

When You Are An Immigrant

- Reflections by Newcomers to Canada -

Selected writing from ESL students
at Kwantlen University College
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edited by Ian A. Brown

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The Reason For Fleeing My Country.

Our family belongs to the Gojam minority Christian group and had to fight its way to social and economic success. I too had to fight my way. When I completed my high school, I could not get into the university for lack of political support which was indispensable at that time. Though I had big problems with the communist youth association to which I did not want to adhere, the anti government agents insisted on my joining their armed struggle or declare my adversity to the government. They would not heed to any of the peaceful principles I tried to explain and regarded my abstaining from participating as an opposition to their war. I escaped many attempts of abduction by anti government agents and underwent many detentions and interrogations by the political police for my father's involvement with the Gojam rights movement.

With the fall of the inner communist regime by the outer communist-armed Guerilla fighters, we hoped that our situation would get better. But on the contrary, it got worse because as they came to power they immediately started chasing and arresting the Ethiopians who had refused to comply with their instructions to kill or be killed. I was detained for interrogation about my political activities and about my "past anti-independence conduct". I was released under severe warning against any undesired activity.

My relatives and family friends managed to get me out of the country.

Samson, 29/3/00

Broken Dream

This is brief story about my girl friend. When I was 17 years old, I was in love with a beautiful girl. Her name was Suadad. She was 16 years old. I had loved her with great affection for five years. She had the same feeling as me and we promised to keep on loving each other. Those days were so nice. At that time, I felt like bird flying through the air.

But in 1991 the Gulf war broke out. I helped my friends to fight the bad government of Iraq. The fighting continued for 20 days. The government got the upper hand so I had to escape from my country.

Many, many people were killed by the Iraqi forces. My friends and I were lucky. We managed to reach the Saudi border. I lived in Saudi Arabia for seven years. Then I decided to come to Canada because it's a peaceful country. When I got here, I called my family to ask them about my girlfriend.

My family told me that she had got married. I felt so bad. I was in despair. My dream was shattered. I will never forget my Suadad. She will be in my heart forever.

Mohamed, 22/6/98

Coming To Canada

I'm going to write about my trip to Canada. This memory will always be in my mind. That was my first big trip. Before then, I had never seen a real airplane, just on TV. When I sat in the plane, I said 'O my God, I'm so afraid, but I'm brave'. My first flight was short, about half an hour from Belgrade to Skopje. But at that time I didn't know I needed more time to change my plans. I was so surprised when I arrived in Italy. Then we flew from Italy to Amsterdam. This flight took about two and a half hours.

While flying, I kept checking my watch and figured out that I would be late for my next plane from Amsterdam to Vancouver. When I arrived at the airport, I knew I needed to ask somebody to help me. I went to the information and asked one of ladies from the 'KLM' agency. I asked her how I could get to Vancouver because I had missed my connection. I showed her my ticket. After ten minutes of checking, she said "you're lucky - another plane is leaving in about three hours for Montreal, and there you change to a flight for Vancouver."

My flight took nine hours to Montreal. I enjoyed my flight. I ate everything that the stewardess brought me. I chose something but I didn't know what it really was, but it was delicious anyway. I drank every kind of juice. When I got to Montreal, there were a lot of people waiting in line to go through customs. I was so exhausted and still checking my watch because the line was moving so slowly. When I finally came to the customs, they were very nice with me. But it wasn't my final destination. After they checked my passport, they sent me to the Immigration service. I was so scared when I got there that I couldn't move my mouth. They told me to answer with my head 'yes' or 'no' because. After that, I went to luggage control, but in my mind, I kept asking myself the same question, 'how can I get to Vancouver where my husband is waiting for me?' While they were filling out my papers, I explained that my luggage was still in Amsterdam, and that I only had ten minutes to get the plane. They said "sorry, it's too late, you will have to take a flight tomorrow." They helped me get a hotel for the night and they gave me another ticket for the next plane.

In the hotel, I couldn't sleep. I was very sad and very, very tired. I waited for morning. At six o'clock I went to the airport. Outside it was very cold and there was a lot of snow. In the airport, I found my way to get to the departure lounge. I was first there. I didn't move from my seat for three hours. Finally, I got on the plane. And finally I got to Vancouver.

There I found my husband waiting for me. When we got together finally, I was able to forget my travelling and how tired I was.

Anna, 12/4/0

The Day We Left

I was very sad when I received my visa. The postman said congratulations. My mother also felt sad. Then I told my neighbors and friends. But my elder sister felt terrible. My nephews were crying. Our relatives came to meet us. My friends gave me gifts.

We left our home on 22nd. December, 1999. My sister and brother-in-law came with us to the airport. When we entered the airport we were all crying. After some time, my father and I went to comfort my sister again. It was terrible. I can't write any more about that. I didn't know how we entered into the plane. I felt a little bit better than before.

We had ten hours stay in England (London). I felt very tired. It was hard to wait for ten hours. I was also afraid because I couldn't speak English. A guy who could speak Hindi helped us. He was really nice. After that we traveled from England to Canada. I slept all the time. Then my mother woke me up. I felt happy. We had arrived.

We finally left the airport at Vancouver after one and a half hours. We were last in line, which didn't help. We felt very happy to see my sister after four years, and my nephew for the first time. At that time he was only a month old. We felt happy when we got home. My uncle, aunt and their children were there to welcome us. My father felt very happy to meet his brother. But I didn't feel very well.

Life is very busy here. Sometimes I think I made a big mistake in coming to Canada. On the contrary, life is very easy in India, especially for women. They are only homemakers. Now I think I should go back to my home. But my family does not agree with me. They think I should try to settle here. These days I am not able to take any decision. I am just thinking now. It is hard to decide because some things are good here and other things are good in India. Anyhow, at first I want to study here because I think we should get good things from where we are. Finally I want to say that coming to Canada was a mixture of joys and sorrows.

G.K.B, 11/4/00

First Day In Canada

I got my visa on 28th. March. I was very happy but I also felt very nervous and sad. My parents also felt very unhappy because I had never lived anywhere without my parents. Next, I did some shopping and met my relatives. Then I left my home on 9th. April, 1998. I stayed two days with my relatives who lived in New Delhi. My parents came with me to see me off. I went to the Temple before I left my relatives' house.

I went to the Airport on 10th. April. Then I hugged and kissed my mom and dad and other relatives. I cried and so did my mom and dad. I felt very confused because I didn't know what to do, whether to go or stay. But, on the other hand, my husband and in-laws family were waiting for me. So I entered the Airport and filled in the form. The Airport officer checked my passport and ticket and asked me some questions. Then at last I left my country, my motherland where I was born.

I was very nervous and felt lonely. On the plane, I didn't eat anything but only drank some orange juice. I felt very homesick in the plane. In Singapore I changed plane. I stayed there only one hour. Then I arrived in Canada at Vancouver Airport on 11th. April 1998 at mid-morning. The immigration officer checked my passport and ticket and stamped my visa, and gave me some information books and cards.

I felt very nervous but I felt very happy because I had finally met my husband after one year. When I came out from the customs area, my husband and relatives were waiting for me. When I first saw my husband and relatives, I was very happy but I also felt very upset because I had left my parents and brothers in India. After leaving the Airport, first we went to the temple. Canada looked very different from my country. It looked very clean; I was very surprised when I saw the Sky-train without any driver.

When I entered my home, my mother-in-law gave me \$100. Then I took a shower and ate lunch. After that I called my parents who lived in India. Then I got some rest. That night we had a little party at home. We took some pictures and made a movie. After the party, my husband and I went to a hotel for the night. At night Vancouver looked very beautiful.

In my first week in Canada, I didn't like the food and water. I gave some gifts to my sisters-in-law and other relatives. After one week our relatives invited us to dinner. Now I study at Kwantlen College in Newton. Sometimes I miss my family in India. Now here I live a happy life with my husband.

Jaswinder, 16/12/98

First Steps

I came to Canada three months ago. Everything has changed during these times. Everything is different than in Taiwan. New places, new friends, everything is new. I thought I could learn more things than if I stayed in Taiwan. I told my manager about my thinking and asked if he could give me one year's leave from my job. He agreed, so I decided to spend one year in Canada to learn more English.

In the first month, I didn't pass the English test, so I had to stay at home and wait until another school assessed me. During this time, I found a tutor who helped me improve my vocabulary and conversation. This tutor helped me so much. She let me know how I could learn English well and improve faster and faster. Sometimes we talked about her family or my family and my friends. She is my teacher and also my first friend in Canada.

In the second month, I got my driver's license. I had to get a driver's license because the international driver's license is only good for half a year. My father bought me a new car, but then he decided to send it back to Taiwan in a container ship.

I often tell my friends in Taiwan about my life in Canada and tell them about my experiences. They also tell me about their news since I have been in Canada. I miss all of them because we studied in the same class about five years. I also miss my boyfriend. In Canada, people always do many things by themselves. For example, people usually cook and eat at home. In Taiwan, people usually don't cook by themselves because they are always busy and have no time to cook. So a lot of people do take out or eat in restaurants.

Three weeks ago, Kwantlen College assessed me and told me that I could start the LINC class. During this time, I have learned more and more. Also I have made a lot of new friends. Different countries, different people, different cultures! Everyone comes from a different place, everything is different from my own country! There are many things I can learn. I think I can attain more things during this year!

Judy, 9/6/99

Life In Canada (2 Accounts)

I just came to Canada several months ago, but I think my life has changed a lot. When I was in my hometown in China, I used to work six days a week from morning to afternoon. I worked for a TV station as a technician. Every day I had many things to do. When I finished work, I had a social life with friends, shopping, watching movies. Sometimes I went to friends' homes to play games like Ma Jong or go bowling. I had a lot of friends, so I was always busy.

Now in Canada, sometimes I think I have lost myself; no job, no friends, every day staying at home, doing housework, looking out of the window. I am very sad. I cannot understand or speak this language very well. I watch TV games. I don't understand everything so I just listen to half of it and guess the rest. I'm so unhappy.

But I like the air here and the environment is clean, beautiful and so quiet. I think I need to study English then use it to find a job and make new friends.

Geling, 8/9/98

* * *

My family arrived here one month ago. My first impression was that there are many trees here compared to my home country. All members of my family look like they are having a pleasant time except my daughter. She is used to a complicated life in the city area with many of her friends. I know that everyone enjoys their own lives in their own style.

In my eyes, everything looks fresh and wonderful, especially the fresh air and water. But she does not see this. How could we buy such wonderful air with money? How could we buy such wonderful water with money? We are usually apt to think that fresh air and water are always given to us, as a God given right. We take it for granted. How many people are there on earth? How much garbage is there? I have worked most of my life in the countryside with good accommodation luckily. But life in the city is more convenient compared to the country. There are many department store and hospitals nearby.

In Korea, it really was an easy life. I did not need to move. But the most important thing is that lack of exercise causes you to be fat. My daughter does not like to do homework. She enjoys naps or only watching television. Whenever I see her laziness I tell her to move. Nowadays she is very eager to learn English and she is getting more accustomed to her life. I am happy with my family here.

Jae, 7/1/00

Life In The Last Two Years

China and Canada are the two big countries in the world. China is a Communist country. Canada is a Democratic country. Because they are different kinds of country, when I immigrated to Canada, I felt things were new for me. And I felt my life would change.

The first thing that is different is the traffic. There are lots of vehicles running on the road. In my first country, I used to ride a bike everywhere, but now in Canada, I drive a car because in Canada everyone drives after the age of sixteen. When I arrived in Canada, I was nineteen years old, so right away I did the writing test about car safety, passed it, and then started to study how to drive. When I passed the road test, I bought a car. This happened in just half a year after I arrived. But in China, I think that would have taken me ten years. Oh, that is a long time - too long.

Before I came to Canada, I used to go to school every day. But now I go to work every day. And I feel my life is exciting. My life in China was tedious. Because Canada is a free country (freer than China), I feel hopeful. I can go anywhere I want with my car. And I'll be able to earn so much more than I could have in China. That's why I came to Canada. Here, I have to work really hard but I'm getting so much experience from different kinds of jobs.

Because Canada has changed my life, I will live in Canada. I like my new life and my new country - Canada.

Michael, 9/9/98

Best And Worst Things About Living In Canada

BEST THINGS:

- The laws are good.
- There are a lot of benefits.
- Canada is a beautiful place.
- The education is good.
- Transport is good.
- The banking system is good.

WORST THINGS:

- The weather is bad.
- The children have too much freedom.
- There is a shortage of work.
- There is too much crime.
- There are lots of drugs.
- There are language problems.
- There are too many taxes.
- There is too much divorce.
- Canadian life is too busy.
- People don't trust each other.

Narinder, 27/11/96

A Dream That Everyone Spoke English.

Last week I had a beautiful dream. It was a wonderful spring morning. The sky was clear and blue. It was a nice day and I went to school. At the school everything looked beautiful. In my dream I learned English in a nice class. All the students attended the lesson in silence. The teacher was content with his students who were from different countries, with different cultures, customs and habits. All of them respected the teacher and the other classmates, they all kept silence and listened to the explanations very carefully. The teacher asked every student different questions and everybody tried to give the best answers. In the class all the students kept quiet and there was a lot of harmony and friendliness. The teacher was delighted with the seriousness of his students. All of them worked hard.

But the alarm clock rang and I woke up. It was in the morning. I had to go to school. It was a regular day. In the class my classmates spoke loudly. The teacher entered the classroom and started the lesson. But in the class there was a confused murmur. It made it difficult for me to concentrate and to understand the lesson when around me and over my head, everybody spoke in their own language. After the lunch break, I had a strong headache, and I couldn't attend the lesson anymore. Everything was hard to understand in this noise.

I know that every culture is different but I think that in any culture people have to respect the people who work or learn nearby. They have to think these people sometimes know less and learn slower.

When I got back home, I cried because I was tired and discontented. What a difference between dream and reality but in this reality we all have to learn and live.

What else can you do?

Lydia, 14/2/96

Jobs In India

People who are doing government jobs in India never work hard on their jobs. They take many holidays. Sometimes, they take holidays without any reason and do their personal work at home when they want to. Indian people get lots of money from government jobs. The people who work in farms and mills get much lower wages.

In India, people are divided in three classes. Some people are businessmen who are very rich and have lots of money. They can buy anything they want. Some people belong to the middle class. They have a good salary to live on. But in India there is a majority of poor people. They don't have enough money to buy their food. They work on farms and get very little money.

There are many jobs but I like teaching jobs. In India this job is very easy to do. My mother, aunt, sister and many other relatives are doing this job there. My sister recently started as a teacher. She likes her job very much. She always thinks this job is very easy. She is teaching political science. She gets about 6000 rupees per month. The government gives some other benefits too.

She did a Masters to get this job. Firstly she didn't like the job, but my family members compelled her to do it. She didn't want to do this job at first because most members of my family were already teachers. She always told me, "I don't like this job, I want to get any other good job." In India it is very rare for girls to do something against their parents' wishes. So she chose teaching as a profession, according to my parents' wishes.

Baljinder, 26/4/98

Raja Hindustani
(Movie Review)

I really like Hindi movies. Every weekend we watch a Hindi Movie. Some Hindi movies are love stories and some are full of action. I watched the Hindi movie "Raja Hindustani" two weeks ago. I really liked it. It was a love story. In this story, a beautiful girl whose name was Krshima lived with her father and stepmother. Her stepmother did not have any children. Even so, she didn't like Krshima because she was her stepdaughter.

Krshima wanted to visit her mother's village. But at first her father and mother didn't agree to that. In the end, her father changed his mind. She went to her mother's village. She called the taxi, and the taxi driver's village was the same as her mother's village. The taxi driver's name was Raja. He loved his country so he asked people to call him by his full name 'Raja Hindustani'.

Raja and Krshima were attracted to each other. Raja's uncle and aunt lived in the village. They liked Krshima. One day, Krshima's Dad decided to pay his daughter a visit. He met his daughter and asked her to come back home with him. But she was in love with Raja. She wanted to marry him. Her father was a rich person. He didn't like Raja because he was a poor taxi driver. He was angry with his daughter.

He went back to his town and Krshima got married to Raja. Krshima's father said he would never give his property to her. When his wife listened to these words, she was very happy. She didn't want her daughter to have any money. But, after some time, Krshima's father changed his mind and forgave her daughter and decided to give her property.

Then her stepmother made a plan. She decided to try to separate Raja and Krshima. She told Krshima that Raja wanted to divorce her, and then told Raja that his wife wanted to divorce him. She thought that if Krshima divorced Raja, she would arrange her marriage to her brother's son. Raja and Krshima wanted to meet each other but her mother wouldn't allow them to. Krshima gave birth to a boy. When Raja heard the news, he went to his wife's house and kidnapped the boy. Krshima went to Raja's uncle and aunt's house and there she found out that it was her mother's plan to separate them.

Her mother's brother and nephew tried to kill Raja and his boy. Raja fought against all the people. In the end, Raja and Krshima lived a happy life. Her stepmother, uncle, and her nephew were arrested by the police because they wanted to kill Raja and his son.

Pardeep, 19/3/97

Sohini Mahiwal

This story concerns two lovers who were from Punjab. This area is a part of Pakistan. Many writers wrote this story according to what they want to say. It is the famous story of Sohini Mahiwal.

Many years ago, there was a famous sculptor, whose name was Dulla, he was from Gujarn village. There was a king in Balkh Bukhara village. Neither of these two men had any children. They went to an astrologer and they begged him for a child. The astrologer said, "within a few months the king will have a boy and Dulla will have a girl. These children will be known as Sohini and Mahiwal. Mahiwal's childhood name is Mirja."

When Sohini was a teenager, she was famous for her sculpture. The astrologer gave a ceramic pot full of water to Mirja's uncle Hasham. His uncle gave this pot to Mirja. He drank the water. There was a miracle. He saw a picture of a girl in the water of the pot. The pot had been made by Sohini and it was her picture that Mirja saw. Ranjha fell in love with Sohini. He knew he had to find her.

His uncle Hasham told him about the astrologer and said that he could find out where Sohini lived. Mirja left his home and set off for his destination with his uncle. He had to face many difficulties on his way. Finally, they reached Sohini's village. He asked a villager, "I want to go to the house of the person who made this beautiful pot."

Mirja was surprised when he saw how beautiful Sohini was. Sohini was surprised too. They fell in love. Mirja asked her father if he could come every day to learn how to make sculptures and pottery." Sohini's father agreed with his idea.

Next day Mirja came to Sohini's house. For several days they worked together. One day her father set off to do some essential work. Mirja told Sohini the whole story about how he had received the pot and how he had had a vision of her in the water. Then they were so close that they couldn't live without each other. But they had to love each other in secret.

One day the prince of the village sent a message to Sohini's father saying that he had seen Sohini and he wanted to marry her. The message added that if the father didn't agree to his proposal, the prince would make sure that he would not be able to get earth for his sculptures. At the same time, Sohini's father found out about their love. Her father had to marry his daughter to the prince Jabroo because of the threat. Sohini and Mirja were very sad. There was nothing they could do.

There was a man who looked after the cattle for the whole village. He helped Mirja by agreeing to trade places. Mirja gave him a lot of money so that he could impersonate him. After that day he was called Mahiwal. He lived in a hut at the edge of Chunab river. Sohini went to meet him by swimming across. She used a sculpture as a floating device. She hid her sculpture in a sugar cane field.

But prince Jabroo found out what was happening. He was angry and sought revenge on Mirja and the man who had helped him. He arranged for poison to be given to the village's cattle. Then Mahiwal (Mirja) was arrested. After that, the prince married Sohini. She went to her in-laws home. Mahiwal escaped from the prison and returned to his hut beside the river. When Sohini heard that he had escaped, she couldn't wait to meet her lover again. Unfortunately, one day her sister-in-law exchanged her sculpture with a cracked sculpture.

When she swam into the middle of the Chunab, the sculpture broke and she drowned. Mahiwal jumped into the river to save her. He drowned too. When they met in the middle of the water, they drowned together.

Amrit, 20/12/95

My Family Has Come Here From China

There are three people in my family - my husband, my son and me. We just moved to Canada four months ago. At present, my son is studying at High school and my husband is looking for a job.

My husband and I worked at a large company before we came to Canada. That was a government import and export company. China is a communist country so there are lots of differences from other countries. For example, my salary was just \$800.00 (U.S.) per month, but my benefits were good. We had a medical plan and pension plan. We had some subsidies, for instance, telephone bill, newspaper and magazine bills, traffic bills etc.

Everything was subsidized. I had 40 days holiday every year. In particular, I had an apartment, the area was about 80 square meters. It was allotted to me. I only paid a little money, it was about 1% of my salary. If you didn't leave this company until you retired, you could live there until you died.

However, China is a country of the third world. After all, agricultural economy and agricultural population still occupy about 70% of the country's economy and population. Most people are still poor (my family lives only in the cities near the coast.) Now, the Chinese government is trying to make some changes. I believe that big changes will happen in China over the next 10~20 years.

Connie, 17/6/98

My Family Of Origin

I was born in a traditional Taiwanese family. My grandfather was a farmer. He had six sons and one daughter but my father was the youngest. Only my father obtained an education. Not many people in rural Taiwan had high degrees about thirty years ago. When he was a young man, he came to the big city and started up a business - a spinning factory. However he had a setback. In 1980, when I was a young boy, my father's business had to shut down, because at that time in Taiwan, there was an economic depression.

My mother always tried to encourage my father. She played both the role of breadwinner and homemaker. She was always a good mother. She never complained about financial problems and lost face. Taiwanese are uncomfortable seeking help from outside the family.

Now my father has succeeded again. My mother is still my father's assistant and homemaker. I thank God for helping my parents and my brother and sisters and me. We are Christian. Most Taiwanese are Buddhists because they feel they must respect their ancestors, but I don't agree with this.

Steven, 17/6/98

My Father

My father is fifty-three years old. He's 6'3" tall and he is healthy. He was the best sportsman at his college. He always loved sports. When he was student, he won lots of prizes and certificates.

My father was a landlord in India. We had a big farm. He always took care of our farm. He was also the leader of ten or fifteen small villages. His duty was to collect money from other landlords and farmers and give it to the Government. This money had to be paid to my father by the due date, otherwise the Government took action. Sometimes when people didn't or couldn't pay, my father never said anything and he paid himself to the Government. The village people always respected my father. Sometimes people came to our home and talked to him. They would say, "we have some problems and we want your opinion." When government officials came to our villages, my father would tell them that we needed facilities. He also talked about how the poor people needed help. Six months ago, my father and I went to India and I could see how much people missed him.

Now my father is a security guard in Canada. He wants to improve his knowledge and get a better job. He is very interested to learn more and more. Reading books, papers and listening to radio are his hobbies. I love my father so much. I wish him a long life.

Sukhpal, 19/1/98

I Look Like My Father

I'm going to write about my father, because I look like him. He lives in Yugoslavia. He is a farmer and he works in the milling factory. He makes flour. Now he is 60 years old, with green eyes and half bald gray hair. He looks old for his age, because all his life he has been a hard worker. He started working very early, when he was 5 years old.

My dad is a little shorter than I am. He likes good food which has lots of meat. Supper without meat is not supper to him. Because he is a little fat, it is not healthy for him and I tell him not to eat so much fatty meat. And this is always his answer: 'When I was a child, we often didn't have food because my mother died very young and my father went to the war and I had to stay with my grandma. She was old and not very healthy, and we had a shortage of food. So my wish was when I got older, I would never be hungry again.' It's a story I have heard so many times because it's painful for him.

He likes Hungarian Gypsy music. He is happy when he sings. My father's favorite hobby is fishing. When I was a young girl, I used to go with him. He taught me how to catch fish. He was uneducated because, at that time, life was really hard and he needed to make money for the family however he could. He was about seven when he left school.

I like my father because he is such a helpful person and is so friendly. He loves me so much because I was born first and he gave me his mother's name. My wish is that he lives a long life.

Anna, 12/1/00

My Mother

My mother lives in Taiwan. She is fifty-eight years old. She was born in 1940. My mother has two children, me and my young brother. She is short in height. She is slim. Her hair is light black, short and curly. She has fair skin. Her eyes are black and big. My mother and I are great friends. She always listens to me when I have a problem. She always appears happy even when she is sad.

She is also a wonderful grandmother. She and my father live with my young brother and 2 grandchildren. She worked for many years in an elementary school. She is a teacher. She taught Grade 2. She was patient and empathetic with her students and she was respected by them.

My mother is very noble. She is the best mother in the world. I love her very much.

Jen, 22/4/98

Waste Not, Want Not

My mother was as tall as me, but she was old and thin. She had cataracts, so she didn't see clearly. She always distinguished us by our voices. She liked to wear traditional clothing, but most of the time, she wore plain clothes. When she was young she was beautiful.

She didn't waste anything. She was frugal. She was careful to calculate the cost when she bought anything. She usually was willing to help someone if they needed it. She was intelligent even though she never went to school. When I was three years old, my father died. We were in a difficult situation. Since that time, my mother brought up seven children without support from anyone, so she was strong and competent. She always hoped that all of us would be talented, so she was a strict instructor, but she was kind. She had a traditional Taiwanese attitude; she didn't accept the behavior of some young people.

She smoked for a long time. We advised her that smoking would affect her health, but she always opposed this idea. Finally, she stopped smoking by herself while she was sick.

My mother passed away in 1990. She got bladder cancer. She had a difficult time with that illness. She had Chemotherapy and she needed to endure both the pain of the treatment and the illness. She was optimistic and cooperated with doctors. She fought the disease for six months, so she was brave and patient.

My mother's death was a very sad event in my life. I can never see her again. It reminds me everyone should take care of themselves and spend more time in the company of their parents. Otherwise, they will have regrets.

Judy, 22/4/98

Unforgettable Incident

It was my great desire to serve in the Army since my childhood. My desire became true when I enrolled in the Army in 1963 as a clerk. On completion of my basic and advanced training, I was posted to a regiment. As per records policy, clerks can't serve in one regiment until their retirement. They are required to be posted to some other units on completion of their stipulated period of service. Accordingly I was also posted to various units.

In 1982, I was posted to a unit which was located at Amritsar in Punjab. Our unit was ordered to move to Rajasthan to carry out its Annual Practice Camp. We moved there by a special train. We carried out over technical exercises and also completed our Annual Practice Camp. We remained in the exercise area for about three months.

One day, when we were required to move back to our permanent location, I was called by my Adjutant who gave me his verbal instructions that I was required to move alone by train and deliver official mail to our higher headquarters. On taking his brief instructions, I was given the official mail duly locked in a small brief case. Since my home was located nearby on my way back, I was granted one day's casual leave, on my request, to enable me to see my children.

That evening, I set off on my journey by train to Amritsar via Delhi. I reached Delhi the next morning. Here I had to change train. I alighted from the train, cleaned my teeth and washed my face and took a little breakfast and boarded the train that was going to Amritsar. Now it was day time. I was travelling in a compartment which was very small and was next to the engine. There was only one door for the passengers to get in and out of the compartment because it was a mail train that only stopped at junction stations. As my junction railway station was about to come, I checked my luggage and got ready. After some time, I wanted to go to the washroom in the compartment. I went to the washroom and when I came back to my seat, I noticed my brief case was not there. I searched for it everywhere in the compartment and also inquired from the co-passengers but all in vain.

I remained stunned as to what to do now. I alighted from the train at my station and reached my home by bus. When I reached home, I was happy to know that my brother who was also serving in the Army, was also on leave. I related to him the whole incident of what had happened to me. We talked over the matter and he advised me to make a police report at the railway police station where this incident had happened.

Next day I got up early in the morning and reached the railway police station and requested them to record my report. The in-charge of the Railway Police Station was a very kind man. He advised me, "it would be better for you if you search for your papers on your own by going along the railway line." It struck my mind that if somebody had stolen my briefcase, he might have thrown it away. On taking this in mind, I started my search along the railway

line. When I had just gone about 3 miles, I noticed a railway line repair party coming from the opposite side. I stopped them and related my story of yesterday's incident and inquired from them if they had seen some brief case or some papers lying near the railway line. One man said he had seen some papers lying scattered near the railway lines in the bushes. On hearing this, I felt relieved and made a request to the in-charge of the party to send this man with me. The in-charge of the party agreed and sent his man to accompany me. I was very eager to reach the place. We reached there and I collected the scattered papers. I also made a search for the briefcase and I found it in the bushes in a very torn condition. I picked it up too. I paid a lot of thanks to the man who had helped me.

Next day I reached my unit's permanent location. I reported the matter to my Commanding Officer who became very annoyed with me but he didn't punish me, thinking that all this had happened accidentally and not neglectfully. I prayed to God who saved my military career. Whenever I think about this incident, I shiver and think what a horrible experience that was. I will never forget this incident as long as I live.

Gurpal, 27/11/96

Being A Teacher In India

My father is a Headmaster in a Government High School. First of all, I will explain how to get a teacher job. For this job, you have to get a Bachelor's degree in any field (i.e. science, arts etc.) and then you must have a Bachelor of Education. After that, the Government gives a test to the candidates. Then they make a list of candidates according to their marks in that test. The government gives jobs to those candidates who get the highest marks. After that, they join the schools which are recommended by the government. This job is not easy because you have to have a lot of knowledge about your field.

My father got a job as a Teacher, when he had completed both his degrees and got high marks in the examination that was given to him by the government. Then he joined High School as a Teacher (in India we use the term 'Master'). He got a good salary at that time. In our country, a teacher works 8 hours in a day. Sunday is a holiday for him. In High School, a teacher teaches about a specific subject which he has studied during the degree of Bachelor of Education. My father is a Math Teacher. He teaches classes from 7th. grade to 10th. grade. After the examination of students, the government checks the record of a teacher who has taught those students.

According to experience, teachers are promoted to do a Headmaster's job. After doing a long teacher's job, my father was promoted to a Headmaster's job by the government. A Headmaster has a hard job. He has to handle the whole school. His pay is also increased. I think if anyone get a teacher's job in my country, he should be happy with his job. Everybody respects a teacher in my country. Teaching is an honest job in my country. The Headmaster has to keep discipline in his school. He has to make rules for the students and for the teachers. He has to check the work of the teachers. He has to give good advice to teachers. He has to send reports on the teachers to the government. He has to give the salaries to the teachers. He has to arrange all the activities in his school.

Now times have changed in India. These days, prices in my country are going up. Now the salary of teacher is less according to their needs. There are fewer jobs in my country now. There is great competition between the candidates to get jobs. A few candidates get a teacher's job. There is too much unemployment in my country. Many people have degrees, but they have no job.

Harpreet, 13/5/98

Visit To A Hill Station

I can never forget my visit to Mussoorie. I went there during the last year's summer vacation. My uncle had invited me to spend the vacation with him.

My school closed on the 18th April. I persuaded my friend Surinder to accompany me. Both of us left for Dehradun by the night train. Next morning we were there. In the afternoon we drove to Mussoorie by taxi. The journey was very pleasant. The road zigzagged.

Soon the upward journey began. We were then at a height of five thousand feet. We felt like birds flying in the air. At last we reached the taxi stand. My uncle was there to receive us. He took us to his cottage near the mall. We saw large number of tourists enjoying themselves.

The next day we visited some picnic spots like Gun Hill and The Fall. We enjoyed our evening walks through the woods. We loved to see the clouds around us.

Our stay at Mussoorie was pleasant. The memory of the visit continues to thrill me even now.

Baljit

I'm Still A Colombian

I'll begin this story with one of my Grandfather's set phrases, "You can go to the end of the world, but you can never forget from where you come from". Until now, I've been practicing this in my own life. That's why I can't understand how some people from my country have forgotten many things about themselves, like their religion, language and some other customs.

Well, I really love my country (of course) and I'm also quite realistic about the scary situation in which they are living at the moment, but even so, I'm still a Colombian and I will always be, wherever I go.

It seems to me that you are kidding yourself if you pretend that just because you speak some English and have a Canadian citizenship, that you have lost your previous identity. You won't ever completely lose your Spanish roots or your accent or your skin color.

Anyway, a couple of months ago, my husband and I met a girl in a Latin-American Carnival. She spoke with us in very good English and she told us that her parents were Canadians. A few minutes later, the couple came over and my husband and I just looked at each other and started to laugh. We couldn't stop laughing because the famous 'Canadians' were just a meter and a quarter tall and they looked just like Tupac Amaruc. I mean they could have been the most pure representation of the South American or Central American indigenous people. When the parents talked to us, their English was very poor and had a very strong Mexican accent. Why didn't they speak to us in Spanish? They knew I was from Columbia. Were they ashamed of their roots? What a nerve!

We also met a couple from Colombia who have been living in Canada for twenty years. They have two kids. They all usually go to Colombia for vacations every two or three years. What a bad time for the kids, because they don't have any idea of Spanish and their family in Colombia doesn't speak any English. Well now that I have experienced all this, I still think that no matter how hard I have to work in my house, I'll continue teaching Spanish to my husband and my kids, if I have any. My husband thinks that Spanish is the most romantic language he has ever heard, and our commitment will be to teach it to our kids.

Sandra, 9/6/99

First Impressions Of Canada

I came in Canada on July 24, 1978. It was cloudy and sunny alternately. While approaching Vancouver, I was able to see a beautiful view from the plane through a crack in the clouds. There was a widely spread, plentiful landscape. How beautiful it was! I can't express the beautiful view in words.

When I came out from the airport's customs, my wife, daughter and sister-in-law were waiting to meet me. My wife and daughter had arrived in Canada a month previously. In driving home from the airport, I was able to see Vancouver's landscape more clearly. Most of the houses had spacious back yards and front yards. Wherever I looked, there were many trees and flowers. During my eager sight-seeing, I was almost able to forget feelings that had risen in my mind - complex feelings that included excitement, hope, anxiety, and so on that I had been feeling when I had got on the plane just ten hours ago in Korea.

For months, I really enjoyed living in Canada. Especially, I loved Vancouver's weather. It was not hot in summer and not cold in winter. It is terrible to think of the weather in Korea at the time I left. It was too hot to sleep at night. Although here it is always rainy in winter, at first I didn't mind it. It is warmer than in Korea. But, this winter, gradually, I am getting to dislike the rainy winter in Vancouver.

At first I used to compare the value of commodities in Canada with the Korean money rate. So, I felt that Canada's price levels were a lot lower while the wage levels were similar to Korean's ones. Therefore, I felt happy about the economic situation. But four months later, a serious economic crisis developed in Korea. The value of Korean money fell about 80%. Nowadays, I am getting the feeling that Canada's price levels are high. Also, I now know how hard it is to get a job in Canada.

To live in Canada is no longer a fantastic dream. I will live my life eagerly in Canada. If our family life becomes stable financially, I would enjoy travelling more so that I could see Canada's beautiful nature.

Gidu, 18/12/98

Field Trip To Steveston And A Buddhist Temple

On Sept. 21, 1999, we went to Steveston quay and The International Buddhist Society by car. The trip took about 3 hours.

When we arrived at Steveston quay, we couldn't find any fishing boats selling fish. Then our teacher asked somebody and they told us, "if you want to buy some fish, you should come here on Saturday morning."

There are many restaurants and shops in Steveston. I wanted to drink a cup of coffee, but I didn't. I thought it must be beautiful at night, having a drink in one of the restaurants overlooking the many fishing boats with their lights, and up above the stars.

We met a fisherman who told us there were many methods to catch tuna. Some people in Asia use a big fishing net, which is not a good thing because other kinds of fish will be caught, even smaller and younger fish. But this man said he used fish bait, because tuna like warm water so they are not in deep water. After that, many classmates went window shopping.

Then we left Steveston and went to the International Buddhist Society. There, we saw many different images of Buddha. They used incense for praying, Amtabha music for praying and meditation.

I come from Taiwan so I know all about Buddhism but my classmates come from different countries, they didn't know anything. They told me that they felt very interested. Sora asked me why there were pictures of people's relatives on the panel. I told her: there were three meanings, the first is the dead person is single; the second means the husband and wife can worship together, and the third means that the family (many generations) can worship together. In Taiwan, our tradition is usually to place a memorial tablet at home, not at the temple. If the ancestral tablet uses a red colored paper with no picture, that means the person is still alive but he wants a long life, and to be able to pray for a healthy life. It is also possible to pray for happiness, good business, success in studying, making money, etc.

Then we went upstairs to see an old lady who was the temple's oracle. We had to bow down three times and pray for a question in mind. The old lady told us to shake many sticks in a pot until one fell out. We had to give this stick to the old lady, and she would then give us the fortune on a piece of paper.

We had a great day.

Lily, 4/6/99

Minister Threatened By Freedom Of Speech

Freedom of speech can be a real threat to certain types of people, usually the less sophisticated who find it very difficult to tolerate ideas that conflict with their own. Hence, they respond by lashing out at their opponents with abusive labels and outright slander in their attempt to silence all opposition to their own views.

Health Minister Joy MacPhail is a first class example of the type of person we are talking about with a limited capacity to understand what democratic freedom is all about. Her latest foray into the dark, oppressive world of a dictatorship, whereby she intends to make sure that the right people get appointed to the regional health boards she is creating, and exclude all appointments of pro-life people who want to serve on the boards, is an insult to every person in this province, even those who mistakenly support this regime.

We kill around 15,000 children in the abortion industry in this province every year, the highest in Canada. This amoral gang not only have no respect for human life, they do not have any respect for the sensitivities and feelings of millions of decent people in this province. No conscience, no shame, and no respect for our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Lakhvir, 9/4/97

The Giant That Had No Heart In His Chest

(A Folk Story from Germany)

Once upon a time, there was a king. He had seven sons. He couldn't live without them. At least one of them had to be around him all the time. As the sons grew up, the six older brothers had to go away to find a wives. The youngest, Aschenbrödel had to stay at home. The six older brothers had to look for a wife for the youngest brother. The king gave his sons the best and nicest clothes. And all of the six sons got a very expensive horse. They said goodbye to the father and the youngest brother.

After they had visited all other kingdoms and had seen all the available princesses, finally they came to a kingdom, where there was a king who had six daughters, the most beautiful daughters they had seen on their travels. As the princes saw the king's daughters, it was love at first sight. They took their brides back home. The princes were so in love that they forgot to look for a princess for Aschenbrödel.

On the way home, they came to a giant's castle. The giant came out, and when he saw them, he turned them into stones. The king waited and waited but his sons didn't come home. So the king felt in the depth of despair.

The king said :

"If you do not return, I will not live a moment longer."

But Aschenbrödel begged his father to let him go to search for his brothers. But they had no horse left. The only thing that they had was a donkey. So he got on his donkey, and waved goodbye to his father.

He said: "I will come back when I find my brothers."

As he rode along he saw a raven which was laying there on the road. He could not fly anymore because he was so hungry.

The raven said: "Please give me something to eat. Then I will help if you are ever in need." So Aschenbrödel gave him his food.

Then he met a fish. The fish lay on the land. He couldn't get in the water. The fish said : "Please help me back into the water. I will help you if you are ever in need. So Aschenbrödel helped him back into the water.

Then he rode along again. On his way, he met a wolf. He lay there and was so hungry. The wolf said: "Please give me your donkey to eat.

Aschenbroedel said: "I can't do that. Then I wouldn't be able to go on."

The wolf said: "Don't worry, I will help you when you are in need."

So Aschenbrödel gave him his donkey to eat. After the wolf had eaten the donkey, the wolf was as big as a horse. Aschenbrödel put the saddle on the wolf and mounted it. The wolf was faster than the donkey had been. After a long ride, the wolf said:

"Over there is the giant's castle. And those stones are your six brothers and those other six stones over there are the princesses. And there is the door."

Aschenbrödel said:

"No, I will not go in there because the giant will kill me."

The wolf said: "Don't be afraid. In the castle is a princess. Do only what the princess tells you."

So Aschenbrödel went in. In one of the rooms he found the princess. She was the most beautiful princess Aschenbrödel had ever seen. When the princess saw Aschenbrödel she was anxious.

She said: "If the giant sees you, he will kill you. Nobody can kill him because he has no heart in his chest."

Aschenbrödel said: "I have to try and release my six brothers that the giant has turned into stones."

The princess said: "All right, in the night you must get under my bed and listen carefully. Later, Aschenbrödel lay under the bed as the giant stepped in.

The giant said:

"Hmm, I smell human flesh."

The princess said, "yes, a raven flew by and dropped a bone. I tried to get rid of the bone. But the smell is still in the room." The giant was satisfied.

As the evening came and the giant went to bed, the princess said:

"I've been with you for so long and you have never told me where your heart is. I know you don't have it in your chest. The giant replied: "my heart is under the door post."

The next morning when the giant was gone, the princess and Aschenbrödel started to dig. But they found nothing. He said: "We have to keep asking." They covered up the hole again and the princess put flowers under the door post. As the giant came home, he said: "I smell human flesh."

The princess said: "it must be the old bone from yesterday." And the giant was satisfied with her explanation. Then the giant saw the nice flowers under the door post. He asked: "who put the nice flowers under the door post?"

The princess said: "I did."

"And why?" asked the giant.

The princess said:

"I love you so much that I wanted to make the door post very pretty because I know your heart is under it."

The giant said: "it is not under the door post, did you really believe that?"

The princess said: "yes, I did because you said so." As the evening came, the princess asked him again.

The giant said: "my heart is over there in the cupboard."

The next morning when the giant was gone, Aschenbrödel and the princess looked in the cupboard. But they didn't find it. The princess said:

"We have to ask him again. She put some flowers around the cupboard. In the evening Aschenbrödel had to hide under the bed again."

The giant said: "It still smells like human flesh."

The princess said: "it must still be the old bone."

When the giant saw the cupboard with flowers around it, he asked: "who put those there?"

The princess said: "I did. Because I know now your heart is in the cupboard. And I love you so much that I had to put flowers there."

The giant said: "it is not in the cupboard. How could you believe that?"

The princess said: "because you said so."

The giant said: "you are such a fool. Because my heart is in a place that you could never reach."

The princess said: "if it is impossible for me to get to this place, why don't you tell me anyway?" So finally the giant told her.

"Far, far away there is a lake. On the lake is an island. On the island is a church. In the church is a well. In the well there is a duck swimming round and round. In the duck is an egg and in the egg is my heart."

Early in the morning, when the giant was gone, Aschenbrödel said goodbye to the princess. The wolf was still waiting for him. The prince told him what he had heard. "But I don't know the way," he added.

"The wolf said: "don't worry, I will find the way. Aschenbrödel got onto the wolf and the wolf ran as fast as he could. Over the hills and mountains they went. After seven days, Aschenbrödel saw a lake. The wolf plunged into the water, and swam towards the island. As he stood in front of the church, he saw the key hanging out of reach up on the tower."

"Now," said the wolf, "you must call the raven. The prince called the raven for help. The raven flew up and brought the key down. As Aschenbrödel entered the church, he saw the well. In the well he could see a duck swimming. Aschenbrödel tried to get the duck to come closer. When the duck was close enough, the prince grabbed her. As he pulled her out of the water, the duck laid an egg. But the egg sank into the deep well. Aschenbrödel didn't know how to get the egg out of the water until the wolf said:

"Now you have to call the fish." The fish came and dived for the egg. When Aschenbrödel had the egg, the wolf said:

"Squeeze the egg in your hand." At that moment, the giant cried.

The giant said: "please don't kill me, I will do whatever you want."

Aschenbrödel said: "give me back my brothers and the princesses." The giant gave him what he asked for.

The wolf said, "now squeeze the egg twice." So Aschenbrödel squeezed the egg again and the giant fell dead on the ground. When Aschenbrödel got back to the castle, he saw all of his brothers and their brides. After he had rescued them, they all went home. When the king saw them, he gave a feast. Then they celebrated and lived happily ever after.

The Single Pearl

Which way for me? Where could I see?
Where could I find the Single Pearl?
Where should I go in the big fog?
Lest I step on You
Where are You hiding? - please tell me
Maybe You are near here
I fear that my heart's beating
Will be scaring You
Where are You hiding? - please tell me
Maybe You are near here

Stiff faces are grinning here
Cold hands are elbowing me
But I feel that I'm finding you
Because You attract me
It's just good to hear Your voice
And to know that You hold me
To fly on Your great eagle's wings
Over this marshy place
It's just good to hear Your voice
And to know you hold me

Andrea, 15/12/99

Courting And Marriage In Columbia

In December 1964, my Parents decided to get married, after more than 2 years of meeting each other and getting to know their two families. In my small town at that time, you needed to know who you would marry.

My Father was 28 and my Mother 17. She was really young so they kept their engagement a secret. My Father had a small car but he needed to change it for something bigger because they were not allowed to go out alone or be seen together. They needed to take at least two of my five aunts (as chaperones) with them everywhere they went. My Father, as a gentleman, had to pay for pops, ice creams, cinema tickets, snacks and some other things for all of them, but he was so in love with her that he didn't care. Poor guy, the price of love!

In October 1964 on the day of the official engagement, my Father was more handsome than ever before. He was wearing new clothes - white pants, a shirt and a tie. My Mom told me he was wearing pine perfume that day. Before he left his house (20 meters away from my Mom's house), he drank two Scotches to settle his nerves. That day he asked my Grandfather for my Mom's hand and he gave her the engagement ring. If my grandfather wanted and accepted him as a son-in-law, everything would be OK. There was no problem. My grandfather gave them "La Benediccion", blessed them and together they began to prepare the details for the wedding day.

My Mom was still at school. Her classmates had many wedding showers for her. In my country, the party is paid for by the bride's family and the groom pays for the honeymoon and the church details, like flowers and ribbons for the chairs. The night before getting married, the groom comes in the middle of the night with some musicians to present a "Serenata" to the bride. They sing love songs. The bride doesn't open the window, she just turns on the light of her bedroom to let him know that she is listening to the Serenata. This is something that still happens in my small town Cucuta (Colombia). The traditions haven't changed at all.

The next day, the house of the bride becomes a circus. Some people come to help them, like hairdressers and manicurists. In my parents' case, the ceremony was at 9:00 am in the Cathedral of San Jose, and the reception was

at 12:00 noon in The Cazadores Club. The honeymoon was in Cartagena, which is on the coast. When they came back from their honeymoon, the family held a party for them and my Parents gave everyone the gifts they had brought back from Cartagena.

One year later, I was born. And here I am 33 years after my parents got married.

Sandra, 28/4/99.

Taiwanese Wedding Traditions

In Taiwan, the tradition for a wedding is that a boy's family and a girl's family meet together in a restaurant or a public place. They always have a matchmaker who talks to each family about both the boy's and girl's strong points. For example, the boy's family is rich, his record at school was high, he is very handsome, he has a good job, etc., or for the girl – that she is very beautiful, very smart, very gentle and graceful, etc. In particular, the matchmaker will mention the fact if the girl's buttocks are big, because members of an earlier generation always said: 'big buttocks can deliver many children'.

If both families think this boy and girl are good persons, the boy is allowed to make contact with the girl until their wedding. In a Taiwanese traditional wedding, the boy's family must present a money gift to the family of the bride like traditional shoes and clothes, a gold ring, a gold necklace, a gold bracelet, gold jewelry, etc. The girl's family must prepare a trousseau. Some girls' parents give their daughters household appliances and if the girl's parents are rich, they might even give their daughter a house.

After the wedding ceremony, everyone eats in a restaurant which is paid for by the groom's family. Then the bride goes with her husband to his house. The next morning, the bride must cook something for the groom's parents and sister, then they can go on honeymoon travel for several days.

Brian, 11/3/98

Vietnamese Weddings

In Vietnam, after the children graduate from high school, the boys and the girls can make friends. They can go out of the house, go to parks, movies, theater they can visit their relatives and friends on the weekend. They can go anywhere that they like, but whenever they go, the boys have to tell their parents where they are going and what time they'll be back. They aren't allowed to go out of their house overnight. They can't live together before marriage, either. They can be friends for a long time. When they are in love, the boy tells his parents. Then his parents go to her parents' house with some gift - for example, wine, tea, fruits, etc. and they talk to each other about the engagement or wedding. If her parents agree, both the boy's and the girl's families will fix a wedding date. During that time her parents can suggest some gifts from his parents, for example: cake, tea, wine, fruit, and "Trau cau" - one of fruits and leaves that are a symbol of "Loving", to deliver to her relatives. Her family is very happy they think their daughter will get married to a good man. So her family always want to receive a lot of gifts from his family to deliver to their relatives to show how proud they are.

On the wedding date, his family visits her family with a lot of gifts. Both their parents talk to each other. The groom's family are invited to drink a cup of wine, then they give some gifts to the bride's parents. Most of the gifts are put into red boxes and they are covered by red towels. Everybody wears their special clothes, and the groom often wears a suit, and a flower on his shirt on the left. He holds a bunch of flowers to give to the bride. After that, the bride appears and greets everybody. Then the couple go to her Ancestors' Altar. Solemnly, they bow and kneel. During that time the bride always wears traditional clothes. After they pray, they give rings to each other, and the groom's father gives a bracelet, chain, earrings, etc. to his daughter-in-law, too. Then the bride receives a lot of jewelry from her mother-in-law. She says thank you to her parents-in-law and then the couple kneel before their parents. After that, the bride receives a bunch of flowers from the groom and then they all go to his parents' house.

Here at the groom's house, the couple kneels before his Ancestors' Altar. Solemnly, the couple greet his relatives. After that the couple change their clothes and go to the park to take a lot of photographs and a video. They come back to the restaurant at 5 pm. There are a lot of their relatives, and their friends are invited to their party. The couple always feels happy on their wedding day.

Kim, 30/4/97

Anxious Moments

My parents went to India in January, 1999. They came back after three months. While they were away, I really missed them. It was the first time I had been separated from them. Every week I phoned them. My parents were busy because my sister was getting married in India.

When I was told that my parents were coming back on April 24, I was really glad. I started to clean the house and make special food. On Saturday morning I got up early. I was really excited to meet my parents after three months.

My family was supposed to arrive at the airport at 3 P.M. I wanted to see my parents as soon as possible. I had to wait for such a long time. I watched all the people coming from the plane but I didn't see my parents. I asked people "have you seen an Indian couple?" and I described my parents. I became more and more worried. Eventually, I talked to Immigration officials but they weren't able to help. They said it was the correct flight and they couldn't explain why my parents weren't on the plane.

After 3 hours wait, I went home. I felt kind of sick. My heart was beating fast. I called the travel agent but they couldn't help either. Finally, about an hour later, the phone rang. I rushed to the phone and picked up the receiver. I heard my mother's voice. I was so upset that I couldn't believe that it was really my mother. When I realized it was, I felt so much relief. My mother told me that the reason that she and my father were not on the flight was because in New Delhi, they had to wait for 27 hours because of problems with the plane. We talked for about ten minutes and I told them that I couldn't wait for them to arrive. The next day, at 11 a.m., I got a call from the airport. They had finally arrived!

When I saw my parents, my face was red with happiness. I hugged both of them. They looked very tired. When we got home, I felt so good.

Kulvir, 28/4/99

Comparison Of Wedding Customs

RELIGION → CUSTOM ↓	SIKH	TAIWANESE	KOREAN
Before engagement (Selection, courting arranged/chosen, etc.)	Tradition: always arranged (often at age of 4 or 5) Now: usually arranged but ↑ 'love' marriages	Traditionally: use of 'matchmaker' Now: young people get to know each other (character, dreams, ambitions) through dating. Parents want to know about jobs, family's history, education.	Traditionally: arranged Now: young people get to know each other (character, dreams, ambitions) through dating. Parents want to know about jobs, family's history, education.
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boy/Girl's families visit each other. Check out personality, family status, condition of groom's house, how the girl walks/talks/shows respect, etc. • If boy & girl like each other, both families give them some money to 'seal the deal' 	Tradition: the 2 families meet at a restaurant to choose lucky day for wedding. Both parents have to buy jewelry for each other's son/daughter. Boy's parents also must provide wedding cookies and money Boy & girl exchange gold rings	Proposal: usually the boy who asks Engagement party at restaurant for relatives and parents of both families – paid for by girl's parents. Girl wears a pink dress.
Before Wedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride's father & relatives go to groom's house & give him <i>shagun</i> (money) and gold gifts • Bride's Shower at her house. <i>Mehndi</i> (henna) put on hands & <i>churra</i> (red bangles) put on arms. These must be worn at least 5 weeks after wedding. 	Groom & best man (lucky person) pick up bride from her house. Bride's parents remind her she should be a good daughter-in-law. Bride worships her ancestors. Friend's & relatives put money in red pouches which is given to couple on wedding day	Boy's parents send girl some dresses, underwear, a night-dress and the wedding gown. Boy's parents usually buy an apartment for the couple. Girl's parents buy electric home appliances, furniture and kitchenware.
Wedding Ceremony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wedding Day: Groom comes to bride's house for breakfast. • Clothes: Bride – red 'lehnga'. • Bride & groom make 4 circles around the holy book (Guru Granth Sahib) 	3 options: (a) local court for a notary (b) church wedding (c) party in hotel/restaurant wedding must take place in public & certificate must be signed (local law)	Bride wears Korean red long dress and green short blouse. Gifts are usually money Held in yard of bride's house (traditional) or rented hall
After Wedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bride & groom go to his house. Groom's mother puts oil on the sides of the door, & circles bowl of water around their heads for good luck. Bride is presented with gold bangles (= 'wife') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party at restaurant paid for by groom's family. Couple give out candy. • People play <i>majang</i> • Bride & groom go to groom's house In the morning, bride must cook something for groom's parents. • Bride & groom go on a honeymoon 	Bride & groom change into traditional Korean wedding clothes. Parents throw jujubes (= baby daughter) and chestnuts (= baby son) at the bride Party→ Couple leave for honeymoon Bride's mother sends 9 kinds of food for the groom's family

Baisakhi And The Birth Of The Sikh Nation

There are many kinds of traditional fair in India. India is divided into States. Every state has its own fair. In Punjab, Baisakhi is the most famous fair. It is celebrated in April.

This fair is related to the birth of "Khalsa-Panth." The birthdate of Khalsa-Panth was on 13th. April, 1699. For Sikhs the world over, this day has a special significance - it marks the birth of the Khalsa, the Sikh Nation. It was on this day in 1699 that Guru Gobind Rai, the tenth master of the Sikhs, created the Khalsa Holy Order.

Here is the story. Guru Gobind Rai stood in front of a crowd of thousands of followers in Anandpur, and drawing his sword, asked if there was anyone among them willing to accept death as the ultimate sacrifice for the Guru's mission. Out of a bewildered crowd, one voice rose up, that of Bhai Daya Ram. He offered his head to the Guru, and the Guru took him inside a tent.

Then the Guru emerged alone, with his sword dripping blood. The crowd stood silent as he asked for another devotee to offer up his life. Bhai Dharam Das stood up and offered his head. Again the Guru and the volunteer went into the tent together but only the Guru emerged. He asked for volunteers three more times. These were Bhai Mohkam Chand, Bhai Sahib Chand and Bhai Himmet Rai.

After the final courageous follower was taken into the tent, the Guru emerged once again, only this time he was followed by all five volunteers. These, he announced to the astonished crowd, were the Panj Piaras (the five blessed ones), five Sikhs totally devoted to their Guru.

Inside the tent he seated the five men and told them that they were the true disciples of the Guru. He then baptized them. Outside, the Guru told the gathering that they had all been re-born. Their previous casts, creed and race were abolished. They were instructed to help the poor and fight oppressors. They were to consider all human beings as equals. He then asked his Panj Piaras to baptize him and the onlookers and the Khalsa was born. All members were to carry the name Singh (Lion) or Kaur (Princess). He vested the leadership in the Guru Panth (Community), thereby bringing democracy to the realm of religion. The Singhs and Kauras of the Khalsa were, on this day, again a philosophy and a program to follow for life to uproot tyranny and practice the noble values of life, thus living as model saint soldiers.

After the five Sikhs took *amrit* (holy water) from the same bowl, Guru Gobind Rai made them take an oath to observe the *kakkar* or five 'K's' - namely *keshi/kesh* (not to cut the hair), and the wearing of the *kangha* (little comb), *kirpan* (dagger or sword), *kachha* (a particular kind of undergarment), and the *kara* (an iron bangle). This is the formal dress of the khalsa.

This day is celebrated in every village and Gurdwara in the Punjab. But the most famous Baisakhi fair is the Baisakhi of Anandpur sahib. People bathe in the pool around the Gurdwara.

There is an enormous procession in which people sing and read from the religious book, Guru Granth Sahib. (This custom is called *kirtan*). Five Sikhs hold the *Kessari* flag (dark orange colour). This colour is a religious symbol of the Sikhs. Another five Sikhs hold swords and walk after the flag. Some *Nehhangs* (priest caste of Sikhs) ride on horses. *Nehhangs* always wear robes of a navy blue colour and carry a sword with a shield. After them come people with the Guru Granth Sahib on a trolley which is decorated with fresh flowers. Other people play music on a harmonium and drums.

In Canada, this day is celebrated too. It is celebrated in Vancouver on Main Street. Baisakhi is not only a religious fair but also a harvest festival. The wheat crop is almost ripe and ready to be cut at this time. The *Jatt* caste of the Sikhs are very happy because they are going to make money by selling it. Everyone celebrates. Tents are put up, stalls are set up by shopkeepers where they sell sweets, dresses, tools, jewelry, toys and so on. Children wear new clothes and young men do Bhangra dancing. It is a wonderful day.

(compiled from the writings of Mandeep & Swarnjit)

Ramadan

Moslem Iraqis fast for one month during Ramadan. Every year during the ninth month of the Islamic year, they don't drink water and don't eat food from sunrise to sunset. After this hour they have dinner and then go to the mosque and pray. In all, Moslems pray five times a day. After prayer, they read the Holy Quran. This book came from Allah to the prophet Mohammed, and then to the Moslem people.

The night between the 26th. and 27th. days of Ramadan, at which time Allah first revealed Himself to Mohammed, is called The Night of Determination, during which, according to the Quran, God determines the course of the world for the following year.

On the last day of this month, they have a big celebration called Eid for 4 days and they visit each other. They give presents to their children. They do that because so many people in the world are hungry, and by giving to their children, they entreat rich people to give to the poor. People also fear God, or Allah, because he has ordered that if you are Moslem and believe in Allah, you must obey the conditions of the fast of Ramadan.

Mohamed, 15/6/98

Muslim Culture

As a Muslim, we must follow Allah Suaban Wa Tallah's procedures. We must pray 'namaz' five times daily and read the holy Quran.

All Muslims should give 'zakaat' (tithes) on crops, jewellery and income etc... . Zakaat money is given to the poor and needy people and also those who don't have parents to support them. Being a Muslim we must fast. In fasting we must not eat or drink anything from sunrise to sunset. But in our religion, fasting also means we shouldn't lie or steal. We should be on the right track and also do good deeds. Every year Muslims fast for a month. After thirty days we celebrate Eid-ul-fitr. It is the biggest festival for Muslims.

On Eid day, all Muslims make 'samai' and sweets and also wear new clothes then go for prayers. They hug each other. After prayer they go to everybody's house to eat samai and sweets. They also invite each other to their houses.

In our culture, dressing is totally different from other cultures. Some people wear a 'burka' suit to cover their whole body. We only can see the eyes and some wear 'salwar kamerz' and put scarves on their heads.

Marriages are arranged by parents. Before 'Nikaah', both bride and bridegroom can not go to each other's house. When a person dies in our culture, we give 'gusul' and wrap the body in a 'carfun'. After that we read the holy Quran and the priest prays 'zanaza' for the dead person. Then they take the dead person to the 'kabar tanan' (cemetery) for burial. Some Muslims don't cook food for three days. They get food from relatives and neighbours until their mourning (the period of grief) is over. .

Finally, all Muslim people have many specific things to follow like helping to giving zakaat to poor and needy people.

Nasim, 23/9/98

Happy New Year

In my country, every year has a different New Year's Day, because we use the Chinese calendar for our New Year. I like this long holiday very much. It lasts 15 days.

At this time, we go to a relative's or friend's home. We eat lunch or dinner together, talk about last year or the future, drink tea, eat seeds and snacks.

At New Year every family will make different homemade foods, every family has a lot of special stuff.

In my home, on New Year day's morning, my mother makes Tofu, liang feng, white wine and some dimsum all boiled together. Everybody must eat it to bring good luck for the New Year. At night, my mother makes a lot of dumplings. You must eat at least 8 pieces, but it is always delicious so everybody usually eats more than 8 pieces. These are some of the New Year traditions.

Geling

Diwali

Diwali is the most famous feast in India. It is a joint festival of both Hindus and Sikhs. Hindus celebrate the victory of King Rama over Lanka's King Ravan and Rama's return with his wife Sita and his brother Lakshman to his kingdom Ajudhia in northern India after fourteen years absence. On this day, people all over Ajudhia lit lamps along the road so that Rama and Sita would not get lost on their long journey and so that they would know that people were glad to have them back. Everyone threw flowers on Rama, his wife and his brother as they passed by.

For Sikhs, Diwali is a special day because the Sikh's sixth guru, Sri Guru Hargovind Ji was released from the Gavaljar jail on that day. Guru Ji had been imprisoned at this jail along with forty rajas (kings). He was asked on his release, 'how many kings can you take with you at one time?' Then Guru Ji stitched a robe with forty corners, put it on, and told each of the forty Sikh kings to take hold of a corner of his robe. They did this and left the jail with Guru Ji. The Sikh population were very happy and they burned candles and made a lot of sweets.

These days, Diwali is celebrated in November. On this day, schools are closed. People clean and paint their homes. They have two reasons for doing this. One is that the summer season is finished and winter is on the way. The other is that they think that Lakshmi (Goddess of money) will visit their homes. At night they worship The Lakshmi divi.

On this day, everyone lights candles and diva oil lamps and place them in front of their houses and on the walls. The houses look very beautiful at night. People go to the Gurdwara (temple) and light more candles. The whole village is bright with light as people visit their relatives and bring them gifts. Everyone eats good food. Children love Diwali. They are allowed to wear new clothes and light fire-crackers and dance with the grown-ups. There is, however, one superstition; parents don't allow their oldest child to go out of the house because they think that someone could cut their hair.

Unfortunately, there are always some people who drink too much and gamble or get into fights. It's too bad. Diwali is a festival of happiness.

(drawn from the writings of Gurdeep, Updesheep, Ruby and Baljit)

Lohri

Lohri is one of Sikhism's cultural festivals. It is a winter festival. People celebrate it with joy every year on the 13th. January. It celebrates the pleasure of a baby boy's birth. If there is a baby boy born in anybody's home than they invite their relatives and friends to join their happiness.

It is a night festival. Six or seven days before this day, young girls in a group go door to door singing songs for sweets, peanuts and money, just like Halloween here in Canada. On a particular day they make a fire in the center of the yard. Then they hold the new baby with its head towards the fire. Everybody dances and sings around the fire. Then the head of the family mixes all the sweets and peanuts in a big pot and distributes them among the people.

They eat and congregate with the parents of the baby and pray to God that he may live a long life. For three or four hours, people continue to sit around the fire. When people are ready for go back to their houses, the baby's mother gives sweets and peanuts to the relatives and friends to take home.

I like this festival very much.

Manjeet, 1/3/00

Birth Tradition in Taiwan

In my country, Taiwan, birth traditions are different than in other countries. When a family has a new baby, their relatives and friends give the new baby gifts. The gifts are gold ornaments with blessings on them. When the baby is one month old, his parents prepare red eggs and fried sticky rice and give them to their relatives and friends in appreciation.

When a baby is one year old, the grandparents prepare some books, tools, pens, etc. for the baby, and the baby chooses one of these things to predict what his or her job will be in the future.

The birthday celebration is lively and happy. At people's birthdays, they usually eat noodles, red eggs, leg of pork. The noodles must be very long, the long noodles mean long life. Red eggs mean a peaceful life. Leg of pork means getting rid of bad luck.

In my country the birth celebration is full of fun and I like our tradition very much.

Linda, 23/9/98

Tradition Of New Born Baby In India

I was born in India. In my country 50-60 % people are educated but still they believe in old customs. There are many customs related to a new born baby. When a lady gets pregnant, she feels happy and starts thinking about her new baby, "what the new baby will be", because everybody wants the first child to be a boy. Some ladies feel shy when they get pregnant.

When she knows clearly that she is pregnant, then she tells her husband about her pregnancy. In India most people live in a joint family. A joint family means that the whole family lives together in one house. Some ladies like to tell their mother-in-law about their pregnancy. If she doesn't tell her mother-in-law about this, then the mother-in-law may feel unhappy and get angry with her daughter-in-law.

When everybody sees that she is pregnant, then everybody starts hoping that the first child will be a boy. In some families they give advice to the ladies to see a doctor for a check up. When they know their first baby will be a male then they feel very happy. But if they know they are going to get this baby as a girl, then they feel unhappy. However, usually they can accept it if this is her first baby.

If a lady gets pregnant a second time, after checking if she knows she is going to give birth to a baby girl, then she feels really unhappy. Her family members push her for an abortion, because nobody wants a second girl. Not only the family but sometimes even the ladies and their husbands don't want their second baby as a girl. Then ladies go to see a doctor for an abortion.

If a lady gave birth to two or three girls, then family members don't give her respect. They start thinking that she is not good for their family. On the other hand, if a lady gives birth to sons then everybody feels happy. Her father-in-law and mother-in-law think she is lucky for their family.

Mostly Indians like to celebrate their son's birthday but they don't like to celebrate their daughter's birthday. Some people think girls are a burden on them because when their daughter gets married, they will have to pay for her dowry. The problem is that some people don't have enough money to give their daughter a dowry. In India some people don't give money to their daughter. This can lead to a situation where her in-laws kill the daughter. Another problem is that some poor people don't like to adopt birth control methods because of the cost involved.

Balbir, 23/9/97

A Penny Saved Is A Penny Earned

I read a story in a Korean book when I was a youth. I adapted this story so as to explain this proverb. I don't know whether this adaptation is appropriate or not. Anyway, I am going to begin the story.

Once upon a time, there was a poor boy. He wanted to be rich. One day, he went to a rich man. Then, he asked the rich man how he could be rich. The rich man answered, "OK, I will show you." After that, the rich man brought him beside a big tree. The rich man said to him, "first climb this tree, then hold on to a branch with two hands."

The boy did what he was told. The rich man then instructed him, "Let go of one hand." The boy carried out the order. The rich man then demanded of him, "now let go of the other hand too."

The poor boy said, "I can't let my two hands go, because if I do, I will fall down and kill myself." He hung on to the branch more strongly with one hand.

The rich man explained, "this is how you will be able to get rich. If you get a penny, don't let go of that money. Just hold on to it like you are holding onto this branch. This is the way to get rich."

As he walked away, he mumbled to himself, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

Gidu, 27/1/99

The Woodcutter

(A Folk Story from Taiwan)

A long, long time ago, a woodcutter lived in a village. He used to go to the forest for wood. One day his axe fell into the water. He started to cry. He prayed to God. Suddenly God appeared and put his hand into the water and brought out a gold axe.

The woodcutter said, "this is not mine."

God put his hand in again. He brought out a silver axe.

The woodcutter said, "but this is not mine."

So God put his hand in once again. He brought out an iron axe. When the woodcutter saw this, he was very happy. Meanwhile, God was pleased with the man's honesty.

God gave him all three axes. The woodcutter became rich. He lived happily ever after.

Jen, 25/2/98

Anguished People In Iraq

The people in Iraq have been tired since 1980. First they fought with Iran for eight years. That war had many problems. Many men went to the war. Some of them died in the war, and their families missed them.

Some men came back from the war as amputees. They couldn't do anything and they didn't like to go on living. Also, they couldn't work or give money to their families or care for their children. Over and above that, my government didn't provide for the amputees. Believe me, there is a big difference from the care that the Canadian Government gives to an amputee in Canada.

I don't ever remember seeing an amputee in the street, on the bus or going shopping. All of them stayed at home. This caused a lot of worry to their families. Many wives were given help because their husbands were martyrs. Many people died from bombs. Many people in the war lost their homes. Many schools for the children were destroyed from bombing by rockets.

Janet, 12/7/99

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is found in east Africa. Formerly known as Abyssinia, it is a very ancient country with a very long history. Three thousand years ago, there was an advanced civilization at Axum in northern Ethiopia. The discovery of this civilization was a miracle.

We are the only African country to have our own Amharic letters. We have never been under colonization. During the Second World War, we had a war with Italy for 5 years, but Italy lost the war. It is known that Ethiopians are heroes and peace loving people. Most Ethiopians are coptic orthodox and we are famous for our churches and monasteries.

Ethiopia is the original home of coffee. We are also famous for our athletes. Unfortunately we have had civil war for many years and that is why we are one of the poorest countries in the world.

Samson, 8/3/00

Peruvian Feeling

I had good luck because my mother taught us many things about Peruvian Culture. She taught us to love Peru's music, customs, Inca architecture, etc. In fact, Peruvians are very curious about the mysteries of the first people. They had constructions that, even now nobody understands. For example, at Saczahuaman and Nazca, it is still possible to see lines in the desert that the Incas had made in order to study the universe.

Many people in Peru actually resent and disagree with the conquest by Spain. The Spaniards came to Peru only to take the wealth. In spite of the fact that the Incas were a great army, they couldn't fight with the conquerors because they were surprised by the horses and guns.

I feel very proud of Peruvian Culture. There are many foreign people in Peru and they grow to love my country. I know some of them and they told me their feelings about Peru. Everybody in Peru knows Maria Reich. She came from Germany when she was very young to study the Nazca lines. She never got married and she was studying until the day she died. She died when she was 97 years old. Now her sister continues her studies.

Peruvian people are very hospitable people and love peace too. That is what I like the most. Canada reminds me of Peru in some ways. I feel at home here.

Karina, 10/11/99

Bad Times

Colombia, like any other country, has very well qualified professionals, lots of them unemployed at the moment. We all ask each other, what's going on here? After all, everyone knows how rich our country really is. It's because of the 'narcotraficants' (drug smugglers) who are just a few people, not the whole population. Yes it *is* true, they are very rich people, they *do* deal with drugs, but it is because there is a demand or request for this poison in some other countries. This is not the fault of the whole country. But we assume and believe it is.

The economy is going down and down every day, we don't know what to do. There was a big scandal against the president two years ago, because the U.S. government thought they had the right and enough moral authority to accuse and torture this president, Ernesto Samper, because he and his party had received some money for the campaign of the 'narcotraficants'. This was on TV and in the daily newspapers for more than a year. Samper promised himself and the county that he would finish his presidential period, and he did..

Because of this problem, we (COLOMBIA) received a Dis-Certification Diploma. We have no idea what this means, we just laugh - it's a joke! The only thing really bad is that we're not allowed to export some of our products to the States. But other products, including of course the bad ones, are still going there.

A few months ago, there was an earthquake, and it destroyed an important city and some villages around, where the coffee plantations are. Around the world, some people didn't want to help, because they assume that Colombia is a rich country because of the stereotype of drugs. I would like people to understand what my country is

really like. I want to say to them, “stop consuming and then they’ll stop producing.” It is true that right now it is Colombia that produces a lot of cocaine but who will be the next producer?

At least this famous president was, and still continues to be a very good guy, loyal, and faithful to his wife, and to his country too.

Sandra, 24/3/99

Vietnamese Women

Vietnam is one of the smallest countries in Asia. Vietnam spent more than 1000 years enslaved by the Chinese army, 100 years by the French army, and 20 years civil war. But the history of Vietnam shows that the Vietnamese are always proud of the words: ‘Hero, brave, loyal, and working hard’.

In fact, Vietnamese men are loyal to their King and country. Vietnamese women are loyal to their husbands and take care of their children well.

During the war, this is what happened. The youth of Vietnam took part in building, and defending their country. Some of them became the soldiers, others went into the jungle to reclaim land (to plant rice, vegetables, build houses, etc.) Still others worked hard to produce a lot of products. They all contributed their knowledge, property and health in the work of building and defending their country. Many of them died. Many families lived in situations where, for example, the wife had lost her husband and mothers had lost children. But these things didn’t make them quit the struggle of defending their country. They always put the mission of their country as the highest priority.

One of the best qualities of a Vietnamese woman is her loyalty to her husband, and how well she takes care of her children. She never knows about sex before she gets married. Her husband is the first male person that she knows in this way. When they get married, both he and she belong to each other from the heart. She thinks her husband is everything to her. She never betrays her husband, even though her husband doesn’t love her any more. She doesn’t think about divorce, either. Vietnamese women aren’t only loyal to their husbands, take care of their children well, but also take an active part in the community. If war happens in her country, a Vietnamese woman is also prepared to shoot the enemy.

Besides their function as mother and wife, Vietnamese women always do any kind of job, the same as men. For example, they take part in science, the army, production of goods, etc. Some are famous characters in history such as Ba Trung and Ba Trieu, etc. Many more are heroes who lay deep in the ground unnamed. They died to defend their country, fighting the enemy.

For more than 1000 years there was ongoing war between the Chinese and the Vietnamese. Then there was 100 years of war between French and Vietnamese. Following this, there was 20 years civil war between 2 Territories, South and North Vietnam. Peace came at last to Vietnam in Spring 1975. Vietnam became a communist country. But Vietnam had been affected heavily by war for many centuries. So it couldn’t become a rich country in a short time. The Vietnamese needed time building their country.

In fact, today there are a lot of hospitals, schools and factories that have been built. Many new streets have been widened, all children go to school, many students are going abroad studying about civilization and technology so that they can then come back to serve their country. A noisy, hurried, new life in Vietnam is happening. Everywhere the Vietnamese are working hard enthusiastically. I believe that Vietnam is about to become a famous, beautiful and rich country as a result of the motivated, loyal hearts of its people.

Kim, 7/5/97

My First Day In Canada

I got my visa on 28th. March. I was very happy but I also felt very nervous and sad. My parents also felt very unhappy because I had never lived anywhere without them. Next, I did some shopping and met my relatives. Then I left my home on 9th. April, 1998. I stayed two days with my relatives who lived in New Delhi. My parents came with me to see me off. I went to the Temple before I left my relatives' house.

I went to the Airport on 10th. April. Then I hugged and kissed my mom and dad and other relatives. I cried and so did my mom and dad. I felt very confused because I didn't know what to do, whether to go or stay. But, on the other hand, my husband and in-laws family were waiting for me. So I entered the Airport and filled in the form. The Airport officer checked my passport and ticket and asked me some questions. Then at last I left my country, my motherland where I was born.

I was very nervous and felt lonely. On the plane, I didn't eat anything but only drank some orange juice. I felt very homesick in the plane. In Singapore I changed plane. I stayed there only one hour. Then I arrived in Canada at Vancouver Airport on 11th. April 1998 at mid-morning. The immigration officer checked my passport and ticket and stamped my visa, and gave me some information books and cards.

I felt very nervous but I felt very happy because I had finally met my husband after one year. When I came out from the customs area, my husband and relatives were waiting for me. When I first saw my husband and relatives, I was very happy but I also felt very upset because I had left my parents and brothers in India. After leaving the Airport, first we went to the temple. Canada looked very different from my country. It looked very clean, I was very surprised when I saw the Sky-train without any driver.

When I entered my home, my mother-in-law gave me \$100. Then I took a shower and ate lunch. After that I called my parents who lived in India. Then I got some rest. That night we had a little party at home. We took some pictures and made a movie. After the party, my husband and I went to a hotel for the night. At night Vancouver looked very beautiful.

In my first week in Canada, I didn't like the food and water. I gave some gifts to my sisters-in-law and other relatives. After one week our relatives invited us to dinner. Now I study at Kwantlen College in Newton. Sometimes I miss my family in India. Now here I live a happy life with my husband.

Jaswinder, 16/12/98

Sikh Religion

I belong to the Sikh religion. I am proud to be a Sikh. Guru Nanak Dev Ji is the father of the Sikh religion. He was born in Talvandi in 1469. So this religion is not very old. It is a very new religion. And the reason for the birth of this religion was that at that time there were many fights between Hindus and Muslims. Guru Nanak was a peaceful man and he wanted everyone to be happy in this world. In his mind, there should be no crime, there should be no jealousy in anyone's heart. He wanted everyone to have respect in their hearts for other religions. But his nation's condition was not very good, so he decided to start a new religion in which there would be no difference between people - everyone would be the same. He said that God is one and we are all his children.

So he started the Sikh religion and in a very short time it became a popular religion because anyone can join this religion. There were no hard rules for this. At that time, people were frustrated because of the strictness of their religions and the Sikh religion was very simple and believed in only one God. So many people were interested in this religion. After Guru Nanak, there were nine more Gurus who came one by one. Their teachings are enclosed in a book called 'Guru Granth Sahib'. Now this is the holy book of Sikhism. Sikhs believe in the 'Granth Sahib' as their Guru. They follow its rules. The main rules of the Sikh religion are:

- No smoking
- No haircut
- No drinking
- No meat
- No abuse / No gossip

- Believe in one God
- Wear five “k”’s : 1. Karpan 2. Karra 3. Kanga 4. Kaish 5. Kachaa.
- Believe in equality, no difference in any caste.
- It is compulsory to pray to God daily (in morning & evening).

Finally, I want to say that the Sikh religion is a very good religion. Everyone is equal in this religion. There is no difference between upper and lower caste. Everyone is the child of one God. Sikh religion teaches that we should love each other, we should help others in hard times and we should respect other religions too. After doing this we can wish for a ‘happy world’.

Jaspreet, 18/10/99

The 50th Anniversary Of Independence Day In Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka was under the British until February 4th. 1948. That means that today Sri Lanka is going to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its independence. The celebration will be in Colombo city. The ‘Prince of Wales’ will also be attending this celebration.

If we look at Sri Lankan history, the Portuguese and Dutch invaded Sri Lanka before the British. But those countries couldn’t hold on to all of the country. Finally they gave up on that idea. Then British troops came and landed in Sri Lanka. At that time, Sri Lankans didn’t have any kind of good weapons. They fought with bows and arrows. The British had guns, so they were able to fight with better weapons than the Sri Lankans. Finally they controlled all the country. Then it was under British rule. They called this Island by the name “Ceylon”.

So, when they were there, they changed so many things. Whatever they did at that time, most of the changes were good for us. However, some of them created big problems. The British like tea. They planted tea in a large part of the country. But in that area, there weren’t enough people. So, they brought many Southern Indians to Sri Lanka. They are called Tamils. The British like Ceylon tea very much. They expanded the tea plantations and brought over more Tamils to our country. At first, the Tamil population was very small. There were Tamils only in the northern part of our country. They lived the same as other Sri Lankans. At that time so many different cultures lived together very peacefully. The British didn’t realize the problems that would occur later.

At that time, Sri Lanka was 99 % Sinhalese. But now, they comprise about 80 % of the population. In 1983, the Tamils started a bloody war. Now there is no freedom in Sri Lanka. Tamils want to divide this small Island. Between 1983 and 1997 they have killed thousands of soldiers and civilians with bombs and shootings.

The Tamils tried to stop Prince Charles’s visit. They placed bombs and destroyed one of the oldest, holiest temples in our country. That temple was built three centuries ago. But they couldn’t stop Prince Charles from visiting our country. He went there. So Sri Lankans are very happy and he is the chief guest for all of the 50th anniversary of the Independence celebration. Sri Lanka is going to celebrate the 50th anniversary of independence today. I hope that one day someone will bring peace to this small Island called Sri Lanka.

Uresha, 4/2/98

Great Experience ☺

Asia is the largest of the Earth’s continents. It covers about one-third of the world’s total land area. It also has the majority of people in the world. For many historical reasons, Asia is considerate the cradle of civilization. It contains all the principal religions of the world and many minor ones. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and the so-called Chinese religions, composed of Confucian and Taoist elements. Christianity is practiced by a small number of Asian people, but it still the predominant religion in the world. Buddhism has almost disappeared from India, but it is the main religion of many countries in Asia.

Yesterday I visited a Buddhist temple. The first thing that attracted my attention was the symmetrical design of the temple. It had a very traditional architecture. It expressed a deep poetic response to its philosophy. The beauty of many statues and the fine drawing on the wall revealed the story of that religion. The soft music that was playing

resonated in all the corners of the temple, transmitting feelings of peace and calm. Inside the temple, the predominant red color and the gold statues of Buddha made a powerful impression. It was superb! It was a great experience that I'll never forget. I'd like to know more about this fascinating religion.

Since I came to Canada I've learned many interesting things about other cultures and it has been very constructive for my knowledge. The more I learn, the more curious I get and more questions keep coming to my mind. Yesterday, made me think how infinitesimal we are compared to the magnitude of the world.

Flavia, 31/10/99

If I Had A Million Dollars

If I had a million dollars, I would become a rich man. All people would respect me. Then I would not care about anything. I would buy a new sports car and a big beautiful house.

After that, I would start some business. I would try to become a good and famous businessman. I would visit all of my country. I would give some money to the beggars and poor people. All peoples would call me a rich man.

I would invite other famous and rich people to dinner. I would have many good girlfriends. I would go to the beach with them. I would enjoy the beach with my beautiful girlfriends.

Then I would get married with a good and intelligent girlfriend from among them. I would try to spend a good married life with my wife. I would buy many dresses for my beautiful wife. I would love her very, very much. After that I would feel very happy.

Harneke, 17/11/99

(Editorial comment: Harnek, with your plans, I don't think that \$1,000,000 is going to be enough!)

If I Won \$10,000,000 In The Lottery

I was born, and grew up in a big family, seven sisters and one brother. My parents used to work hard to supply everything for my sisters and brother. My family is average level. When I was young, I always used to feel sad whenever I saw my rich friends who were the same age. Their lives were happier than mine, they could do anything that they liked, but I couldn't. I always asked myself, 'Why isn't my family rich?' My parents told me that "if you want to be a rich person, you must study hard."

Sometimes studying is boring, and it isn't easy for me! After I graduated from high school, I wanted to go to the university, but I couldn't achieve my wish. In my country Education is never free. If you are an excellent student, you can pass the main exam to go to the university. When you are in the university you only pay a little money. But if you don't pass the main exam, you must study at the open university. Here you must pay a lot of money. I was one of the unlucky students. I couldn't go to the university, I couldn't go to the open university either. My school life was ended. Fate wasn't smiling on me. I started to go to work.

But every afternoon that I was on my way home from work, whenever I saw many students leaving school, I always felt sad. A few years later, I met my old classmates. Many of them became doctors, engineers, etc. I always regretted my short school life. I hate a poor life! It squashed my dreams and wishes. I couldn't go to the university, I couldn't find a good job, either. I always wish I were a rich person.

If I won \$10,000,000 in the Lottery, the first thing I would do is make my parents' life more comfortable. I would give them a lot of money to take a trip all over the world. I would supply my children with everything that they need. My children would go to the most famous schools. I would go back to my country to visit my relatives, my childhood friends, my sisters. I love my sisters a lot, I would build many big houses for them, I would give them a lot of money for business. Maybe I would go back to my country and live there with my sisters. I always miss them, they are always deep in my heart.

The second thing I would do is open many free schools so that any poor student also can go to school. I think that Education is the background of knowledge and so everyone should have access to it.

The third thing I would do is open many free hospitals to defend the health of everyone. In my opinion the most important things in your life are good health, and good knowledge. If you have good health, and broad knowledge you will become a successful person easily. Do you agree with me?

I also would not forget the disabled, the poor people and old people. The fourth thing I would do is contribute a lot of money to welfare societies to help them.

The fifth thing I would do is open many factories to manufacture goods. I hope that there will not be unemployed persons in the world anymore.

The last thing I would do is build many pagodas, churches so that everyone can go there to pray and say "Thank you God".

Kim, 7/5/97

Winning \$10,000,000 Would Make Me Unhappy

If I won ten million dollars, I would be unhappy because my family, friends and relatives would hope that they would get lots of money. Especially my sons would not want to study. They would want to spend money only. I would have a headache.

But in spite of a headache, I would give money for donations to school and a home for the aged. I would only keep one million dollars. I would spend this money for school expenses in university.

I do not believe in the lottery system. Money is a means to an end. But if money were an end, everyone would be unhappy. I think that everyone should have adequate money. Money is the root of evil. What kind of money should we have? We should have money that we have worked very hard for and earned. Everyone gets it wrong when they think that money is the root of happiness.

Min Hong, 17/11/99

If I Won \$10 Million

When I came to Canada, I brought a lot of dreams with my wife. But sometimes these dreams pile up without money unless you make a load of money or win some jackpot.

One day I had a dream. My wife was telling me that I had won \$10 million. I was shaken at first, then we hugged each other. I shouted, "my dream has come true. We will buy a dream house near a beach and have a wide ocean view. Also let's buy a yacht and a sport car and any other luxuries we may want. Maybe we could plan to travel around the world Italy, Greece, France, all those lovely places. Maybe"

"Steven, Steven, wake up, wake up," I heard my wife saying.

What a shame, I could not believe it was just a dream. I kept saying to myself "just one more dream, just one more dream." Then I thought, from now on I must stop daydreaming because it will only break my heart again and again.

Steven, 3/7/98

Why I Don't Want To Win \$10,000,000

I would not like to win the lottery. I will be happy if I can work by myself. I wouldn't like to get money from the government. Money isn't as important to me as work. If you are a hard worker, then you can earn a lot of money. If I win \$10,000,000, it is not really important to me. I don't want to spend or save this money. If you win \$10,000,000, it gives you less power because you won't have to work hard. If we earn money by ourselves then you will be a powerful and a hard worker.

I disagree when people say "rich people are more important than poor people" - it is not true. I disagree when people say "money causes more problems than love", it all depends on you.

Some people will do anything for money, but I won't. I want to earn my own money by my own effort. If you win \$10,000,000, you won't be careful about spending money and your life will be so easy and boring. But if you earn some money by yourself then you will be so careful about how to spend money. Life will be more interesting if you can work and get what you want by your own effort.

If one day this happens in my life, I will help the poor people of my country, also I will spend some money helping the handicapped and orphans. I won't spend any money on myself.

Manjit, 8/3/99

You Can't Take It With You (A Folk Story From Croatia)

Once upon a time, there lived a king in his castle. He had everything he wanted. He had a lot of money, lots of gold, and he had his slaves. Every day he ate and drank excellent food and drinks, but he only gave the remains and bones to his slaves. There were many days when he didn't give them anything to eat. He used to say his slaves "today you aren't working hard. You will get nothing to eat." And as the time passed by, the king was getting older and he felt sicker every day.

One morning when he awoke, he felt an enormous pain in his legs. He wanted to get up but he couldn't. Then he started to cry "Help, Help, can anybody help me. I can't walk."

When his slaves heard their king crying, they ran right away to his bedroom. After they arrived there, they couldn't believe their eyes about what they were seeing. His face was full of tears. They had never seen their king crying before. "What has happened?" they asked him.

"Nothing, Nothing", he repeated constantly. "Go and call the doctor, as soon as possible", and hurry up, get out of my bedroom. After a while the doctor finally arrived. When he saw him, he already knew that he would die very soon. Then he gave him some medicine and left his room.

Three days later, the king died. And he left all his wealth behind him. He couldn't take anything with him. And as he had no children, all of his wealth belonged to the slaves. And they lived happily to the end of their lives.

Kruno, 27/1/99

Give Me Clean Air

There are half a million motorbikes in Taipei city. That's awful because it's those motorbikes that cause such huge air pollution. However the government has never changed its policy so to reduce or limit the number of motorbikes and vehicles, and has never put forward any policy that protected the environment.

I had a motorbike in Taiwan. I had to wear a mouth mask while I was riding because the air was always lampblack. If you wore a white shirt it would get dirty in no time. And when I looked at my face reflected in the window, I couldn't believe what I saw. My face looked like a monkey - dirty, black and greasy.

On the subject of air pollution, it's a global problem. But my country is much worse than other countries. I have been living Canada for eight months. I have found that the government and residents of Canada really care

about their own environmental air protection. The fast lane idea, where three or four people have to share a car - that's good for us. I love Canada because I always breathe fresh air.

Steven, 22/7/98

Ancient Sinhalese Medical System

In Sri Lanka when I was a child, we lived in a small village. We had a lot of paddy fields around us. My grandparents worked in the paddy fields. One day at harvest time, we worked there a little late. When we returned, home, it was very dark. On the way to our home, suddenly my grandma screamed and held her leg. Some animal had bitten her leg. We thought it was most probably a snake or a viper. They took a piece of cloth like a bandage. They tied her leg up above the wound. Quickly we took her to the temple where there was a monk who was a doctor.

With the first glance at the wound, he decided it was a snake. They know those things by experience. Before anything else, he cleaned the wound really thoroughly. After that, he chopped some wild plant leaves and put them on the wound. He boiled some wild plants with water for half an hour and gave the drink to her. All those medications came from a very ancient Sinhalese medical system.

But now everything is different there. Now we have an English medical system. We have government hospitals, which provide free care and also private clinics and hospitals. Private ones have more facilities than the government free ones. But they are expensive. We still don't have a government medical insurance system like Canada. We can go anytime to the doctor without an appointment. If someone sees an accident by chance, they help the victim by carrying him to the hospital in any transportation. They don't wait for an ambulance.

Shyama, 25/3/98

Hiv & Aids

John took the HIV test last year. John was very worried about AIDS. He had sex with a friend and they didn't use a condom. John decided to talk to a counsellor at an AIDS group. Their talk was confidential. That means that the counsellor didn't tell any one what John said. An interpreter helped John who doesn't speak english well. He also asked his brother to interpret for him as John trusts his brother.

John and his brother met with the counselor. They talked about John's worries. John decided to take the HIV test. The counselor arranged for John to have the test. A health worker took a blood sample. Three weeks later, John went back to see the counselor. John found out that he didn't have HIV. He also found out about ways to protect himself in the future.

How can people get HIV when they have sex? HIV can spread if their partner has HIV and they don't use a latex condom. The virus goes from his semen into his partner's body during sex. How can people protect themselves? People can decide not to have sex. They can choose safe ways to be close. For example, they can hug and kiss. Some people should use condoms, others don't have to. For example, if a man is dating several people, he should use a condom if he has sex. If a woman has a boyfriend, she should only go out with him. If she thinks he might be having sex with other people, she should tell him to use a condom if she has sex with him. On the other hand, if it is a couple who have been married for 20 years, they don't have to use a condom because they only have sex with each other.

HIV can also spread between people who share needles. For example, let's say somebody has HIV and uses a needle to take drugs like cocaine. His girlfriend shares his needle but she doesn't sterilize it first. She will get HIV from the blood in the needle. People should always use new, clean needles - they should never share them. How do you sterilize a needle? Clean the needle twice with bleach and twice with water. The Canadian Red Cross began testing for HIV in 1985. Now almost nobody gets HIV when they receive a blood transfusion.

Nadifa, 2/7/97

An Unfortunate Accident

We had a very kind friend back in Hungary. He had a very ugly accident. We liked him very much and when we heard about that event, we were shocked. I want to write about that, because everybody can learn from what happened.

He and his friend were at his cabin on the mountain. Behind the house stood a water tank, not too far from the house, but the water tank stood higher than the cabin. It sometimes was out of order and he had to fix it. He went several times to the water tank in his car. But everybody told him that he should go on foot, because it was a very dangerous hill. But he never listened to them.

On that day, the water tank was out of order too, and he went over there with his friend by car. And when they were in the car, his friend suddenly said to him, "we are going to skid," and at that moment the car skidded. The friend said, "right after I told him that we would skid, the windows broke out and I felt as if a hand threw me out of the car, and I lay on the ground for a long time. When I woke up, I was looking for him, but I couldn't find him. I went then to the neighbor and I told him everything, and they called the police. My friend died in his car approximately 300 meters down a very steep slope from the road."

This is a very sad story, but we can learn from it. Everybody must be careful. Don't play with danger. We have a hope in this sad thing - that he is in heaven, because he believed in Jesus.

Andrea, 24/11/99

Death Of Someone Close To Me

We are three sisters. I had a brother. He died in an accident. He lived in Dubai, because his job was there. Every year, he came in India and lived with us. When he was about 32, we told him on the phone about my marriage. He was so happy and he tried to come to India, but he could not make the trip at that time. He came 10 days later. My family was very happy because everything was OK. He went with me to my inlaws.

After 2 months of my marriage, one day he had an accident. He had gone out with his friend. While he was coming back around 9 pm, something happened. Nobody knows exactly what happened. It seemed that he had seen somebody on the road and had tried to avoid hitting them. He fell down at the side on the road and his motor cycle fell on the other side. For half an hour, he was laying there because there was nobody around. Then some boys saw him. He was crying. The boys informed the police but they did not come because they were all drunk at the police station. One of the boys called his friend. He came in a hurry and my brother was taken to hospital.

The doctor told us "he is serious." At that time, my mom and dad were not at home, only my sister in law and me were there. We were scared and we had no money. He needed emergency treatment so we went to the PGI hospital in Chandigarh and he was admitted there. They started his treatment quickly. According to his doctor's report, his respiratory system was totally damaged. My parents said to the doctor, "please save my child." My parents took a lot of money with them. He lived for 9 days in hospital and we were happy. But after 9 days he died. When we knew that he was dead, we cried and wept. I understand that doctors are not God but I wish they could have saved his life.

Kuldip, 2/11/09

Family Feud

Emergencies are terrible things which can hit someone's heart. When I was sixteen, we had a terrible emergency. My father's cousins fought with my father and uncle. My father and uncle had many injuries during the fighting. My elder brother went to the farm to see why my dad didn't come home. When he reached the farmhouse, there was nobody there. Then he went to the sugarcane field nearby. There was a big crowd. He found my father and uncle getting beaten up by my cousins. With the help of some neighbors, he brought them home.

When my uncle entered the house, there was so much blood on his head and his body. His right arm was wrapped with my brother's pyjamas. At first glance, we thought his arm had been cut off but fortunately it was only his thumb. The people of my village took them to the hospital.

The doctor told us that he had only 24 hours to re-attach my uncle's thumb, if it could be found. We told my younger brother to go to the place where the fight had been and try to find it. Meanwhile my uncle was screaming in pain.

We had to spend 50,000 rupees for the treatment but my uncle did get his thumb back, thanks be to God.

Amrit, 14/2/96

Hospital Services In Fiji & Canada

I came to Canada on April 13th. 1998. First, when I had to pay the medical insurance, I was shocked when they told me to I had to wait three months. In Fiji they don't have a care card. Fiji has a great shortage of doctors compared to Canada. The outpatient departments are so crowded that the doctors have no time to examine a patient. They will simply ask you what happened and whatever the patient tells them, they just write a prescription and then tell you to go and get the medicine in a pharmacy. Some get it free, but some have to pay for it. Those who can afford it, go to private doctors. Those who can't afford to pay the fees plus the cost of medicine, go to a government hospital for free treatment. Once a patient is admitted to the hospital, then they get proper care, like with diabetes, asthma, etc.

Here, in Canada, they will take blood samples and examine you thoroughly before giving any medication. Compared to Fiji, here the staff are very caring and active and also they will come to you and ask you if you need any help, but in Fiji the staff are not kind. They don't come to ask you, you have to go yourself to them. Most of the people are scared of the nurses in Fiji because they scold them. In my view, medical treatment here is better than in Fiji.

Nasim, 8/7/98

Martial Arts Must Be Consistent With Spirit

Many kinds of oriental people have the idea that "a healthy body is produced from a healthy spirit," and "a sound mind in a sound body." This means that our body is influenced by spiritual attitude and the importance of both are stressed.

My country has the same idea. So Korea has mental training before anyone receives the discipline of martial arts. Mental training consists of composing oneself and concentrating one's attention. This way of thinking is thought to create a sound life and prevent disease.

Of course, I am not sure. I can't prove scientifically that this fact is right. But oriental people have believed it for a long time.

When I was an elementary school student, I studied Tae Kwon Do for 2 years. I have a black belt. If you want to learn Oriental martial art you must do the following things:

- learn about mind control
- respect your teacher
- you must not fight other people unless absolutely necessary

Martial Arts Principles for Playing Golf

To stroke the ball well, I have to control my mind and have a lot of training. Hitting the ball is not easy. In other to hit the ball better, I should have a good teacher. I must learn excellent skills from the teacher.

No matter how hard I try, I can not hit the ball beautifully. I think the reason is that I do not control my mind when I stroke the ball. But I continuously want to practice to improve my stroke until I have excellent skills.

(compiled from the writings of Daesik, Eunjong & Hee soon, Nov. 1996)

How To Handle Stress

1. Keep busy
2. Stop being so busy
3. Talk to others
4. Stop talking to others and be silent
5. Take a walk
6. Take a rest
7. Take a break
8. Take a bath/shower
9. Have a massage
10. Think positive
11. Volunteer to help others
12. Go window-shopping
13. Don't expect or demand so much of yourself
14. Find outlets for your energy
15. Choose what you want
16. Make lists of tasks. Prioritize them. Tackle them one at a time
17. Plan your work carefully
18. Make goals, and make them achievable i.e. realistic
19. Stick to your goals
20. Don't think too much about the future or the past
21. Don't get caught up with or trapped by other people's worries
22. Don't stay home alone all the time
23. Meet other people
24. Treat yourself well – buy/do special things on occasion
25. Improve your English
26. Get a job
27. Do work that you enjoy
28. Get a driving license
29. Listen to music
30. Talk to your husband / wife / son / daughter
31. Know your limits
32. Don't let people make you feel ashamed or guilty if you stick to them
i.e. say 'no' once in a while.
32. Change what you can, accept what you can't, have the wisdom to know the difference between the two.

(compiled from the writings of Kuljit, Manvir & Amardeep)

Some Ways To Stay Healthy

1. Get up early in the morning, have a shower and pray to God for goodness during the coming day.
2. Get regular exercise, e.g. go for a walk and after do some flexing or yoga exercises.
3. Don't eat fatty or fried food (i.e. junk foods).
4. Eat fruit
5. Have an annual check up with your doctor.
6. Don't take alcohol or drugs.
7. Get plenty of bed rest.
8. Don't eat too much salty food.
9. Be happy, don't worry
10. Clean teeth regularly.
11. Wear clean clothes
12. Avoid cholesterol
13. Eat slowly and chew well.
14. Don't drink too much coffee or tea.
15. Have a schedule for each day.
16. Eat meals at regular times.

(compiled from the writings of Rajwinder, Gurpal, Daljit & Gurbax)

Comparison Of Medical Systems

INDIA	CANADA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very expensive • doctor's fees • most clinics private • have to pay for medications but they are cheap • no facilities in smaller villages/ towns - people can die on the way to hospitals • some hospitals dirty • no emergency service • house visits by doctors • patient can buy any kind of medication • dental treatment relatively cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inexpensive if you have coverage • no doctor's fees • most clinics public • medications inexpensive/free if prescribed but expensive if off the shelf • many facilities • all hospitals clean • efficient 911 emergency service • no house visits • patient needs prescription from doctor for many medications • dental treatment expensive

Husbands

My husband has black eyes. He has short black curly hair. He is taller than me. He is a graduate from India. He is a very young and handsome man. He has a short mustache and beard. He usually wears casual clothes. He has been living in Canada since 1993. We have been married since the 26th. July, 1998.

I like his nature and the way he thinks. He is not a selfish man. But I do not like his anger. All the time I want to see him in a happy mood. My husband likes driving and shopping. He has a lot of hobbies. He is a good singer, and he loves dancing and watching football matches. But I hate his hobby of reading the newspaper. My husband is a Sikh and so does not like non-vegetarian food.

He has a good job. He is a truck driver in U.S.F. Reddaway. It's a good company. He loves his job. Sometime he is in serious mood, but almost always he is in a funny mood. In his free time, he watches Hindi movies with me. He loves me a lot. I am proud of my husband and I love him from the bottom of my heart. May God help him and may he live long.

Ruby, 12/1/00

* * * *

My husband has been here in Canada for five years. Last year when he went to India, he found me there as his life partner and we got married. Then after coming here, he sponsored me and now I am here with him.

Kulbir has a good personality. He has light brown eyes and short black hair. He has no beard or mustache. He has a fair complexion. He works in construction.

He is a helpful and kind hearted man. For example, he can't see anyone in pain in front of him. He never likes to see tears in my eyes. He loves me too much.

He likes to listen to Punjabi music. He likes to drive our car at high speed when he goes on a long journey. He likes to visit interesting places. His favorite Indian movie actor is Sunny Deol. He never misses his movies.

At last I just want to say that my husband is a good-natured man. I love him so much. I wish for him that his every desire be complete, and that in the future, we will have as happy a life as we have now.

Jaspreet, 12/1/00

My Favorite Teacher In Brazil

When I was child, I had a favorite teacher at school. Since the first day that I saw her, I thought that she would be a good person. She spoke very slowly, she was patient and smiling all the time.

One day, the students were having a big party at school that we call "Festa Junina". Everybody was dancing and singing the special song that my teacher taught us for the party. All the teachers were happy, but my teacher wasn't. I looked at my teacher, but she didn't smile as usual. She was crying discreetly and nobody knew. I walked to her, and asked why she was sad, and smiling, she answered me, "I'm not sad, I'm very happy because my greatest pleasure is to know that my students learned what I taught them. I'm crying with happiness."

That day was very important for me.

I decided to be a teacher and it was a good choice for me, because I could feel all the emotions that my teacher felt.

Before I came to Canada, I was in a bus and I saw her. She was going to the school. I stopped her and asked if she remembered me, and to my surprise she said: "Of course, Flavia." At that moment, I realized how important she was in my life. I embraced her and started to cry, but not with sadness. I was crying with happiness.

Flavia, 19/5/99

Discipline in Fijian Schools

In Fiji teachers are very strict on students. They teach you that you must concentrate and at the same time, you must learn how to do it. At times students get confused but they are scared to ask and when you do a test if you fail or get low marks at times they beat you with belts. They might also tell the student to cut grass, or make you hold your ears, get up and down 100 times, run around the school building 20 times, make you write one sentence 20 times, etc. At times, students get pleased when they hear such punishment.

Mostly in Fiji, students are used to this kind of punishment. When the students are mischievous, the teachers mostly tell them to stay outside the class, sit down on the floor, or make you stand on a chair. If you still don't show them respect, they simply send you to the principal office. Then if is a serious case, e.g. you assault the teacher or a student, or if they catch you writing a letter to your boyfriend or girlfriend, then the student is suspended from the school. If you don't listen to them, the teachers get enraged and the student can get expelled too.

One day I got an accident. I didn't go to school for nearly two months. Later, when I went to the school, I was shocked when I heard that we were about to get a big accounting test. I did the test but I failed it. I didn't know what to do in the test. I was embarrassed because the teacher was saying to me that you got very low marks in your test and the other students were looking at me. Then the teacher told me to stand outside my class. I asked the teacher: "why are you sending me outside? I told you that I didn't come to school for nearly two months because I had an accident, so why are you giving me a punishment?" She said, "don't make any excuse - I told you to go out so you should do what I say."

I didn't listen to her, so then she sent me to the principal and the principal scolded me. Then she gave me homework for punishment. She told me to write one sentence twenty times. The next day I took my parents with me to school and I changed my school and I threw the homework punishment in front of the teacher and I said goodbye to her. I was very enraged. This was the first punishment I had ever got in Fiji.

Compared to Fiji, Canadian teachers are not supposed to harass the students or give them corporal punishment. Here teachers only give detention. Compared to here, Fijian students are more law abiding. You hardly ever see any students involved in smoking, drug abuse or alcohol. In my opinion, the teachers shouldn't give punishment to any students in the world.

Nasim, 15/7/98

Policemen in India

Indian policemen are not responsible. Some officers are very rich because they are interested in taking bribes, and they use that money for bad habits, like drinking or smoking on duty. They are not responsible or punctual because they don't come in an emergency. They don't help poor people because poor people have no money.

Actually, they need more training and decent facilities like clean offices. My cousin is a policeman. When he completed Grade 10, he took a test. When he joined this course, he only got 6 or 7 months training. I watched him. He has not become responsible or punctual.

Canadian police, on the other hand are responsible. They come on time. They are always ready to help other people, and they don't believe in bribes. They also have many facilities.

Indian policemen have a good salary. The government gives them many other benefits. When there is an accident and the police are called, they come, but first they want information. They are not responsible. Many people think that the Indian police are not careful and aren't interested in the truth.

Promila, 1/4/98

What Is Love?

If nobody loves you, be sure it is your own fault
The important business of your life is love
Lovers even run before the clock
Man loves little and often woman much and rarely
To say that you can love one person all your life
Is just like saying that one candle will
Continue burning as long as you live
Love is a golden bubble, full of dreams
I am not one of those
Who do not believe in love at first sight
But I believe in taking a second look
My first and last love is self-love

Modern Definitions

COLLEGE: Where father pays and the child plays.
AIR HOSTESS: One who pays 10% for her beauty and 20% for her duty.
DEATH: Last station of life.
MONEY: The necessary vitamin for all vitamins.
BOSS: A person who is early when you are late and late when you are early.

Lakhvir

Columbian Police

In my country the police system is very bad because they have poor salaries and the Government doesn't care for them, so they need to use other ways to get money. Sometimes they are accomplices with thieves in robberies. Also they have very bad behavior and don't respect the residents of a city.

In Canada, the police system is much better than in Colombia because they have a good system; for example, in Canada they get an excellent salary, they have good equipment. They respect and give rapid help to the citizens. Crime in my country is worse than in Canada because every day people die in assaults and attacks, robberies, murders and small bombs.

Another problem that my country is having now is with guerillas who hate the police and the government and who are fighting them every day. They live in the mountains and have many weapons. They kill using guns and bombs. The enemy is supposed to be the government and the police but it is the people who suffer most from this problem.

It is too difficult to have confidence in the police in Columbia but in Canada if you want to call 911 the help is fast and we can have confidence and security.

Alexandra, 3/12/97

Police in Pakistan

If I compare the Pakistani police system with the Canadian system, there are so many differences between them. Pakistani police are very corrupt. There are no honest people in the Pakistani police. Canadian police are good, honest, and quick. They help people. Pakistan has honest police too, but only a few. If I have an emergency in Pakistan, I will call the police but the police will never come right away. They will come later. If I think about Canada,

the Canadian police are very quick. They will give you a response right away. If the Pakistani police are going to work for you, they will want a bribe first. Then they will work for you.

Afshan, 1/4/98

Police System In Taiwan

Taiwan was under the control of Japan for 50 years. During this time, the government followed the police system from Japan. Under the central police administration, there are many police stations in every town. Some of the police officers belong to government, some of the police officers are volunteers.

The police officers have many things to do. For example, conveying policy, commanding traffic, giving tickets, keeping the public peace, making sure the voting process in elections is fair, notifying people of conscription, carrying out a census every year, etc. The volunteers help the police officers, help keep public safety, help at elections, command traffic and help fireman.

The police officer's work is very hard, they work 6 days a week. If there is important business to do, they will stop their vacation and come back to work. They don't have much time with their family. They sacrifice their time for their job. Their spirit is very great.

Linda, 14/10/98

* * * *

In Taiwan there are some problems regarding policy. Most police are young men, so they don't have enough experience to be good police. We don't have any confidence in the police.

In Taiwan, most crimes are kidnapping, robberies and burglaries, so many parents take their children to school and back to prevent them from being kidnapped. The robberies and burglaries cause people to install steel bars on the windows to protect themselves. People live behind bars like criminals.

In the event of a traffic accident, some people who witness the accident are only watching coldly without providing help. But in Canada, most of people are willing to be a witness, so that the accident can be resolved fairly.

In the case of an emergency like a fire, break in, robbery or homicide, we should call the police immediately. In Canada for the security of your community, you should call the police in the following cases:

1. In the dead of night, a car slowly drives along your street,
2. A prowler wanders through lanes and yards in your neighborhood,
3. Someone, for no apparent reason, watches or follows children in a schoolyard or playground,
4. A stranger walks a dark street trying car doors.

But if the above mentioned happens in Taiwan, people dare not call the police, because the criminal would probably get revenge.

As a result, I think the police system in Canada is more complete and secure than in Taiwan.

Judy, 1/4/98

Police System In India

As I lived in India for a long time, I had a lot of experience of police administration. After independence, the police administration turned into the worst state. The government officials, the ministers and the rich people have interfered in the administration of the police. Day by day the police have come under the influence of other officials of the government, ministers and the rich people. There is no law. An old saying "Might is Right" can be used correctly for our Indian police.

If there is a theft, murder, fire, quarrel or any other type of case, and someone wants to approach the police, he has to pay the police authorities or have an influential relationship with them, otherwise nobody is going to listen to that poor fellow. It is very difficult for an ordinary man to seek justice from the police. Police have a dictatorship attitude towards people. They usually misbehave to the person who wants to make a report of his case.

The interrogation system is also very bad. They beat the individual like a beast and torture him by using various means. There are no emergencies for the police. Police usually deal with all cases in the same way.

There is a great need to change the police behavior towards the public. The police should be required to know that they are the servants of the people and not the masters. Government has to take drastic action against the defaulters police officers and other ranks.

Gurpal, 26/11/96

* * * *

Indian policemen are not responsible. Some officers are very rich because they are interested in taking bribes, and they use that money for bad habits, like drinking or smoking on duty. They are not responsible or punctual because they don't come in an emergency. They don't help poor people because poor people have no money.

Actually, they need more training and clean offices, cars or other facilities. My cousin is a policeman. When he completed Grade 10, he took a test. When he joined this course he only got 6 or 7 months training. I watched him. He has not become responsible or punctual. Indian policemen have a good salary. Government gives them many other benefits. Many people think that the Indian police are not careful they aren't interested in the truth.

Promila, 1/4/98

* * * *

I am from India. In my country there is a lot corruption. The police system is not good, it creates a lot of problems for the people. In my country, people feel afraid of police. When they see a cop they don't like to stay there. Because they think if they stay there, the police will create some problem for them.

In my country police don't like to help the poor people. If a rich person is in trouble, the police want to help him. But if a poor person is in trouble and he wants some help from the police, the police are not interested. The Police always help the rich persons who give enough money to them for favors. Sometimes if a rich person commits a crime, the police don't like to put him into jail, because they know that they will receive a fat bribe.

Some policemen give lots of trouble to the poor people so as to get their promotion. Sometimes they kill the poor persons without any reason. After that they tell the government he was a terrorist, that's why they killed him. Usually, they are able to get some money or a promotion. The family whose member is killed cries a lot, but the Government will not listen to them. Because there is a lot of corruption in politics too, Ministers try to help the rich persons who give Economic help to them during the election.

If anybody has an accident and his family members take him to hospital for medical help, the doctor will ask them to call the police, because they don't like to attend the patient until the police come. The reason is that if the condition of the patient become worse, the police will create a problem for the doctor. Sometimes police come too late and the patient dies before they come.

In my country many criminals are free, and many poor people are still in prison without any reason. But fortunately, there are some good people who are in politics are trying to stop the corruption and make good laws for the people.

Ravinder, 1/10/97

Environment

We often have heard "we have only one earth". There are so many people, and the population is rapidly growing now. On the other hand, everyone needs more and more appliances for more convenient. For example, the technology of television and computer have drawn sharp progressive lines. Every student is very eager to study computer and see television. They want new models as presents from their parents whenever they enter into high

level schools. What happens to the old appliances? Nowadays, it seems there is a kind of tendency to look down upon the person trying to conserve materials.

This is another story, but more seriously, the young ones begin not to respect the seniors because of television and computer. One book says that every plant and animal is a part of some food chain. It eats or is eaten. If a poison is introduced into one link of the chain, it can affect all other links in the chain. It means that even if the size of the species is small, it can affect human beings. In my class, the teacher told us that there are some countries suggesting that Canada sell pure Canadian water to them. Later it the suggestions could become requests, and then demands,etc. In the end, who knows if there could be a war over water? Even though there are still unpleasant news stories that some kinds of species are being hunted close to extinction and still face problems such as pollution and loss of habitat, there are good news stories as well.

The population of endangered species has slowly increased. Perhaps the best news of all is that people like me and some of my friends are becoming interested and concerned about the fate of wild animals and fishes.

One person can do nothing by himself, but if many think and worry about our earth, it would be in better condition in the near future.

Jae, 16/2/00

Meaning Of Numbers

Many people like Numbers. But their favorite numbers are different.

Americans like 7 or 3. They name their businesses, for example 7UP, 777. They don't like '13', especially Friday 13th.

Many Jewish people like '12'. They think twelve is the perfect number. They have 12 families. I think they also dislike '13'. There were 13 members present at THE LAST SUPPER - Jesus and his 12 disciples. And then one of the 12 disciples betrayed his teacher. And from that time many people didn't like 13.

In Korea many people don't like 4. The number's pronunciation is 'SHA'. SHA means DEATH. And then many buildings don't have room 4, or floor 4. Many Koreans like the number 9. '9' is the largest number from 0 to 9.

Many Chinese like number 8. They like their address to include 8. Their FATHER'S DAY is August 8th. In West Vancouver their address's include 8. I like '8' too, because '8' leaves room for growth.

Many numbers' names have meaning. *Mono* means one, *di* means two, *dri* means three, *tetra* means four, *penta* means five, *hexa* means six, *deca* means ten, *hecta* means hundred, *kilo* means thousand, *mili* means one thousandth, *centi* means one hundredth.

David, 20/12/95

Departed Forever

Kenny Kao is my friend in Canada. In Taiwan when a man grows up to be 18 years old, he must serve in the armed forces, but Kenny had asthma when he was a child.

In Taiwan, we studied at the same college, in the same program but in different Grades. We saw each other but we didn't know each other until we were studying at Kwantlen College.

Kenny is a good guy. He knew it was hard for his father to make money here in Canada and that in order to study in level 3 E.L.T. class, he would have to pay \$530 for a 3 month semester. It was very expensive. He wanted to help pay his school fees so he found a part time job to make money.

He found a chicken farm. Every day he had to wake up at 5 o'clock in the morning. When he got to the farm, he had to clean it up and feed the chickens until 7 o'clock. Then he had to drop off his young sister at school. Finally he came to Kwantlen College to study English.

Kenny spent money very carefully. One time we went to visit Victoria museum and parliament buildings. When I finished my lunch I saw Kenny. I asked him, "did you eat anything?" He said, "No! The food was too expensive. I went to find some cheap food." When his mother went to Taiwan, at lunch time he always ate a hamburger or soup at the restaurant. He would tell me "he missed his mother's cooking," because eating at restaurants was very expensive and not enough for his lunch. He was a hard-working and frugal person.

Kenny had asthma when he was a child, because he had an ongoing cold for a long time. On the night of Feb. 12th, 1998, there was a lot of sputum obstructing his windpipe. He was also out of his medication. He couldn't breathe. At the Surrey Memorial Hospital, seven doctors tried to help Kenny for 3 hours, but Kenny still died. I will remember this friend forever.

Brian, 18/2/98

Kartar Singh Sarabha – Freedom Fighter

My village is in Punjab. My village's name is Sarabha. All the people who live there have the last name Grewal. My last name is also Grewal. There are many people living in my village.

The village was started when two brothers came from another village many years ago. They lived their lives, time passed, and their children grown up. The two brothers' names were Sada and Rama. So all the village are descendents of Sada and Rama.

My village is really popular. When English people ruled India, in our village there were five or six freedom fighters. One freedom fighter was really famous. His name was Kartar Singh Sarabha. He fought against the British Government. So everybody knows about my village. When I tell anybody that my village's name is Sarabha, everybody knows that the village belongs to Kartar Singh.

When Kartar Singh was a child, his parents died and his grandfather took care of him. After he studied at high school, Kartar Singh wanted higher education. His grandfather was a rich person, so he took his grandson to America. In America he started his studies but then he saw that American people hated Indians because they were slaves to the British government. And there were racism against Indian people.

One time he walked the street and he saw on the outside of an English hotel a sign that said, 'Dogs and Indians are not allowed.' He was angry and then he wished that he could free his country from the British government.

He met some freedom fighters. Sometime later he came back to India. When he went to his village, some old people asked 'what did you bring from America for us?' He replied, 'it is not just for you, it's for all the country' because he wanted to free his country. Sometimes later, he was arrested by the police. When he was sentenced to death, he was only 18 years old.

In my village, there is a primary and senior secondary school [12 grade] with the name of Sahid Kartar Singh Sarabha. There is a small government medical clinic with the name of Kartar Singh. In my village, people put money into a fund and they made a big Private Hospital. There is a big playground with the name of Kartar Singh. Every year, the people from the village arrange a tournament. Players attend the tournament from the whole of Punjab. Players play many games - hockey, soccer, kabadi and athletics. I really like my village.

Pardeep, 9/4/97

My First Trip In Canada

I have visited all of northern India. I went with my class and friends. I enjoyed myself a lot on all those trips. That was the 'golden era' of my life. I had wonderful friends in my country. On the day our teacher told us that we are going to go to Victoria, I was thinking about whether I would enjoy the trip or not. My husband suggested that I go and enjoy the trip with my new class. He said, "It will be a good chance for you to go out and enjoy yourself." So I decided to go.

Our class went to Victoria yesterday. I reached the college at 7 o'clock. It was a group of thirty four and our dear teacher, Ian. We went to Tssawwasen bay by bus. It took half an hour to reach there. We took the ferry at 9 o'clock. We reached Victoria about 11 o'clock. We had arranged for a bus to take us around. The bus was already waiting for us. From Swartz bay, we went to the Royal British Columbia Museum and the National Geographic Theatre. It took forty-five minutes to reach the museum. What we saw at the museum was really great. That was exactly what I wanted to learn. A couple of weeks earlier, our teacher had taught us about the First Nations people who came to explore the Northwest Pacific. In the museum, we came to know everything about the First Nation People. How did they start life? What kind of work did they do? What were the main industries at that time ?.....etc . We learned about the old animals and how B.C. came into existence and what kind of industry there was then.

Then we went to the Parliament Building in the afternoon. A guide told us about the building and we met Penny Priddy, a Minister in the government. We spent one hour there. Still we had one hour left. We went shopping. We saw a man doing some tricks and making money. During our walk we heard the native music from some South Americans. We walked around. I wanted to take a ride on a 'Tonga' (horse and carriage) but we unfortunately, we didn't have enough time.

We had to get the bus back to the ferry but our bus was late. We had to wait for twenty minutes – believe me, we were tired! At last we started for the ferry. We got the ferry at the last moment. We reached the college campus at 7:30 p.m.

It was a wonderful trip, hilarious trip, great trip, super trip. How can I explain it? I HAVE NO WORDS. I didn't have to care for my husband, nor any other relatives. I was free from all worries and was free to do what I really want to have from my life: only enjoy, enjoy and enjoy. I really enjoyed it a lot!

Amardeep, 16/5/99

Arranged Marriages

I agree with arranged marriage. I like arranged marriages. In my culture, the Sikh religion likes to have arranged marriages. If my parents want me to have an arranged marriage, I don't mind. I agree with this idea. Some boys and girls want to get a 'love marriage' but some people don't agree with this. Some parents disagree with children who get love marriages. Some parents give orders to their children about it and some don't. Those who have love marriages usually live separate from their parents. In our culture, parents find the groom, we don't.

Smoking

I don't agree with this habit. Smoking is a bad habit. Smoke is bad for your health. If you smoke, you will have many health problems. This smell is bad for others. People who don't smoke find it hard to tolerate this habit. It's very expensive. It gives pollution in the air. I think the Government should put a ban on it. It's a drug. Government should put more tax on it. Governments should make laws on smoking. You should not smoke in Government buildings. You should have to smoke outside.

In Punjab, women never smoke but some men do. In India there is a different kind of cigarette called a *berhi*. Many people waste a lot of money on tobacco because it's very expensive. I don't like people who smoke.

Khalistan

I neither agree nor disagree with it. Punjab wants to separate from India. In Punjab, there are a lot of products. The Central Government doesn't behave well in Punjab. In Punjab, there aren't good laws. Punjab is 'a gold sparrow' (i.e. a rich state) but the Central government is jealous about it. The Central government doesn't care about a lot of things. The Punjab doesn't transport wheat and a lot of things out of the country. So in Punjab, there aren't many facilities. But Punjabi people want to sell our wheat in other countries. Punjab is a big state in our country. The Central government doesn't pay the true value of these products like wheat. The farmers get a lot of taxes and bills. Especially Sikhs want to separate from India because the Central government because they don't like

the Sikh religion. Some Sikhs want to make Khalistan. The Central government hasn't given in to Sikh demands. Sikhs want all people to be equal but the government doesn't care about this.

Parveen

Not Much To Choose Between The Two

Today school opens. But there are fourteen thousand students who don't go back to school. How come? Because their teachers are striking. This is one case among other strikes in Canada. Going on strike was a very serious problem in my native country, China. It was like digging your own grave. Only one thing could happen, you would be fired. But it is not fair to deny the employee the right to criticize their employer.

As for Canada, being on strike is a human right which is commonly used. But you never know who will become the victim. One thing I know is that human rights are a godsend when you are born. But today human rights have been turned around and twisted by people.

For instance, the Canadian government spends lots of money to assist the people who made a habit of using drugs. But it continues to reduce the education and medical budget. However each country has its own problems. But it should get to the root of the problem not provide band aid solutions. It rescues someone from addiction but this means that other citizens are taxed heavily. In addition the 'rescue' doesn't usually change their behaviour. They are scum but they hold tight to their human rights. They are going to get a safety house and just as many free drugs later. Human rights may be incomplete in my past country but still they are running unchecked and wild like in the western world.

At present so many people like to criticize human rights in China. Do you think you really have healthy human rights? No, I don't suppose you do.

Geling, 30/8/98

If I Was Prime Minister What Would I Do?

If I was Prime Minister what would I do? I would announce the new laws as follows:

1. To promote my salary (I don't know the salary of Prime Minister of Canada. The salary of Taiwan President is about CD\$470,000.-).....". ☺
2. Lower all of the taxes to improve the economy.
For example, lower every tax 20% until the GNP improves.
3. Lower the special tax on foreign investment. This way, my people will have more business opportunities.
4. Expand the store hours - this can improve volume of shopping.
5. All of the officials have to pass a test. This means if you would like to work for government, everybody has a chance. This would make things fairer than now. Things should be judged on the basis of merit not who you know.
6. Don't permit independence of Quebec.
7. Higher quota of immigrants from Taiwan and Europe and Japan. Limit and lower the quota of some countries - e.g. poorer and less developed countries.
6. All the people of Canada have to follow the laws of environmental protection.
7. Strengthen the education at elementary level - at present it is too easy; in my opinion, there is too much play and not enough work.
8. Add Mandarin to the other two official languages.
9. Improve the medical equipment and the system.

Lily, 22/4/00

Courage

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face. Challenges can be stepping stones or stumbling blocks. It's just a matter of how you look at them. The purpose of life is to live it, to reach out eagerly and without fear forever seek richer experience.

It takes courage to push yourself to places that you have never been before...to test your limits...to break through barriers. Fortune favors the brave. To conquer without risk is to triumph without glory.

Champions believe in themselves even if no one else does. In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can. They can because they think they can.

Gurdeep, 19/4/00, (copied from another students binder cover)

Water Melon Story (Vietnamese Folk Story)

An Tiem was the name of one of the Princes belonging to King Hung 18 in Vietnam. He got married to a pretty girl named Nang Ba. They both were loved by the King so much. The King used to give to the Princes and Princesses a lot of things, but Prince An Tiem was not like the others. He never showed that he was happy whenever he received anything from the King. He preferred products that were produced by himself.

One day, one of the court mandarins asked him: "Why aren't you happy whenever you receive offerings from the King?" The Prince, An Tiem, answered: "The things which are offered to me by those above me make me worry because I don't know how to repay them. Things given me by friends are different because we are equal."

The mandarin told this to the King. The King became angry and expelled Prince An Tiem and his wife from the Royal palace. From here Prince An Tiem and his wife were taken to live in a far off land - a wild island.

Prince An Tiem was a brave, confident person. Being hungry or cold didn't discourage him. First, he built a house which was made of branches and leaves. Every day he went to the beach to catch some fish for food. His clothes were made of leaves, too. He thought: 'where there is soil, there is life.' And he started to plant.

One morning, while he was digging, he saw a bird that was eating a strange fruit. Suddenly he stood up and the bird flew away leaving the fruit behind. Prince An Tiem was a very intelligent person. He thought: 'if the bird could eat this fruit, humans could eat it too.' Then he picked the strange fruit up and tried some of it. It tasted cool, sweet, soft. After that, he took the rest back and shared it with his wife. They both thought it tasted delicious and so they decided to plant it.

The young couple worked hard. Before long, their garden had a lot of big fruit. They felt very happy. Prince An Tiem was an honest, nice, dutiful and loyal person. He wanted to share his products with everyone. He took a lot of fruit and engraved his name, and directions on how to plant it on the surface of the strange fruit. Then he released them into the ocean. He hoped that one day they would drift along with the current to the people who were living on the land. A lot of seasons passed. But he didn't get discouraged. He kept working hard, waiting and hoping.

His dream eventually came true. One day, some fruit that had been released by Prince An Tiem drifted along with the current to the land. Someone picked them up and tried them. They tasted delicious so they offered them to the King. The King tried them. He too thought that they tasted cool, sweet, soft and very delicious. He recognized Prince An Tiem's dutiful heart. After that the King transmitted an order to pick up Prince An Tiem and his wife to bring them back home.

The name for that fruit was water melon. Water melon - always sweet and soft, the same as Prince An Tiem's dutiful heart.

Kim, 10/4/97

Note:

A Vietnamese proverb says:

*"Food is a product from father.
Clothes are products from mother
Knowledge is a product from teacher "*

In my country, Father, Mother, Teacher are the most important symbols in the Vietnamese people's heart. In fact, if you visit my country in the spring on January 1st. – 3rd. Moon Calendar, you will see Vietnam's traditional festival. Almost every family has at least a pair of water melons that are put on the Ancestors' Altar solemnly. Water melon was a symbol of a dutiful heart. It reminded everyone to remember our ancestors and origin.

Transportation In Brazil

Brazil is the largest country in South America. It has a large number of people living there, and they need rules, especially when it comes to traffic. We have special rules of transit in Brazil. The minimum age to drive is 18 years old. When you apply for a driver's license, you have to do a complete examination, study road signs and regulations, and also take a road test. Nobody is allowed to drink and drive, nor speak on the cellular phones at the same time. The children have a special seat in the car, and animals have to stay on the back seat. There are road checks and the police check for drunken drivers and drug users; but some times people don't respect the laws and they have big accidents. Most of the accidents are caused by young drivers.

Some cities have better roads than others. In the poor areas, the roads are terrible. Due to the population, the traffic slows down to the extreme in rush hours. The buses could be very comfortable and the subways too, but they aren't. Most people have to travel this way and therefore, they become very crowded.

In Canada, a lot of people have cars. Buses don't come by so often; but here, we have the Skytrain which is faster than the bus and more efficient. Canada and Brazil are very different. The rules are similar but in Canada, people are more aware of the risks that they take by driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Flavia, 26/5/99

Transportation In Sri Lanka

The main transportation system of Sri Lanka is owned by the government. The public bus service is called the Sri Lanka Transport Board. It covers almost 90% of the country's routes. By third world standards, it was a good and well organized system. About 10 years ago, the government allowed the private sector to operate public transportation. After that we could take the bus anytime, but the bus fares have gone up. Sometimes we don't want to stand at the bus stop. When we come late, we can get the bus anywhere along the route. If we want to get off somewhere other than the bus stop, we have to tell the driver.

Also we have a very good railway network, owned by the government. Most of our train engines we bought from Canada, Germany and Japan. We still don't have electric trains or underground tube train systems like other developed countries.

Our capital city, Colombo has very big traffic problems. The roads are not as wide as Canada's roads. In major cities, we have radio taxis, too, but they are expensive. Seventy percent of the people use public transportation. Only 30% of the people have their own vehicles.

Shyama, 8/4/98

Transportation In Taiwan

In Taiwan, there are many different kinds of transportation. For example, public bus, private bus, train, subway, taxi, motorcycle, bike, local airplane, international airplane, personal car.

I didn't use to drive in Taiwan, I used to use taxi and subway. I preferred to use subway, more space, more comfortable, you don't feel dizzy, you can read in the subway, use your time, read some papers, study before you arrive and also it is safer than taking a taxi because some of the taxi drivers are criminals. In Taipei, we have two skytrain lines, one from north to south and another one from east to west. The east to west line is finished and the north to south line is just 60% finished, but it has been used for a long time.

The taxi is the most convenient means of transportation. You don't have to wait for a long time. Any time you need a taxi, just wave your hand, the taxi will come, because there are many taxis on the road in Taipei. But of course you have to pay much more than the subway.

Most people in Taiwan usually use motorcycles or the bus or subway or taxi to go to the office or school. Buying and maintaining a car is much more expensive than in Canada. For the same car, you would have to pay double what you pay in Canada. The bus is the cheapest, and most convenient. It is open from 6:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.

In Taipei, we have more than one hundred bus lines, publicly owned or locally run. The buses always come very quickly, every 5 to 10 minutes. Taiwan is a densely populated country, so every day a lot of office workers, office ladies and students are frequently late to their jobs or school. So our government chooses some important artery of traffic and opens one line for " buses only ", so the office workers, office ladies and students can arrive at their destinations at rush hour. In Taiwan, all of the buses only use gas, not like some electric buses in Canada. On the buses, you can pay with change, bus tickets and bus computer tickets. In Canada, some buses have lifts to assist handicapped people, but Taiwan doesn't have this kind of bus.

People use trains, airplanes for travel or business trips in Taiwan. People use bikes for exercise, but not that often because the streets are just too busy and are not safe enough. You just find people riding bikes in the countryside.

In Canada, I think everybody knows how to drive, everyone owns a car and cars are very cheap. If you use bus, you have to wait for a long time and they are not cheap. It is different compared with Taiwan. After getting off the bus, you still have to walk to the destination. Mostly people drive in Canada. Taxis are very expensive and you have to call first, you cannot wave your hand on the street to call taxi, it is impossible in Canada.

(compiled from the writings of Lily and Brian, 4/4/00)

In China, Cars Are Scarce

China and Canada are two of the biggest countries in the world. But they are so different. China is a third world country, so everything is developing. And Canada is a prosperous country.

In September 1996, I immigrated to Canada. This was my first time in Canada. So, everything about Canada I knew only from TV and books. So when I arrived in Canada, I felt things were different from my first country- China. The biggest things that are different are the traffic and transportation. There are lots of vehicles running on the road. And the traffic is convenient. People can take the bus and rapid transit very easily. But in China

you can't do that because China is overpopulated, and public transportation is the main kind of transportation in China. The second kind is the bicycle. There are few people who own a car because a car is very expensive. So the Chinese people have to use the public transportation system and bicycles for normal life. Unfortunately the public transportation service is not very good. Often people have to wait a long time for the bus, and there are so many people in one bus, it's overcrowded.

In Canada, each family has a car, or more. And everyone can drive when they are over sixteen years old. When I arrived in Canada, I was nineteen years old, so I went to have the writing test about car safety, and passed it, and then, started to study how to drive. The driving schools in China and Canada are different. In China, the student drivers study in the school. They have to study in the classroom first, and then practice in a big specially designed area. In Canada, student drivers practice on the road and have the road test on the road. I was never a student driver in China but I felt the practice of driving in Canada is more realistic. When I passed the road test, I bought a car. This happened in just half a year after I arrived. But in China, I think that would have taken me ten years. Oh, that is a long time - too long.

Michael, 23/7/98

Driving In Fiji

In Fiji the steering wheel is on the right hand side but in Canada it is on the left side. In Fiji we don't have to take a learner test - we only take driving test. In Canada it is difficult to get driver's license because there are so many tests. In Fiji nobody cares about the stop signs on the road. They cross if nothing is coming. There are no signals. In Canada we must stop at the crosswalk. In Fiji there are no such things.

Here in Canada driving rules are very strict but in Fiji nobody cares about driving rules. In Fiji the road condition are very poor. In Canada they are very good. In Fiji we don't have any lights on roads only on bridges. In Canada all main roads have lights every two or three streets. In Fiji we *do* have speed limits and stop signs but nobody cares about them. When the police are on the side of the road to check how fast the drivers are driving, some drivers help each other to avoid the speeding tickets by flashing their cars lights. Like Canada, in Fiji it is very important to wear seat belts. If you don't wear one and you are caught, you have to pay a fine.

Nasim, 1/4/98

Driving In Colombia

There are many rules in my country, but people don't follow them, even when we have a special traffic and roads police. Some of them are very corrupt and instead of give a ticket they receive money and everything is OK. Most of the roads are in really bad shape which makes people spend more time getting somewhere.

At peak hours it's just impossible to drive in Bogota, because of the traffic on the main roads. It's quite possible to spend two or three hours waiting.

The main roads are smaller than in Canada and some times the lights don't work properly. We don't have any subway or skytrains like in Canada, only buses always full of people.

For me it's better to drive here in Canada than in Colombia, most of the people follow the rules and this makes everything easy for everybody.

Sandra, 26/5/99

Comparison Of Transportation In India & Canada

India	Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drive on left • no speed limits • no lanes • narrow roads • white lines or no lines • roads in poor condition, i.e. potholes • no/few road signs • no Air care requirement • if accident, no insurance system – police deal with it • horn used a lot • horn used if overtaking • most people do not have a car • mostly standard shift cars • seat-belts optional or non-existent • no regulated parking • no strict bus schedule • transit workers not well paid • transit workers often rude • transit workers often not punctual • buses have driver and conductor • tickets don't have time limit • vehicles/equipment old & not well maintained • buses dirty • deluxe buses (with movies) for rich • tell conductor when you want to get off • 3 classes on buses, trains & planes • trains mostly run on coal • other modes of transport include bikes, ox-carts, tractors, rickshaws, scooters, 3-wheelers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drive on right • speed limits • lanes • wide roads • white & yellow lines • roads in good condition • many clear road signs • Air care requirement • ICBC claims system • horn not used much • signal light a must if overtaking • most people have 1 or more cars • mostly automatic cars • seat belts mandatory • regulated parking • strict bus schedule • transit workers well paid • transit workers usually polite • transit workers punctual • buses have only driver (not skytrain) • tickets have time limit • vehicles/equipment replaced regularly and well-maintained • buses clean • few private buses lines • pull cord when you want to get off • 1 class on buses, 2 classes on trains, 3 classes on planes • trains run on electricity/diesel oil • other modes of transport include skate-boards, sea-planes, helicopters, boats

Serious Accident

I was in 10th. grade. One day my sister, my cousins and I went to Chandigarh for a visit. We left our home at 9 a.m. We were very excited. We had lots of fun on the way. We were in my cousin's car. About 1 p.m. we entered Chandigarh. There are many gardens to see. First we went to sector 17 and bought some cold drinks. I also bought a pair of shoes. Then we went to the Rock garden. It's really very nice. There were many strange things that were made from broken plates and bangles. We felt very happy. At 2.30 p.m. we left for Pinjore garden. It's also very wonderful. We saw lots of things there.

Eventually we got tired and decided to go back home. We set off. We were on our side on the road. We saw a truck coming towards us. Suddenly the truck driver lost control and hit our car. The front side of the car was smashed badly and we were all injured. The truck driver didn't stay and drove away.

I was badly injured. I didn't know what had happened. After an hour, I came to my normal condition. Then I was in hospital. I had a cut on my head and it was bleeding. The doctor cut my hair where the cut was. Then in an ambulance we went to the police station and the inspector asked some questions. Then the police gave us a ride home. My face was swollen. When our parents saw us, they were frightened. It was a really terrible experience.

Daljit, 19/2/97

My Goal

When I was in India, I wanted to be an accounting lecturer, because I thought teaching was a very good job. So after I finished Grade 10, I took Commerce. In commerce I chose Math, English, Accounts, Management, and Punjabi. All of my subjects were in English. At first, I faced many difficulties. But at that College all of my teachers were very nice. They helped the students a lot.

I liked my accounting lecturer very much. Her name was Jatinder. She lived near my house and she helped me so much that I got interested in accounting. I worked very hard. She also liked me very much, because when she gave us homework, I did it very sincerely. Whenever I saw her working as a teacher, I also thought of becoming an accounting lecturer. Her teaching approach was very good, so every student in my class did well in their studies.

When I finished Grade 12 in these subjects, unfortunately my parents had to move to another city. All the schools and colleges were very far from my house, so I had to live in a hostel. But there was no hostel at my first college. I had to enroll at another college, and there were no commerce subjects at that school, so I had to go into computer training. I was very sad at that time - I was so depressed that I wanted to die.

I will never forget my first college days or my teacher, Jatinder. I would still like to be a teacher in the future.

Gurmit, 29/6/99

* * * *

When I was a small girl, I wanted to be a Doctor. But I wanted to be a Doctor in India, not here, because most Indian people are poor. They don't have a lot of money. I wanted to do free check-ups. I wanted to help the poor people. If I did free check-ups, the people would love me.

But now I am living in Canada. Canadian life is very hard for me. When I came to Canada, my English was not very good. Then I took English classes. Now my English is a little bit better. I applied for a Resident care aide course. My course will start in September. When I finish this course I will start the Registered Nursing course.

I will go back to India when I graduate because I want to do this job in India. I really like this job. I want to live in India. I love my India.

Amanpreet, 25/8/97

What I Want To Do In Canada

I. Travel:

There are many things that I want to do in Canada. At first, I would like to make a trip and to see everywhere from west to east and from south to the north of Canada. Especially, I'd like first to go and see the northern part of Canada. Then, I would meet the Inuit people and see their way of living. If I could stay with them for many months, I would eat raw fish with them. And, I'd like to see many polar bears and the beautiful sight of the aurora displaying in the night sky. Some day, I would like to live alone among the forest without anyone around for 6 months. I would reflect about who I am, where I came from and where I'm going.

If possible, I would go around the eastern area of Canada. Then, I would feel the ancient life of eighteenth century people and be impressed by the greatness of modern culture around Toronto. Also, in the Prairies, I would feel the empty spaces of endless wheat fields. Near the Rocky mountains, seeing that beauty, I would like to purify my mind. In conclusion, I would be a person that is more natural, more generous, and more peaceful in this new and beautiful country.

2. **Work:**

There are many jobs in this world. Among all those jobs, I want to be a carpenter. There are many reasons. First, I hate routine work. Quite the opposite, I like creative work. But carpenter's work needs calculating to cut, measure and assemble the stuff. Therefore, that work needs you to use brain and physical power. This is one reason why I want to be carpenter.

Second, I don't like to kill live things so I would not like to work as a butcher or sell meat or poultry. I also don't like jobs that involve bargaining with a person for something, so sales jobs are not for me. But a carpenter's work doesn't need that. So, I want to be carpenter.

Third, Jesus was carpenter. So, from ancient times, a carpenter's job was regarded as a holy job. That is also a good reason why I want to be a carpenter.

Gidu, 30/11/98

When I Was In The Iraqi Army

In 1987, when I was 18 years old, I entered the army. I served in the army for 4 years. When the fighting started between Iraqi forces and USA forces, I was over there. I saw the US forces fight the Iraqi forces. At the beginning of the fighting, the Iraqi forces were very strong. The fighting continued for 5 hours. At that time, the US forces retreated. Then the US forces advanced again to the front. They fought the Iraqi forces for about 17 days. The US forces used every kind of weapon - air force, navy and artillery. I was in an artillery unit.

Do you know why the Iraqi forces didn't triumph? First of all, the Iraqi forces and Iraqi people didn't like Saddam and they still don't. They also didn't want to invade Kuwait. The Iraqi forces lost the war with the USA so they don't believe in that war. After the war, the Iraqi people and part of the Iraqi forces made an uprising against Saddam in 1991. But unfortunately the uprising failed because Saddam had special reserve forces in a base in Baghdad.

After that I left Iraq and went to Saudi Arabia.

Mohamed, 21/10/98

My Previous Jobs In Korea

When I was attending high school, I studied Art design. But I failed to enter university. At the time I felt terrible. In the past, I have spent a lot of time and money on my education, but worst of all my parents expected me to enter the university. They believed that if I was able to pass my exam, then my life would be continuously good. Because I failed, I decided to stop my studies.

Then I went to a Hotel management college. After 2 years, I graduated and went to work as a restaurant hostess in a five-star hotel. After a few months, I was offered a secretarial job at a large corporation. The company's name is Hyundai Heavy Industries which builds ships for export. I was secretary to the president of this company for almost two years. My job was to schedule appointments and take notes during meetings. Even though my job was very hard, I felt proud of my job. But my achievement was still not enough. I had to take the exam again to enter the university and hopefully graduate from Art design.

I followed my dream and quit my secretarial job. Then I passed and so I entered the university. My parents were very proud of me.

Sora, 6/10/99

Kindergarten Teacher In Ukraine

I always loved children and love them now. I can get along with them quickly and easily. When I began my career, I didn't have to think about what kind of work would be best for me. I went straight to the kindergarten. It wasn't a mistake. I worked there as a teacher for ten wonderful years. I loved my job and my children.

Usually I had 24 to 28 children in my group. It was not easy, but I worked with an assistant. Together we could do a lot of things. We taught our children to dress themselves, to use a fork and a knife, to be courteous and friendly, to speak clearly and correctly, to play with friends and toys, to draw and to dance. We taught our children to do all this and our children taught us to be patient, honest and considerate.

I think I'll remember the names of all my children all my life. I'll never forget a small boy called Deema. He was always singing. I had to be careful with him, because he liked to eat house plants. It could even be cactus. I can't forget a small girl, Tanya. One time she said to me, "I love you more than my mom, because you read a lot of fairy tales and legends, you play with me and look after me, my mom never does that."

I spent more time with many children than their parents. With these children I was especially careful and considerate. Sometimes parents didn't have time for their children and were too tired to talk with them. I did what I could for those families. Sometimes parents understood me and were grateful, sometimes they didn't see my energy. One time, some parents forgot to take a child from the kindergarten.

I remember many different happenings of that period of my life. I tell sometimes my friends about my work as a kindergarten teacher. Sometimes they laugh, sometimes they are sad and usually they say to me, "you should write a book about your experiences for the parents." When I have enough time, I want to write some stories, because I will always remember my children with love and fondness, with gratitude and hope some day to work again with children.

Natalia, 6/8/97

My First Job In Canada

I arrived in Canada on 9th. Feb, 1998. After six months, I decided to get a job so I took an application to the chicken factory. At home I had been very bored and frustrated. At the chicken factory, I stood outside the office door for a few minutes. After a few minutes a supervisor came. She was a woman. She was very nice. She told me, "I'll give you your interview." I said OK. She asked me a lot of questions and then she said, 'you can start work Monday afternoon at 4 p.m'. I said 'thank you so much'. I was so happy. I couldn't believe it. I had got a job.

Monday morning I got up early. I made my lunch. I arranged my ride. My husband dropped me off. I was very happy but very nervous. I started my work at 4 p.m. I was very sad when I saw the chickens. There were so many of them and of course they were all dead and frozen. My hands got stiff, I felt very cold, so upset, really bad. After two hours, it was time for coffee break. After ten minutes, I had to go back to work. I kept wondering, 'when will my shift be finished?' When finally my shift was over, I was so relieved. A kind lady drove me home. When I reached home, my hands were so swollen. I wasn't able to knock on the door. My husband opened the door and asked me how my day was. I started to cry. I said, "I will never go back there again". My husband said OK.

Next morning I got up late in the morning. In the evening, I got ready for work again. I decided that the job wasn't so bad after all. Now I have been working there for three months. Now I feel better than before.

Shanu, 1/12/98

* * * *

I came from India two years ago. I got a job with Assured Building Maintenance Ltd. I was worked at Sutton Place Hotel. This hotel is a five star hotel in Vancouver. I worked graveyard shift. I worked from 10-30 p.m. to 6-30 a.m. My supervisor seemed to be very nice.

I worked in the kitchen area. I had to use dangerous cleaning chemicals. Amongst other things, I had to work on a three-step ladder, cleaning the oven hood. After some days, the chemicals started bothering me. I did not

feel good on duty. I told the supervisor. But he did not care. I wanted to change my job. One day, at about 5 a.m., I passed out in the kitchen area. The Chef was there at the time. After 15 minutes, an ambulance arrived and took me to Emergency. After two hours, I felt better. My supervisor and other workers stood near my bed in the hospital. The doctor told me never to use this chemical again.

Gurbax, 23/6/99

The Saddest Day In My Life

I have many relatives and friends. My father has 3 brothers and one sister. My mother has 2 sisters and one brother. All are married. But it is my mother's younger sister who I love very much. She is a widow. Her village is Kup Kalan District, Sangrur. She is a teacher at the Primary School in her village. She is medium height and very beautiful. She loves me and my family. She works very hard. She always speaks the truth. She believes in God deeply and always reads Gurbani.

Her husband died on July 11, 1996. He was a Lecturer at the Senior Secondary School Bhogiwal near his village. He had degrees of M.Sc. and M.Ed. He was a lecturer of Physics. He was a really good person with a good nature. One day he felt very bad. He said to his wife, I think I have some problem. He went to a Doctor for a check up. The Doctor said "your body needs rest so you have to rest at home and stop going to School.

But after seven days he felt very bad, then he was admitted to the Government Hospital Malerkotla. At hospital he caught a fever. He became so weak he couldn't walk. The doctors were really worried about him. He couldn't speak clearly. His family and relatives were also worried about him. On the 4th. day at Hospital at one o'clock, the situation became critical. Because he couldn't speak, he wasn't able to tell his wife about his problem, so he touched his head. His wife went to the doctor. When the doctor came to him he was holding his head but he still couldn't speak. The doctor gave him oxygen. But God came to him to pick him up. My aunt was outside the room at that time. When my aunt heard the news, she felt she was going to go crazy. She couldn't speak a word and she looked like a stone. She was crying very loudly.

She has one boy and one girl. The boy's name is Rinku and the girl's name is Rupy. They both were crying when they heard about their father's death. Rupy is studying now. She studies in College. Rinku passed his diploma and he got a good job in April 1997. Now he wishes his father was alive. His father had a lot of dreams about his children. He wanted his children to get good jobs, but he never lived to see his children as adults. Rupy always misses her father and sometimes she cries when her mother and brother are not present at home.

Now they are only three members in their family. We love them very much but now they feel alone in India. Because we are here. We can't go back to India right now. I think about them all the time.

Ashminder, 7/5/97

Vernon Story

There was a man who lived in Burnaby. He was born in Canada. His name was Mark Chahal. He was 30 years old. He was working as an accountant. He got married two years ago. He was separated. His wife tried to get a divorce but he didn't agree. Unfortunately, nobody knew why, what he was really thinking.

On April 4th. he drove his car from Burnaby to Kelowna. He parked his car at the airport and he rented a van. He checked into a motel for two days. He drank too much alcohol. He got drunk. He shouted and other people heard his noise.

On Friday morning, he went to his estranged wife's house. He had a shot gun and two handguns. He started shooting and killed his wife and her four sisters, one brother, one brother-in-law, mother and father. His wife was 25 years old. She was working as a dentist. After that, he came back to the motel. He told the motel owner to come to see him after one hour. Then he killed himself. When the motel owner went back to his room and knocked on the door there was no reply. Then she opened the door with the other key. She saw there was a dead body. She fainted and fell down on the floor. Everybody was shocked to hear this story.

Everybody says that he shouldn't have done that. The relatives say his wife had done something wrong, but nobody knows what. This is a terrible story.

Daljit, 12/2/97

When You Are An Immigrant

When you come to another country, you must prepare yourself psychologically. When you first come to a different place, maybe you are really excited but after you have stayed for 2 or 3 weeks, gradually you have a lot of things that you need to think about.

First you stay with your family. You have no friends, probably no job, so all day you feel ignorant. You can't understand the language or the culture. The customs, culture, education and traditions, are of course very different from your country.

In your hometown you knew everything, where to find your favorite foods, where to find your favorite shops. You knew a lot of people, you had a social life and you had a job. You were fulfilled.

Here, some people are not friendly. Also they think differently. Their ideas are different, their lifestyles are different so we feel distance from them.

Leaving your hometown is not very easy. Having a good life is not easy either. Time will reveal everything. This new life starts again now.

Geling, 16/9/98

Nobody Knows Me Here

I was very busy on that day in my brain only. In fact, I had packaged all my family's baggage a few weeks ago, so I had been waiting for a long time. I felt a little bit sad, but the feeling was not very strong. I had thought about leaving Taiwan for a long time. Actually, I felt very happy, but also there was a conflict within. I was not sure whether it was right or wrong for me to leave. In any case, I made up my mind to go to Canada. I didn't say goodbye to anybody because I didn't have brothers and sisters and relatives and anyone that I wanted to say goodbye to. My parents had died so I wanted to start a new life so much.

I wasn't really thinking too much. I am not a selfish person but all I knew was that I wanted to live for myself. However, I just want to say I'm really very sorry to someone whose name is Tine Tine. Unfortunately, I could not contact him. I tried to arrange a meeting three times at least. He was too young to come alone and his grandmother was too busy to bring him, and also I didn't have enough time.

I could not say anything on the telephone. Maybe it was all God's plan. Even I didn't have the courage to tell him the truth - I will be going tomorrow. I couldn't say goodbye. I could not explain. I had no excuse. I could not face saying I will go forever, I will never come back to Taiwan - it broke my heart and made my spirit withered.

I looked forward to the long air trip. It would send me to another country, far away from all the troubles, far away from former friends who turned out to be hypocritical and false, far away from all the worries. I was flying to a new place to find peace of mind. I am very annoyed with all of them (my friends, husband). At that time, I was fed up with everything. Thank God, He gave me a way out - Canada. I am very lucky.

All day, I was afraid that something would prevent me from leaving. For example, I was afraid of someone stopping me from going to the airport. Maybe there would be some problem with my documents. I only felt safe once I was on the plane. Then I felt I really was on my way. I took my regrets with me and gave my blessing to him. I must leave forever. Tine Tine, forgive me.

It is two weeks later. I am thinking about how I loved and hated my country. There are many sad and bitter memories that I want to throw away from my brain forever. I really hope I will have a new life here and be reborn. I can use my new name - Lily, it means white, clean, pure - no stain. Nobody knows me in Canada. I can have a happy and simple life - just me and my remaining family.

It is a very big change in my life style. I do not have to work but I have to be a housewife. I don't know how to buy food or where to buy anything. I cannot speak much English, I cannot drive, I cannot touch people. But, I am not afraid. In Taiwan, I didn't know how to cook or how to wash clothes. Now I have lots of time to learn. In my country, I used to get up at 7:00, but now I get up at 5:00. I used to go to bed at 10, now I go to bed at 12.00. I cannot sleep well. There are so many things I need to learn.

In my country, I used to eat in restaurants. Now I won't, because it is too expensive. I used to take taxis, now I need to drive. I had a babysitter to take care of my baby in Taiwan but now I take care of them myself. It is a very hard job. Everything is difficult for me, but I like it. I can feel free, I can breathe, I can feel that I am far away from fear and bitterness and emotional pain. We are very happy in Canada. I feel I really have a new life. I will be just fine in the future. I just want to be happy and have an easy life from now on.

Lily, 15/9/99

My Life In The Last Two Years

My name is Jasvir Singh Dhillon. I'm 25 years old. I was an electrician in India. My life started changing in 1993. I got a visa for Dubai. My flight to Dubai was one day after Diwali but I couldn't go because my parents were insisting that I get married. My marriage was an arranged marriage. My wife Kulwinder was a Canadian landed immigrant. After two months she went back to Canada.

Then she sponsored me to come and live in Canada. I came to Canada on Dec. 5, 1994. When I left India, I was very sad. At first in Canada I was very nervous. I felt it was so cold in Canada. On my first day in Canada, I woke up early in the morning, then I looked out of the window and found that all the trees, ground and everything was white. It was the first snow of last year. I was amazed to see the whole scene, because I saw snow for the first time in my life.

After some days I started to search for a job. I got a job as a plumber's helper, but it didn't last very long. It was only 20 days. Then I tried to get another job. After one month, I got a job as a gardener's helper. I did this job for 3 months. Then my employer laid me off. It was the first time I have ever been laid off.

After this, I started working on farms. It was very hard work and the pay was nothing. I did this job for four months, then I started another job as a gardener's helper. Now I have been laid off for the second time. I decided to learn English before looking for another job.

Jasvir, 20/12/95

Why I Want To Stay

When I finished senior high school, I had two choices; one was staying in Taiwan, the other was coming here. First, my grandparents didn't permit me to come here. They said I must stay in Taiwan because they wanted me to live with them. Then, I thought about and planned my future. Finally, I told them I would come here. I wanted to be a secretary and they also wanted me to be a secretary. So I told them why I chose here. If I stayed in Taiwan, I would have to spend three or five years to finish college or university. And if I graduated from college or university in Taiwan, I wouldn't be able to speak English well. If I came here, I would just have to spend three or four years and then I would be able to speak well.

I have lived here about three months and I like it here. It is a nice place. But I will go back to work in Taiwan in about three or four years. I want to earn a lot of money. Then I will come back again and live here. Here it is cleaner, quieter than Taiwan. The public security is better than Taiwan. Here many things are better than in Taiwan. So I decided to stay and get married here. One day I hope my grandparents and aunt will also be here with me.

Sandy, 27/11/96

* * *

I am from Ukraine. I lived there for many years. But life there became more and more difficult. We had many unusual problems. In August 1996, we arrived in Canada. It's a beautiful country. There are many mountains, lakes and forests. The air is very clean and always fresh.

My children go to school. My little son has a babysitter. I go to college and my husband goes to work in the day and attends a course of English in the evening. We are finding our place in this country, in this life. We are beginning a new life in this blessed land. I don't worry about food for my children, because the government pays \$200 a month for each of my three children. The Government pays for the babysitter. The laws protect my family from unexpected bad luck. I really like Canada.

Luda, 27/11/96

Why I Will Stay

If anyone asks me 'do you like Canada', it is hard for me to know what to say. Sometime I like Canada but sometime I don't. I like the fact that Canada has fresh air, light traffic, beautiful sights and polite people. On the other hand, Canada has a completely different culture from my country.

One time I was sick and I didn't know where to go and what to do. I am a stranger in Canada. I have many things to learn and I don't yet have good English. I can't explain my meaning very clearly, especially when I talk to a doctor. There are such strange words to explain how I feel. I try to find a doctor who can speak Chinese. But it is far to where the Chinese doctor lives. It is a big problem for me. I am always scared when a member of my family is sick. We had a good doctor in Taiwan. I miss him especially when I am sick.

I miss Taiwan too. I miss many things I used to do in Taiwan. I lived there for about forty years. So many things were familiar to me. My parents and my brothers live in Taiwan. I miss them very much. Especially when I am in trouble. Many times I have to face troubles by myself. I have to protect my children in Canada. I hope my husband will come to Canada soon. It is easier if all members of the family face troubles together. I am lucky because my husband has the same thought.

I have a good husband, two good children and many good friends. And I always believe God is beside and around me. That is why I will stay in Canada. I want to have a good career in my life. I will try my best with all of my family. God has blessed me!

Julia, 27/11/96

Taipei

A lot of people like going to Taipei because it is the capital of Taiwan. I'm very proud of being born in Taipei.

I lived in Taipei for almost twenty years. I know everywhere to go there. Although Taipei is very crowded, it's still my favorite place. During the weekend, my whole family usually goes outside, for example, climbing mountains, jogging, picnics...etc. Actually, there are some nice places in Taipei. The public transit is very convenient. You don't need to drive a car by yourself because you can take the bus or skytrain. Buses are very convenient to go anywhere. The skytrain started to be used two years ago. You can take it to see many different areas of Taipei. But tickets are more expensive than in Canada.

The traffic problems are very serious in Taipei. People would rather take a bus or the skytrain to go anywhere. During the holidays or on sunny days, some famous places are always full of people. You can't find a parking space to park your car. For example, there is the famous hot spring near the Taipei Center. It's very crowded during the winter in Taipei. Some guides bring foreign visitors to the famous hot spring, especially Japanese visitors.

You can find some really lovely stores in Taipei. Also there are a lot of department stores. Trading and shopping are convenient. I really like where I was born and grew up. Although I am living in a beautiful country now, Taipei will always be my hometown and my favorite city. If you have a chance to visit Taipei, I can be your guide!
Judy, 24/8/99

Where Paradise and Hell Live Together

My country is the biggest in South America. It has a large number of people living there. Those people live in different conditions of life. It's the result of a social, economic and chaotic situation that has been sustained for a long time. The government doesn't try to help the population and it manipulates them for its own interests.

Starving people, who are unemployed or in very low-income jobs, are surviving under terrible conditions. Children without education are growing up on the streets, learning how to take care of themselves, selling their own bodies to get money to eat or asking for money to buy drugs. At the same time, rich people are enjoying their money, buying imported cars, speaking on cell telephones, living in nice houses, growing up with a high level of education, wondering whether to be doctors, knowing that all the doors are open for them.

These people live together, in the same area of the city. This situation is so natural for them, that it's part of their lives. It doesn't matter if they are rich or poor. They just close their eyes to the social problems, because they are accustomed to that cruel system that has been prevailing for many years. The law of interests will never be uprooted. It's amazing, but it's true. I used to be part of those people that lived in the deepest blindness. Actually, I am part of them.

Now, I can take off my mask and see how pathetic life is. I'd lived in my country under the guise of mediocrity. Everyone is a victim of his own mistakes. Everyone is guilty. Illusion never changes into something real, but the hopeless are the last ones to die ... We'll keep trying ... who knows, one day, we can win our "civil war"!

I'm thinking about my country, where the paradise and the hell live together ... I'm thinking about my loved homeland called Brazil.

Flavia, 8/9/99

Life In Punjab

I live in Punjab. Life in Punjab is easier than in other places. In Punjab people have many occupations. In Punjab, there are many farmers. In India and in Punjab most people live in villages. In Punjab, during the summer it is very hot, so people wear thin clothes. During winter, the temperature is cold. That's why people wear warm clothes. In Punjab farmers are very rich and laborers are poor.

In Punjab, farm laborers work from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 P.M. They do not get paid by the hour. The government reserves jobs for the lower classes. Many people have fish farms. They earn a lot of money by selling fish or frying the fish. Some people sell fruit and earn good money. All the time the roads and the streets are busy with people.

Cinema is part of our life. In India there aren't many adult movies. A censor can stop adult movies. When people go to parties, they wear pants and coats.

In Punjab, people work on the farms the whole year. There are many implements to plough the fields. People plough the fields with a tractor many times. Then they sow the seeds in the fields and irrigate the crops. People harvest the wheat with scythes (short tool with a curved blade). After, they bundle the wheat with ropes and they take it to the thrasher to turn it in to grains. People carry the grain to the market on trails.

People sow potatoes in the earth. They apply chemicals and spray the crops to save them from insects. At harvest time, people pick up the potatoes from the fields. Then they put these potatoes in sacks.

Jasminder, 3/6/98

My Favourite City

My favorite city is Ludhiana which is located in the Punjab. It is 95 km from my city. I did all of my shopping in Ludhiana because I could buy everything that I wanted there.

There are two million people living in Ludhiana, mostly Hindi and Punjabi people. I lived there for 3 years because when I finished Grade 10, I enrolled for admission in Grade 11 in Ludhiana. I did grades 11, 12 and also the first year of my B.A. in Ludhiana.

I lived there in a hostel. In Ludhiana, I knew many people. One time I met Priti Sapru, who is an actress in Punjabi pictures. I also liked the restaurants in Ludhiana. I like the Chawla Restaurant the best because whenever the warden of the hostel gave me permission to go to the Market, I always went to Chawla's Restaurant. In Ludhiana, shopping markets are outdoor markets. Whenever I wanted to buy some punjabi suits or any other thing, I went there by rickshaw. I found many new designs there because it is a really modern city.

The weather is very hot there in the summer. The best time of year to go is in December, January, February or March. These are the best months because they are not hot months. I really love Ludhiana very much.

RKG, 12/7/99

Chandigarh

Chandigarh is a very beautiful city. It is the Capital of Punjab. There are many Government buildings there. There is a very big University with a well known Language Institute. There is a big library and a big sports stadium. There are two big Gardens, the 'Rose Garden' and the 'Rock Garden'. They are very beautiful. There are many different flowers.

Chandigarh is near a very beautiful lake called 'Sukh-Na-Lake'. There are so many beautiful places. There are many big roads. There are about two bus stations from which you can get bus service to all the provinces. The High Court of Punjab is in Chandigarh. There are two Sikh Temples and a Hindu Temple also. In my opinion, Chandigarh is the most beautiful Capital of all the provinces in India.

Kamaljit, 7/99

My Village

In India, 80% people live in villages. Their main occupation is agriculture. I also belong to a village in Punjab (India). The villages in Punjab are very developed compared with the villages of the other parts of India. There is very little difference between a village and a town in our state. These days most villages have the same facilities as can be found in the towns. The atmosphere in a village is more peaceful than that of a town.

My village is a modern village. It is situated on a main road and also linked with the link roads. The electricity has also been supplied by the government for our domestic use. Buses, plying from one town to another town, pass through our village. Anyone who wants to bring some store items from a town can easily get a bus. Our religious Gurdawara and a Government Primary School are situated on the main road. There is a government co-operative society store which is also situated on the main road. From this co-operative society store, we draw manure on credit and can also buy clothes and some grocery items at the government fixed rates. There is one pond which is about 8 to 10 acres in diameter. It is always filled up with water by an electricity tubewell. The tubewell was installed by the village committee. In this pond the village committee puts fish for breeding and gives it on lease for a specific period to a person who wants to make fish trade his business. The sales proceeds are being used for the development of our village.

The main roads and alleys are made of bricks. There are cemented drains to drain out waste water of houses. All the houses are built with bricks and cement and there are no mud houses in our village. Our houses are well ventilated. We keep our animals in separate houses. There is an elected committee of our village which is usually elected for a period of five years. The committee is elected by the people on a voting system. Only people who are on the voting list of the village can vote. The elections of the village committee are always held under the supervision of

the government representative. The elected committee looks after the welfare of the peoples and further developments of the village. It is financed by the government and also makes use of the surplus land held in the village. The earnings from this land can also be used for the village development. The head of the committee is called "Sarpanch". He is also treated as the representative of the government. He can also take his own decisions for minor village cases. If there are any disputes, both parties are required to report their matter to the committee.

There are a few grocery shops in our village from where we can buy needed items. Since the Punjab state is situated in a plains area, there are no mountains near to my village. The earth of my village is very fertile. We take three crops from our fields in a year. My village is situated near Khanna Town which is the biggest Grain market not only in India but in Asia. The main crops of our area are wheat, sugarcane, rice, channa beans, maize, cotton, sunflowers, groundnuts and every type of vegetable.

The people are of middle class. In our village, the main populations are of Sikhs, two families are Hindu Brahmins and three families are Muslim Teli. Sikhs and Hindus are cremated, their dead bodies in one graveyard, whereas the Muslims bury their dead bodies in a separate graveyard. There is one small committee house in our village. There is a government dairy where one government representative collects milk from the peoples who want to sell their surplus milk. There is one resthouse which is called "Dharamsala". There is one Hindu Mandir which is just in front of my house. There is one playground where the children of the village assemble and play various games in the evening. The people of my village are peace loving and I will always remember them. May God let them live long.

Gurpal, 12/3/97

Major Problems In India

In my opinion, India is a good country, but the Indian government is bad. The famous national leader Nehru said, 'India is rich, but Indians are poor'. India can make progress by leaps and bounds, but Indians don't know how to make progress. There are a lot of burning questions like, population, pollution, and corruption. The government doesn't do their duty honestly. Nobody cares about cleanliness. Indians aren't interested in birth control. They think that kids are gifts from God, and God knows what is in store for us.

It is true that there is more progress than before, but it is still not what it should be. There is a lot of inflation. Some people are well to do, but others are dying of starvation. That's why most youngsters from India are interested in coming to developed countries like America, legally or illegally.

I am proud of my country. I hope my India will progress day by day.

Raman Deep, 25/3/98

Child Labor Problem

Today, I am writing about Indian problems. After freedom India faced so many problems like population, lack of education, unemployment and child labor problems. I want to discuss with you the child labor problem. In India it's a big problem. I'd like to point out that rich people in India are getting richer and poor peoples are getting poorer. In India the prices of the goods are day by day going higher and higher and the value of the Indian currency going down and down.

The poor people work very hard. They have unskilled manual jobs due to their lack of education. They have no extra money to send their children to schools. Now the government is starting to give some facilities to poor people but they do not understand because they are illiterate. I was always told that the younger generation would have no future because there are few jobs.

Everybody wants their child to study at a higher level but if parents have no money to send their child for higher studies, they have no other way. That's why, poor people do not believe in the education system. They think, why should we wait for a long time. Our children are able to earn money for us.

In my opinion, they are not thinking about their child's future. They are only thinking about money. India faces a population problem because poor people either don't know about birth control programs or they don't care - they have become apathetic because they don't see anything changing.

Aman, 28/3/00

Cultural Comparison Between India & Canada

INDIA	CANADA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rural, developing country • high level of manual labor – low level of automation • overpopulated • 80% of pop. live in villages • pollution problems • low wages • ‘piece work’ common • small consumption of meat • spicy food • buy food in different shops • people buy fresh food • no fixed prices • many people grow their own food • hot climate • boys make friends with boys, girls with girls • classrooms not mixed • school on Saturday (½ day) • low usage of phone • drop by without having to call • 20% of women have paid job • pay by cash • less/lower taxes • no property tax • no health insurance • no emergency number • mostly pay education • school uniforms • no student loans • houses made of bricks and cement • no dating • most people live together, e.g. extended family in 1 house • everyone inter-dependent • low rate of divorce • father head of family • grandparents/uncles/aunts have specific roles • car, fridge, stove, computer, VCR, etc. seen as luxuries • little adult education • opportunities tied to class/caste • religion very important to all • people have time for a social life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industrialized country • high level of automation – low level of manual labor • underpopulated • 80% of pop. live in cities • less pollution problems • high wages • ‘piece work’ unusual • large consumption of meat • bland food • buy food in Superstore • frozen food is very popular • fixed prices • few people grow their own food • cool/cold climate • friends can be girls or boys • classrooms mixed (boys & girls) • no school on Saturday • high usage of phone • call before visiting • majority of women have paid job • pay by check or debit/credit card • more/higher taxes • property tax • health insurance • 911 emergency number • mostly free education • no school uniforms (in public sys) • student loan system • houses made of wood • dating (from 16 up) • people live alone • everyone independent • high rate of separation/divorce • often mother head of family • usually relatives don’t have key roles • car, fridge, stove, computer, VCR, etc. seen as necessities • good adult education system • equal opportunities • religion unimportant to majority • no time for social life

What Is Life?

I often think about life. I want to know what it is. What is its nature, its shape and behaviour? But I could never get answers to these questions from anyone. One day I went out in search of life. I reached the busy corner of the city. All were doing their duties disappointedly. No face was with a smile. I talked to some people. They asked me if I wanted to know about life, I should go to big bungalows, five star hotels, clubs etc.

Life lived there is that of luxury, we are simply passing our time. Life is far away from us. We are overburdened by poverty, grief and miseries. I reached a five star hotel. It was so glorious. I felt day in time of night. There were millions of lights and people with costly dresses, looking happy. I went near them. There I came to know that they were acting for their social life. They were not as happy as they were looking. It was a part of their social life. They also had a lot of worries. It was a great shock to me when they told me that they had heard the question, 'what is life?' for the first time.

At last, I sat in a dark corner and looked inside my heart. I came to know that life is in our heart. Life is a 'Sangam' of happiness and sorrows. It is that 'Rose' which always grows with thorns. When our heart is full of love and joy we can say, 'Zindgi Ik Safar Hai Suhana.'

What Is Love?

If nobody loves you, be sure it is your own fault
The important business of your life is love
Lovers even run before the clock
Man loves little and often woman much and rarely
To say that you can love one person all your life
Is just like saying that one candle will
Continue burning as long as you live
Love is a golden bubble, full of dreams
I am not one of those
Who do not believe in love at first sight
But I believe in taking a second look
My first and last love is self-love

Lakhvir, 18/6/97

Black Friday

*Today Is Our Test Of English
All Students are in anguish
Some students are trembling with fear
They say to one another, "What should we do, dear?"
Some are planning to move
But once they hear the tone of teacher's speech
Back benchers are mostly in worry!*

*Oh dear, we have no breath to say sorry.
Some are writing on the palms of hands
Some are moving in seven lands
Half are present and half are absent
Those who are present are in self abasement
O God help us in every possible way*

*We shall remember you even on coming Saturday.
Back benchers call, 'O GOD, keep our brain set
Do not bring us on Teacher's hit list
This was our condition before the test'
Every student knows, I am not the best.*

A View About Life

*Life is a song of love, everyone sings it
Life is a big ocean, everyone crosses it
Life is a candle of light, everyone burns it
Life is also a shining star in the sky
Everyone shines like it
Life is full of flowers and thorns
Everybody experiences it*

Ashminder, 26/10/99

My Father, My Guide

My father is 47 years old. He is headmaster in a Government school in India, and the owner of our family business. He is also an artist. He has done hard work all his life. He paints many kinds of paintings. Usually he makes landscapes, because like me, he is interested in natural things. In paintings he always uses oil colors and water colors. He is a very good artist. When he paints, I always fix tea or coffee for him. My mother helps him, but she doesn't understand painting.

My father is a very kind person. He taught me painting. I remember when I was ninth years old, once I took a world level painting test, and my father helped me. I made a painting of an Indian mother in freedom. Then I won second prize. I was very happy. They called me to Delhi. I went to Delhi with my father. All the national winners went there. I lived there for two weeks. They showed us all the beautiful and most important places in Delhi. Our prime minister gave me second prize, a silver medal and one thousand rupees. My father was very happy to see me receive an award, and next day my picture was on T.V with the prime minister and other winners. That was an important day for me.

Before my marriage, my father was my main support. He is really generous. When I came to Canada, it was the second time I ever saw him crying. I miss him so much. He guides me in my painting. He is like my teacher. When I paint I always think of my dad. He always told me, "One day you will be a great artist."

Promila, 21/4/98

Grandfathers

My Grandfather's name was Crisanto and his wife's name Mercedes. They got married very young in one of the Provinces of Peru called Apurimac. They had 4 children and 18 grandchildren then 25 great-grandchildren - so far. My Grandparents went to the capital Lima after they gave away all their property in Apurimac to some family.

My Grandfather had been the owner of a big estate and many cows, horses, sheep, etc. He was in the military and he worked as the bodyguard of one President of Peru in the '60s. When he retired from his job, he started to spend a lot of time with his family and grandchildren. He often told us about his job, Peru's history and the cause of some problems in our Country.

My grandfather died a year ago at about the age of 90. Before he passed away, I was amazed at his mental lucidity and the fact that he could still talk about anything. There is something else that impressed me. In spite of his age, he was very strong and had a straight stance - his steps were stable. He died of cancer just one day before his

90th. birthday. When I heard the news, I felt very sad. I hadn't imagined him with this problem. My family told me it was terrible and he needed a lot of help.

I will always remember him with so much affection.

Karina, 27/10/99

* * * *

My grandfather is an extraordinary person. He is 86 years old. He was born in Pakistan and had one sister. He has been married for 70 years and has two daughters and three sons.

He has a total of 16 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. My grandfather has never worked a day in his life. He has inherited lots of property. Every year he spends six months in Canada and six months in Pakistan. He has been living in Canada for 20 years. He always takes care of his family in every way possible. For example, he has always helped with expenses such as marriages. About two months ago he took a trip to England to attend his nephew's wedding.

My grandfather promised me that he will buy me a car when I get my driver's license. I think that my grandfather is a very kind, caring, responsible person. I love him with all my heart. May he live long!

Pardeep, 29/7/98

Family History

This is my own family's history in the last 50-80 years. My family belongs to the Sikh religion. My grandfather was a farmer and his father was also a farmer. My grandfather has three brothers and two sisters. My grandfather was older than them. When my grandfather was 11 years old, his mother didn't have any sight so he had to do all the work in the house and care for his brothers, sisters and mother. He was an illiterate person. He helped his father on the farm. He had 25 acres of land.

When his brother and sister were young he helped them. He told us about his life. He got married at the age of 25. My grandmother was a really nice woman. She cared for her in-law's family and because of that, my grandfather had some free time. After some time, my grandfather's brother and sisters got married. They all lived in a joint family. When my grandfather was 45 years old, his mother died. He always missed his mother. He really loved his mother. When he told us about his mother, he always wept.

My grandmother has four sons and one daughter. They all loved their parents. My grandfather was a hard worker. When he was 50 years old, he went to Singapore. There he worked in the gold mines. After ten months or so, he got sick and had to return to Punjab.

My father completed 12th. grade. He was selected to an engineering group of the army. He joined the army in 1961. He was a hockey player in the army. He won many prizes. He fought in two wars between India and Pakistan, the first in 1963 and the second in 1965. My father returned home after two years in the 1965 war. He got married in 1963.

My mother is a housewife. She passed 10th. grade. She has a deep belief in God. She knows how to cook, sew and knit. She can sew all types of clothes. My father resigned his job in 1978. But now the Government is giving him a pension. When my father left the army, he lived separately from his brother because after his mother died, his brother started to hate my father. My father started up his own business, a poultry farm.

Then my father built a new house and my grandfather moved in with us. He died a few years ago, in 1994. I really miss him. My elder sister got married in 1993. She came to Canada in 1994. She became the sponsor for my husband and I. We came to Canada in Aug 1996.

Ramanjit, 16/4/97

Best Friend

Pardeep is my best friend. She is 24 years old. We have known each other since we were children. She is in India. She lives near my house. We were classmates. We passed tenth grade 6 years ago. She was very intelligent. Her family is very poor. She has two older brothers and one older sister.

After she passed the tenth grade, her parents thought about her marriage. After two years, they decided on her marriage. She has been married since 1994. Her husband is 42 years old. He is much older than her. He can't work and he can't drive. He can't do anything by himself. He depends on other people. He is unintelligent but he is very rich. He has a very big house. Now my friend has a lot of money but she is unhappy about her marriage. My friend always thinks about her life. I don't know why she agreed with her parents to get married. Her mother-in-law is very nice. She likes her mother-in-law. She has a son. Her son is one year old. His name is Jasdeep. She is very happy with her son. He is very cute.

Eight months ago her father died. He was a bus conductor and he used to drink too much alcohol. My friend was very upset at that time. She loved him so much. I saw her just before I left India. Since I have been in Canada, I have written to her many times and she has written back.

I miss my friend. I hope that God gives her a long life. I would love to visit my country. I want to see her again.

Amrit, 21/1/98

A New Life At 50

Every creature on earth loves its native land. I too love my native land. When I grew up and studied at school, I had a great desire to see new places and new things. I graduated in 1962. My family members wanted me to continue studying but I didn't hear their good advice. I was very eager to join the Indian Army. It was September 20th, 1963 when I joined the Army and that was the day when there was a total change in my free style of life. Discipline was strict. One had to obey the orders of one's seniors. New arrivals like me feel very awkward, as we weren't accustomed to keeping military discipline. Gradually I also came under the influence of military discipline. I learned a lot of good things and obtained great experience of life style due to having to serve with various classes and castes of the Indian society. I always did above average in my trade work and was also given appreciation by various officers for my excellent work. I was discharged from the army after 28 years of exemplary service. During my tenure of service I visited most parts of India. I took part in two operations with Pakistan.

After I was discharged from the Army, I worked in my fields. My daughter moved to Canada after her marriage. She applied for my immigration to the Canadian government. I got a visa from the Canadian government in June 1995. I moved from India with my family. We arrived at Vancouver airport on July 28th, 1995. Though it was the summer season, we came out from the plane feeling very cold compared to the India's summer season. After getting our papers checked out, the immigration officer affixed his stamp on our passports. We collected our luggage and came out of the airport. On the outside, we were greeted by my daughter and son-in-law and other relatives. She drove us to her house and served us with hot tea and snacks.

This has been a total change in our life. We are facing difficulties to understand the language of this country. I understand English quite well but I can't make correct sentences because of poor knowledge of grammar. I have to work hard to learn English. I am also facing great difficulties in finding a job. I have to learn driving. Teacher please give me your best advice. What should I do to take a course so that I may be able to make ends meet and pay my day to-day expenditures? Please help me Sir.

Gurpal, 5/3/97

Changes In My Life

There have been many changes in Canada during the last four months. I want to mention a couple of them here.

First of all, I became unemployed. I used to work at my company from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. I worked all the day with little break because I was a section chief and had much work to perform. Now, I do not have work to do except home affairs - buying goods at store with my wife, withdrawing money from bank, issuing checks, going to school to meet children's teachers, and so I am not so tired as I was. But, I cannot spend money as I did. I am looking for a work, job or study.

My weight has dropped about 3 kg. I used to be 64 kg for more than ten years. But, I have lost 3 kg in five months. Following the immigration process, moving here and settling was not easy. I have an appointment with Dr. Wang, in Surrey, at 10:00 tomorrow. I think I should eat more, relax and get loose as much as possible.

I have an opportunity to study English at least seven hours a day - five hours in school and two hours in home - and to meet wonderful teachers who will be models in my future. Given that my plan is to eventually return to Korea and be an English teacher myself, it is really a very nice opportunity. I could not dream of it in my home country. At best, I might have attended a two-hour English class after work.

Another change is that here in Canada, I have to drive a car. In Korea I used to ride a bicycle to get to work and use a bus or a train for any longer trip. My apartment was so close that it took just fifteen minutes by bicycle. I did not have enough experience to drive safely. I did not like to drive another person's car. My younger brother taught me several times and a friend from work taught me for a week. So, I am driving my car here with special care.

Recently, I have been thinking about the future. I am not sure whether to look for a job, or study engineering, or continue with my English studies. I met a counselor at Kwantlen College the day before yesterday and I will meet a counselor at BCIT next Monday afternoon. I am trying to get advice and information.

I am sure I will be happier here in Canada soon.

Se Hwan, 3/6/98

Burger King

I went to New Westminster last week because I was looking for a job. I dropped off my resume at many restaurant and coffee shops. After that I felt hungry. I wanted to eat some fries and have a drink so I went to Burger King. While I was there, I asked the manager, "are you hiring right now?" She said, "I am not sure but you're welcome to leave a resume."

The owner called me the next day. I felt so happy because I really wanted to work there. The owner asked to me, "would you like to work at Burger King? If so, then you have to take some training for a few days." So I decided to do the training.

My first day of training was very interesting. I was trained by an English lady. She was very nice. She told me everything about how to make and cook burgers. I was so interested and wanted to learn quickly.

Now I am working there and really enjoying it. There are so many customers from different countries. I know it is helping me improve my English.

Kulvir, 20/4/99

The Lucky Lottery Ticket

(a true story from Sri Lanka)

Henry was a hard worker. He was my neighbor. He was a poor man. He had three daughters and two sons. His wife died two years ago. His eldest daughter was sixteen years old, the others were under sixteen. The youngest son was only four years old.

Every day Henry went to the forest to cut trees with his axe and make firewood. Henry's daughter and son sold firewood beside the road. They couldn't get enough money. All the neighbors helped them every day. We gave them food, clothes, books and other things.

One day the lottery van passed near their house. Henry's youngest son was crying and begging his sister, "I want one". She gave him two rupees. He ran to the van and bought a scratch lottery ticket. After that he was happy. He ran back to his sister and scratched it in front of his sister. After his sister looked at it. She saw they had won 10,000,000 rupees. They came to our house and told that to my mom.

Then they were very happy. They opened a little grocery store in town. Their house is beautiful and large now. They spend their money carefully. They told us they think that luck was given to them by their dead mom. That family is doing well now. They are helping others now. Their life has changed incredibly, thanks to the lucky lottery ticket.

Shyama, 18/3/98

Dotting In The Dragon's Eyes (Chinese legend)

In China, during the southern Dynasties (420-589 AD), there was a man named Chang-Seng who was good at painting. His paintings were great, and if he drew people or plants or anything on paper, they looked exactly like the real thing.

Once he went to a temple for some fun. When the abbot of the temple asked him to paint a few paintings inside the temple, he painted four dragons on the wall. The dragons were painted so true-to-life that they seemed to float there. All the people in there complimented him. But the dragons had no eyes. Everyone asked him why? He replied, "if I put in the eyes, these dragons will come to life and fly away."

No one believed what he said and they all laughed at him for talking nonsense and trying to fool them. They persuaded him to change his mind so he lifted his brush and painted in the eyes of one of the dragons. Suddenly the sky became dark, thunder sounded and lightning crossed the sky. With a terrific crash, the dragon broke through the wall, its colors shimmering brightly. Soaring on colored clouds, it flew into the sky.

Everyone was completely dumbfounded by this strange event. Then they turned around and only saw three eyeless dragons still peacefully resting on the temple wall.

Teresa, 1/20/99

The Ant And The Cricket (A Folk Story from Brazil)

Long ago and far away, an ant used to work the whole summer. While the ant was working, the cricket was singing very loudly and happily. Every day and every night, the ant carried a lot of heavy leaves back and forth. While the ant was toiling away like this, the cricket was playing his guitar. Every day, while the ant was busy storing food inside his house, the cricket was dancing happily.

One day, the cricket asked the ant, "why don't you stop working? Let's sing and dance all summer!" But the ant was very angry with the cricket and said, "I need to work because the winter is coming." The cricket started to laugh out loud and kept on singing and dancing. Day by day, the ant kept working hard.

The winter came and the forest was colder than at any other time. The ant was very warm inside his house with his family. One day while they were eating, singing and dancing together, there was a knock at the door. It was the cricket. The ant was not surprised and asked, "what do you want here?" And then the cricket answered, "it's too cold outside, I'm hungry too. Could you give me something to eat, please?" The ant said, "wait a second and I'll bring you a delicious cake." The cricket was very happy and it thought, "what a stupid ant - he works hard all summer and now I get the benefits."

After a few minutes, the ant brought a cake for the cricket and said, "I hope you enjoy it!" The cricket was really starved and when he bit into the cake, there was nothing inside. The cake was made of snow! The cricket was very angry and knocked on the ant's door again. Then the ant said, "I hope you have learned your lesson: whoever has worked hard all summer is rewarded with a good winter."

Flavia, 24/8/99

Chang Er

(Chinese Folk Story – legend behind the annual Moon Festival)

A long time ago, there were ten suns in the sky. They always rose by turns in the sky. One day, one of the suns said to the other suns, "why don't we rise together?" The other suns agreed to that. Then there were ten suns which rose together in the sky. Several days passed. Many plants and grains were dying. Many rivers were going dry. At this time, a strong man appeared.

His name was How Yih. He was a marksman. When he saw this situation, he decided to shoot down the suns. He brought a bow and some arrows and climbed up a mountain. He drew his bow and released the arrow. In the wink of an eye, he shot down nine suns. When he went to shoot down the last one, he suddenly remembered that he had to keep one sun in the sky, or else there would be no light in the world. Then he went home.

The people deemed him to be a hero, so they supported him to be a leader. How Yih had a beautiful wife. Her name was Chang Er. Although How Yih was a hero, he wasn't a good husband. Chang Er wanted to leave him. One day, a person presented a magic medicine to How Yih. He told How Yih, "if you eat this, you will be a celestial being." How Yih was happy. Then he decided to eat it on his birthday.

Chang Er heard about his plan. She thought this would be a good way for her to escape him. On the night before How Yih's birthday, she ate the magic medicine furtively. After she ate it, she felt her body as light as a feather. Then she started flying through the air. As she flew through a window, her husband woke up and saw her. He tried to catch her, but it was too late. She flew higher and higher all the way to the moon. There was a beautiful palace on the moon. It was called "Guang Han Gong". She lived in the palace forever.

Hsiang-Min, 6/2/00

Note:

On the Moon Festival (on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month), when we eat the moon cake and look at the bright and clear full moon, we can't help to think of this myth.

Billee Shiar Ki Khala

('The cat is called Tiger's aunt' – a folk story from Pakistan)

Once upon a time, there was a jungle in which many kinds of animals were living. One day, while a Tiger was sitting under a tree, he saw a cat. That cat was sitting on a branch of the tree. Tiger did not know who she was.

He asked her, "Who are you?" She answered, "Oh! You don't know that I am your aunt." "O really," he said, "I am so pleased to hear that. Can I play with you?" Then they became friends. She taught him a lot of tricks like how to stalk and hunt and catch animals. There was only one trick she didn't tell him.

One day the Tiger was very hungry because he couldn't find anything to eat. He was mad with hunger. Meanwhile, he saw that his aunt, the Cat, was coming towards him. He felt very happy in his heart. He thought that she would be good to eat. So he waited for her to come near. The Cat was also very aware of the Tiger. She sat a little bit away from him. He said to her, "Dear aunt, come near. I want to talk to you." She said, "You can talk. I am paying attention to you from here very well. Go ahead."

The Tiger felt he was about to go crazy with hunger. He at once rushed toward her to attack her, but she was also very careful about this. She ran toward the nearest tree and climbed up it. Now he was very puzzled about this situation because she hadn't taught him how to climb a tree. Then he said, "why didn't you teach me to climb a tree?" The Cat replied, "if I taught you that, then I would be in your stomach right now."

Amna, 28/1/98

The Farmer And His Sons (A Folk Story from Taiwan)

A farmer had four sons. They never worked. They fought all the time. One day the farmer got really upset. He thought and thought and suddenly had a good idea. He gave everybody a stick of wood and told them to break it.

His four sons were surprised but did as he ordered. Then he gave each of them a big thick piece of wood. Again he told each one of them to break it. This time, however, not one of them could do it. Then he told them to take one piece between them and break it together. They had no problem.

Then the farmer told them. If you all work together like that, you boys can do anything you want.

Jen, 8/3/98

The Imaginary Story Of A House

When I looked at this house I could imagine many things about it. This house was built many years ago. I can imagine this is a happy house. From the picture I would think that this is a family house.

If this house could talk, then it would say that the people living here are all good people. They are nature loving because they have planted many plants in pots. One more thing about these plants is that they are all green. It means the people living in this house are caring. They feed the plants every day as a mother gives food to her children. If the house could talk, it would also tell about the people's love for animals. We can see a little cat is sitting in front of the door. Maybe the children who are living here love cats very much. The house could also tell us one more thing that the people living here are very disciplined. They respect each other's tasks.

Let's imagine that a loving mother named Maria and her husband John, along with their two children Ricky and Vicky, are living in this house. This is their own house. They got this house from their parents. In other words, we can also say this is their hereditary property.

Vicky, the son loves cats very much. The mother, Maria, never discourages the love of children for animals by shouting at him. She feels herself happy that her child loves that God made creatures. Ricky, the daughter loves cleaning. She always helps her mother in cleaning the house. Everyone helps mother to clean this house by taking off their shoes outside the door. The father, Jack, loves nature very much. He is always careful about the feeding and watering of plants. They don't have costly furniture and other costly things but they all are satisfied with what God gave them. They always spend some time to sit together, eat together and listen to each other. They have peace of mind.

If the house could talk, it would pray to God for the long life of those it protected. If it could talk, it would also say that it had feelings. Feelings to live long - not to be ruined by wars. It would wish for some help from God so that the present occupants could repair and paint it to make it look nice and attractive. May God fulfil the wishes of this house.

Daljit, 19/3/97



The Old House

An Egyptian architectural professor was surveying houses all around the world. He had been to Canada, India, Pakistan, Taiwan, China and Japan. He entered this old house in winter. He liked the scenery and the view around the house. He thought that the roof line was beautiful, the columns and beams were strong, and doors and windows were elegant. He went around the garden and took pictures again and again.

But he was worried about the low temperature in the house. He had seen many wooden doors and glass windows not paper ones.

He asked his Korean friend, a mechanical engineer, "How do you keep the house warm?" The friend explained, "We have a fire in a stove in the kitchen. Heat and flame passes through stone tunnels under the floor. It lasts all night, but it becomes cold at dawn. Then, the husband embraces his wife. They are very happy."

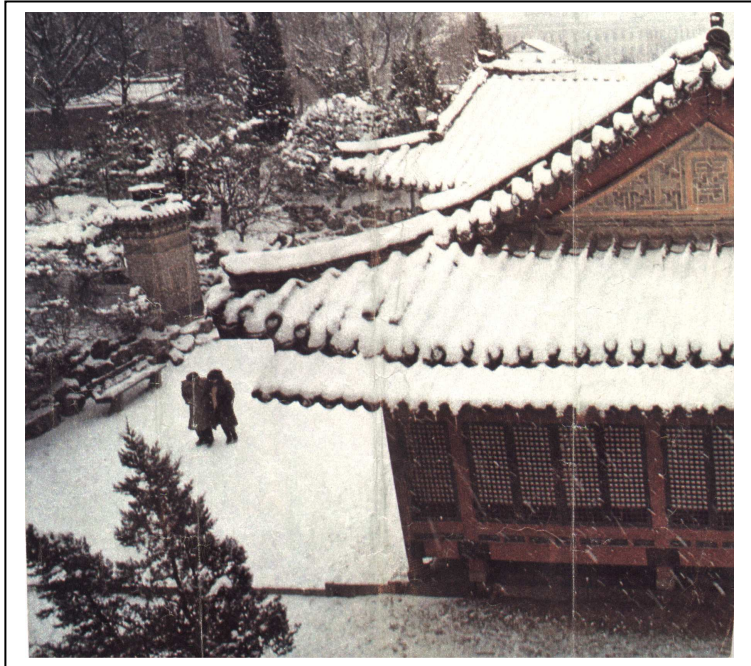
A long time ago, a rich married couple and their daughter lived in this house. They were very happy. They had sufficient resources in order to live well. However, they had a worry. They did not have a son. They did not know how to ensure the family's succession and inheritance of its properties.

After thinking about it, they decided to find a husband for their daughter. The man that they chose was very poor but wise. The daughter and her husband loved each other and very happy. They had ten sons and daughters.

In their will, the benevolent couple left their house neither to the oldest son nor to the others. They left it to all of them. Fortunately, the eldest son agreed with his parents. However it was against the common practice.

Since the house now belonged to the family as a whole, over time it became their meeting place. Not only seniors and adults but also juniors and children met there group by group and shared fond memories of their ancestors.

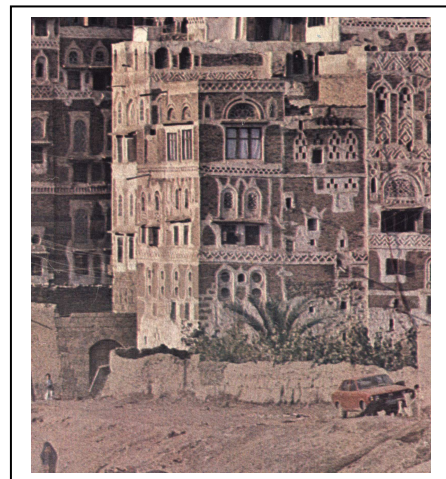
Se Hwan, 28/4/98



Home Alone

100 Years ago this home was a happy home. Its owner was a rich man. He was proud and selfish. He lived with his wife and daughter. He loved his daughter very much. His daughter's name was Nilophar. She was beautiful like an angel.

The left balcony's bedroom was Nilophar's bedroom. And on the right side was her father's bedroom. Every evening, she spent her time on the balcony watching people and the sights. One day when Nilophar was standing on the balcony, she saw a young man who was poor but looked very attractive. Love's golden arrow pierced her heart. Her cheeks went crimson. She gazed at him until he disappeared from her eyes.



The next day she was curious to see him again. She went outside hoping that she might see him again. "There he is," she said suddenly. She went close and held his arm. The young man's name was Ishan and he was so in love with her. One day, Nilophar's father heard about their relationship. He told her "this is no good. This young man is poor." But Nilophar didn't listen to him.

A few days later, Nilophar was standing on a balcony. When she saw Ishan, she felt happy and gave him a smile. But unfortunately her father noticed it. And he felt very angry. He went in living room and took a gun and shot Ishan. Nilophar felt shocked and took cyanide. When her father saw her daughter's dead body, he went mad. And her mother died a few days later. It was a tragic story. Now that house is standing alone and sad.

Gaganjit, 29/4/98

Our House In Ukraine

My wife and I decided to buy a flat in Odessa in 1993. We were ready to buy a house, plus we wanted to live separately from our parents. We bought a three roomed apartment in the center of the city. The flat was on the second floor. The house was a three floored building. The house was built in 1905 from limestone. The walls were 120 cm thick on the first floor to 60 cm on the third floor. The stairs had been designed by the first owners of this house. The ceilings was 330 cm high. The owner had to move to the USA. When we bought this flat we didn't tell anybody about it. It was a shock for our parents but we were happy.

It was a lot of work to fix it up. The house was solid but inside it was necessary to change the floors, water pipes and electricity lines. We laid down a wood parquet floor and a wood paneled ceiling in the kitchen. We installed strong wooden doors. It took seven months to complete all the work. In our bedroom, there was pink wallpaper with gray-pink furniture. In the living room, there was yellow and brown wallpaper with solid oak furniture and a brown leather sofa and pictures on the walls. Our son's room had white and brown wallpaper and pine furniture. On the ceiling were chandeliers made in Czechoslovakia.

There was a fragrant smell of wood inside the flat. All the windows looked out onto the yard but there was still enough sun. There were two other houses that stood near ours. Usually children played in the yard. We heard their laughter. We knew all our neighbors, our houses were open to each other.

Now, here in Canada, we are living in a two bedroom townhouse with two floors and a small yard. It is good but not so strong and we are not the owners.

We sold our apartment in Ukraine to a young family and we hoped that they'd be happy there. I wonder if they will move to another country too?

Oleg, 16/6/99

My Indian House

I am going to write about my Indian house. My house is in Apra, Distt-Jalandhar, state of Punjab and it belongs to India. I had a large house in India. For many years, we rented. Every month we paid 200 rupees which is only \$7 in Canadian money. In time, we built a house with bricks, steel, cement. In India at that time, those materials were cheap. When It was finished, our house had five bedrooms, two kitchens, two bathrooms, a living room, a family room, a prayer room and store.

In Canada, houses are more beautiful than Indian houses. I like Canadian houses because the roofs are sloping. Before I came here, my in-laws' family stayed in a rented house in Vancouver. Every month they gave \$500 for rent, in Indian rupees 15,000. Canadian houses are more expensive than Indian houses. Before I landed here, my in-law's-family bought a new house. In my house there are three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, a family room, a medium kitchen, a small store, and downstairs, two garages, and a big laundry room, and one basement. We live in the attic and rent out the basement.

In Canada the rooms are smaller than in our Indian house. In both houses I have a master bedroom. I like both bedrooms. Here it is colder than in India because of the climate. In India, I had a big garden, there were many flowers and vegetables. We always used to eat fresh vegetables. In my garden there were many kinds of vegetables, e.g. tomatoes, onions, green peppers, radishes, carrots, and cauliflower. I spent my free time in the garden with my sister. Here, in Canada, my father-in-law, mother-in-law and I like to work in my garden. But the problem here is that in the winter, we are not able to grow our garden. I miss my Indian house and garden very much.

Rajinder, 19/1/00

Yugoslavian Farmhouse

I would like to describe my house in Yugoslavia. That house is very special for me, because I spent my childhood there. The house is located in a quiet area far away from the city center. This is a farmer's house. There is a large front and back yard. The house is maybe fifty years old but it was restored. Fifteen years ago, all of the work was done by my father, and one man who helped him. Sometimes I helped to give him the bricks because a lot of bricks were needed. For me it didn't seem hard because I was happy to help him.

I knew that when we finished, I would have my own room. In my country, it is very special for someone to have their own room and for a house to have a bathroom. It took one year until everything was ready. After so much hard work, we all had a nice house with a two and half bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, bathroom and storage room. For a roof we used tiles to withstand the strong wind and cold winter. For a floor, he used concrete everywhere, and afterwards we put down a carpet. The last thing was to install a chimney in the roof. That was made with bricks. We heated the whole house with a stove and in the kitchen with a wood stove. With wood heating, we saved so much money.

My father bought this house 25 years ago. At that time, it was smaller than now. At that time, it was very cheap but now it is worth maybe \$32,000. In the front yard, we had a nice garden for flowers and vegetables. In the back yard we had a barn, pigsty, hen-house and kennel. There were a lot of animals.

Here in Canada, we are renting for \$500 every month. My new house here is smaller than my house at home. It has a nice back yard with grass and a little garden for vegetables. Here our house is not the same as in my country because here every house is built from wood. I have two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bathroom. Here houses are very expensive and now we aren't thinking about buying. I like my house very much.

Anna, 19/1/00

My Hungarian Grandpa

My grandpa was a very kind, cheerful, funny, loving man. He was a very good person. He was always doing something. I never saw him bored. He looked like a young man, because he was always joyful and lively.

He had a youthful constitution, gray hair that was a little bald at the back and brown eyes. He was tall, but not very tall. Sometimes, somebody would ask me if he was my father, and then I was very proud because he looked much younger than his age.

My grandpa liked my sister and me very much and we liked him very much too. We spent many times at my grandpa and he always played with us when we were kids. He made our swing, Ping-Pong table and other toys for us, and he taught us to ride a bicycle and many other things. He liked the garden, and we were in his garden many times.

He liked to make many things because he had many talents. He liked to play violin and to sing, he painted some pictures and he wrote some poems. He made many beautiful things from wrought-iron, for example frames of mirrors, tea-trolleys, shelves, lamps, etc. He had to learn this work, when he was 50. He had a very good job at a big company before the Second World War, but after the war, the state nationalized this company and somebody accused my grandpa of something. This man said that my grandpa is anti-state and my grandpa couldn't work in that job ever again. I think that man was jealous and envious.

My grandpa was in the war at the Don in Russia. There, many, many people died, but my grandpa's hand was wounded by a bullet before the big fight and he was put in hospital and he survived.

My grandpa was a very good man and I learned from him many good things and I loved him very much and I think about him many times.

Andrea, 12/1/00

Berry Picking

I came to Canada in 1993. Two years later, my parents arrived here. I thought my mom could look after my children very well. So, I decided to work. I applied for work at many places. But I couldn't find a job except on farms. It was really hard working on farms. My first job on the farm was with beer plants (hops). We worked for twenty days, 9 to 10 hours every day. Our work was to pick the plant from the earth and then tie it onto the rope. It was really hard to work so fast and bend over the whole day. Some times there was some kind of strong spray on the plants. If by mistake our hand touched our skin, it started burning and turned red.

After this job we did another hard job that was picking berries. I picked three kinds of berries - blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. For 11 to 12 hours, we picked berries. Because it was piece work, everyone tried to pick more and more. So did I. After berry picking we had a job of Ginseng picking. This is a kind of seed and it grows in the shape of a bunch. Every seed is red in color when it is fully ripe. It looks very beautiful. When Ginseng is planted, it stays for five years. One more interesting thing about Ginseng is that after five years in one place, the earth becomes infertile. Nothing can be grown. But it is important to grow Ginseng because it is very useful in many medicines like Tylenol. One more thing about Ginseng is that it could be grown only on hilly areas. It was really hard to travel for 8 hours and work for 8 hours. Every day we went to Cash Creek for Ginseng picking.

There are many other kinds of jobs on the farms but I did only these which I have described. My background is related to agriculture but in spite of this, I never realized that work on farms was so hard because we never go to work on farms in India. You have to be soil with soil if you want to earn money by working on farms.

Daljit, 2/4/97

* * * *

I came to Canada on July 12th. 1997. That summer I started working on farms picking berries. It was my job. It was not a steady job. It was only seasonal work. The thing I liked about this job was that we met other people and shared problems with each other. What I didn't like was that what you earned depended upon your speed. There was no hourly wage. If we picked 100 pounds of berries we got only \$26. This is not a good job.

Pardeep, 2/4/97

Unacceptable Working Conditions

(an open letter)

We are students of the LINC 3 class at Kwantlen College. Recently, we had a discussion about the conditions of being a farm worker. We would like to bring to your attention the following facts:

(1) **PAY:**

Workers get paid only 22c per pound of produce picked. So, for example, if someone picks 150 pounds in a day, that person's pay for the whole day will only be \$33. The contractor, on the other hand, gets 34 cents per pound, which comes to \$51 per day per person. In addition, another injustice is the fact that the contractor collects interest on the difference between his pay for 2 weeks (e.g. 14 days x \$51 = \$714) and

the worker's pay for 2 weeks (e.g. $14 \times \$33 = \462). In other words, the contractor is collecting interest (that varies between 19 - 25%) of \$252 per person every 2 weeks.

(2) **NO SAFETY / PROTECTION:**

If anybody gets hurt no one bothers about him. There have been so many examples in past years. A few months ago, a person was killed by a machine while he was picking potatoes. Some people have died in van accidents while they were going to work in the fields. Some people have died of thirst due to very hot weather and the lack of water supply.

(3) **FACILITIES:**

In some places there are no proper toilets, no water supply and no shelter. In summary, the working conditions for berry pickers in Surrey are intolerable. They must be improved.

Progress And Change In Indian Villages

India's villages are progressing day by day. Approximately 80% of the villages are getting rid of the old way of life, and they are adjusting to the modern way of life. A green revolution is taking place in production of food. People know how they can use electricity. Electric pumps bring water to fields. Tractors are taking the place of oxen in the richer part of the nation. Machinery is taking place of hand instruments. In some states, television and film are being used to teach the way of growing bigger anti-insect crops. The government comes to the villages and informs people about the latest advances in agricultural methods. After work, many farmers and families watch agriculture programs on T.V.

In India many villages are poor, because they have a lack of education and facilities. Some people don't have their own land so they are moving into the cities to look for work. There is overcrowding in cities. It has become very bad. Many people live on sidewalks because the Indian population is growing. Some people live in small rooms, slums and mud huts.

However, not everyone is poor in the cities, as many people live in comfortable houses. Their houses are something to marvel at - like palaces. They live a luxurious life. Their children's standard of living is higher than poor children. Rich people give everything to their children but poor parents can't afford large houses and cars. They just ride on two wheel scooters. They live a very simple life. These people belong to the middle class.

But whether they come from rich, poor or middle class families, children often enjoy the same things. They stand together around the monkey man when he comes to their neighborhood. His monkey dresses like a human and performs tricks while the children laugh. Poor and rich children laugh together.

Even adults stop to watch the snake charmer when he starts his show. He makes his snake sway to the shrill music of his pot bellied flute. Although snake charming is an ancient art, it is still a common sight on the streets of modern India.

Manvir, 3/4/96

28/10/98

Dear Sir,

I have been in Canada for fourteen months. The environment has lots of space, fresh air, trees and many natural parks. I like it here.

During this time, I observed something. I was very confused. Why is everything so very slow? Last summer my family arrived here. My daughter applied to Kwantlen College. She had some problems. First the admissions person was on vacation, nobody was replacing her, so my daughter just had to wait until she came back.

At that time, the admissions person gave her some information. She had to submit her high school results, certificate and TOEFL result. When the admissions person saw the documents, she said, "we don't accept the Math result, you need to take a test." My daughter was angry, then she tried to get other colleges (B.C.I.T and Douglas) to accept this result. They agreed to accept her Math results but told her that they needed to test her English. The waiting list for the test was long. She waited a long time before she had the test. She knew she needed to take ESL level 6. But she had missed the deadline. This meant that she needed to wait until next term.

At the time, she received notice from Kwantlen telling her to apply right away for the E.S.L. course but on the day that she called, the line was busy. By the time she got through, it was too late - the class was full. She went to the Admissions desk at the Surrey campus of Kwantlen and asked "what happened now!?" They answered "the old students get priority". When she heard that, she was really fed up, but she had no choice.

I was very confused. Why was the admissions person on vacation not replaced. Why was the position empty? Nobody could give us an answer, all they said was, "just wait until she comes back. The school accepts applications. Everyone has an equal chance. I don't feel it's fair. I hope you can see the problem and that you can improve the situation for students in the future,

Linda, 28/10/98

Letters To A Loved One

26/3/97

DONG DEAR!

I haven't seen you for ages. I haven't received a letter from you. This weekend I will spend all my time to write a letter to you.

I've been Canada for more than four months. The winter is over. The weather of spring is warmer than winter. I don't feel cold any more, and I can go out of the house to visit my relatives, or to buy some food. Now the time of night is also shorter than the day. The sun rises earlier and sets later. Everywhere the flowers are beginning to open. Spring is coming.

I usually get up at 6:30. After finishing breakfast, I go to school. My school is far from my house and I can't get there on foot. Sometimes my sister Huong picks me up, sometimes I have to catch a bus. School usually begins at 9:00 and ends at 3:00. It is not like our school in Vietnam. We have a lunch break here. My class has three teachers. They often change with each other. My teachers are very nice and help me enthusiastically. My classmates come from a lot of countries, although most are from India. Sometimes, they speak their private languages, I can't understand. Sometimes, they speak English so fast, I can't hear. I remember the first day that I came to class here, I felt so confused, but now it isn't a difficult problem for me any more. We can speak and help together.

I always respect my teachers. I love them so much, because they teach me everything, from how to change money, catch a bus, buy a coffee, use a pay phone etc., to guiding me to improve my knowledge about Society, Science, Education, etc. I like their classes, they have made a big impression on me. Many times, I want to make clear my thoughts and feelings but I can't because I don't have enough words or I don't know how to put them together.

My darling, although I am very happy during the time that I have been studying here, I think after I finish this course, I will have to find a job to have the opportunity to come back to our country to see you again. I always miss my relatives in Vietnam, my childhood friends, and the most important thing that makes me feel sad is that we are living far from each other.

What are you doing? Do you usually go to school in the morning? Where do you go on the weekend? Write a letter to tell me all about you! I always hope for a letter from you.

Everybody here is very well. My parents often remember you. Now I am living in Canada, I know English is the most important thing. If you are good at English you can go to College, University. You can improve your knowledge about Canada's civilization. You can have a good car and a beautiful house. But if you really want these things, you have to set your mind to it and work hard. I hope that after you leave our country, you will continue to

go to University. Two years or five years to reach our dream is not too long. Do you agree with me? There were a lot of nights I missed you, I couldn't go to sleep. I look forward to us having children. You should keep alive the hopes and dreams of our future and I hope I'll come back as soon as possible. I send my best wishes to your parents. I think about you all the time. I love you so much.

Love, Phuong

4/6/97

My Darling!

My course is going to end on June 13th, 1997. My sister, Huong, and my brother-in-law, Dung have applied for a job for me in a lot of places, but I have not heard from any place yet! I am looking for a job, I am worried about my future job a lot. At this time, I can't concentrate on anything. When I am in class my mind always wanders. When I go shopping I find it hard to know what I want to buy! Every night I always stay up late with a lot of my things. Many times I get up to go to the table. I wanted to write a letter to you, but I didn't. Sometimes I feel hope and wait for good news. For example: with a good job and good health, I could achieve something. But it has not been coming to me for more than a month yet! I feel sad a lot. So I haven't written a letter to you, because I never want you to be sad or worry about me either.

I'll tell you about my health result after I go to see a doctor. My kidney is good, my head is okay, too. But my left breast has a big problem. The first time the doctor guessed that it could be cancer. After the doctor checked. He gave me a referral and required me to go to a special hospital to have it checked again immediately. There another doctor used a syringe to draw some water from my breast. It hurt a lot, and I cried. Can you imagine about my mind at that time? My mind broke down, I had no job, no money, I was diseased. I only wanted to die. Many nights I went to sleep and I wished that I could keep lying in bed and never wake up anymore. I was despairing.

My Darling, at the time I felt the most hopeless, your picture appeared into my heart. Your love urged me to cheer up and so I went to school again. I went to North Vancouver on May 28th. with my father, my teacher and my classmates by sky-train.

Here I visited a market and harbor. When I was in the sea-bus I could see the whole of beautiful Vancouver city. It made a great impression on me. My Darling, that was the first time I went out without you, and that was an opportunity so that I could take some photographs with my class.

I passed my written driving test on May 16th. I am now practicing driving. My sister, Huong is teaching me. I am always afraid of having an accident and I am not yet confident.

The weather is turning to summer. The sun rises at 5 am, and sets at 10 pm. The temperature is around 8 - 15 degrees. Sometimes the temperature is around 27. The rain in Canada isn't as heavy as in Vietnam, but it lasts for a long time. The weather can vary a lot. For example, it can suddenly turn from cold to hot, sunny to rainy. I always take an umbrella. But my health is suitable for this weather. I can go anywhere by bus, sky- train, sea-bus, or car. I don't have headaches anymore. I can see the sights, observe the names of the streets, bus stops, companies, factories, schools, sky-scrapers, parking-lot, malls, shopping etc. It made me feel optimistic once more.

Last week, I applied for studying English at KEC school Vancouver. I'll have a test two and half months from now to place me at the right level. After that I must wait for the class to start. Now I must wait for a job, I must wait for English class to start, and I must wait for a long time to see you again, my darling. When you are reading my words, know that I've been crying a lot for a long time. I miss you all the time. I love you forever.

Love, Phuong

300 Years Celebration Of Khalsa Day

We celebrated three hundred years of the Khalsa Anniversary on the 3rd April, 1999. All Sikh people joined to celebrate Khalsa Day. On that day many Sikh people wore a blue or yellow uniform which is the special uniform for Khalsa. That day I felt so good as I celebrated Khalsa Day here in Canada.

All the Gurdawara's had been decorated for many days. The Khalsa Anniversary took place in Vancouver and Surrey. I went to the Surrey Gurdawara at 11 o'clock. I walked there from my home because the police had blocked some areas of the parade route.

The Nagar Kirtan was starting from the Gurdawara as I arrived. First of all, there were students from Khalsa school wearing white uniforms. They looked very nice. After them, five Sikhs wearing yellow uniforms rode on white horses. Behind them were white people playing in a pipe band. Then came the Guru Granth Sahib which was on a float which was decorated with different colors of flowers. Beside it, singers sang holy songs. There was many people who followed behind the Guru Granth Sahib. Some people ate food and some people drank something. There were so many people.

All Sikh people who live in Canada came together. I met many other people. On that day, the Sikh people looked like a brave and bold people. I felt proud of my religion.

Kulvir, 7/4/99

Women's Rights In Islam

When addressing non-Ahmadi friends on the topic of religion, the question of the rights of women always comes up. Even though most of our Ahmadi sisters know what rights Islam has bestowed on us women, I wish to explain to other sisters who are still confused on this topic about the respect we enjoy as Muslim women.

Arabs, at the time of the Holy Prophet's (pbuh) birth, were extremely paradoxical in the attitude towards women. Sexual permissiveness, the free mixing of men and women, drunkenness and dancing were the highlights of the Arab society. On the other hand, the birth of a girl was considered to be a matter of disgrace and extreme shame. Strangulation and burial alive of baby girls was common-place among Arabs who had high status in society. Stepmothers were not considered real mothers and there was no ban on a son marrying his stepmother upon his father's demise.

Mohammed, the prophet sent by God to reform mankind, established the due status and rights of women with such force that his own behavior is an example to all ages. Islam was the first religion to give rights of inheritance to women, to daughters and wives alike. Mothers were given such profound respect that the Holy Prophet said:

"Paradise lies under the feet of mother."

The Holy prophet was so careful concerning the sentiments of women that, on one occasion, as he was leading the prayers, he heard the cry of a child and concluded the service quickly, explaining thereafter as he heard the cry of a child, he imagined that the child's mother would be distressed and he had therefore concluded the service quickly so that the mother could go and attend to the needs of the child.

The status of women was raised to such standards that they could no longer be treated as helpless commodities. They were given an equal share in the affairs of life. They could now stand up to their husbands and speak their minds. They now had the right to divorce their husbands if they so pleased. Mohammad liberated women to be what they were created to be - treated as an equal, respected and regarded in high esteem. He gave the right to women to be the partner of one man and not of many as sexual vulgarity was the common practice of Arab society. He veiled the women so their honour and dignity could be protected .

The uninformed and superficial observer of Islam thinks it is a religion of the dark ages where women appear to be suppressed and her place is emphasized to be "at home". This is wrong. Muslim women were given their liberty and freedom fourteen years ago. In a society that claims to bestow equal rights and liberty upon its women, unwed mothers are common to find and feminine charms are on open display advertising everything from detergents to chocolates to cars. Prostitution is on the rise, not to mention drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, suicides and other horrors. It is a society seriously out of balance and gone astray. The role that women play in the Islamic social system is certainly not that of concubines in harems nor as prisoners behind the four walls of their homes - barred from progress and deprived of the light of knowledge.

Quite to the contrary, according to Islam, women must be emancipated from exploitation and playing a role of being instruments of pleasure .The holy prophet, under divine guidance, told women to cover themselves and not

to act in a manner so as not to call undue attention to themselves. Men were also advised to abstain not only from casting lustful eyes at women, but also to abstain from such visual and physical contacts as that may lead to uncontrollable temptation.

As far as staying at home and raising children is concerned, Islam points out the inevitable facts that it is only women who can give birth to children. They can go through nine months of nourishing and nurturing the seed of human generation, feed and nurse their infants and take due care of them. A mother's relationship with her children cannot be paralleled by a father. It is mainly because of this difference that Islam proposed different roles for men and women. A woman has the right to be kept free from the responsibility of earning the bread for the family. Yet, there is no reason why women should be prevented from playing their part in turning the wheel of economy if they so desire.

Dear readers, Islam has given us the kind of freedom that we cannot find in any other religion. We are free, respected and honored. Yet, we sometimes forget those basic rights and we want more and more of what the western world has to offer. Sometimes, it is hard to appreciate that we have more rights in our religion than we can ever wish for.

Amna, 18/1/98

Wanting A Job

I had no job in my country because I was a student. I wanted to finish my studies. I had my dreams about a good job. But unfortunately I got married while I was a student.

At the present time I have no job. I am studying at Kwantlen College in level 3. I want to continue my studies so that I can get a good job. After ESL class, I'll do a career training course. Last week I started a cashier's course. I am going to have to get a part-time job while I continue my studies.

I am lucky because I have a nice husband. He supports me all the time. He expects me to get a good job. My whole family wants to see me have a good job. Sometime I feel guilty but right now I am happy because I have a chance for my future.

Iqbal, 26/1/00

* * * *

Ten years ago, I was in the fifth grade. I was interested in painting. I wanted to be an artist and teacher. When I finish Grade 12, I wanted to teach about painting. In India, nobody is interested in students and their feelings. Many students who are interested in painting, are not encouraged by their teachers. They end up by changing their minds. On the other hand, my parents were always supportive. Many times, my parents told me that I should teach painting to other people.

I have many dreams. I want to design my own house and teach students about painting. I have always wanted to express my views in painting. I have always wanted to help poor students.

Now I am married, and I have only one choice. I want to do a computer job. I want my own office and my computer. Because I think in Canada a computer is necessary. Now I like computers, everybody depends on the computer.

Why don't I want to do painting? Because here in Canada, I saw many people who are artists. They are greedy. They use their painting for money or they draw bad paintings. That is not good for our future. Now painting is only my hobby. I want to draw natural things. Here I have many problems with paintings. I want colors, brushes and paper. One way or another, I have to paint. Painting is my life. I don't know if it is possible or not, but I want to do computer art.

Promila, 6/5/98

The Keg

I'm working at the Keg. I work four or five days a week. My bosses' names are Darren, John, Sharma and Lorne. They are very nice. I like to work at the Keg. The Keg is a very clean restaurant. We all work together as a team, even when we all came from different countries. I came to Canada on February 16th. 1998.

I started to work on May 14th. 1998. On my first day, I was very ashamed because it was my first time working with different people. I didn't have any experience before I started working as a dishwasher. But because I worked fast, my bosses were happy. After 3 or 4 months, they decided to give me training preparing salads and desserts. After another three months, they gave me further training as a cook. At first I was a short order cook. The waitresses gave me orders. I had about nine to ten minutes to have the food ready. I worked in a line with four or five other cooks. I have learned to make lots of different kinds of food, some in the oven and some in the fry pan and some made on the grill. Every project is hot and I have to be careful. They pay me \$ 7:50 an hour. I like to work at the Keg.

Virpal, 9/6/99

Subway

I have a job at Subway. I work there part time, sometime at night and sometimes in the day. Sometimes I work a double shift, when the other person can't come. My job is pretty good, because it's inside work.

I had an interview for a position as a Subway Cashier. I want to do the full time English class but my boss doesn't want to let me go, because he trained me. He was very patient with me. First I worked free for him but now he pays me minimum wage. Usually I work 40-50 hours a week.

Sometimes I feel so tired.

Surinder, 23/12/98

Stitches

I'm going to write about my job. Last year in May, a good friend of ours called Dorothy, invited as for supper. We are talking about my life here and she asked me what kind of skills I have. It was a nice question for me because I don't invite that kind of question. I know that it is very hard to find job and my answer was I know a lot about sewing. A week later she phoned me and started talking about a job.

We made an appointment at her place and she wrote a resume for me and she described a place that I might be able to get a job. Later I met the person that turned out to be my boss. She was a nice person and very friendly. She asked me how long I had worked and where.

Then I started with my story. I learned about sewing during the one and a half years that I was working in the factory in Yugoslavia. Even though this is not a very long time, I learned every kind of sewing and stitching - dresses, skirts, pants, pockets, etc. Then she told me that if I could get hold of two types of sewing machine, she could help me.

My husband and I decided to rent these machines. It was very expensive. Two weeks later, she gave me my first order work. The first work I did for her was very hard for me because I hadn't done this kind of work for a long time. It was a lady's shorts and blouse with short sleeves for summer time. When I finished, she saw my work, she told me that I could work for her. I was very happy about that. She told me what kind of work I would have to do. It was mostly uniforms for hospitals, hotels, and shops. It was hard at the beginning. When I sat down and started sewing, I felt I had forgotten everything. I would work until I was so tired I couldn't work anymore. Gradually, my speed started getting better.

Two months ago, we bought two machines. I am still working for this lady who helped me when I needed it. Now everything looks so much easier than before. The summer time is very busy and in the winter there is less work.

I like my job and I am happy because I can work at what I like.

Anna, 26/1/00

My Father Is A Farmer

My Father is a farmer in Punjab, India. He did this work from a young age. In that job he is boss. He has many helpers, although sometimes he does the work himself. He has a tractor. He ploughs his farms. He grows wheat, black beans, sunflowers and sugarcane. I helped him by looking after the workers. I went to our farm every day. We had buffaloes and an ox. He had to give them food four times a day. He had an ox and cart. He brought grass for the animals. He usually went to the farm in the early morning. He came back home at noon for lunch. He cared for his crops like a father towards his child. He gave them food at the proper time, even he gave them water on chilly nights.

He felt happy when the crops were ripe. Then he sold them. I really liked this job. I wanted to do this job but it was very hard. He did his job very well. Some other farmers grew different crops, e.g. rice, green beans, potatoes. They made good money. Agriculture is the main job of Indians, especially of Punjabi people. They earn their living from this job. It is a nice job. Sometimes if my father had a surplus, he would give free food to poor neighbors. It was a respectable job.

Gurdeep, 26/1/00

My Father Was A Plumber

My father was a plumber. Now he is in his sixties and he is retired. When he was young he owned a farm and his farm was in a village in the north of Iraq. He grew many types of vegetables, wheat, fruit and food for animals because his farm had cows, chickens, goats and sheep. My mother also helped my father on the farm. When I was a baby, I was sick so my parents had to take me to the doctor in another province. When we came back to the village, my parents found all our belongings had been put into a truck.

The government had ordered all the people to leave the village because of some problem in this area. My family moved to live in Baghdad. My father started doing work as a plumber with a French company.

In 1980 when the war began with Iran, all the foreign companies returned back to their countries. My father started doing work in new houses, building as a plumber. My father likes his job as a farmer more than a plumber. My parents are living in a big house and it has a big garden. They take care of this garden very much like a farm.

Janet, 12/10/99

Pawnbroker In Taiwan

From the time I was born, I lived with my grandfather in Taiwan. I didn't have any sister and brother. My grandfather was a pawnbroker. When I was a child, I played with the salesmen, accountants and servants. I didn't have any friends my own age.

In former years, if you owned a pawnshop, your family was isolated from the community. People regarded you as a bloodsucker or vampire. It is interesting, people hated you but at the same time, they really needed you. People were very hypocritical. When I took a walk with my grandfather on the street, they were always very respectful. They would say, "How are you, Master Gin, how are you, Miss Shu-I?" Even though I was very young, they were always very respectful.

I always stayed at the pawnshop. I sat behind the windscreen with the accounts, sometimes with my grandfather on his lap. Pawnshops in Taiwan are private, not public. You should know my grandfather is very rich. I saw people pawn gold, watches, diamond rings, necklaces, family heirlooms, suits, lighters, earrings and so on. They always haggled over the price. I knew the rules. There was about 40% discount, and they needed to pay interest higher than the bank interest rate. People needed money when a member of their family was sick, to pay school fees, to buy food, to settle gambling debts, or when there had been an accident.

I heard so many different stories, some beautiful but most sad. Some people didn't have a good education, so they could not get a good job. They didn't have much money and often they had many children to raise. It was impossible for them to get loans from the bank. Some people had failed in business.

Why did my grandfather work as a pawnbroker? I often wondered about this in my mind. These people were so poor. Why did grandfather make interest from them? I found the answer after my grandfather died. When I was 11, he died in his sleep, no pain, peaceful. His funeral was very grand. I saw many of his former clients. I was very surprised. Didn't they hate my grandfather?

When I was older, about 20, my mother got sick. I took over the family business and after a while I decided to close the shop. When I handled the goods, I found many broken watches, imitation jewelry, etc. I noted the names. Some of them were the same people I had seen at my grandfather's funeral. I talked to the accountant, who had worked in the pawnshop for 20 years. He said that my grandfather knew everything about these goods of little value, but he had given money for them because he wanted to help his fellow townsmen.

I had found the answer to my question. My grandfather was a kindhearted and generous man. Even ten years after he died, there were still people looking for me to return money that was owed – all because of their respect and appreciation of how my grandfather had helped them.

Lily, 4/6/99

Indian Army Officer

I am going to write about my Grandfather's job. My grandfather's name is Major Jarnail Singh Atwal. He lives in Punjab. He is 78 years old. My Grandfather was an Army officer. But now he is a retired military officer. He loved his job. He is very intelligent and has a wonderful personality.

He was a very hard worker and strict person when he was doing his military job. He lived with discipline and rules. That's why everybody gave him lots of respect. When he was a military officer, he was also a good player of grass Hockey. He has lots of pictures of those days. When he was going to play hockey in other countries, then lots of white people were taking his autograph. In my Indian village, all the people were a bit in awe of him.

Ruby, 14/10/98

My Grandmother

My grandmother's name is Yue-Mei Hu. She is an old woman. I love her very much. She is the greatest grandmother of the world. She is seventy-five years old. She doesn't look very tall. She is very thin and a little humpbacked, but her personality is very kind.

My grandmother had one daughter and four sons. My father is the second son. She always takes cares of her grandchildren. I am the oldest grandson, so she gave me special attention. I remember when I was a child, she lived with our family. Sometimes she took me on a bus to visit my grandfather or visited some temple to worship Buddha. If I was hungry, she would take me to "I-Mei" bakery to buy some snacks or bread.

When I studied in elementary school, whenever I got up late, she would always call a taxi or take a bus and drop me off at school. Every day, she always walked to my school to give me a steaming hot lunchbox. After school, she usually prepared some dessert for me. My grandmother knew about traditional Chinese medicine. She knew about a special plant. If you took it with some traditional Chinese medicine, you could cure your common cold. It was really effective.

Right now, my grandmother is really old. Her health has degenerated, especially her heart and lungs. Sometimes she cannot breath very well and my uncle must call an ambulance to send her to hospital to have emergency treatment.

I hope my grandmother will live long, and that I will always be able to show her a grandson's love and respect.

Brian, 22/4/98

How & Why The Sikh Religion Grew

These days lots of people are looking with malice at the Sikh religion. Soon Sikh persons won't want to know the meaning of the Sikh religion. More and more, Sikhs are leaving their own traditions. They don't try to know 'What is the Sikh religion?' and how it was created.

The word 'Sikh' means 'learner'. The Gurus said if any person does not want to learn about GOD, that person isn't a Sikh. A Sikh is a person who accepts patience, humility, kindness and platonic love and who rejects egoism, greed, passion, anger, lies and lust.

Sikh religion started with Guru Nanak Dev in the 14th century. At that time, Indian kings were cruel. They didn't have humility. They oppressed their people. Guru Nanak Dev improved people's conditions. Nanak gave them GOD's message.

Also, Guru Nanak went to Arabic countries and he gave people there GOD's message. When Guru Nanak arrived in Mecca, he lay down with his feet towards Mecca. Muslim people said to Nanak, 'you insulted our religious place'. Then Nanak said, "it doesn't matter which way my feet point because God is everywhere."

The Sikh religion isn't only for Punjabi people. Any country's people and any caste's people can come into the Sikh religion. In the Sikh religion there is equality for everybody. Guru Nanak created the Sikh religion for every person.

Sikhs' Gurus didn't write about their own lives. They wrote about GOD. They said, 'human's real home is in GOD's lap'.

So far, the Indian government has oppressed the Sikh religion. They have forgotten that time when Sikhs sacrificed themselves for the Hindu religion and its people.

Every page of Sikh history has been written with the blood of sacrifice.

Rajvir, 29/1/97

Story Of Punjab

Punjab is in the northwest corner of India. Although Punjab is smaller in land area than other states, it is highest in agriculture. Punjab produces lots of wheat, rice, maize, sugarcane, cotton and all kind of vegetables. In Punjab, eighty-five percent of the population depend on agriculture. Poultry, piggyeries, dairy and fish farming are very famous in Punjab.

Punjab has a big agricultural university in district Ludhiana. This agricultural university is the biggest university in India. This university produces new varieties of wheat, rice, maize and others crops. Punjab is the world record holder in wheat production per acre yield. Punjab has lots of vegetables and sends them to other states. The Punjab wheat production every year is about 135,000,000 tons. Punjab has been sending wheat to a central pool since 1972 but the farmers of the Punjab are not happy because the control of wheat and others crops is under the central government. Every year the price commission fixes the price. This is under the central government and the central government takes care of other states.

The farmers of Punjab disagree with the decision of the government. Sometimes it is a very difficult situation between farmers and the central government. I think that this is a kind of political pollution because there are only 13 M.P.'s from Punjab. On the other hand, the other states have greater representation. The wheat price per quintal in India is Rs, 575. This is equal to 25 Canadian dollars.

Now we can imagine the position of the Punjabi farmer. In the end, Punjab is the king of India without a doubt. The peoples of Punjab are richer than all others. The standard of living of Punjab's people is the highest in India. The education system of Punjab is not bad, when we compare it with the standard of the other states.

Gurbachan, 5/4/00

Love Thy Neighbour

I would like to talk about my friend. He is four years senior to me. He is medium height, just a little fat, with a soft red face, so he looks like an energetic man.

He is half bald, he wears a wool jacket which is made by a Vancouver Native Indian. Several times he has told my family it is very expensive cloth. He is a Christian, he enjoys drinking a little. I don't like drinking but it is no problem to chat with him. He has a pleasant mind and is so funny.

He was an old friend of mine about twenty years ago in my home country. At that time we were working at a middle size company. It was a very hard job but we understood and helped each other. On occasion, I got news about him but I did not see him after 1982. He immigrated eight years ago, and we lost touch with each other.

Last September, I received permission to come to Canada. Just before I came here, I got my friend's Canadian address from a mutual friend. When I arrived here one month ago, he and his wife came to see me at the airport. From that moment they have been very kind and have helped my family and I very much. I don't know anything about life around here. He planned my schedule and accompanied me to register my family's social and medical insurance, and helped me rent a house, buy a car, etc. He didn't expect anything from me in return.

Besides, he was very busy at the time I arrived. I know he got his lovely new grandson one month ago (this is the first child to be born to his father's family in seven generations, so you can imagine how happy they are!) He has invited his daughter-in-law's parents to come here to see their daughter and to do some sightseeing. He must be busy, but he is very eager to help me. He only says to me, "20 years ago, you gave me many things, so it's the least I can do." It reminds me of Christ's message, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself'. I am learning a good lesson from him in human life.

Jae, 12/1/00

Best Friend

Everyone has a friend ... a best friend. A best friend is like a God in which we can trust. A true friend always helps in trouble. I have a best friend. Her name is Seema. Now she is in India.

We've studied together for 12 years. We met each other in grade 3. We were very close to each other. We always went to school together and came back together. We ate and studied together. Every day we talked on phone. We were at the same level in our studies. We helped each other with study problems. We had lots of friends, but we were both very close. We enjoyed school & college life a lot. While we were studying in the B.A. program, she got married. She invited me to the wedding. I enjoyed it a lot.

After marriage, she left University. I continued my studies. I used to do my studies with her. It was very hard for me to study without her. I was studying when she had a baby boy. I was very glad to know this news. I went to see her baby boy. He's very sweet. We've met each other much less after her marriage. I continued my studies and got an M.A. degree in political science. After that, I got married. I invited her, but she couldn't come. She was sick. She was in the hospital. I felt very depressed. Now I'm in Canada and she is in India. I miss her. Last week I phoned India. My sister told me she has just had a baby girl. She misses me too. I'm very excited to see her baby. But I can't see her right now. When I go to India. I'll see here.

Friends are very necessary in everyone's life.

Sandeep, 30/7/99

My Old Teacher In Vietnam

('Spirit Engineers')

All of us have many memories of school life. Although I finished my studies in high school 14 years ago, whenever I recall them, I seem to relive my childhood. Now I'll tell you about one person who made a great impression on me.

By the time I studied in 10th. grade, I had many friends. We spent a lot of time playing and studying together. Our teacher was very strict and our monitor used to disturb us whenever we talked each other. We used to fool around rather than study hard, but our teacher responded to this by forcing us to listen to his lectures and finish all of our homework. Although we were never punished, we hated him a lot, even though we usually *did* pass all of our examinations.

One day, we wished that he would become ill, or his bicycle would not work or worse than that. To our utter shock, our wish came true! He had a serious accident and didn't come to class any more. We heard that he died soon after the accident. We felt awful and guilty. We regretted our wishes.

We paid a visit to his house. What a sight! It was a small cottage beside a dirty river that had so much rubbish in it. The floor was bare earth that would become muddy easily in the rainy season. The house had only a simple door and a window. It was built of leaves. Every room didn't separate privately. If you stood at the door, you could see everything inside. There was a simple table beside an old wool bed. All of our homework was on the table, some of it hadn't been given marks.

I looked at his picture that was held on the wattle and daub. Perhaps that was the first time I looked at him carefully. He was about 50 years old, his hair was gray with a wide forehead, his eyes were brown They were honest and open. He was a very strict person. I never saw him smile. Maybe a poor life made him become more austere and older than the persons who were the same age as him. He wore thick glasses, they were held on a straight nose. His complexion was sunburned.

That thing followed me all my school life and I always had regrets. He used to wear only a white shirt and black trousers. Although, they weren't new, they were always neat. In my country, teachers didn't make much money. Their life was very simple, but they never gave up teaching. In my opinion, God was not far from here, God was in the teacher's heart. They played an important role in our society. Although the teachers didn't contribute directly to society's welfare, their role was like a spirit engineer who educated future generations. If I could be some else, I would like to be a good teacher.

Kim, 12/3/97

The Seasons In Korea

There are four seasons in Korea.

The four seasons are spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Each season has very different weather.

The spring season is warm. It's very nice.

At this time, a lot of foreigners come to visit our country and

Many people go on picnics and hikes in the mountains.

The summer season is hot.

Occasionally, you can't breathe well.

It feels like you are in a sauna.

So a lot of people want to take their vacations during this time.

The most popular places are beaches and islands.

If you want to rest then you should avoid beaches and islands.

Also you can have a lot of rain.

During this time, if you want to go out somewhere, then

You have to have an umbrella.

The fall is cool.

The parks are very nice during this season because of the colors of the flowers And the red maples.

This view is especially beautiful.

The winter is cold.

There is extremely cold weather, such as snow storms and strong winds. Some people like to go skiing or ice fishing, but most of them stay home.

So, four seasons are clearly different and each season has a specific character. If you want to visit Korea, then you have to bring your clothes for each season.

Sora, 28/7/99

My Feelings

When I left my country I felt very sad. When I arrived in Canada, I was ecstatic. It was the first time I had been on a plane and also, after four years, I was going to meet my brother. Our trip was wonderful. It took fourteen hours from Fiji to Canada. My brother and my sister in law came to pick us up. When I got home, many people came to my brother's place, but I was shy because I didn't know some of them.

In Canada, when I ate the food, it was disgusting. Here most of the vegetables are packed in tins, but not in Fiji. In Fiji, people eat fresh vegetables.

We sometimes ring Fiji to talk to my brother and my sister. After talking to them, I get depressed and homesick. I really miss my brother and sister and the rest of my relatives and friends in Fiji. Recently, we phoned Fiji and I was upset when I heard my aunt had passed away, and also when I heard that people are having so many problems. In Fiji, some people don't have anything to eat.

When we went to Surrey Place Mall, I felt frustrated because the stores are different from Fiji. I was shocked and amazed to see the Skytrain. I stayed home for two months because I had to work at home. I was so bored.

After that, I started my schooling. Now I am happy and after this program, I will find a good job and then I will go back to Fiji for a visit.

Shabina, 7/8/98

Packing Herbs

I came to Canada in March, 1995. In my first year here I had lots of stress on my mind about the English language and about the job. My sister and I went every day to apply for a job. Then after four months, I got a job with in Five-B-Produce company. It is a herb packing company. When I got the job I was very happy. In this company, we packed many kinds of things, but mostly herbs and flowers. We also cut vegetables and pack them as salads. Five-B-Produce is not a good company. It is an Indian persons company. In the summer time, I had to work 12 or 13 hours every day. But the owner didn't give us any benefits like overtime and other medical benefits. She was very strict with the employees. The job itself was not very hard but the owner's behavior was not good.

After two years, I changed my job. The work was the same but the company was different. This company's name was International-Herb-Ltd. It also belongs to an Indian person. This company was not as big as the old company. But it has the same problems - no overtime and no other benefits. The job is the same - packing herbs and flowers. Some herbs smell very strong; for example the lemon grass.

Salwinder, 23/5/99

His Own Boss

Today I want to discuss my husband's job. My husband is a general insurance broker. He works as an independent agent with Bay City insurance services which has various locations spread all over the lower mainland. He sells all lines of insurance - auto, home, business and commercial Insurance. He works as a mobile agent offering free in-home services.

He sells auto insurance through ICBC and all other types of insurance companies such as Wawanesa, BCIC, CGU, etc. My husband has been working in this field for the last 8 years and he has developed a very good clientele base. He enjoys his work very much. His work allows him to meet with a variety of clients. He is also licensed as a senior enrollment officer with Heritage scholarship trust plan which sells registered education saving plan for children's higher education. He has been selling R.E.S.P.'s for the last six months and he enjoys this line of work as well. He earns good money. I like my husband's job because he has a flexible schedule and he can manage his own time according to his needs.

Asima, 26/1/00

The Worst Job I Ever Had

When I lived in Colombia, I worked in a company that made billboards and boats. I worked as an assistant to the director of personnel. I would organize the office and answer calls on the switchboard and I had to supervise three people who had to report to me about paying accounts and any other information. The salary was okay but the problem wasn't the salary, it was other things. The owner of the company would visit the office three times a month but when he visited the company, he was always angry and treated all the women employees badly.

Five times that I can remember, I personally had problems with him. For example, all messages had to be worded exactly as they had been received or he would swear at you. Other silly things were that he hated people snacking, or drinking pop during work time. Coffee breaks were exactly at their scheduled times. If you were busy at this time, you missed your break. He didn't like to see his employees pregnant. With one woman, he got angry and asked my supervisor to fire her.

One day he was angry with me. So I said to him, "please have some respect! You are always treating your employees in a bad manner. Just because you are the owner of the company, doesn't give you the right to treat us bad." Other people in the company were too scared to speak out at him. A few days later, I quit. I found another job that offered a better salary and better respect for the employees.

Alexandra, 28/1/98

My Jobs In Taiwan

In Taiwan, I had three different jobs. In the first job, I was an interpreter in the 'Science World' of Taipei city. When people visited the science exhibition, my duty was to explain what everything meant. I liked this job very much. The pay was small. So I just worked one year.

Then I changed my work to an electric appliance factory. In the 70's, Taiwan's economy was growing. Many foreign industrialists invested a lot of money to establish electric appliance factories. All products were exported to other nations from Taiwan. We couldn't buy these brands of product, even if we wanted to. We didn't even see them in our shops. In the factory, there were many production lines. Every line had 15-20 workers. My job was quality control of the product parts. I worked at this job for about 2 years. The factory was far from Taipei. I had to take bus and take train every day. I spent a lot of time to get to work.

The last job, I became an accountant. At university, I studied accounting and statistics. I didn't have any experience. In a chemistry company, I learned how to record deals, how to make a balance sheet, how to make income statements and how to declare income tax. I studied hard so I had a good performance record. When this company closed, the accounting chief introduced me to an insurance corporation. This corporation is very large. It had one head office and four sub companies. There I learned more things. At last I became an auditor. I had to go to the sub company once a month. I checked some data. This job was full of challenges. I like challenges so it was great.

I am just a housekeeper now. The past is passing away like clouds and mists. I have to start over again learning English because now Canada is my new home. There are so many things I must learn. I like it here except for winter.

Teresa, 11/25/98

Farmer At Heart

I am writing about my husband's job. He is a woodworker. He is the owner of his company. He leaves for work at 8.30 a.m. He comes back at 5.00. He makes railings and fireplace metals and after that, he installs these in new houses. If anybody wants work from him, they call him. He gives an estimate before he starts a new job. He gets the lumber from a hard wood company. Sometimes he goes to work in Abbotsford but his shop is in Surrey on 82nd. Ave. Sometimes he is overloaded, then he feels very exhausted. But at other times he is free. His work is a little hard because sometimes people don't pay him right away. They give the money after four or five months. That makes him very mad. He doesn't work for those people who do that. He likes his work but he wants to change his occupation because the wood dust is not good for him. He has an allergy.

Already he has another job. We have a farm in Oliver. Maybe next year we will go there. Oliver is a very nice and peaceful place. Our farm has many kinds of fruit like apples, cherries, peaches and gold plums. In the summer, it is a very busy time but in winter we have lots of free time. My husband likes farm work and I do too.

Manjeet, 26/1/00

Farmers In Punjab

There are many jobs and farm workers in India. But there are many people who don't have a job. Most people have their own business.

Farm workers work hard. In Punjab, they work from 8 am to 6 pm. My father owns a big farm - about 100 acres. He is a very hard worker. He is a very rich man and *sarpanch* (head man) of the village. He helps the poor people. He is a very kind person. He works with tractors and machinery. He has many employees. All the people respect him.

In Punjab, there are many farmers. They earn a lot of money by selling. Some people sell fruit and earn good money. My father sells his crops. He earns about five lakh or around \$19,000 (1 lakh = 100,000 rupees = \$3,800) in the six months. It is not unusual for a farmer to make as much as 800,000 rupees or over \$150,000 in the six month period.* But all things are more costly than in Canada. All the time the roads are busy with people.

In Punjab, farmers are very rich, and workers are poor. In Punjab, people work on the farms the whole year. There are many implements to plough the fields. People plough the fields with a tractor many times. Then they sow the seeds in the fields and irrigate the crops. People harvest the wheat with a short tool with a curved blade. After they bundle the wheat with ropes and they take it to the thrasher to turn it into grains. People carry the grain to the market in trailers.

People sow potatoes in the earth. They apply chemicals and spray the crops. When the potato crop is ready for harvesting. People plough the fields. People pick up the potatoes from the fields. Then they keep these potatoes outside in a store room until needed.

Ravinder, 3/6/98

* *this figure from Jasminder*

Job Situations: Korea And Canada

Canada is an advanced country. On the contrary, Korea is a developing country. It is inappropriate to compare Korea and Canada's job situation. On the other hand, it is worthwhile to compare Korea's wage structure, price levels, and working conditions with those of Canada for an understanding of each culture. Korea's minimum wage is 70% of Canada's one. But Korea's price levels are 120% of Canada's ones. Also, Korea's working conditions are not as good as Canada's ones.

When you consider the above mentioned, Canada is a better place to live than Korea. However, the unemployment rate in Canada is higher than in Korea. Canada has an unemployment rate of about 11% and that is

fairly steady. But in Korea, a few years ago, the rate was as low as 1 or 2%. Now, because of the economic crisis, it is higher, perhaps 7%. It is still much easier to find a job in Korea than in Canada. Korea will be a good country in which to live if it can overcome the economic crisis of this year.

Still, I want to live in Canada because in general I believe that it has a better environment.

Gidu, 25/11/98

Janitor

I am going to write about my job. I have work as a janitor in the Supreme Court at New Westminster. I work part time. I start at 5 o'clock in the evening and I finish at 10 p.m. This contract is with C.B.M. company. First, when I started this work, I didn't like it. Now it is OK.

But I will not be doing this job for much longer. I have got other work as an accountant. I like this work. This is very easy work. My accounting work is with papers such as bills, invoices, payroll, etc. I don't work with a computer. This work is near my house. I started the job one month ago. I work from 2.15 to 4.30, so it is not a big time commitment.

I really like my accounting job. But in Canada my life is very busy. In India I had studies but I was free for the rest of the time.

Sarbjit, 26/1/00

Insecurity

I was surprised at the report that many people are looking for a job in B.C. I used to think that Canada, including B.C. were stable and, of course, people in B.C. were stable in their lives. Now I am in Canada. I find that I am in a bad situation.

When I was in Korea, people who wanted to work and were qualified always had work. They were stable and satisfied. So was I.

I have three brothers and two sisters. They have jobs. One brother is an official in a city hall. He has worked there for about twenty years. He majored in civil engineering. He is involved in city planning. He is a section manager and very happy. The second brother is a director in a company managing construction equipment. He is working with the licensing, insurance, tax and compensation of this equipment. He likes it very much. My third brother is managing his own business, interior installation. He earns a lot of money and works hard. One of my brothers-in-law works with my first brother as an official in city hall, and the other works as an optician managing his own business. They are also happy.

All our friends have jobs, even though some involve hard physical labor and some are dangerous. Ten years ago, white collar jobs were better than blue collar, but now there is not a big difference between the two. As people know their abilities, they look for more appropriate jobs.

Most people work six days a week. Some work five days. Big and advanced companies are changing to five day work for their employees. We work eight hours a day. But sometimes, 2-3 times a week, we work 2-3 hours more. We have so much to do.

We were paid a lot. Generally speaking, half of the salary was spent in life and the other half was saved. Unfortunately, nowadays the Korean economy is not good.

Recently I have been thinking about my job. And I have found out that there is real opportunity for me to get a good job in Canada. The problem is just my language skills. All I have to do for 1-2 years is study English and get my Canadian license as a mechanical engineer. Then I will be able to get a good job. I believe it.

Se Hwan, 13/5/98

Extended Family

In India we mostly live in extended families. Grand-Parents, father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, cousins, all live together. My family is an extended family. My grand- parents, my father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, cousins live together. My father has two brothers. My father is younger than my uncle. I have one brother and one sister. I have 4 female cousins sister and 3 male cousins. My grand mother is elderly. She is 87 years old.

We have big houses and big farms. My father and my uncle own the farms. We have many servants in India. They are working in the farms. My uncle died 3 months ago. For three months my family has been very upset. My uncle was in charge of my house. My uncle is a very well-known personality. He was a mayor of village. He was a kind person. One of my 3 male cousins is in the army. He is a Major. He went back to India to help my father. The other two cousins live in America. My younger brother is studying in India. In India my life is very easy.

Now, I am married. My in-laws family is very nice. I have my own house. We are 4 members living in this house. My father in- law, mother in-law, my husband and I. My husband has a good job. He is a loan manager in Royal Bank. I am very happy with my husband. I hope I will get a good job.

Dashminder, 17/6/98

Foster Parents

Eighteen years ago, my mom had a baby girl for the second time. That baby girl was me. My sex was one of the reasons that my parents let me become my uncle and aunt's foster daughter for three years.

Chinese people think every family should have one or more boys to inherit the last name. Before I was born, my parents hoped that I would be a boy. But when I was born, my mom kept me in the home for months. As it happened, my aunt and uncle had two boys and no daughter. They wanted a girl, so they took me home. When I knew how to pronounce pa-pa and ma-ma, I used to call my uncle pa-pa and my aunt ma-ma, and they were just like my real parents in my little heart.

My uncle and aunt lived in country. There were many trees and few houses. I don't remember what my uncle's job was. I think he was a fisherman. We lived close to the ocean. I always remember my papa brought fish or seafood home, and he smelled bad. I was very happy to live with my foster parents, and everybody in the family really loved me. I have been told that I was a bit of a tyrant at home.

When I was three years old, my real parents wanted to take me back. I didn't call my real father 'papa' until my parents explained the situation to me. It took me almost a year to understand that the person I used to call 'papa' was in fact, my uncle. At that time, I was so confused and embarrassed. Fortunately, things got better as I got older. Sometimes if my uncle and my father sat together, I called both of them 'papa'.

Time went by. I got older and stopped called my uncle papa. When I was ten, my aunt had a new baby again, and it was a girl.

It is good to recollect all this. Sometimes I wonder if I still lived with my uncle and aunt, where would I be now?

Alice, 4/12/96

Wonderful Years

I started going to school when I was 5 years old. For us, it was a privilege to be in this school, because they had a long waiting list of girls even from other countries. We needed to keep very high marks. Otherwise we wouldn't get a place next year.

Besides the essential subjects, we had one hour of Religion everyday, one hour of 'behavior and health' twice a week, two hours for crafts and one for 'manners and behavior' each week, e.g. ways to wear our clothes in social activities, in church and out of school. Once a month we paid tribute to our National Symbols, too.

Those were really wonderful times for me, even when I have to recognize that sometimes I also really hated my school. Catholic schools in my country are quite good and they have been in Colombia for long time. Mine was called 'Colegio El Carmen Teresiano' de San Jose de Cucuta and the Community is Carmelitas Teresas de San Jose.

This school has a National reputation for its high academic level. They made us work really hard and also I learned lots of religion, moral values, social behavior and many more things. Half of our teachers were Nuns. I still remember the names of the strongest ones like: Sister Elvira (short but strong, with a no-smiley face), Sister Monserrat (nice but very strict), Sister Francesca (run away from her, she had 20 eyes, she was able to find all the bad things), Sister Lucy (too sweet to be there).

Every day after the mass we had to stand for 20 minutes at the coliseum and Sister Francesca came to check our uniforms, hair, nails, shoes and cleanliness in general. We were not allowed to wear short skirts. They had to be down to the knee and fully ironed. We could not wear any make-up or nail polish, or dye our hair because we were told that we went there to learn and study, not to participate in a fashion show. Polished shoes and white socks were very important as well. She also checked our marks, and depending on those, she allowed us to be part of the basketball, volleyball and tennis teams. We also had a musical band and scout girls association and some other groups.

I can honestly say that this was the best time of my life and that if I could turn the clock back, I'd be glad and grateful to go there again. My school is still in my town and many parents and girls respect this place.

Sandra, 23/6/00

My Favorite Teacher In Taiwan

I had a wonderful teacher when I was in junior high school. This teacher was different than other teachers. She knew how to help students and let them have fun when they were learning. She knew what was best for students. Sometimes when we were learning it was boring but this teacher could make it fun and interesting for us. We never had heavy homework because she thought that the whole personality was more important than just working all the time. She liked to chat with us and so she knew if we had any problems with anything or not. She was also a pretty teacher.

I still remember something that happened in 1962. At that time, I didn't do anything at home. The teacher used to tell us, "you ought to help your Moms." One day the teacher announced in class "next Saturday after school, I will invite you to come my home to eat dinner." All the students were excited. That day, more than twenty students went to the teacher's home.

We felt very relaxed there. The teacher prepared a bag of flour. She called us to divide into four groups. She gave every group some flour. She taught us how to make dumplings from dough. She taught very clearly. So we learned how to make dumplings and how to cook it. The dinner was dumplings. We were happy because we had made them by ourselves. From then on, some students always went to the teacher's home on Saturday afternoon. The teacher taught us many things. Especially how to be a good student and a useful person.

That's my teacher when I was in grade eight and nine. I still remember what she did for us and how she cared so much. She was a special teacher and taught us in a different way. She was a Chinese literature teacher. The teacher's name was Jiang Pei Li. I really thank her for what she did. The most important thing is how to be a good person and take care of others. I will always remember her.

Teresa, 21/10/98

Catholic Wedding in Taiwan

In Taiwan, usually there is a simple engagement ceremony before the marriage. During this ceremony, two families and some relatives eat lunch together at a restaurant. Sometimes in the country, the engagement ceremony is very luxurious. These expenses are paid for by the girl's family. The boy and girl exchange their engagement ring. After a ceremony they become fiancé and fiancée. According to Taiwanese customs, they can live together but they have to marry within one year.

About the wedding, there are three patterns in Taiwan. You can go to a local court for a notary, or go to church as a religion form, or go to a party in a hotel or a restaurant as a traditional form. Anyway, the base local law the effective marriage must be an open public party and two witnesses sign the certificate of marriage. Then they have to make a marriage registration in the municipal office in six months.

My wedding party was held in Taipei city on Feb. 15, 1975. On that day, I got up early in the morning and took several hours at a beauty saloon for putting on make up and dressing. The wedding ceremony was in a catholic church at 4:00 p.m. and the party was in the Taipei Hilton at 7:00 p.m.. We invited about fifty guests to take part in the ceremony and about one hundred guests attended the buffet party in the evening. After the party, we invited ten persons to play majang in our home. This is a traditional game after the party in Taiwan. Sometimes young people like to go the bride and groom's home to make fun until the newly-wed couple beg them to leave.

Yea! that was a nice memory.

Teresa, 11/4/98

The Rich Man

Once there was a rich man. His name was Ram. He had lot of money. He was a businessman. His wife had died in an accident. He had a big and beautiful house. He had a daughter. Her name was Reena. He loved his daughter. He thought, "I can give happiness to my daughter with money. I can do anything with money." He believed in money. He had many servants for his daughter, but she always felt alone because his father had no time for her. He was busy in his business. She wasn't happy with money.

While she was studying in College, one day she met a handsome boy. His name was Shashi. They were immediately attracted to each other. Shashi was very intelligent and nice but he was poor. Even though Shashi was determined to get a good job after his studies, he thought to himself, 'Reena belongs to a rich family. She will never come into my life.'

But the girl had confidence that her father would like her choice because she knew how much her father loved her. When her father heard the news, he was very angry. He wanted a rich boy for her daughter. He thought, 'I know that she will only be really happy with a rich boy.' Reena didn't want her father to be sad, but she was deeply in love with Shashi. She felt torn. She knew her father would never allow marriage with a poor person.

Eventually she decided 'my father loves money more than me.' She decided to leave her father's home. The rich man was very sad because his daughter had left. As the days passed and he was alone in the house, he missed his daughter. Finally he realized that you cannot buy happiness with money. It was then that he wanted his daughter and her husband to come back to his house

Palwinder, 27/1/99.

My Schools In Croatia

The children go to kindergarten or to their grandparents because the parents are usually working. At around the age of 6 or 7 they start at elementary school. After 4 years of elementary school, they go to High School. They take more subjects like geography, chemistry, physics, etc. High school is compulsory but College is optional. At College, there is a choice of 3 or 4 years.

I would now like to talk about my own experiences. I started to go to school when I was 6 years old. I can remember now how excited I was by my first day of school. My first teacher was a lady. Her name was Abida Tersic. I liked her from the first day on. She was strict, but all the class loved her, because she had a nice appearance. She was my teacher for four years.

My best friend in the class then was Leonardo Boskic. At the school we had a lot of ceremonies like 'Day of the Republic' etc. At that time my friend Leonardo and me were taking actor courses at the school. Whenever there was a ceremony at school we would fool around. Those times were very funny. Most of the time I got very good marks at the school. Sometimes when I got bad marks, my teacher Abida used to tell me, "What's the matter with you, Kruno," I know you can do better."

I finished my elementary School in June 1986 with mark 4. It was a good success but not the best, because the best would be mark 5. I must confess when I was going to elementary School I liked to play a lot with girls. And in my neighborhood were mostly girls.

In September 1986 I was just 10 years old when I started to go to High School. The High School was located in the same building as the Elementary School, but was on the second floor. My class was divided into different classes, or levels. My best friend Leonardo had got class number B, and I had got C. But in the break we were mostly together with other new friends. My new 'home-room' teacher was Mladen Soldo. His subject was history. At High School we had a different teacher for every subject. Mladen was nice and we always used to say that he was the best teacher of all classes.

Those times at school were really the funniest in my life. Of course I had bad times too, like quarreling with other children, or getting bad marks in mathematics. But mostly I have great memories.

When I look back at my school memories, I know that those times were the best of my life. Sometimes I wish I could turn back the times.

Kruno, 2/12/98

Education In Korea

The Korean educational system is similar to Canada's system. Still, in teaching methods and students' studying attitudes, it has fallen behind Canada's one.

Korean society is well known as an academic clique. Therefore, In Korea, if someone wants to succeed in their life, They should enter a noted university. The elites who are occupying the highest level of Korean society are graduates from Seoul University, Korea University and Yunse University. So, all parents really want their children to be entered in these universities. Therefore, in Korea, from elementary school onwards, the students must compete to get extremely good scores. So, Korean students have to take a heavy burden of studying, from the age of 10 on.

Canadian students seem to enjoy their school life until high school. Still, they have to study hard in university to graduate. On the contrary, Korean students have to study hard to enter noted university. But they don't have to study so hard once they are at their universities because it is easy to graduate in Korea's universities.

Korean parents must spend a lot of money for their children's education. There was sensational news in Korea two months ago. It is that about 200 rich parents paid 25,000 dollars monthly tuition fee to tutors who would work one to one. Nowadays, the matter of education are getting to be a big social issue in Korea.

So, I think Korean educational system is in an abnormal state. I hope it will get back to a normal state as soon as possible.

Gidu, 1/11/98

Problems In The Educational System Of Brazil

The educational system in Brazil is discussed a lot in many Congresses and Conferences. There are many problems that have to be solved. The principal problem is the very high drop out rate. Why do children drop out of schools? Statistical research shows us that many children fail their grades and have to repeat their year. There are two main reason why they fail: hunger and childhood work. Another grave problem is that many teachers have not been properly trained, principally in poor regions. It doesn't help that all teachers in Brazil get a bad salary.

The government created a program to stimulate children to study that is called: "Every child at school." This program tries to find solutions to those problems. The first measure that this program took, was to give one minimum salary for families that have children who were not studying. With this money, parents could buy food and children didn't have to work. Another measure was to increase courses for teachers that are experienced but don't have proper training.

The teachers have to have better salaries, because they need incentive to work. Many teachers have to work in different schools to increase their income. That's why there are a lot of strikes. In addition, the government program of financial subsidies to poor families hasn't worked; first of all, this is not a big program and despite the money, children keep working and asking for money in the streets. However, the government is trying to find the best solutions.

The Government is studying ways to help the educational system in Brazil, but they have to do it fast, because education is progress and progress is built by education. When I was studying to be a teacher, I had many dreams to change the educational system. I thought that I could fight for better salaries and better conditions of work. I was just seventeen years old!

I started to work in a private school. There, I could not express my opinions very clearly. The director wasn't a teacher and didn't have any training to administrate a school, but I had no choice. To find job in Brazil was difficult and I didn't have any experience so I needed that job. I had a Practicum teacher who taught me Teaching Methodology, and she told me that I could do anything that I wanted when I close my class's door. So, that's what I did. I taught with my methodology and my ideologies. I was very happy because my work was doing very well and the director was very happy with my job too. But the salary was not good. I taught just for pleasure and loved my profession.

I filled the forms to do tests to work in public schools but I didn't do those because I came to Canada. The salary is worse than private schools, but you can work with more freedom. I was also doing Economics at University at the time, and I was a student assistant in one discipline that is called 'Econometrics'. I played with the idea teaching Economics at the University in the future. Maybe one day University teachers have more power to fight with the government about educational problems.

I know that I am not one in a million, because there are many teachers that think like me. They want to change the rules and make a better country, but educational problems are not the only ones: health, economics ... it's very complex ...

Brazil will be 500 years old next year, and it's time to evolve. We have to make real the words that our flag carries: "Progress and order." Only in this way we can have a good country with the same rights for everyone.

Flávia, 7/7/99

Some Observations From 2 Taiwanese Mothers

There are many differences between our country's schools and Canadian schools. Here students study for free whereas in Taiwan they don't. In my country schools have more discipline than in Canadian schools. In the Canadian classroom, every student talks to each other. In my country students must be silent. Teachers are very strict. They give a lot of homework.

In my country, students don't play any games and don't watch any movies in the class. If you want to leave the class, you have to ask the teacher. Students' bags are very heavy because there are a lot of books in them. When the teacher comes into class, every student stands up and says, "Good morning".

But I like Canadian education because children can learn many things, for example, computers, drawing, skating, skiing and many other things.

Jen, 3/2/98

* * * *

The Chinese tradition is that a scholar should be familiar with the literary and martial. I don't agree with this. A person can't know everything in his life. How many years can a person live in the world? Maybe 50 to 100 years. Besides one person has to eat and sleep. We don't have much time for work. If a person can live with something that he likes, all his life is happy. No one needs to know everything - even if they are a teacher.

If we keep on learning through our experiences, that's good enough. Try to do everything, well but don't push yourself too much. I don't think working is the most important in my life. Being happy is the more important.

My mother used to want me get 'A' grades. She thought that was the duty of a student. I used to study hard to reach her goal. She was proud of me when I was a child, but I was unhappy. Now I am a mother, I don't want the same thing to happen to my children. I am happy as long as my children are doing their best. It doesn't mean they must get the best grade. To get the best needs chance and luck.

Julia, 13/11/96

Education in China

In China, when we go to daycare, we must be 3 years old. Before that, usually a retired grandfather or grandmother cares for the infants at home.

In China, kindergarten and daycare are together. When we are 7 years old, we can go to elementary school to study for 6 years. Then we go to middle school for 3 years. At this time we have 12 kinds of subjects: Chinese, math, physics, Chemistry, politics, music, sports, art, biology, history, geography and English. Everyone works hard, because we need to pass through four extremely difficult tests. There is a lot of competition. Only 60-70% students get into college or university. Of the other 30-40%, some students continue to study so that they can retake the test next year. Others find a job or get into 2-3 years vocational training. However, if you study medicine, you need to study for 5-7 years. Someone who finishes a College or University course can continue to study to get their masters or Ph.D degree.

When I was in middle and high school, every day my classmates and I walked to and from school. We seldom went to a movie. In the summer and winter holiday, we needed to finish a huge amount of homework. Sometimes we went shopping or reviewed lessons together. In middle and high school, boys and girls are not allowed to talk to each other, so I never knew what boys did when they were together. Girls just talked about the future and read a lot of books, from eastern to western, classic, modern, and make a dream. We didn't talk TO men, but we talked ABOUT them!

Before we could live in our dreams. But now, we have entered a life of reality - the life of a grownup. Life was simpler before!

Geling, 2/12/98

Opinions About Education

In India, our education stresses theory and pays less attention to the practical work. I think the system of education in my country is not so good. They have to give more attention towards practical study. That makes a man creative. Now, educated people are thinking about this theory in my country. After some time, they will change the pattern of study.

To get a job in my country is easier than in Canada. If you have good qualifications, you will get a job easily. There are some jobs in my country which need experience. Most jobs don't. In Canada, it is not easy to find a job. You have to do volunteer work and have some experience to get a good a job. There are few jobs which need no experience.

There is a loan system in Canada. The government gives loans to students who are qualified. There is no loan system in my country. The government gives some money to lower class people. They have to pay lower fees than other students. 35% of the jobs are reserved for the lower class. The middle and upper classes have to face great competition to get a good job. But in Canada, the situation is totally different. There are no reserved jobs. To get a good job, you need special qualities. You should be honest and interested in your work. You should have a good attitude. You might have to do some volunteer work to get a good job. Your speaking and listening must be good and you should have good health too. If you have the above qualities, you can get a good job easily.

Harpreet, 20/5/98

* * * *

'Teacher' is a short name but its meaning is big. A teacher is that person who makes the future of anybody. Lots of students learn from him. He makes them into doctors, engineers, Prime Ministers, pilots etc. In other words, he is the engineer of humans. He gives them a lot of support. Without his support, students can't achieve their goals.

This is a respected job. In the past, Indian people gave him the name Guru. Guru means a teacher of religious practices that produces peace of mind. But at this time teachers are not so valued.

Rich students don't obey them. If a teacher gets strict with them, their rich fathers change them to other schools. When the exam days start, they give money to the teachers to pass their children. Many teachers do not do that. An honest teacher thinks that if he sells degrees, then the country's future will be finished.

There are a lot of differences between Indian and Canadian teachers. In India, the schools are the property of the rich people. The Government schools are under the control of rich people. The rich people put the pressure on teachers to promote their children. But in Canada, nobody can force the teachers. Nobody can give them money to pass their children because it is against the law.

The Indian Government made several policies to make education better. But day by day the education system in getting worse. In Canada, a teacher's job is a good job. Here people live the same. Nobody is rich and poor.

Mandeep, 5/6/96

2 Views Of Education In Canada

#1

The Canadian system of education is very good. In Canada (unlike my country, India) the government spends a lot of money on education. The education boards take care of students, teachers and others. In Canada, all teachers are well qualified and are hard workers. Every teacher has good experience. Canadian teachers' behavior with students is good.

But, in my opinion (and maybe I am mistaken), there is something wrong in this education system of Canada. All students come to school as if they are going to a picnic. No student knows how to sit in the class and nobody knows what is the uniform for the school. In Canada no student and no teachers say prayers at the beginning of the day. No student knows how to stand in a line when we are going to say prayers or sing the national anthem. I feel this is the first responsibility of the Canadian government and education boards.

The Canadian government and school boards must give direction to the teachers to maintain orders and the law. Last Monday, my teacher told us about a 14 year-old student in Surrey who committed suicide because he was the victim of bullying. In this case, I feel his teacher is guilty. The teacher should know what happens in class and out of class. If the teacher is blind then terrible things can happen. Everyone knows that freedom is good, but excess of anything is bad. So the teacher must not give too much liberty to the students. It is not easy to stop bullying. This is

a big responsibility for teachers, government, education boards and parents to stop the bullying problem. If government doesn't wake up, then it will be too late. Maybe tomorrow will not be glorious.

Gurbachan, 29/10/00

#2

At first I didn't know anything about the education system in Canada. Sometimes I heard only the merits of the free-style education system here. When I was young, in Korea, I was a good student. What made a good student? At that time, it entirely depended on who got good grades in examinations. At school, if I didn't get a good grade in examination, the teacher always scolded me very angrily, and sometimes hit me with a stick. When I came back home, my parents always asked me to study hard. Most of my friends were depressed by the examinations. The books in my schoolbag were so heavy that my shoulder would hurt on the way to school and home.

Remembering my student days, I have seen my children just like me. But I couldn't do anything but say "study harder". I think the reason is that the whole society has been requesting that the young ones only get good grades in exams so as to get good jobs. It seems like Korean society is saying, 'memorize as much as you can'.

Are children computers? I understand that selection of the best people for jobs and higher education is a difficult process. Populations are so large. Classrooms are so crowded. In my country, there are 50 - 60 students in a classroom. Every day life is like war. They have to be the best in their small group, if not, they are apt to fail.

On the contrary, here in Canada, I have seen the curiosity and sunny faces of the students through several recorded tapes. They are discussing with each other, the teacher suggests only the direction of the subject to study. The most important thing is that they are communicating with each other.

I have heard that students in Canada often have work projects in the community. I think that education is to understand, not to memorize. If I were the minister of education in my home country, I would change the education system.

Jae, 9/2/00

Education System

INDIA	CANADA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no semesters • pay education • textbooks not free • poor facilities (some schools don't have buildings) • physical punishment • uniforms • morning song/prayer • teachers "tough" • a lot of discipline in schools • no loans • no counselors • few computers • High School after 5th. Grade • College* only after 12th. Grade (*Gr. 11/12 can be done at boarding school, eg Guru Nanak Girls 'College') • Too much homework • no calculators allowed • little/no adult education • around 50-60 students per class • students "must respect teachers" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • semester system • free public education • textbooks free • very good facilities (clean, well-kept buildings + playgrounds) • no physical punishment • no uniforms (in public schools) • no morning song/prayer • teachers "honest & polite" • not a lot of discipline in schools • loan system at College level • academic & personal counselors • many computers • High School after 8th. Grade • College or University after 12th. Grade • Not too much/too little homework • calculators allowed • extensive adult education • around 30-35 students per class • students don't have to respect teachers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students afraid of teachers • students must stand when teacher enters • no drugs • school Monday – Saturday • ‘donations’ to teachers by parents so as to get preferential treatment for child • special homework in holidays • 1 chance to get to University • private schools for girls only/boys only • some co-educational public schools (boys on 1 side of room, girls on other) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are not afraid of teachers • students stay seated when T. enters • drugs used, sold and bought • school Monday – Friday • no bribery • no special homework in holidays • more than 1 chance to get to University • co-educational private schools • co-educational public schools
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Truck Driving Man

My husband’s name is Jaswinder. He is a truck driver in T and P trucking Co. in Langley with his own truck. Truck driving is very hard work. He came here for the first time in 1991 and stayed at his sister’s house.

In the first year, after landing here, he got a job on a farm but it wasn’t a good job because the farm owner did not pay decent pay for his hard work. Finally, he met an old college friend who advised Jas that if he liked driving, he should get a truck driver’s license and then they could work together. Jas agreed. He got his license and drove the truck with his friend, but only for six months because his friend cheated him.

Then he talked with my father-in-law about buying his own truck. Later he bought a truck of his own, but after buying the truck, he faced so many problems. He didn’t have information about trucking routes. He started truck driving on long routes like Vancouver to Toronto, Calgary and in America to California or to Mexico. The trip lasted for a minimum of twenty days. He usually drives for 14-15 hours a day. Sometimes he gets lonely on the trip and sometimes he takes another driver with him. He told me that American highways are full of many kinds of flowers and in the summer season the prisoners have to clean the freeway.

His tractor’s height and length is ten feet and the width is more than a car. His trailer is forty-eight feet long and ten feet wide and has 18 wheels. It’s really hard to drive a truck that long.

Aman, 26/1/00

HEER RANJHA

This is the story of two lovers who are from Punjab. Many writers wrote this story according to what they wanted. Some have happy endings and some have sorrowful endings. We want to tell you the story according to a writer who was called Warish Shah. He was a famous writer of Punjabi stories.

Heer was born in Sial village. Her father’s name was Chuchak. He was a rich person. Heer grew up in house of much wealth. She wanted to help poor people. On the other hand Ranjha was born in Takhat Hajara village. His father’s name was Mozu. He was a rich man too. He lived with his family of brothers and sisters-in-law.

When Ranjha was a teenager, he didn’t like to do any work. All day he fooled around and plucked the bansary (musical instrument). His brothers and sisters-in-law said, “we can’t look after you, now you have to work with us.” Then they became angry with him. They said, “if you don’t like to work then leave our house.” He had a lot of pride so he left the house. After leaving his house he went to a village called Sial.

He stood outside of the village in an open room where the young girls came to fetch water for their home. Heer’s friend’s told her, “there is a young boy who is very handsome. Then she went to see him. She was instantly attracted to him. She fell in love with him. He told her his whole story about leaving his house. Heer brought him to her house. She told his story to her father and she said, “please give him a job as a servant. He can look after our cattle. Her father agreed with her idea. So Ranjha became a servant of Heer’s father.

A few months passed. They were so close that they couldn't live without each other. But one day Heer's uncle Kadhown saw them making love and told her father. Chuchak was furious and decided to marry his daughter to Sadda who was from Rungpukhera village. After her marriage, Heer went to her husband's house. Ranjha was very sad. He had nothing to do.

On the other hand, Heer was sad too. She made excuses to her husband that an Astrologer had told her that if you are touched by your husband, you will have big trouble in your life. She made the same excuse for several days. Satty, who was her sister-in-law, helped her to meet her lover in secret.

Ranjha then went to the temple of Guru and said to the guru, "please give me some strength to get my lover back. I can't live without her." The guru helped him. One day, Heer and Satty went to their field. Heer made an excuse that a snake had bit her feet in the field. Ranjha, who was disguised as a student of the guru in an orange colored gown, was standing nearby. When they saw that she was unconscious, her in-laws said to the guru "please save our daughter-in-law, she has been bitten by a snake." Then they took her to their home. Guru said, "you have to leave her alone with me for her treatment."

When they shut the door, right away Heer and Ranjha escaped through the window of the room. According to Warish Shah, they went to get justice from a little court in the city. But Heer's parents said, "come back home now, we have decided to allow Heer and Ranjha to get married."

However it was all a trick to cheat her. Her uncle gave her poison and she died. Ranjha, who was grief stricken over her death, died on her grave. Some say it was because of a broken heart.

Amrit, 6/12/95

Morocco

Morocco is an independent country. Nearly 25,000,000 people live there, all of them Moslems. Morocco is ruled by a king. Its main commercial city is Casablanca. Rabat is the capital. There are a lot of tourist cities like Marrakech, Essaouira and Agadir.

In Ouarzazat city there is famous places where American movies passed. The big stars American and European visit Ouarzazat every time.

The shops and market places are full of strange foods, rich silks, jewels, swords, and beautiful leather work.

Five times a day the muezzin "the priests of Allah" call the people to prayer from the tops of the mosques (Moslem houses of worship).

The fields of Morocco yield harvests of wheat, barley, beans, and peas. Other crops include figs, almonds, citrus fruits, and olives.

A kind of wheat called semolina is used in a dish called couscous, the basic item in a Moroccan meal. In a heaping dish of the cereal, there are bits of everything from peeled grapes to meat and vegetables. There is good fishing off the coast and Morocco has a large sardine industry based on coastal fisheries.

The country is poor in metallic minerals but it does have important deposits of natural phosphate rock, from which fertilizer is made.

Morocco is a beautiful country, people who like tourist cities must visit it.

Bouchra, 29/03/00

Flowing River

Dear Dad and Mom:

*I just have been here a little over four months
But I miss you very much. Did you know that?
I always miss you deep in my heart although
I haven't told you before
Dad and Mom
Thank for giving a wonderful childhood to me
It's the best gift in my life*

*I still remember the murmuring river
Behind our house
When I was little I played games
With my childhood friends
Later
While I was growing up
I liked contemplating under the willows of the river*

*Nowadays, as years flow away
The river still sings songs deep in my heart
Dad and Mom, did you know that?
It has become a symbol of you both
Murmuring the love song forever.*

*What a magnificent country Canada is
So many beautiful rivers and brooks
Again and again, I was trying to search for the same river
But what happened was that I just became clearer
About how wonderful my childhood was
Nothing can substitute for it.
Dad and Mom, I want you to know that
You are the most wonderful parents in the world*

Your daughter, Finda

Funny Stories

Good husband

In one small town, all the men were afraid of their wives. One day an investigator came to check out the situation. He asked: "men who are afraid of your wives, please step forward. Everybody stepped forward, except one man who didn't move. The other men were really surprised. They asked this man: "Aren't you afraid of your wife?" This man answered: "My wife didn't give me permission to move."

God

A six year old boy asked his mother: "Is God a man or a woman?" His mother said: "God is a man and a woman." He asked again: "Is God black or white?" His mother said: "God is black and white." He thought for a moment and

asked: "Is God heterosexual or homosexual?" His mother was very surprised, but still said: God is heterosexual and homosexual." The boy said: "Oh, now I get it, God is Michael Jackson."

Demon

Three men were stuck on an isolated island for long time. One day, a demon showed up saying that he could make everyone's wish come true. The first man said: "I want to go home", so he got his wish. The second man said: "I want to go home, too". Then he got his wish as well. The last man looked at the demon and said: "now, I feel so lonely, I wish for them both to come back."

Get Direction

In a desert, an exhausted explorer driving a jeep struggled towards an Arabian who was riding a camel. He asked this Arabian: "How far to the nearest road?" This Arabian said: "follow the sand road turn right next Saturday."

Secret Recipe:

A man used a lot of money to buy a prescription to treat itch, in a big box. This was a very secret prescription handed down in the family by the ancestors. One day, this man's body was too itchy to endure. He happily took out his big box. When he opened the box, there was a small box inside. When he opened this one, he saw a big package. He felt so itchy, he opened the big package, and there was a small package. He couldn't wait so he opened this last package and there was a small paper with a few words on it, "scratch the itch, stupid."

Thief speaking

It was wartime. All the people were very poor. A couple of old people just had some peas in a big jar. One night, a thief broke into their house. In the dark, the old man saw the thief, but he thought 'there's nothing for him to steal'. But the thief found the peas. He took off his jacket and put it on the floor so that he could wrap up those peas. The old man did not utter a word and, while the thief wasn't looking, he snatched the jacket. A few minutes later, when he couldn't find his jacket, the thief was startled. He cried out in surprise. This woke up the old woman who said to her husband: "there's a thief in the house!" this old man said: " Don't worry! There's no thief here." At this, the thief said indignantly, "no thief, what do you mean! Where's my jacket?"

Geling, 4/11/98

The Best Teacher I Ever Had

When I was a child in Sri Lanka, I was really interested in music. So, when my father turned on the radio, I used to dance. One day my father bought me a melodica for my 5th birthday. But I didn't know how to play it. One day he said, "let's go to the music class," so I went to music class with him. At that time, I was the youngest student in our music class. Because of that, my music teacher really liked me but all the time I cried. She gave me chocolates then I stopped crying.

Her name was Rani Wijemanne. Everyone knew her as " Rani Aunti". She was a very nice lady. She had short gray hair and big eyes. She used to wear glasses. Actually she was very neat. Every day she wore a different color of pearl necklace. She had a wonderful figure. She was 60 years old. All students really liked her. She spent all her life in music and teaching her students. Actually she was a professional music teacher. She taught music in one of the biggest schools in our city.

She could sing very well and also could play most musical instruments. She could also speak very good English. So, I studied with her until I came to Canada. I learned so many things from her, not only about music. She encouraged me to write for the government - theory and practical exams. One day I went to that exam with her. I was nervous. Fortunately I did really well on those exams. I got two "A" passes.

Every year we had a musical concert. Thousands of students participated in that. It was a contest. She promoted me as a group leader. I had to conduct the group of students. As a result, my group and I won a lot of

awards. She gave us certificates. Now I have lots of certificates and government certificates, too. I never had a teacher like her. She was a wonderful teacher.

She taught a lot of students. As a result some of them became music teachers themselves. As for me, I am not a music teacher, but I'm still enjoying the fruits of her music lessons.

Before I came to Canada I went to see her. She gave me so much advice. One thing she told me that I should never forget was, "don't give up your musical abilities. Music keeps you happy and you will never get bored." Anyway I came to Canada in February 1997. In April 1997, my mother called me and told me very sad news. It was about my music teacher. She had died. She left us on that date but her thoughts and music still remain. I will never forget her and whatever she taught me. I'm so grateful to her for all she did for me. I really miss her. She is a legend in my life. I feel she still lives around me. I hope we meet again in our next lives.

Uresha, 21/1/98

The Worst Teacher That I Ever Had

I have had many different teachers during my life. I didn't have any very good or bad teachers during my school days in Iraq, but I have a very bad memory from grade 5 about 8 years ago and I can not forget what happened.

Until grade 8, I wasn't a good student. I was a little lazy, but after grade 8 in high school I decided to be a good student. During elementary school I hated to go to the school. Every time I had some reason for not going to school. Sometimes I would say, "oh no, today I have a very bad stomachache - I can't walk." Or, I would put my head on the heater and then say to my mom, "oh I have a fever." Or, in the morning, I would wake up and I would put some medicine on the floor which was a message to my mom that I hadn't slept and I had had a very bad night.

In grade 5, I had very rough teacher and I always tried to stay at home. For that reason I was a bad student. One day we had a math test. If somebody got a bad mark she had to leave the school. On that exam, I and many other students got bad marks. Our teacher called the Principal and she brought all our school documents and said, "you have to leave the school."

Many students cried a lot but I thought to myself this is only to scare the students. However, after a few minutes, I could see that she was very serious. She said, "I will call your parents to pick you up." After that I started crying but I knew she was lying and that she couldn't expel us like that. After a while she forgave us. After this incident, my parents and I decided that I should change my school.

Noosha, 17/12/97

Spare The Rod And Spoil The Child?

(The Role Of Punishment In Chinese Culture)

China is a big country. It has five thousand years civilization. So it has five thousand years history of punishment. The traditional punishments are hitting the buttocks and palms. In the last thousand years, the punishment of hitting the palms was in the school, and both punishments were in the family. But today, schools in China don't have the punishment of hitting the palms any more because that is illegal. But the school still has other kinds of punishments, like the students have to write lines, or run around in the playground, or stand in the playground etc.

However, the family still has the traditional punishments. In the family, the father is the breadwinner and his authority is unquestioned. His primary duty is to teach his children to be nice, great people. So, if the children don't listen to him, he will give them punishments. Sometimes the mother will give punishments to her children too. In the family there are so many kind of punishments. It could be to not give the kids an allowance, make them wash the dishes etc. But in China the housework and the punishments are different. The parents like their children to do the housework when they are young. This is the traditional thing in China too. It can make the kids diligent.

In my opinion, letting the children do the housework is right. But punishment is wrong. In the traditional way of thinking, the Chinese belief is that punishment is right. They think that punishment can make the children diligent too.

I have an elder sister. She is five years older than me. When I was a little boy, I couldn't stand to see my father give her punishment. But I think my father believed that punishment could make my sister be a nice person. That was his view. If up to me, I wouldn't do it like that. If I was a father, I would give the punishment with flexibility. If my children did good things, I would give them compliments. If they did bad things, I wouldn't give them corporal punishment, I would give them self punishment, let them think about what they did. I think this is a good way.

Michael, 15/7/98

Two Terrible Events

I'll never forget the day of my dad's accident. When I was unmarried, I lived with my parents in India. One day my dad was on the road with a tractor trailer. The trailer was filled up with lot of sugarcanes. My dad was driving and our worker was sitting on the tractor seat beside him. Both of them were going to the sugar mill in Phagwara. Suddenly the big wheel broke and the worker fell off the tractor and the sugarcane fell on his body and he was crushed. He was really hurt and crying out. My dad helped him.

Some people were passing by. Even though they were looking at the accident, they just kept walking. My dad was crying, "please help me". But nobody helped him. So my dad was brave and grabbed the worker's arms and pulled him out. The worker was very injured and so was my dad. My dad and he went to a nearby hospital and were admitted there.

When we heard this news we were very upset, but then later we heard that both of them were OK. Then we relaxed and gave thanks to God. I'll never forget that day. I love my dad and may God let him live long.

Ruby, 24/11/99

* * * *

I am a student of Kwantlen University College. My first Christmas holidays in Canada started on the 17th. December. It was so great to get up late every day. My husband and I went Christmas shopping and visited my relatives. We saw Christmas lights. It was so beautiful. In Langley, four houses were all decorated with a light system. The houses looked like Disneyland.

On Christmas day, our plan was to go to Seattle. However, at the last minute, we changed our plans and went to Abbotsford for Christmas dinner. The next day we drove to Seattle and stayed with my uncle and his family. We had such a good time.

On the evening of 30th. December, my cousin phoned me from America. He told me that my uncle was dead. Somebody had shot him. He was a taxi driver. Another taxi driver was in a fight and my uncle helped him. And then the other person shot him. My uncle died in hospital. I wept a lot because I really liked my uncle. On the evening of the 31st. December we went to the Gurudawara and prayed to God.

Ruby, 6/10/99

A House On Fire

It was Diwali night. Everyone was gay and happy. People were lighting earthen lamps and candles. Children were bursting crackers. Fire works could be seen all around.

All of a sudden, I heard a hue and cry. I rushed to the spot. I found flames leaping up from a house near by. The house was on fire.

A large crowd of people had gathered there. Some of them were emptying buckets of water on the rising flames. Some of them were trying to rescue the occupants of the house.

The fire brigade had not yet arrived. The owner of the house and his wife were crying bitterly. They had risked their lives to save the child. People were simply staring at one another.

Without caring for my life, I rushed into the flames. I picked up the child in my arms. In the meantime, the bedroom door had also caught fire. Fire fighting men put a ladder against an open window. I quickly came down and handed the baby to the crying mother.

People held me in their arms. Everyone praised me for my dash and courage. I also felt very proud.

Jaswinder, 10/4/96

My Car Accident

I had a car accident on January 24th, 1995, but I didn't know how the accident happened. It was a very serious accident and I nearly died. I was riding my motorcycle in a busy part of Taipei when I hit another motorcycle head on. I flew over the handle-bars, and then I crashed face first on the sidewalk. I shattered my face's frontal bones and my nose and I broke my wrist and thigh.

After the accident, I stayed in the Intensive Care Unit about 30 days then in a sick room for about 50 days. During my stay in I.C.U., I had a dream that Bodhisattva helped save my life, and Bodhisattva told me: "You must help someone if someone needs your help."

I had 10 separate operations in different hospitals. They included making a frontal bone and a nose bone, plastic surgery for my face, metal pins for my wrist and hip, metal wiring for my teeth and to fix my nose bone. It wasn't easy!

Right now, when I think about those operations, I still get scared, so everybody please take care to stay healthy!

Brian, 25/3/98

A Difficult Experience

I usually drive very well, because I drove for 6 years in China. In April 1996, I had an accident. Because of that experience I am now afraid of driving. On that day, my boss and I had a very important meeting. My boss had just got her driving license and so she insisted on driving. We needed to go to a neighboring city quickly. It was about 10 p.m. and it was very dark. My boss was driving really fast. I told her "slow down, slow down", but she didn't listen to me. Then it happened! She was passing a car and she crossed the center line and suddenly we had a head-on collision with a car coming the other way. We were both wearing seat belts but my boss had an air bag and I didn't. Even so, when I woke up, I smelled a very strong smell. I released the belt, and crawled out of the car and found we were very close to a cliff.

I had a painful chest and couldn't move my arms. I was in hospital for one month, and took Chinese medicine every day. About 3-4 months later, I felt better.

Now I don't like driving cars. Even if you are very careful, somebody else can always give you trouble. You can't trust other drivers.

Geling, 10/7/98

From Shopkeeper To Mill Worker

My father's name is Amrik. My father was a shopkeeper in India. He was a very successful businessman. The job was not easy but not too hard either. My father and three other peoples worked in my shop. The shop was always full with groceries, seeds, and many other things.

He also owned a factory where he prepared mustard oil, flour and cotton. He managed everything carefully and dealt with the customers very politely.

In Canada, my father is working now in a lumber mill. The work is very hard. Everything is changed now. He likes this work but sometimes he is very tired. I want to help my father. The work is very hard compared to his work in India.

In India other people did work under him but here the situation is the opposite. His boss gives him only \$6 an hour. My father is always worried about me and my sister's future. My fathers work is not regular. It depends upon his boss. Sometimes his boss says, "tomorrow, don't come to work, wait until I call you."

My father misses his Indian job.

Rajwinder, 15/5/99

Plumber In Iraq

My father was a plumber. Now he is in his sixties and he is retired. When he was young he owned a farm and his farm was in a village in the north of Iraq. He grew many types of vegetables, wheat, fruit and food for animals because his farm had cows, chickens, goats and sheep. My mother also helped my father on the farm. When I was a baby, I was sick so my parents had to take me to the doctor in another province. When we came back to the village, my parents found all things of our house put in the truck.

The government ordered all the people to leave the village because of some problem in this area. My family moved to live in Baghdad. My father started doing work as a plumber with a French company.

In 1980 when the war began with Iran, all the foreign companies returned back to their countries. My father started doing work in new houses, building as a plumber. My father likes his job as a farmer more than a plumber. My parents are living in a big house and it has a big garden. They take care of this garden very much like a farm.

Janet, 12/10/99

Men At Work

I am a housewife only. I never had any job. When I was a young child, I was a vocalist at Dong-A radio station chorus.

My father was a professor at Seoul University and Sung Gyun Kwan University in Korea. I think his monthly pay wasn't too much, but he wasn't worried about money because my grandfather was a very rich man, he had many big mines and a lot of land. My grandfather left a lot of property to my father, so my father is a rich man too. He is a director of Kwang Wun University in Korea. When I was a level 2 elementary school student, my father studied abroad at Oxford University in England. He has two doctor's degrees, one in labor law and the other in economics.

My brother is a professor at Seoul University and a technical advisor at Samsung Electric. He studies abroad in Paris, France. He has a doctor's degree in electronics. I think he has a lot of income, but he doesn't have leisure time. He is really busy every day.

Haesun, 13/5/98.

My Son

I have one son. His name is Chamira Nilanjan Perea. His pet name is 'Bouday'. He is one year old. He was born in 1997, May 2nd. He has a nice smile and curly black hair. He looks like my husband. Now he has 4 teeth. He bites everything. His weight is 21 lbs.

Now he is walking. He doesn't eat baby food. He wants to eat our food. He never drinks formula or Homo milk. He always loves to drink my breast milk. He loves to eat a lot but he is not fat. He is healthy. He always loves it when his grand parents take care of him when I'm not at home.

When he was born I had chickenpox. He didn't give me a hard time when he was born. I had only four hours labor. I got a lot of help and support from Surrey Memorial Hospital. They gave me one room and they told my husband 'You can stay day and night with your wife'. That made me really happy. Special doctors and nurses took care of me. The doctors told me not to give breast milk to him because of my chickenpox. I was worried about that. After they discussed my case with Vancouver hospital doctors. After five hours, they changed their minds and told me that breast milk would have no effect on him. That was a relief.

Chamira loves to watch 'Barny and friends' every day. Now he is talking some words 'Ma' 'No' 'Go'. When I stay at home he loves to play 'Peek-a-Boo' with me. He hides everywhere and says 'Boo' to me. When I give something to him, he always say 'tha' to me. He loves to play with my sister's daughter. My son and her daughter are the same age. Sometimes they fight, but they love each other.

He is a dream in my life. I think he will be a genius and a kind person in the future.

Shyama, 22/4/98

Electric Appliances

In Taiwan, my father and mother owned an electric appliance store. After school, I always used to stay in the store to help my parents or our employees.

Sometimes, when a new product entered the market, my job was to study how to use it and what advantages it had over other products. If I could explain this product, then I could catch the customer's attention. Working in the store helped me learn about how to deal readily with customer, how to be a better salesman.

Sometimes, I had to help my father or employees transport T.V.'s or refrigerators etc. to a customer's house. That physical training made me strong and healthy.

Every day my father and mother got up at 9:30 a.m. then opened the store, stay in the store and served our customers all day. The store closed at 10:00 p.m. but my parents had to stay in the store to write faxes, to order products and check out inventory and check the day's receipts. When everything was finished, it was maybe 11 or 12 o'clock, every day work 14 hours, every week 7 days, it was a hard job.

However right now, it is hard to make profits in this business because electric appliances have become cheap but wages have become expensive and nobody wants to do this kind of hard work. Sometimes when we sold an appliance, even though we didn't make any profit, some customers would still find something to complain about. Maybe we will start another kind of business in the future.

Brian, 21/1/98

Sassi Punnu

Many years ago, there was a King who got married many times. When he saw a beautiful girl, he got married to her. So he had many wives. Somebody told him if your wife gives birth to a daughter you will be ruined. When the daughter is born, you must kill her.

After a few months, his wife gave birth to a daughter. He was very angry. He took his daughter and gave her to his servant. He gave him an order: "You must go away from here, kill her and throw her in the river." His

servant went to the river and when he was about to kill her, he saw that she was laughing. He felt sorry for her so he didn't kill her."

He took her, put her into a box and threw her in the river. There was a washerman, who was washing clothes. When he saw the box, he jumped into the river to get it. When he opened the box, there was a beautiful girl in the box. He was very happy because even though he was married, he didn't have any children. He prayed to God in gratitude.

Then he took her home and told everybody, "God gave me a daughter". His wife also was very happy. They gave her the name Sassi and took care of her. She grew up in a small washermen's village. One day while she was playing with her friends, one of her friends showed her a picture of a handsome boy. The name of the boy was Punnu. She felt so attracted to him that she decided that she really wanted to meet him.

One day she was walking in the fields. Suddenly she saw the handsome boy that she so wanted to meet. Then he saw her. She was a very beautiful girl. They fell in love with each other. She used to go to the farm to meet him. Everybody saw them and they were talking about them.

One day the king heard that there was a very beautiful girl who was a washerman's daughter. He gave an order to his servants to go to her village and tell her father that the king wanted to get married to his daughter. His servants rode their horses and went to the washerman's house. They told him the whole story. Sassi wrote a letter and gave it to his servants and said, now you can go and give it to the king. Then they came back to the king's palace. The king asked them "What did her father say?"

Then they gave him a letter which was written by Sassi. He opened the letter and read it. He was very angry because she wrote in that letter, "hey king if you had a beautiful young daughter, would you marry her? If yes I am ready to get married to you." The king was angry that Sassi had written to him rather than her father, as he had ordered. He tried to get revenge. He took both Sassi and her father and made them prisoners.

After a few days when he was about to kill them, the washerman said "but she isn't my daughter. I just took care of her." He told the whole story to the king. Then the king stopped. He asked his servants which one had gone to kill his daughter. One of them said, "I am the one, but I didn't kill her. I put her into the box and threw her in the river. I am sure she is your daughter." Then the king felt very sorry and gave them freedom. They went back their house and they were very happy.

One day some men on camels stayed in Sassi's village. They saw the handsome boy Punnu. At night they gave him drugs. He became unconscious. They took Punnu with them. When Sassi got up she went looking for Punnu. When she discovered that he was gone, she chased after the men on camels, but she couldn't find them. She was walking on hot sand. While she was walking she kept calling "Punnu, Punnu."

She got blisters on her feet. Finally she fainted on the hot sand and died. A man, who was a priest, saw Sassi. He buried her. When Punnu recovered from the drugs and saw the strange men, he felt afraid. Like Sassi, he met the priest while walking on the hot sand. The priest then told him the story of Sassi. He sat on Sassi's grave and cried. He died of grief. The priest buried him beside Sassi.

Daljit, 27/6/96

My Feelings Learning English

❖ Frustration

When I first came to Canada, I thought everything was very easy. If I wanted to drink a can of coke or to eat something, I just pointed with my finger to my object of desire and the people could understand me. It was simple. The body language was great but I couldn't keep my mouth closed for a long time. I started to feel frustrated.

❖ Scared

I decided to go to school to learn English. Because I couldn't speak or understand English very well, I was very anxious about my first day at school. Everyone in my class was able to speak a little English and most of them had been here for years! I couldn't understand them because of their accents. I was really scared.

❖ **Excited**

After a few weeks, I had already learned many words in English (my vocabulary was very poor... Actually, it still is poor)! And I knew how to speak a little English. I wanted to talk with everybody in English, even if it was just a word like "Hello." I was really excited with my progress and very proud of myself.

❖ **Involved**

Three months later and I was able to say complete sentences. I had great marks! It was the result of my hard studying. I was very dedicated because I could see my evolution very fast.

❖ **Bored**

I started to feel bored with those high marks. I wanted to learn more and more. I bought an English Grammar Book. I discovered that English wasn't what I thought that it was. It was more complex and difficult.

❖ **Innocent**

I thought I could learn English by myself. I started to study the Grammar Book every night. I tried to translate every sentence into my own language and I was convinced that it was a good idea.

❖ **Confused**

Right now, I am confused. Maybe studying by myself the new stuff was not a bright idea. Everything is mixed up in my brain. The more I study, the more confused I am. Doubts, doubts and doubts... I discovered that I am like a baby taking my first steps. Disappointed, worried, upset, hopeful... I would like to know what my next feeling will be... Learning English is very hard, but I'll keep on trying to understand it... The only thing that I have certain is that I have got to be patient and dedicated if I really want to learn great English.

Flavia, 6/10/99