

Reflection paper 3

Name

Institution



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My parents are not immigrants now, but they were immigrants some years ago. They thought about living in the United States as immigrants, but changed their mind and decided to go back to Korea after a certain period of time that they stayed in the United States. My father started his studies in America in 1984. After he graduated from college, he got married in Korea and decided to come to the United States with my mother to finish the graduate course. Therefore, my parents came to America in 1988 together.

The main purpose of my parent's immigration to the USA was to have better education, and seek for better quality of life. They thought they would get better pastures in the United States. However, their conversation proves that what they experienced in America is not what they expected. According to them, staying in a new country was stressful because there were no Korean friends whom they could share feelings with and feel at home. During the time that my parents arrived to the United States, there were only few Koreans in America. My parents felt lonely and isolated. My father says, "It literally took one and half hours to get to the grocery shop of Korean food, and it made me more isolated, because I missed our cultural food." He adds that the low number of immigrants in the United States worsened the situation. Since there was little knowledge on the existence of immigrants in the USA, some took advantage of the gap in knowledge and bullied the innocent immigrants, including my father. My father remembers that when he went to class, some people came to him and asked "Do you like garlic? I know all Asians like garlic." They could then give him garlic and laugh sarcastically. These actions were very humiliating and dehumanizing. Before coming to the United States with my mother, my father stayed at a dorm for one year. He also suffered troubles staying there, because there were people who spread Kimch, which is Korean traditional food, on the wall of his dorm room.

My parents say that racism was not only happening in their daily life. They point out that even though they did not come to have jobs in America at that time, the immigration desk was mean and unfriendly to them. My mother remembers that when they arrived to the United States, it took



them almost 3 hours to pass the immigration desk, because the workers were ‘confirming’ the purpose of their visit, and checking all the belongings that they had brought. My mother believes it was useless to ‘confirm’ their purpose for the visit for unrealistic hours, since the name of their visa was ‘student visa’.

Orelus , (2012) states that, “Whereas some people voluntarily move to a foreign land, other are forced to do so as a result of socioeconomic, racial, political, sexual and religious oppression.” Even though my parents had come to the United States voluntarily without any oppression, they experienced hard times and emotional unrest. However, there are immigrants who came to America because they could not bear with the oppression in their own country. It is hard to imagine how they would feel after encountering unfriendly environment in America. They might have felt like they are dumped by the world.

After my parents had finished their studies, they thought of living in the United States. Therefore, they wanted to apply for a green card. However, they decided not to stay in the country. The two articles discussed in the class describe the two main reasons why my parents decided to give up the green card. “The loss of familiar social networks is especially hard on families and women who often find themselves isolated, forced to deal on their own problems with the multiple demands of life in a foreign environment” (Perez, 2001). As Marchetti-Mercer, (2012) puts it, “Emigration is never an individual event: its impact is far-reaching, affecting more than the emigrating individual or family” (Marchetti- Mercer, 2012).

While my parents were waiting for their green card, my father was doing an internship. My mother had a hard time melting into the United States with the absence of her husband. Since my mother studied in Korea and Germany, she could not speak English fluently at that time. Fortunately, she could understand most of the spoken English. Additionally, since she did not have any friends who would share the same cultural background, she felt isolated. Therefore, she did not want to go anywhere. Furthermore, not only my mother felt the impact of migration. Back home, my grandparents were missing my parents deeply, especially my grandmother, who is my mother’s



mom, was having a very hard time. Since my mother was lonely and depressed, she started to call my grandmother a lot, and that made my grandmother even sadder. As a result of the sadness and depression, my mother became physically sick. My parents decided to go back to Korea, so that they could heal and reduce the impact of being immigrants for several years.

According to my father, he does not regret the fact that they gave up the green card and went back home. In fact, he is happy that my mother's health has improved. Even if he could make more money and secure good job opportunities in the United States, he feels comfortable that his wife is happy and healthy. He says that whenever he goes to places where there is no Asian population, he fears that he might get ill-treated as it happened in the United States. My father says that since he belongs to the 'dominant or major population group' in Korea, he does not have to fear about just being in Korea. In addition, he says that in his workplace, there is one foreign worker that reminds him of his stay in the USA. Since Korea is not a diverse country at all, my father says that he is trying to be nice to that worker.

In conclusion, I think it was a good decision to return home. In fact, mother seems happy living in Korea with her parents, and not sick anymore. Similarly, my father is glad that our entire family is happy to be where we are. When going to the United States, my father thought that he would get equal opportunities and make an 'American Dream' come true. However, there was no equal opportunity, and it seemed like "American Dream" existed far from where he stood. Therefore, he believes that leaving the foreign country was the best choice that he made at that time.



References

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