching students from various stages. Once a week different students would come. I teach a couple of classes for students, a combination of music theory, music history, and ensemble. We play for each other, that's why we call it enrichment class. There are usually six students in each class, and the parents also would come. These students came to Peabody after their regular school. They call it prep school. Prep schools have many missions; they can prepare people who want to go into music, but they

can also accommodate people who just play an instrument for enjoyment, not necessarily go into music as a career. So we have a full range of students, and also a full range of ages, from child to adult.

When taking students, I select parents. When children are young, everybody can be educated. It depends on the parents' dedication, whether they have the right expectations, and right kind of attitude to guide their children. I feel that if I can get along with the parents, if we have the same kind of values as parents, the children would definitely come easy. There were cases in which parents needed to guide the child. I enjoy being very close friends of parents, because we all have similar outlooks. Students and parents became long-term friends. Basically, I teach children between ages of four and seventeen. I had 50 students when I was in Baltimore. Now I teach no more than 15 students, because I want to practice more for my personal growth and accommodate my husband's job.

My husband moved here because he wanted to do biomedical engineering. There is good support here at Washington University from chancellor to dean. It was also a good time, because our children were old enough to go to college. We didn't have to worry about uprooting them.

I think Johns Hopkins is a very conservative place, and my husband's career was pinnacle over there. There was certainly a glass ceiling. He was named the medical school's full-professor ten years ago. He was the only Chinese American to be named to this position in over one hundred years of Hopkins history; after him, no other Chinese American has been named, which I think is not logical at all. I am sure there are many deserving Asian Americans, but people still have very tight-knit outlook of others. There he reached the highest he could go, but he feels that he can make a big difference. He is also very concerned to make sure there are role models of Asian American professionals in his position. He wants his children to know that you can be a leader and that you should be assertive. He also mentors a lot of other friends' children, and they seek his advice, so he feels it is important for him to be a chair in a very good program. Maybe indirectly, it allows other people to have some role models. I am very proud of his determination. A

lot of time we say that you have to be twice as good in order to compete with the mainstream, which shouldn't be. Unfortunately, sometimes even twice as good is still not enough.

His work now is wonderful. He has wonderful support. They are determined to make biomedical engineering the top priority at Washington University. He is very happy. Washington University is the third-ranked medical school in the country, and all the top biomedical engineering program are associated with very top medical schools. Right now the program is just in its first year, and it's already ranked number 22. He got his degree in the late 1970s in biomedical engineering, he was among the first wave of scientists involved in biomedical engineering development. In a way, the field has been in existence for almost twenty years, and it has become extremely important. They have wonderful students, all graduate-level, which is exceptional.

His job is demanding. He stays at work very late, but this is no difference from before. He always works hard. It's definitely not a nine to five job. He has to recruit faculty, which takes a lot of time. He has to write a lot of grants and find the right kind of people for students to work for, so all of this takes time. He is involved in the lab as well. He enjoys it. His office is at the engineering school, and his lab is at the medical school. He spends more time doing administrative work than writing grants and doing research. It is no longer a research job, in which he tells his research fellows what to do. They correspond with him from Baltimore on how to use and maintain their grants. This is different from what he did before; it is more administrative, he manages the department. He wants to make a big difference at all levels, from undergraduate education to graduate students. He does this not just for himself, but for every area where he feels he should be. He is a pioneer in this place. He enjoys the administrative work more than he thought he would. Before when people were approached him for that type of position, he wasn't ready, and he thought he wasn't interested in it. He is very good with figures, very determined, and methodical, the scientific type. Some people can not do administrative tasks. He is very good, because he has been doing a lot of that anyway. In a big way, doing grants is similar to administration.

In the family affairs, I influence him a lot. We are very good at compromising if we have differences. If I feel strongly, I still do it my way. If he feels strongly, certainly he will do it his way. If it concerns our children, we definitely have the same idea. We talk about it away from the children. We come to one decision. We don't tell them different things.

Do I have any religion? No. But this is also funny. This has probably been very Chinese. After my parents decided I would live away from home, since I never spent a night away from home in Taiwan, and it was decided that I should go to Boston rather than New York, because in my mother's mind, and it's probably true, Boston is a safer place than New York, even though she has never been outside of Taiwan. She somehow found out that Boston is a Catholic town. I was converted, I went through the training of how to become a Catholic, and became one in name. My mother felt that it was a way she could protect me--send me to a safe place and have me join the majority religion. It's very moving actually when you think about it, because that's all she could do for me being physically away so far. In name, I am supposed to be Catholic, but I never practiced it. My religion is very much a Chinese kind of thing, which is just being a very nice person, trying to be helpful, and living the way your conscience leads you. That's my religion. My husband doesn't have any religion either. I have to come to peace with my own conscience.

What is my typical day? In the morning, we get up very early. After my husband has breakfast, we will talk about our day. He sometimes gets up at five-thirty. I will get up at seven. After he leaves, I practice, then do yard work. By that time, it is almost noon. Then I run errands. I will start teaching in the afternoon. Usually the class goes from early afternoon to late afternoon. The day goes by very fast. I might spend two or three hours at piano, two hours in the yard, do a couple of errands, start teaching, and cook dinner when my husband comes back. Sometimes, I cook dinner before I start teaching. I cook everyday. Very seldom do I take orders. I enjoy cooking, so it's not a problem. Before the children came, I did a few cooking classes. I enjoy food. After dinner, we spend some time together. During the school year, we are out a lot of time on weekdays, either recruiting or going to school related functions. So we have a

lot of social events. This is another reason why I can't teach a lot, because I have to go out on a couple of nights when I have class. I noticed that, last year, I had to go out often on Wednesday nights. They do keep us very busy. For instance, last week, we were out four nights. We often invite people, senior members, trustees, or potential donors, into our home. I cook for those occasions. I coordinate department functions, such as dinners with graduate students and faculty; I deal with schedules and catering.

Liz Sing

Liz Sing was born in Taiwan in the late 1960s and came to America with her family as a teen. Her parents first owned a Chinese restaurant in Columbia, Missouri and then moved to Kirksville, Missouri, for better business opportunity. She became manager of her family restaurant after graduating from college.

I was born in Taiwan. I lived in the capital, which is about the same as New York. Not in population, but in terms of the people and the traffic, it's the same. What you could see in New York, you could probably see over there. It's a pretty westernized place, I think sometimes it's too westernized.

I came to America with my family when I was a sophomore in high school. I don't know why we came to the United States. It probably started with my dad. He decided to move to the States where he had many relatives. They gave him a lot of business, and then he decided to move his family to America.

We didn't live in Centerville to start. We lived in Columbia, Missouri for about ten years, then we moved down here. When we first moved into the town of Columbia, I guess I didn't really like it, because in the capital of Taiwan, when you go out, you always see people around, and there is a nightlife. In Columbia, back then, one of the things that really surprised me was that when I went to the downtown, I didn't see anybody walking on the street. It was pretty much just businesses there, just one or two people walking around. I was shocked because I knew that downtown would be the place that attracts a lot of people. Actually, it turned out the other way. On Sunday, people in Columbia would do outdoor activities, like playing football, or do things with family, whereas on Sunday in Taiwan, everybody goes shopping; nobody

plays football. Columbia took me a couple of years to get used to it; but once I did, I really liked it. It's getting bigger, but it's not too big. If you want to go to the license bureau in Taiwan, it takes you forever to get finished. Columbia is a really good-sized town.

Centerville is a very quiet town. It's really good to do business because you don't get many mean, tricky, and crabby customers. You get it occasionally, but not in large numbers. But it doesn't make very much difference to me, working in a restaurant. When I go home, I go to sleep.

Our restaurant business actually started out with my uncle, who has a restaurant in Taiwan. My mom and dad helped him out. When they came to the States, they decided to open their own restaurant. If you look at the Columbia area, it's pretty much saturated with restaurants like ours, so we decided to come to Centerville. It only has two or three [Chinese] restaurants, so we thought this would be a good area to start the business. We're serving Chinese food, but we want customers to be able to carry out the way they do with fast food. Normally if you go to a dining room restaurant, you might have to wait a little while to get served. But here in our restaurant, I think you will bring people food and service a little bit sooner, and people will come back for that.

I would say that the way Chinese food is served to Americans and the way it is served in a traditional environment in Taiwan is probably about the same. You have to chop the vegetables, prepare the meats, and it's cooked about the same. But when you serve it, it's a little different. In Taiwan, if you serve a family, you have the entrees in the middle of the table, enough to serve four or five people. In America, you pass around the entrees. But the Chinese people don't do that; you take the chopsticks and pick out whatever you want to eat. You usually have the soup after the meal, but in America you have the soup before the meal.

I like to meet people through our restaurant. You talk with them, you serve them, and later on you become friends with them. It's just another way of making friends. Another thing I like about the business is it gives me some experience on how to deal with people--not only customers, but also employees. For

example, when they are late or when they have a problem and can not make it to work, how do I deal with them and how do I manage the whole thing? I would say the worst part in the business is the long hours. I like working here, but I don't like such long hours all the time. If you are involved in the restaurant business, you can't have any time off. It's really hard. If you take the day off, you spend the whole day thinking, "Okay, there is something wrong at the restaurant." You also think, "something is going to pop up, something is going to happen." You think about it all day. That's what I really don't like. You won't be able to take a day off unless it's Sunday.

If the community--like the police department, or the Red Cross, or the Chamber of Commerce--asks for a donation to help with certain activities, we try to help since we don't have time to participate.

I finished a college degree at University of Missouri-Columbia. I graduated in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in business management. Nothing really in particular stands out about my college experiences. It just started out as college life.

I can only compare the educational systems of Taiwan and America at the high school level. I wouldn't know the difference in college education between the two countries. In America you get so much freedom on what classes you want to take. In Taiwan you need to go to more classes than you do here. Everything is fixed. Everybody has to be taking the same class and doing the same thing. All the way through high school and college, you get tremendous pressure in Taiwan.

I would say that the family upbringing in the two countries is about the same. Family is the same everywhere. There are arguments. Mom and Dad care about you very much. And sometimes you might care too much, and always are worrying. But I would say it's about the same. I would say the kids really have to respect their parents in Taiwan. But I'm not saying that Americans don't have to respect their parents. I just think that if Americans were more caring about each other, they wouldn't have such a big gap between parents and children. That's a pretty significant difference between the two cultures. I would

say that Americans are much more individual-oriented. But we Taiwanese are much more family-oriented; everything you do, you think about family first, you think about other people as well. You don't pursue your own goals and say, "this is something I want to do." So that is quite a big difference.

I have gone through the formal citizenship procedure in the United States. I think the citizenship is more of a formality; it doesn't matter. As long as you are not Caucasian, people will still think you are Asian and a foreigner. In a way it bothers me, but I'm getting used to it. I think it has to do with the whole country. You get all different kinds of people, but people don't recognize the differences. You might get all different races, but they're still Americans. I guess some people don't recognize that.

As a female, there's no doubt about discrimination. There is a double standard in this society. I can't think of a specific example; it's just kind of a feeling you get. But I don't think it has so much to do with race. As long as you want to get a good job, you want to make a living out of it, and you work hard, it doesn't matter what race you are. It's not as though if you were a Caucasian American, you don't have to work hard.

Economically, I think there is a big difference right now between the U.S. and Taiwan. Since I immigrated to the States, I can only see that there is a certain price increase. A package of Little Debbies used to be sixty or seventy cents, now it's up to ninety-nine cents. The price of food, the produce, and everything is pretty much steady. In Taiwan, I would say there is a huge price increase in all the basic needs that you need to have.

3. Interracial Marriage

Martha Reeves

Martha Reeves was born in Xian, China in 1976. She met her husband in China, where he was a foreign student, and came to the United States with her husband after they got married. She was twenty years old and a student at the University of Missouri-Columbia at the time of the interview in 1996.

My English name is Martha. Ed [her husband] gave me this name. I didn't know why he chose it. He just said that's good for me. I was born in Chong Qing, Sichuan province in China. I never knew that until very recently. Before I left China I had to fill out papers for my visa, and at that time my mom said I was born in Chongqing, Sichuan. I don't know when we moved to Xian, Shaanxi province. I always lived in Xian as long as I can remember. I thought I was born in Xian but my paper says I was born in Chongqing, Sichuan and I must use that paper for my visa.

My parents are both retired. They stay at home and take care of house and everything, including my nephew and my brother. My father was a manager of a traveling company. His job was very easy. He did not have to spend a lot of time at work and he did not work too hard because he was old. He is sixty-three now. My mother is fifty-eight. She was an inventory clerk and she took care of everything in her factory. She did a very good job. She was very busy. Both my parents were very busy when I was young.

Before they had jobs, they were peasants in a village in Hunan province. My father had very limited education; he didn't graduate from elementary school. But he went into the army at sixteen. After my mother graduated from middle school, my grandfather said to her, "you don't need more education because you are a girl. After you are married just stay home and take care of your husband and baby." So they didn't let my mom go to high school. I think in the village that is very common. The girls just need to know how to count so they can pay the bills.

I graduated from high school and I came to America. School is twelve years in the Chinese school system--six years for elementary school, three years for middle school and three years for high school. Ed told me that here it has just two years for middle school and four years for high school.

Many people go to university in China, but it depends on what university. Qinghua University in Beijing, for instant, is a very good university. If you go there you must have good grades and money. In the United States you can borrow money from the bank, but in China most people depend on their parents. Some parents have good jobs and can save a lot of money. But some parents are very poor. You can

probably get a scholarship if your grades are very good and if your high school tells the university that you're very good. If you are excellent, the university is free for you. There are only a few cases like that, and most people go to an average college. They are not good but they can provide you with a diploma to prove that you graduated from university. I have never been to a university in China, but I went to Ed's university in Xian. I thought that for foreigners it is good, but for Chinese, it is just a library. They give you one big room to study at night. It is very crowded. I don't know anything else about it because I did not attend university. My parents made me study when I was younger. I really regret the time I didn't read a lot of books.

In the late 1970s the Chinese government issued a law permitting only one baby per family. That time my mom was seven months pregnant with me, they wanted my mom to abort me. My mom said, "No! If you want to kill my baby, you first kill me!" They didn't do that, and I was born in 1975. My family is considered big in China. I have three brothers. My first brother got married some years ago and they have a baby, my nephew. He is three years old. All of my brothers are older than me. I think my first brother is now thirty, my second brother is twenty-four, and my third brother is twenty-three. They all have jobs. My first brother is a driver, my second brother is a hotel worker, and my third brother does his own work as a salesman. It's not a really good job; it's just sometimes you do when you have free time. For instance, right now I work at Hardee's. Study is important. I just need a little money from Hardee's, so I work there. In China, I worked at Xian Hotel as a shop assistant. My section of the shop sold polished jade and wooded statues. The other section sold clothes.

When I was very young, my father loved me a lot. When we grew up, I tried to think we were all the same. My parents wanted me to go to school and study. They want me to study a lot and study hard. All the Chinese parents hope their children to do very well. In China a boy can always go out, but a girl can't, especially at night. In my life, before I married Ed, only two boys came to my house. One was my classmate, the other was my workmate. The first boy came to my house just to give me a book that I left at

school. The second one stayed at my house with all my workmates. After an half-hour he left because my father didn't like me to meet boys.

Ed is a brave and special boy. He is not my first boyfriend. I had two boyfriends before I met Ed. One was my first love. I was dating the second one when Todd was in China.. After we broke up, I met Ed. At that time I didn't think I would marry him because he was a foreigner. We were just friends. But next year he came back to China again just for me. Oh, he just came back for me, how exciting! Then I thought we understood each other. I knew he was really good to me. After we decided, we were married. I didn't tell my parents about it. One night, I just told my parents I was married. They said, "What? You married a foreigner?" But they didn't go against it because they knew I'm a donkey [very stubborn].

So I introduced Ed to them. For people their age, my parents are open-minded. After they met him, we often ate out together. During the Chinese New Year, Ed was at my home with us. Everyone in my family thought that he was a normal person, a part of the family. After that I often brought him to my home and spend time with us. They often talked with Ed, and that made them understand him. At first they did not like or dislike him, because they didn't know him. They just thought, "Ha, he is a foreigner." When they knew Ed better, they liked him, especially my mom. They just hoped he was nice to me. They didn't want anything from him, they didn't care if he was rich or poor. They even didn't care that he was a foreigner, that he looked different, and that he had blonde hair and blue eyes. I think if Ed were a Chinese he would be in much trouble. But because he is foreigner, he doesn't understand some parts of our culture, such as the boy going to the girl's house. He is very lucky in that way. My parents and my brothers would like to play with him, but they didn't want to make it too difficult for Ed. So they tried to be so nice to him, especially my mom. She always asked, "Is he cold, is he hungry?" I really miss that time when we spent time together.

It's not good to be a foreigner in China. I met some Chinese here in Columbia. When I told them my husband was an American, they didn't say anything. But I could see that their eyes just looked mean,

as if they were saying that I just wanted to marry a foreigner to come to America. I stopped talking with them; they're not my type. In China, when I walked with Ed on the street, some people would say, "Oh! That girl is dirty!" At that time I was not used to it, so I was very mad at Ed. After a while I got used to it; I just thought: I'm marrying him, your bad words mean nothing to me. When people said some bad words when they saw me with a foreigner, I just looked at them. Only a few times, some teenagers saw me and said, "Oh, she is a translator." I was very happy because they didn't think bad things about me, like you make love with him, you live with him, you want to spend his money. That always made me angry.

Chinese boys treated me differently than Ed did. When I am with Ed, he tells me everything. He always lets me choose what I want to do. But in China, all the boys already made their plans and you just go with them. They cared about your dress and they cared about your appearance. When I was with my Chinese boyfriend, I always felt nervous. While with Ed, I'm very relaxed. I want to do everything that I want. I can do anything with Ed. I don't worry about him being angry because he likes everything I do. Going out with my Chinese boyfriend, I must bring money with me. Sometimes I paid and sometime he paid. When I am with Ed, he always pays, but that's not what matters. I feel Chinese boys are not strong. They are not like men, but like young boys. When with Ed I feel very good and very relaxed. He is just my friend. I feel very happy and very free with him, and I want to do everything and to make noise. That's what I like most about Ed, his temperament. Even if I'm very angry and very crazy, he is always very nice, always makes me feel better, quiet, and calm. He makes my heart feel good all the time. Sometimes I fought with my family, then I would go to his dorm and be very angry at him. He would calm me down and I would go home to my parents and we were all together again. I like that. If I did that with my Chinese boyfriends, they would say, "What's wrong with you? Are you crazy?" They always did that to me.

When I was with Chinese boys, we couldn't hold hands. But I could hold Ed's arm to go down the street or go shopping; I felt it was very natural and not strange at all. When I was with Ed in China, I never touched his hand. I never let him touch me. We just walked on the street and I went to his dorm just to

study and to listen to music. I never let him touch me. The first time he kissed me, I thought, "Oh, this is a foreigner. This is foreigner's kiss." It felt very different and I just thought, "Oh, this is foreigner's kiss taste."

This is how I first met Ed. I remember that in the disco my friend Bobby said my friend wants to be your friend. At that time I thought, "Oh, he could be my friend." So I walked to Ed and spoke to him. I said hi, he said hi and then I went back. At that time I was thinking, "Oh, he has beard, he is very old." You know Chinese boys doesn't have beards. Then one day he shaved his beard. Standing in front of my workplace, he showed his face to me. I thought, "Oh my god, it's so strange. When I saw him first time, he looked like he was thirty. Today he stands in front of me and looks like he's fifteen or seventeen." That time I thought he was very different, but I felt very strange. I had never seen a boy before and after he shaved his beard. I had never seen Chinese boys like that. So I just thought, "Oh, he is a foreigner and he is very interesting." I never felt he was different from us. I liked studying language. I wanted to know different cultures and different countries. I could study English from him, and he could teach me English. That was what I thought about Ed then.

I want to have two children. I want to teach them about my Chinese heritage. We will bring them to China, because I want to show them China is a great country, and that many cultures came from there. After we have baby, we will decide if they must speak Chinese at home. When they go to school they can speak English. I don't want them to forget Chinese because they are half-Chinese. I want to teach them like Chinese children. I want them to have knowledge about China when they are young, in kindergarten and in elementary school. I want them to speak both Chinese and English. I don't want them to forget either one. I also plan to teach them some Japanese because I was going to study Japanese. I studied Japanese in high school for half a year. I want to study Japanese again. If I study Japanese well, I will teach them a little bit of Japanese. I want them to speak a lot of different languages.

If we have enough money, we will send them to a private university because I think education there is very good. We still want them to have nice personalities. We don't want them to hate poor people

because we don't like that. We were not raised poor. We are young; we cannot throw money out. We must study to give our children a good life. I want to do that. Parents in China do that. They start saving money for their baby when they are very young. That's why they try so hard to find a good job. That's why Chinese teenagers study so hard. They probably don't want it, they don't like it. But their parents want it. So their parents make them study because their parents want them to be very good, hardworking people.

Since 1976 parents in China can only have one baby, and so that baby becomes your king. In China we call baby the king because he would just sit down there and says "I want this and I want that." Then his grandparents and parents must get this or that for him. If they don't, he starts crying. When he is crying, the parents and grandparents would say, "It hurt my heart! My poor baby!" So parents and grandparents spoil a child in China.

A lot of girl babies were deserted. Especially now, since you just have one chance to have a baby, most people want a boy, especially in villages. When some peasant women have girls, they would try not to let the government know and her baby girl wouldn't have a birth certificate. After the baby grows to one year or two years old, and if she wants the baby to have a birth certificate, she must pay money, about ten thousand or twelve thousand dollars to the government. You must have connection to the government some way. If you don't, your baby would have a very difficult time getting that birth certificate. The birth certificate affects how you go to school and if you could buy your food, because we buy food like rice and flour in government-owned stores. That's important for the Chinese. If you don't have a birth certificate you can't buy food for the child. That's why those families are very poor and they always run away from government. They don't have a home. Boys are very important in China. That's why they find a lot of girls whose parents don't want them. In middle school, I found that situation all the time. In the back streets, if people look around they could find a crying baby. It must be a girl, it wouldn't be a boy. It's just a girl by itself by the road. Sometimes the parents keep the baby's name and birth date with the baby. In China

now they still think boys are important. Parents think they can depend on the boy when they are old. That's why they want a boy, but I don't think that way.

If I stayed in China I would be expected to take care of my parents. While in America, old people are very independent. In China, if you don't live with your aging parents, other people would think you are very bad to them. You either live with them or bring them to your house. If you don't do that, people would think you're very bad to your parents. My first brother has a house, but it is not big. China has lot of people, they can't have big houses. My parents are not old now. They can still take care of themselves. My second brother and third brother live with my parents so they can take care of them. Even after they marry, they will probably live with my parents. But they will probably rent a room because too many people living all together is not convenient. If you have only one son, your son will probably live with you. If I were married and lived in China, and if my brothers can't take care of my parents, I would bring them to my house. If I married a Chinese boy I would have to live with his family. But some men live with their wives' families because they don't have their own houses or they don't have enough space for the wedding.

Chinese weddings are very different. At Chinese weddings, we must wear a red dress. But in America people wear a white dress. I don't think it matters. In China, if someone died, we would wear a black or white dress. White dresses are considered bad luck, while red dress can make ghosts and bad luck go away. The color red is hot. On a Chinese wedding night we must wear a red bra, red underwear, and red shoes. In America you must wear a sexy dress. When Ed's mom told me that I just surprised.

In a Chinese wedding, when the groom first goes to the bride's house, he must try hard to get into the house because all the girlfriends of the bride would stop the groom and say, "Give me my money." So the groom must give them money for good luck. After the groom gets in the house, he must rush into the bride's room. The girlfriends of the bride would say that he can't come in, he can't take her away. The groom has to try very hard to please these girlfriends so they would let him come in.

Then the newlyweds go to the reception. Before they start eating, they have to show their marriage certificate. If they don't show it, they would be thought as fake, that they just want to have a reception to make everybody think that they are married. Then they eat, and after that, the groom takes the bride to his home. There groom's friends start teasing the bride. If they want to smoke, the bride must light the cigarette. That was just a normal game people play at weddings. The bad game is when the groom has policemen as friends, they would use handcuffs on the bride. Sometimes they beat the bride just for fun. This kind of teasing is really hard to take and sometimes it even makes the groom angry. Before I met Ed, I was thinking that if I had wedding in Xian that it would be very scary. The manager of the hotel where I used to work said at his wedding he had to eat three candies and then throw them up into his bride's mouth. If you don't do it your friends will be angry.

In China we have a lot of American movies. We often see American weddings on TV. But I never thought I would have a wedding in America and that I would wear a white wedding dress. On my wedding day I thought it was like a dream, and I was very sad that day because my parents were not there. That morning when my father called me from China, I was very sad. I cried over the phone, not being able to stop myself. When I went to church I was still crying. "You can't cry! You'll be very ugly if you cry!" I prayed to God. When the clergyman was saying the wedding vows, I was just thinking, "My family is not here." Next month we will send them wedding pictures and videotapes.

My parents were very sad when I left for America and I was a little surprised that they let me go. They didn't stop me, but they just said, "We hope your life is good. If you choose it then you must be there. If you're sad in America you can come back. If Ed is not good to you, you just tell us and we will help you." That was very sad. My mom always cries. Every time when they write a letter to me, I am very happy for a few days. Their letters let me know something about my home and I can think about things there.

I think it's normal for parents to be so supportive of and helpful to their children, especially in China where we always live with parents. My brothers are already twenty-four or twenty-three and they still live with my parents and depend on them. My parents buy food for them and give them money if they need it.

In America when you are eighteen years old, you must go out to work and your parents don't give you money. In China we don't have to. When I was in high school, my parents paid my tuition and fees. But in the last semester of my high school, I paid tuition myself. I paid one hundred dollars; I was very proud of that. There are a lot of people who don't do that; they just depend on the parents. In my family I am very independent.

Now I understand that my parents are very important to me. But I didn't understand that when I was in China. I thought I could live by myself. I could save money. I could go to work. But I never thought life was not easy. When I came here to Ed's mother's house, I thought we could depend on his parents. We wouldn't have to pay for food, rent, and utility bills. But after we moved to Columbia, I must take care of everything--rent, health insurance, his tuition, and electricity, water, and trash bills. We must plan our spending for every month. At that time I began to feel our life here is not easy. I think it is very difficult not to live with your parents. But when I was in China I wanted to leave my family. It was normal for high school students to want to leave their family.

I really don't have a favorite thing about living in America. I just have one wish. I wish I can speak English like Ed. Eventually, I want to understand everything. I can go to college or university. I want to have a very good education so I can find a good job. I can help Ed because he will go to another school and study for five years. If I can speak English and go to university, I think I can find a good job. It is my wish. In China my favorite thing was riding bicycles everywhere. I didn't have to stop. I would look at everything. But here I am afraid to ride a bicycle. I am worried that I will die in traffic. There are not too many interesting things for me here. I just want to study English all the time.

I will go back to China, but not stay there for a long time. I like America because everything is convenient. I think American education is good for our future babies. I want them to study here and grow up here. I will go back to see my parents. I miss them a lot. I have lived here only for four months, but I feel it's like four years. Probably I would just go back and live for half a year, just for a visit. Ed is studying Chinese politics, everything is very good for his study in China.

4. Attaining Education

Rita Chang

Rita Chang was born in Taipei, Taiwan in 1976. She came to the United States during her junior year in high school for better educational opportunities, as the competition for college entrance examines was stiff in Taiwan. She was twenty years old and a student at Truman State University at the time of the interview in 1996.

I was born on 24 November 1976 in Taipei. My mom is in St. Louis. My father now works and lives in Taipei, because he just got a promotion there. He goes back to Taiwan every once in a while for conferences. I don't know exactly what he does right now, but before he got the promotion he was an air traffic controller at an airport. He looks at the screen and talks to the pilots. My mom is an accountant and works in a computer company.

I came to the United States with my mom about three years ago, mostly for purpose of education because my parents really don't like the educational system in Taiwan. We thought there was a better system here, and we could also learn English. But mostly we came for the education. In Taiwan you can go to high school or university only if you pass the entrance exam. You can only take the entrance exam once and if you fail it, that's it. So nothing counts but the grade that you receive on the entrance exam. It's like ACT here, but you can take ACT over and over. So to get into high school we have to take a high school entrance exam. It is a two-day exam that covers five subjects, three subjects in the first day and two in the second day.

Three days before the exam I was in the hospital because I had a high fever. I didn't feel well physically in those two examination days and I was too nervous. I get nervous when I have to take big exams. I threw up after the first period exam on Chinese. I was just like, "Oh my gosh! I have to go to the bathroom." I don't eat breakfast usually, but on those two mornings I ate breakfast because my mom told me, "You're taking this big exam, you should eat something." So I threw up afterwards. Before the exam my teacher would say, "I don't worry about you, you know you should get into at least the top five." In Taiwan there are about a thousand good public high schools that people are trying to get into. My teacher said that I should get into at least the top five high schools. But after the result of the exam came out, I got to the ninth one. That was bad. I felt like I failed it. But there's nothing you can do about it. My parents really disliked the system. My sister was a couple years younger than I am. She likes to play, and doesn't like to study at all. So my parents were worried about her. We have this school system--all the classes are divided into good classes and bad classes. If you belong to one of the bad classes, you don't learn anything. Nobody cares about what you do. It's really bad. So my parents were worried that my sister would learn smoking or other bad things that the bad kids would do. So that's the big reason why we came here.

I have just one sibling; that is my sister. She just turned fifteen. She is in high school in St. Louis, Missouri. My parents have definitely treated us differently since we got here. My mom has changed so much. For example, my mom has gone really easy on my sister for putting on make-up. If you're a student in Taiwan and you put make-up on, everybody will look at you like you're weird or strange. But here it's okay. And my sister has her ears pierced, which is inappropriate for students in Taiwan. When I was in middle school, if I wanted my friends to come over and spend the night at my house, I would have to struggle for that. If I wanted to go out to see a movie with my good friends, I also had to struggle for that. I had to tell my parents two weeks in advance who I was going with, where I was going, what time I was going to be back, and other details like that. My mom just said things like, "Oh well, it's dangerous to go to

movie theaters. What if there's a fire? How are you going to escape?" I think they're really concerned about the security. They are still strict, but they have been really easy on a lot of subjects.

I do not necessarily think this is from living in the United States. I guess for my mom, I can't say that coming here doesn't have any influence on her. But I would also think that part of it would be also because she's older and I guess when you become older, you just appear to be easy on things.

I have a Green Card, so we are residents but not citizens. I do plan to go back to Taiwan after I get my degree here in the States, maybe after four years because I plan to pursue a master's degree. Right now my major is business. I plan to study either International Relations or International Studies for my master's degree, but that might also change.

I came here when I was a junior in high school. But only after a semester, I was a senior. It was really different. We have to wear uniforms in Taiwan and our school system is like a military system. Everything is really strict and rigid. We sing. I think you do that in America school, how you sing the national anthem in the morning and you see your flag rise, just like that. We go to school from seven o'clock in the morning to six o'clock in the evening Monday through Friday, and until twelve-thirty in the afternoon on Saturday, so school is a big thing and that is what you do when you're a student. We cannot choose our schedule. Everybody studies the same schedule. And we learn a lot. We have ten subjects in middle school and more in high school. One of them is cooking. We stay in one classroom for three years in middle school. We don't move around the classrooms; we just stay in one. Teachers come and teach us. So I think in that case you really get to know a good friend. We have lunch boxes, not cafeterias. We have heater, like a microwave, and you just put your lunch box in it. The focus is a lot on the academic subjects. We do have Physical Education, but it's not emphasized. We have an hour of PE and an hour of drawing every week. But, mostly, we study Chinese, along with math, science, geography, history, and stuff like that a lot.

It's such a pain for a year in ninth grade, which is a year before you take the high school entrance exam. Our middle school is from seventh to ninth grade, and then tenth to twelfth grade would be high school. Ninth grade was really terrible because we had to be at school at seven o'clock in the morning and then we went home in the afternoon. Then we stayed at school to study until nine o'clock at night, because if you fail the exam, bye-bye. You have two lunch boxes and you eat at school. You just go home to sleep for four hours and then you get up and go to school again. It was really hard.

I got really tired in the end. That's probably also why I didn't do as well as I should have. I just got so exhausted physically, and maybe mentally. For three years in middle school, there were around forty people in my class, which is pretty normal considering how we have crowded in Taipei. I was always in the top fifteen in my class and I graduated from middle school as the thirteenth in my class. My teacher would say, "I wouldn't worry about you. Just relax and take the exam. That's fine. I'll see you in high school." So I was really sad and I really don't like the system because I think we should take into account our performance in school, not only on the exam. That's just too much for a fifteen year old. I felt it was the end of the world when I realized that I didn't do as well as I should. All of these expectations and pressures are just too much.

I think my parents were pretty open on the academic part compared to most of the Chinese parents. But they are strict on the social part, on dating. Maybe they're just too protective. Throughout the three years in middle school, every time I handed my father my grade report, he would go like, "Oh, are you the last one in you class? Oh, you're not. That's fine." And he would go really easy on that. My mom is a little bit stricter. Still, I don't have to be the first one in my class. Myself, I would want to, of course. Every time I do my math, I wanted to be the first one. I caused pressure for myself, but my parents didn't. I guess they were disappointed that I didn't do well, but then they said, "it's fine." I think they were disappointed but they didn't say it. They were just like, "why don't you just prepare for the exam for the

private high school so you can go to private high school." So I ended up going to a private high school close to my home.

I worked in McDonald's during my senior year in high school in St. Louis, Missouri. It was okay to work there. I don't know whether people treated me differently because I was Asian. At the time I still didn't speak very good English and I didn't really talk a lot to anybody that I worked with, so it was just a communication problem. But the managers were really nice to me and the atmosphere was pretty friendly. I worked, and then I went home.

I speak Chinese at home to my mom and my sister. We eat mostly Chinese food. My mom has had a hard time learning and speaking English. But she's getting better and better because she works in an American firm, and she has to talk to her co-workers. It is interesting that she got a job when she didn't really speak any English (now she does). In the firm that she's working for as an accountant, she is directly responsible to her boss who is from China and speaks Chinese. But everybody else in the firm is an American. That she's only directly responsible to her boss works out for her. But then of course she gets contact with her co-workers so she gets to practice her English.

I don't think that I've been treated differently in high school because of my heritage. When I didn't speak good English for the first year or two when I was here, I felt isolated; but I can understand that. Now that I'm here at the university, I've made a lot of friends. I think people here are really friendly. My friends are a mix; half of them are foreign exchange students. Grim Hall is mixed up with one-third international students. I'm really glad I have all those amazing friends. It's cool. Five of my close friends here on campus are Asians; everybody else isn't.

I'm the president of the Chinese Student Association this year, so I try to be as nice as I can. That helps me to get to know everybody. We just get together once a month to have a party. We had the Moon Festival party last month, this month we showed a Chinese movie, and we will have a graduation party for

these who are graduating in December coming up next month. We don't have any really big events because everybody is so busy. Once a month we get together, and we get to speak Chinese to each other.

In my spare time I like to sleep a lot. I also listen to music. I like soft music, real soft classical music. I can't stand rock and roll, and I don't like country music. I also read, write letters to my friends, or just relax. Recently, I've really liked to play tennis. I think it's a really, really good sport. I just hang out with my friends and do all the things that people would do. I don't go to church. My family doesn't have any religious background.

On the weekends I study on Sundays, like the day before I have to turn in my work. On Fridays we definitely hang out and relax. I don't do any homework on Fridays. On Saturdays, sometimes I realize I have big things due on Monday, and I'll start work on Saturday night. But sometimes I don't realize that I have to do so much until Sunday and it's really bad. I'm trying to change that habit. During the week I would say that since I have seventeen credits this semester as I'm trying to graduate earlier, I don't have any choice but study.

I am interested in our [Taiwanese] politics. But I'm also interested in American politics, maybe thirty percent, I guess. I don't really understand American politics. I haven't ever took any American government course before, so I don't really understand the system. But I'm interested in it a little bit.

Sometimes I ask my friends from Taiwan who are just here for a year or so about what is going on there. They will hear a lot of things from their families. They call their family every day or so. When I call my father I just talk to him about what's going on in Taiwan. We subscribe to a Chinese newspaper in St. Louis at my house. If I have time to go back, I read it. Sometimes I just write my friends in Taiwan and they tell me about big things that are happening. We have a Taiwanese newspaper in the library, and I also read that.

My friends are what I miss most about Taiwan. Besides that, of course, is the food. We can't just go out and go to a restaurant even in St. Louis and eat a little food. There's just things that my mom cannot

really cook. But it's okay. Hopefully I get to go back next year. I'm going to visit my friend in Russia, so I don't know if I have all the money to go to Russia and then Taiwan. Hopefully I'll find a job next semester and try to make some money. I'll try to work four hours more as a tutor so I can get some money. I'm still working on that and I also take seventeen hours next semester. It's hard. It keeps me busy so I always eat and study and gain weight. With all this cafeteria food, I can't help it. The first year I was here I would eat until I can't eat any more. I would eat everything they have and it was like, "Oh! Food," every time you wanted any. This year, it was better. I eat until I need to stop. I also get sick of the food. They don't change the menu much. I eat healthy food now, I don't eat hamburgers and pizza.

I call my dad once a week. He comes here every summer and during winter vacation. He has to stay in Taiwan because his job is there and he doesn't want to give up his job and come here and start over again. I am close to my parents. Maybe not as close as American families because that is not the case in Chinese families; you don't get really close to your parents. It's like there's a respect line right there. I don't think, "okay my mom is my best friend." But it is not like every time I see my mom I bow to her. I know who are my friends and who are my parents.

I think people here are really friendly and I really enjoy that. You know how you're just walking down the street and people say hi to you. That's really nice. It was a big change from Taipei to St. Louis. But from St. Louis to the university town, it's not as big. Generally speaking I do like the big city atmosphere better. I know I will only be here for five years or so, so I don't mind staying here and studying. But I wouldn't want to live in a community like this for twenty years. Maybe when I become older I will, but I want to still live in big city and experience all of the excitement while I'm young.

I don't like the feeling of being really homesick. But I can't go back Taiwan either. I would have nothing to do if I go back. I can't just apply and go to a university like the kids in the United States. I would have to take an exam, which is based on the three years of learning in the high schools in Taiwan. So I

wouldn't be able to pass the exam at all. I want to graduate with a Master's Degree here and then go back and try to get a job in Taiwan.

Sandy Lee

Sandy Lee was born into a Chinese-Indonesian American family in Holland, Michigan in 1977. Her parents came to America in 1973 for better educational and occupational opportunities. She was a nineteen-year-old student at Truman State University at the time of interview in 1996.

I was born on 15 June 1977 in Holland, Michigan. My parents were both born in Jakarta, Indonesia. My dad was born on 28 September 1942 and my mom on 21 September 1944. Both of them went to high school and college in Indonesia. I am not totally Indonesian. I am Chinese-Indonesian and I guess they are stigmatized in Indonesia. If you are not Indonesian, you are oppressed. That is kind of the sense I got from my mom.

In Indonesia she really wanted to be a psychologist. She applied twice to the school and she didn't get in. She ended up dropping out because she was so discouraged. My dad went to undergraduate in Indonesia for a few years, then he went to Germany to finish his undergraduate. When my parents moved to the United States they went to Texas, where my dad got his masters.

They came to the States twenty-three years ago. I know we have relatives in the States. I don't know if that is why they went to Texas specifically. I'm not exactly sure why they wanted to move to the United States. It could have been that my dad wanted to continue his education here.

Both of my grandfathers are dead so I never met them. My grandmas live in Texas and California. I really don't know when they came to the States. I think it was probably after my parents. Both my grandmothers speak Indonesian. My grandma Testus, that is my dad's mom, doesn't know English very well, but she knows more than my other grandma. We call my grandma in California Omar and my dad's mom grandma. When I was maybe nine my grandma came to Holland for a year or so to spend time with my mom. She is a pretty old lady and she didn't know any English really. So we sent her to the community

education center just to teach her English. She would get these workbooks with pictures of shoes and books, and she would have to write the English word. She was just so slick. I was just a little sucker. She had me doing all her homework. "Grandma that's a book. That's a shoe grandma," and she was just writing it down. I don't think she realized that she was that sneaky. It was funny. I don't see them very often though since they live across country.

My father is a product engineer. I live in a town that has two really big office furniture places. He works for Herman-Miller, a big company. They design and manufacture office furniture, like tables. He works there as a designer. I have always known he was an engineer and then I found out engineers can do several duties, so it is kind of hard to nail down his specific position. I know that he does something with product design.

We used to own a store, and we had it for twelve years; we finally sold it about a year and a half ago. My mom used to be the one running the store while my dad worked from eight to five. But now that we don't have the store, she stays home gardening, busy as ever. She always is. She likes being at home.

The store we used to own was a little grocery store. It started off as an Asian food store, because we were from Holland, Michigan and there is a pretty big Asian population. It's not huge, but it is nice to have someone who knows about Asian culture, so there was a market for it. Holland also has an incredible Hispanic population. It ended up being within a year, it was at least about 80% Hispanic and 20% Asian. We sold the store to a friend from Chicago. He is Hispanic himself, and he owns stores. It is kind of sad because he doesn't know about the Asian products so he has kind of rounded that out. It's because he doesn't know what to get. A lot of people I know in Holland are really disappointed with that, just because our store is where they would come. My mom would always give advice on how to cook things. That is a complaint that I hear a lot. He has done a lot with the store, so it is growing. We owned it for about twelve years. For a long time my parents were running it and we kids helping out once in a while. But towards the end it was just my parents and that was a lot of work for them.

I have three siblings, two brothers and one sister. My oldest brother is twenty-four. My older sister is twenty-two. My little brother is thirteen. I'm not the smartest kid in my family. My siblings are all really, really smart; better than I am in school. My sister is working as an architect in an firm in Detroit. My little brother is in high school and he is just brilliant. He is a little genius. I am pretty normal. I get B's and everything. I try, but I'm definitely different from my brothers and sister. My parents have always known that, as much as they say it really doesn't matter. I've got the worst grades out of all of my siblings. But they really stress that it really doesn't matter. It is pretty much me that is putting all the pressure on myself.

I've never been to Indonesia. I don't know if I'd like to go there. I know Indonesia is really tourist-oriented place. My sister went a couple years ago because she really wanted to. She stayed with relatives. It was good for her to go there but she came back and said that there were a lot of things about Indonesia that she didn't like. Environmental issues are just terrible. They are just so corrupt there. She was sick for the first week and she didn't know why. She went out of the tourist area and went into the real Indonesia, and it was like garbage. It smelled really strongly, and she couldn't tell at first, but then after a while she figured that something wasn't right. She was there for two months; the first month she stayed with relatives, which was like a big family vacation and so it was kind of a drag. The next month, she pretty much toured around Indonesia herself and she sketched. She visited people that she met at school. I think it was a better experience for her; she was kind of independent. I think overall she got a lot out of it.

I would love to travel anywhere. I don't know that Indonesia would be the first place that I would want to go. Eventually I would like to go there, but right now I am looking towards Hawaii and Europe. One day I hope to go to Indonesia.

The language of Indonesia is Indonesian. My parents still speak it. They have been here for a long time, but as the years go on I notice that they don't speak it as much anymore. I can expect that if they just came here. But they have been here for ten years and all of a sudden they have started winding down. My parents are pretty multi-lingual anyway. They have a lot of other languages up in their heads.

They learned Spanish from the store and just from meeting people. So they know Spanish. From living in Germany, they know a little German. My dad is pretty fluent. And they know just a little bit of a lot of languages. I don't know how they did it. My mom has a gift for language.

They badly wanted us to understand Indonesian. But this is not so much anymore, because there is not much they can't tell us, or that we don't understand. I know a few words like, "get over here." When my parents speak sometimes we can pick a few things out, or you can tell what they are talking about just from their body language. I couldn't rattle off, though. It is just dialogue.

My parents instill everything about their cultural values in us. I guess I am pretty hard working. They are hard working. My sister is hard working too, but hard working in a different way. At the same time, while they are really hard working at school, I'm not. It is kind of hard to say what they did to instill their culture in us because it wasn't uniform at all. I'm sure there are ways they did, but there are things I don't recognize as cultural values. I just see them as things that have been there from the beginning.

There are some Indonesian foods that my mom does cook. She will go in kicks. She will go on rice kicks and we will have all rice, and then she will go on soup kicks and she will make soup all the time. She makes things and she makes us eat them every once in a while. We have rice everyday with pretty much everything. I hated rice when I was growing up. It was such a treat when I did not have to eat something with rice. We have a rice cooker and we only use Gasin rice, a certain type of rice.

I even have Gasin rice, but Minute Rice scares me because it is not supposed to be that quick. It should take at least twenty minutes to cook, so that rice is like fake rice. My roommates get it and I am like, "what's that? That's not rice." I never really had Minute Rice until last year in the dorms and you know for the first time rice sounds real good, and I got it and I was like, "what does this look like? What does this taste like? What is this? Is this Styrofoam?" It tasted very different.

If you go to an Asian food restaurant you know you would get Gasin rice and that is the kind of rice that I will eat. It might be Jasmine rice, or it might be different. But it has some kind of fragrance to it,

something like that. I don't think you can get it at a local grocery store. I think it is specialty stuff and you may have to order it at a certain place. I've got a twenty-pound bag of rice. My parents gave me this big bag when I left for college. I have made it twice now and I have nineteen and a half pounds to go. It is like feeding people in third world countries.

I have never really been a fan of soy sauce so I don't put it on my rice, just salt and things. If I am just eating rice I have to put something on it. I usually eat it with something. Salsa is a huge favorite. I love salsa. At Wal-Mart there is a salsa that has black beans corn in it. All of a sudden I am just a salsa fiend. I just inhale bottles. It's good. I know my roommates make fun of me. I should just buy a case or something like that because I go through big bottles. They go through spaghetti sauce bottles.

I have some of those Indonesian recipes from my mom actually. I like my mom's food a lot. I can't make it as well as she does, but I try. I want to cook her recipes. Most of the time I just don't succeed because they are not easy. I am so impatient. I hate making pasta. I just think that I can't cook.

My mom and I get along pretty well. I think I have always been the tough child of the family because I was pretty much a hellion. I'm not like my sister; I am the social one. I do things differently and I am very stubborn. My parents both know that and I guess we have a love/hate relationship. I know that we get on each other's nerves and I know that we get along at times. I think I am the only one in my family that really talks to my parents. Not that my brothers and sister don't do that but I actually tell my mom things that happen. It's different and I think my mom really appreciates that. We kind of get along when we are both in the mood. My relationship with my father is pretty much a typical dad/daughter relationship. My dad is cool, but I see a lot of things in him that I don't want to find in someone. But that is typical for everybody. We get along fine. My dad is kind of a sucker; if I want something it's mine. But I try not to take advantage of that and I'm not really greedy. My older brother and sister and I are close. My little brother is in high school. I can't really be close to him.

I can't go home all that often and everyone is spread around. I have been home once and that was over mid-term break. I probably go home about six times a year, which isn't bad. It is only eight or nine hours away. My brother is in Wisconsin. My sister is in Detroit. My family is in Holland. We're pretty far apart. But we'll all see each other on Thanksgiving and Christmas. There are things we will still come home for. I don't email anybody as much anymore. I am just sick of emailing. But I call them and sometimes they call me.

My parents think education is essential. It wasn't even a question of whether or not I would go to college. It was just what I was going to do. It was understood. But I didn't even think about not going to college. That's how education is ingrained. I don't know many people that don't go to college. Where I grew up is a pretty conservative town; everyone was geared towards higher education. Even if that wasn't the case, I would end up going to college anyway. My parents said it doesn't matter what you do as long as you move out of here.

I have a friend that is going to school here. I am living with her right now actually. We wanted to go to school together. I guess that is kind of a bad thing. She is one of my closest friends, and we went through a lot together. This is a cheaper school. It would be like the University of Michigan for me in state, because it is about $10,000 for Michigan and Michigan State. It's cheaper here and they have a good biology program too, so that is why I came here. It fits. I'm breaking apart from Michigan too. I definitely wanted to leave, but where I went wasn't a huge factor. I would have even gone to Michigan University. It was weird coming this far away but I don't know. It will probably end up being better in the long run.

I am a journalism/communication major. I was thinking about going into public relations, something in that field, maybe mixed in a little with advertising and designs. I would like to work with art in public relations somehow. I like working with other people. I have always been able to get along with people; it is my forte. I just like when company comes over. When I was at home, my parents always wanted me

around because I was entertainment. I can be as cocky as anything and adults just eat that up, and I knew it. That is where I come in. I'm the social one.

I was a biology major, and it is really interesting to me and I would have probably gone into Botany if I would have done that because I love plants and gardens. But that is more along the lines of the scientific, analytical sibling group. So I really needed to break apart from that, but that is what I had to do, kind of like coming to this school. I didn't have to go to the University of Michigan like both of them did, and I didn't have to get the same grades as both of them did. And this isn't intentionally one way to break apart of that whole technical career mode. It suits me better than anything else I think.

I've had some difficulty in school like in Spanish. I didn't drop the class. Spanish isn't easy. I guess I have a hard time focusing because I like my friends so much and I just love my room and I love the people next door, and it is always fun hanging out with them. It's hard to say, "I need to work now." It's always, "I want to play." So that is probably the hardest thing for me, just buckling down. I don't know if I really study efficiently or not. I don't think I do, but that's me. I probably spend about two hours a day studying, which is not a lot at all. I wish I could say more. Weekends I will try to study hard, and I think the weekends are keeping me where I am. I have class pretty much throughout the day; I have few hours between them when I have to work; additionally, I have another job that I work at It just feels like I have no time, and the time that I do have I want to see my friends.

As far as relations with my classmates, in particular in my Spanish class, our class is divided. We have a few really vocal people and we have a few that just sit there, that just try to stay afloat. I only know a few people and I am trying to meet more people. But it is hard because everyone in that class is scared to death. It depends on how the teacher treats it. If the teacher fosters the community then it's really easy to meet people. But if that doesn't happen, obviously we are just one of those faces in the crowd. I won't really make an effort to try to get to know a lot of people if it is not part of the class. I am probably one of those people who just listen. It really depends on what class it is. Like in Spanish, I think I will say

something, just because you have to say something. But in classes like my mass communications class I am pretty much quiet even though I know it is part of my grade. I've been more and more outspoken though. I'm just kind of being more vocal. It's my major. I'd better be.

Probably the thing I like most about the university is the friends that I have here. The whole registration thing made me really leery of the school. Small class sizes, small school systems really bug me. I just wish they could be bigger, just one space bigger. I do like big cities. I like having options. That is probably why I got a job. So I would have a little something to do on weekends making a little extra money. There is nothing else to do.

I have really close friends here. The people who are my closest friends have been here since freshman week. I met them last year while living on the first floor of Dobson Hall. Living in the dorm was a good experience. I liked my hall. I live with my friend from home, and the other roommate is her old roommate. The people next door are all AKL's (Alpha Kappa Lambda fraternity). We just love them to death. We get along pretty well. There are some little minor things, but we get along pretty well for the most part. They are people that I have really clicked with. I know that I should find the time to visit a lot of people more often. But it is really hard, especially living off campus now. But the people that I have are my friends; I don't ever think I have had closer friends than that. Of course, I haven't had to be around people twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. I'm sure that leaves room for either hate or disaster. We do get along pretty well. Those are my closest friends and they keep me here.

I'm not dating anybody. I just had a big talk with a male friend of mine yesterday. It was actually kind of neat. We laid everything on the table from last year. It was a big deal. It's been about a year and a half and we never talked about it. Yesterday we kind of defined everything and decided, "Well, it's going to happen." It was good because I have never had a talk like that with anybody. It was totally open and honest. I know that he hates that kind of thing so much. So it was so cool to make him start that because it was all on his shoulders. He had to initiate it. That relationship right now is the biggest thing. We're just

kind of going to figure things out. Things are good; we felt the same way. We are leaving the door open to anything in the future. I can't say anything else. I wish I could but I can't think. It is kind of hard to say what is going to happen because it is complicated. But we know how everybody feels now. We'll see what happens in the future.

In my spare time, that oh-so-abundant-time, I usually hang out with my friends and listen to music. Music is huge in my roommates' and my life. We always have music playing. We listen to nothing really hard at all. I like a lot of different things as long as it is pretty mellow. I like "R.E.M." a lot. I like "10,000 Maniacs."

I read a lot actually. I usually like feminist books. I was reading a book called *Earth Vibes*. It is about environmentalism and feminist theories. It is very interesting. I don't know if I would agree with a lot of things, but it is an interesting perspective. I would like to read more about that. I haven't had much time to read on my own for enjoyment since this summer because there is so much to do and I am so far behind.

We don't have a TV at all. I love not having a TV. I don't have any time for it in my day. I don't know how a TV would work out. We have a TV that we keep in the closet because I wouldn't want to pay. But if we didn't have to pay, we would definitely have it plugged in. But now that I have gone through it and I know what it is like to not have a TV. I just love it so much that I don't know what I would do if we had one. It seems like I never do anything productive anyway. If I am just sitting there watching TV, I feel bad about myself.

A lot of times my friends and I just sit around, cook, and talk. We hang out and do homework. We go to Pershing [the gym] to work out. My friends are pretty athletic. They like to go to work out. I go swimming there. I do that quite a bit actually, but none of them really swim or none of them want to go swimming. That is as far as I go and I like it a lot. It is a good challenge for me. I tried swimming in Health and Wellness class. I just got hooked. I love it so much. In high school I ran cross-country in my freshman

year, but realized that I hated to run. I stayed on it because I enjoyed the team. Then I played soccer for three years. I would love to play soccer here, but the players here are pretty good, better than I am. I would love to play if I had a chance, but I don't think I have that chance.

At the University I take pictures for the *Index* (a student newspaper). I work at the Career Center. I do not really get involved in other school activities here. I wish I did. I used to be in the astronomy club. I was the treasurer. I was a terrible treasurer, because I am so unmotivated and I didn't want to do it because it was a pain. It was a lot of responsibility and I didn't want it in the first place. I don't know anything about astronomy. I think they just organize nights to go out. They got telescopes and we got to go to the observatory one night and look up the sky, pretty dumb stuff. It was cool for a while, but then you get into all the technical club stuff, and that's what's not fun.

My parents do finance my education. See, that is the thing. I told you that my dad was a sucker. If I want something then I get it. Well, I am really aware of that and I have always been so independent. Even now I am paying for independence. This summer I worked two jobs because I wanted to earn enough money so I could help out a little bit with my education. But this summer I find out that my brother and sister didn't get a job after their freshman year. My parents definitely paid for their education. They just sat around and did yard work for my dad. They both wonder why I have so many jobs (I have three jobs here). I work at the coffee shop that is on the downtown square on Washington Street. I work at the Career Center, and I also take pictures for the *Index*. I don't even know if I'm getting paid for it. Actually I am not even on a time card now. I just got this job. This is the second time I am going out. I haven't worked anything out with anybody yet. But it is not a big deal. I don't mind volunteering. My siblings just wonder why I have jobs. That is always the way I have been, I always work. I like making my own money and I have always been a hard worker. So I do end up paying for a little bit, I think. But my education is mostly paid by my parents.

I took pictures of the swim meet. I am in beginning photography so I don't have a lot of experience. It is kind of intimidating because they gave me this big set of cameras and they say, "okay, take some good pictures." You've got to be critical on what you pick. It has to have all the right compositional elements. I end up getting nervous and I take terrible pictures. It's hard, but I have only taken pictures once and today I'll take pictures of the blood drive. I am taking the class on photography and I learned how to develop film. I love developing, or working in the dark room. I saw the ad in the paper and thought it would be good.

I want an internship too. This summer I am planning on going to Washington D.C. because I have a few friends that are going to D.C. too. That is a good place for us to go. I want to try to get an internship in Hawaii next semester; I would like to work somewhere like the National Tropical Botanical Garden. I want to go so badly, although I am not a biology or botany major, but a journalism major. To go there to pull some weeds; I would love it. I was thinking about being a biology minor actually because I have the course work behind me already. I found out about the Hawaii internship by working here (at the Career Center) and playing on the Internet. They have cabins on the beach and your door opens out to this huge deck. It is right there on the beach.

Let me tell you, I would like to go out right now, get a job, and get a life. I'm pretty sick of school. I would really like to be on my way so I can have something to say, "that's my own." On prom night it's like, "oh, that's my parents and I am really glad because I am really lucky to have my parents." They worked hard to pay for it. But I don't know; I would like to get up in the morning and have people waiting for me to come because I've got to do something. I like the feeling that I am making it on my own. I like independence. So I just want a house to renovate. I want an old house to fix up and just live there. Seriously, my biggest dream right now is to have the money to buy a house and fix it up, but that is pretty narrow-minded.

I have basic expectations. When I get married I want someone who appreciates me for me, someone who loves me and wants me to be an independent person; at the same time, I want someone who is always there, being helpful. I would want him to have a job. I haven't really given it much thought.

I don't think my parents have any expectations of who I should marry. I haven't brought anybody home for them to consider. Well, actually I brought one person home. We were home for mid-term and he and my mom hit it off. It wasn't like meet the parents kind of thing, but to see our town, to see where I came from. I felt weird at first. But he loves my family a lot, so that was good. I like that person, with whom I defined everything yesterday. I'd probably want someone like him, but not now.

My parents have never placed any emphasis on my dating or marrying an Indonesian. We never really talked about the whole dating thing. And they know where their lives end and my life begins. They see that I see really clearly, but they have never said anything like that.

I don't know if I want a life with children. I could mess them up. I've thought about that for a long time. I just probably wouldn't want that, at least not right now. Now, thinking about the future, I don't want that. To be perfectly honest, I don't think I would be better than anyone. I would be scared to have children, but if I did, I definitely want them to be hard working. I've never done anything bad. When I was a little kid, I never stole anything or broke anything. I never threw things; random acts of violence, that was not me at all. I was a good kid. I would just want them to be the same way, which is tough. I just want them to be good. I don't know Indonesian. But I wouldn't say it was a really important thing to teach any kids I might have, just because I don't know it myself. I don't know how that affects or doesn't affect my life. I definitely want them to have interest, to go out there and see for themselves, just like any other culture. It doesn't matter. I just want them to be pretty multi-cultural and multi-lingual. That's cool.