

“A New Life”

Nellie Mattson

On January 6, 1994, I arrived in Minnesota on a plane from South Korea with two other adoptees. I spent my first six months of life in an orphanage in Seoul until my new family was ready to have me in their lives. The journey was long and with an ear infection, I spent most of the flight in tears. After reaching the gate, I was carried off the plane, by a social worker, in a pink blanket that was specially made by my new adopted family's friend in celebration of my adoption. Immediately, I was handed to my new mom; the blanket was the first gift my new family ever gave me, and in her arms it brought me comfort and allowed me to feel safe in an unfamiliar place. Although I do not remember this exact moment, she continues to tell me that my tears finally stopped in her arms. As a child, I carried my “trip blankie” everywhere that my parents would allow, and I made sure it never got ruined. The blanket is not directly tied to my culture in Korea, but it is the only object I have left from my journey over. As I was growing up the blanket became less and less important to me as a physical object, and more important as an emotional object. I feel this was because I stopped depending on the object's physicality for security. Instead, the idea that it was there, even when I didn't need it, helped me to feel some of the same emotions that I had had as a child. While I mainly associate my blanket with my American family and the memories that they have given me, the blanket also served as a guide in understanding my double culture. While it is just a piece of fabric, the blanket helped me adjust to my new surroundings, and I found I had to learn to embrace the life that I was given, instead of wondering about the life that was taken away. The blanket now stays tucked away in a box in storage. It still holds a special place in my heart, and I think about it when I feel grateful for the

way my life has turned out. To me, the blanket is not a representation of the life that I have left behind, but it is a symbol of the new life that I have received.