

Yunhee Joung Transcription

Hi. My name is Yunhee Joung. I'm from South Korea. I married an adopted Korean American. He was six years old when he came to America. He grew up with three other siblings who were his parents' biological children. He grew up in a very small town in Wisconsin. He never met any other Asians until he went to university. Fortunately he met some Korean students and learned about Korea. His friendships sent him to South Korea.

My husband and I got married and lived in the city of Daejeon, in the middle of South Korea. He worked at a private university as an English instructor, and I stayed home and watched my daughter. My husband and I loved spending time with our daughter and traveling around Korea. We had a good income and enjoyed living there.

But we decided to move to the USA when my daughter turned four years old. I knew that the time would come soon when my husband started complaining about Korea. He said, "I hate living in this tall building. I don't want to live in a crowded place. Many Koreans don't follow traffic rules when they drive. Korean kids are spoiled and rude. I don't want my daughter to act like that." I told him that this happens everywhere. It mattered how you raised your daughter. We could have stayed in Korea longer if there wasn't an issue which was bothering both of us.

It was the Korean education system which we couldn't change. My husband and I felt sorry for all the Korean students. They never have time for playing or enjoying their childhood. They are taught how to get a good score on the test. Lots of students have to do extra lessons after school and older students have to stay at school from before sun rise until 10PM. We didn't want our daughter to learn how to get good and perfect scores. We wanted her to learn how to be good person and how to find solutions when she encounters a bad situation. Also, we wanted her to be a good woman who stands up for her rights.

We talked about when would be the best time for us to move. We wanted our daughter to know about Korea and speak Korean. I think it is very important to teach your kids your own language. He or she will learn about culture and ideas through the language. The language is the first step to understanding everything. And I want to use Korean when I communicate with my grandchildren in the future. So my daughter should speak Korean. We stayed there until my older daughter spoke Korean well.

When my husband quit his job and prepared to move back to America I cared about the children's books. I knew there would be many English books around her. She can read English books at

the library, school and her grandparent's house. But it might be hard to find the books with Korean unless she visits Korea. So I packed 10 boxes of the children's books and sent them to Wisconsin where my husband's parents live.

We arrived in July 1, 2013 in Wisconsin. My husband looked for a job in the Twin Cities where Korean communities are located. He wanted me to feel close and get to Korean stores and restaurants easily. There are 10,000 Koreans in Minnesota. I won't have any problem finding Korean food or supplies. I go to Korean church and Korean grocery stores whenever I want. And my daughter goes to Korean language class every Saturday. She meets Korean friends and learns about Korea. Luckily I live in a high technology age. I can see and talk with my family through FaceTime on the iPad or Skype on the internet. And I can call for free to Korea anytime using my smartphone. Even though the winter is so long and cold, I love living in St. Paul.