

Simon Lee

## **My First Day in New York**

I came to the United States in 2014. I arrived in the United States for the first time in Hawaii. I stayed at a hotel next to Waikiki Beach. I remember the weather was beautiful. While I sat on the ten-hour flight, I was not sleepy. I loved the fresh air and bright sun when I went to Waikiki Beach. I went to Pearl Harbor. I saw and listened to World War II history. I understood and felt a memorial spirit.

After I was in Hawaii for four days, I came to New York. I was excited, but I didn't know anyone in the United States. I was worried. On the first day, I went to the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and Time Square. I was very happy because I had often seen them in the movies. I felt a new culture and systems.

In the evening, I took the subway from Rockefeller Center to Flushing to find a hotel. The next day, I bought many newspapers and used the internet. I found information about apartments. I found an apartment. I rented a room in an apartment after staying at a hotel for five days.

After my life became stable, I studied English for six months at Cheng Long School in Chinatown. After that, I heard about this school. I was lucky to get into the University Settlement Adult Literacy Program. I feel I've made a lot of progress.

Esther Li

## **Facing the Future's New Challenges**

My family moved to the United States in 2012. First, I felt all things were strange. I saw the environment was beautiful, the people talked about... I didn't understand what they said. But I was lucky because my oldest son's English was very good. Before we came to the United States, he was an international student and he lived in Arizona for five years. So as a first stop, my family chose Arizona, and my son finished his Master's degree. He liked the United States. He didn't want to go back to China. Therefore my family moved there.

I lived there for a while, and I had many problems because my English was not so good. And my youngest son missed his friends back in China. So life was difficult and I became bored. But I didn't think too much. Yesterday was history - I had to enrich my life and I had to face the future's challenges and I was a parent. So I was an example for my youngest son.

So I decided to study English. I bought some books. I learned words. I lived there for one year. I interviewed for a job and got it. I was an inventory clerk and worked in the shipping department. Every day I had to drive a car to work on the highway for forty minutes. I was tired, but I liked the job. At lunch time we talked about "the good old days." We enjoyed our jobs.

So the days passed quickly for about two years. One day my sister invited me to come to New York. I didn't want to move to New York. I liked Arizona; there the houses were cheaper. There was a lot of parking and I had made some friends. But in the United States I only have my sister. I had to take care of this relationship.

So, my husband and I moved to New York in 2015. I didn't like it here at first. There is a subway and buses, so it's convenient. Here there are many supermarkets, clothes stores, movie theaters and people

from many different countries who make me learn about cultures. I like my job, because I have time to go to school to study English. More and more I like New York. I believe in myself. I will face the future's new challenges! Change is not merely necessary to life, it is life.

Amy Chen

### **The First Day I Came to the U.S.**

I came to the U.S. in August 2009, because my husband and my son lived here. I took an airplane from Guangzhou, China.

My husband and my mother-in-law picked me up from the airport. When I arrived, I was with my family. I was so happy because for ten years I had not seen my mother-in-law. On the other hand, I felt a little depressed because I would have to face the U.S. in the unfamiliar world.

Then we packed all our stuff into the car. On the way home, I saw mountains and trees. After a long time, we were in Connecticut. My home was a big house.

My mother-in-law prepared a nice dinner for me. This was the first meal I ate in the U.S. We were very happy to eat.

After dinner, my husband took me out to the back yard for a walk and to become familiar with my surroundings. There were various kinds of flowers - so beautiful - and there was a large swimming pool.

At 10:00 pm, my husband went to work. My mother-in-law and my son had to sleep. I sat alone in the living room. Suddenly I started to cry.

Fen Fen Liang

## **New Beginning in the United States**

I came to the United States on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014. I came here because my husband had lived in the U.S. for almost ten years and he thought in the U.S. we could earn money easier than in China.

I came to the U.S. with my son. Because I had never been to the U.S., my husband went back to China to bring us here. We took the airplane from Guang Zhou Bai Yun Airport to J.F.K. Airport. The airplane arrived at night. My father-in-law and my uncle picked us up. My uncle drove a big car to the airport because we had many bags.

I receive a letter from the U.S. immigration office. It said we had passed the interview. Then my husband rented a big apartment for us. When I went into the apartment, my aunt had prepared a lot of food for us. At that moment I felt warm. That was the first time I met my aunt.

My husband didn't work the first week we came to the U.S. He took us to Time Square in Manhattan and he took us to different malls. We went shopping. We ate a lot of delicious food that I had never tasted in China. In that week I was very happy.

After my husband finished his vacation, he went back to work, my aunt worked, my father-in-law worked, everyone worked except me. Although I wanted to work, I needed to take care of my son.

I thought maybe I could take him to a day care center. So I looked for many day care centers. That was difficult for me because I didn't know the streets, I couldn't communicate in English, I didn't know how to take trains. I felt so worried and so helpless, although people were friendly.

Another thing struck me. It was the price of the day care center. It was expensive. The lowest price was \$780 for four weeks; the highest price was \$1080 for four weeks. So I could only take care of my son by myself. That wasn't a bad thing. When the weather was good, I took my son to the park, and I could get a lot of different information from other parents about how to adapt to life in the U.S.

Shelly Zhong

## **A Memorable Day**

My husband, my son, and I came to the U.S. on September 30, 2013 because my husband said, "We are so young. We should go to see the world outside."

In the morning, we took three suitcases, and went to the Guangzhou Baiyun airport. The first stop was at the Hong Kong airport for one hour. After that we changed to the U.S. airplane and said goodbye to our country.

On the plane, my mood was very uneasy. I thought a lot. In China, I had a good job, but I couldn't do it in the U.S. because my English was very bad. Also I heard that in the U.S. it snows a lot in the winter and it's very cold. I was very worried.

After about fifteen hours, we arrived at JFK airport. It was night. After we picked up our three suitcases, we waited for my sister. JFK was not beautiful and not big.

I heard my sister call my name. We hugged. My sister helped me pull the suitcase and we walked outside and waited for my sister-in-law to pick us up.

It was raining, and I felt very cold. I didn't see many houses or many buildings. I saw a lot of different skin colors and heard different languages.

After we got to my sister's home, my sister prepared a hearty dinner for us. But I wasn't in the mood to eat because I felt very tired, and I felt strange and homesick. I cried. I wanted to go back to China. My sister held me and said, "Don't worry. Everything will be okay."

Chi Tuen Hon

## **My First Day in New York**

I came to the U.S. in 2010. I took an airplane to New York. When I arrived at the New York airport, my wife and siblings were waiting for me. We were very happy to be there. I felt very excited and we hugged each other. They brought me to my new home in Manhattan.

That day was a very special day for my family. I came to the U.S. to be with my family. My wife invited all our siblings and friends to our home and they prepared a party. They cleaned the apartment, washed the floors and painted the walls. When they finished all their work, the apartment looked beautiful inside and out.

And they cooked a big meal before I arrived. We all sat in the living room and we ate different foods, drank juice and other beverages, and we talked. Some people talked about their children, other people talked about the weather, and everybody looked forward to an exciting future. Everybody enjoyed the meal very much. Everybody enjoyed the party very much.

Nobody wanted to go home!

Kelly Liang

## **New Life in New York**

I came to the U.S. in March 2015. I arrived at JFK airport. I saw a blue sky and snow. It was cold. My brother-in-law came to JFK airport to take us to my mother-in-law's home. My mother-in-law cooked a lot of food, but I was very tired so I went to sleep.

My family came to the U.S. for my son. American education is better.

The next day there was a heavy snow. My son was very happy. He made a snowman. We went to Times Square on the D train. The D train was very noisy. At Times Square there were a lot of people. The people were very fashionable and they looked very friendly. I was surprised to see many Chinese people and Chinese logos.

I looked for an apartment in the newspaper. I found my apartment. It was quiet and safe. I bought furniture and cleaned the floor. I moved into the new apartment and I met our new neighbor. She was a nice woman. She taught my son to sing an English song. My son really liked her.

I came to the U.S. one year ago. I feel New York City has a lot of energy. Most people are very polite. There are people from many different countries in New York City. You can find a good job and improve your life.

Xiu Lin (Lisa)

### Untitled

I looked down from the aircraft. Los Angeles - shiny, sparkling lights. My heart felt hot. Wow. I had entered the United States.

On the first day, my friend sent me a second-hand down jacket to wear in the winter. I washed it by hand.

On the second day I rode the subway to find a job. I took the subway in the wrong direction, so I had to change trains. When I got off the train, the station lighting was very dark, and this station was far down in the ground and it was difficult to go out to the street again.

There were only a few nondescript men. One of them came up to me and I was very scared. New York is too dangerous. Life has no guarantees. I quickly bought a life insurance policy. I didn't want my parents to be left with nothing if I died.

Joyce Wu

## **Our First Day in the U.S.**

We were so happy when we knew our immigrant visa was approved. In my family, my parents-in-law came to the United States first. They came to the United States in 2004. They never went back to China. So my husband hadn't seen them for a long time. We missed them so much. Now we met them at last. My parents-in-law came here because they hoped their son could come here for a great future.

Before we came to the U.S., we waited for more than four months to have fun and visit our friends. The time passed so fast. I remember on December 10, 2014 we took the airplane from Guangzhou, China to JFK airport in New York.

I came to the United States with my son and my husband. We spent about fourteen hours on the airplane. It was boring and tiring. When the airplane arrived at the airport, we didn't know where the exit was or where we could pick up our baggage. So we followed the people that took the same airplane with us.

My parents-in-law picked us up from the airport. We were happy when we met my parents-in-law. My son had never seen his grandpa and grandma, but my son really liked them when he met them for the first time. My mother-in-law wanted to put my son on her back, so she bent her back. Suddenly, my son ran and jumped on her back. That behavior was dangerous. My mother-in-law almost fell. We were frightened. Luckily, my mother-in-law was okay.

Before we arrived in the United States, my parents-in-law helped us find a house, but the owner of the house said he needed to meet us, then he would decide to rent to us. So the first day in the U.S. we stayed at my husband's uncle's house on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brooklyn. He took us out to eat breakfast.

My husband and I looked out the window when we rode in my husband's uncle's car. We looked around and thought our neighborhood looked just like a small town. It didn't have big buildings or a mall. It was quiet. We went to a Chinese restaurant for breakfast. The food was the same but the taste was different. In China the food was delicious.

After breakfast, we went to the phone store to buy phones. In the United States, luxury items aren't very expensive, but in China they are very expensive. In the U.S. the food is cheap, too. Here, I think foreigners are friendlier than Chinese people. Education and benefits are good! I like the U.S., but my husband doesn't like it. He thinks people's rhythm of life is too fast and the work is very hard.

I believe this is just a transition period. When you slowly adapt to a new life, everything will be fine.

Anna Wu

## **My First Day in the United States**

I came to the United States in 2011 because my family was already here.

I took an airplane from Guangzhou, China to New York. When I arrived, my mother, sister and father-in-law picked me up from JFK airport. At the airport, I saw people from many different countries.

I felt worried and happy. I thought, "I can't speak English very well. How can I live here and begin?" So I missed my friends and my country.

Outside the airport, I looked up at the blue sky and white clouds in the sky, I breathed a deep breath, and my worries went away. On the way home, I saw shops on both sides and many signs written in Chinese on the street. A hint of not feeling yourself in a foreign country. Passersby on the street talked in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Taishanese. I saw a fruit stall, seafood stalls, and the owner yelling out loud, like at a country fair. I know in Brooklyn there is a place full of Chinese flavor, people experiencing their customs and culture in a foreign country.

My heart said to start everything from scratch, opening a new ear, going towards a new goal in life.

Junying Zhen (Letina)

## **New York Impressed Me**

I came to the United States on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012. My family and I were new immigrants. We came to U.S. because my son wanted to go to high school in the United States. I felt very happy.

We arrived at JFK airport. The weather was warm. The air was very fresh. I saw the white clouds in the sky. The sky was blue. It was beautiful.

We walked out of the airport. My sister-in-law picked us up and we went to our new home. They drove through Chinatown. I saw Chinese words above the shops. "Is this China?" I was surprised.

"No, it's Chinatown," I told myself. Chinatown was very dirty. Traffic was very bad. And then I saw a lot of high buildings everywhere, especially in Manhattan. I saw the reconstruction of the World Trade Center. It was standing there.

The next day, I took the Path train to Times Square. I saw all kinds of signs in Times Square. A big screen played a variety of advertising. Skyline buses shuttled on the streets, the tourists on buses along the street took pictures. Broadway performances went forward. Here was New York City, a big city. I hoped my family and I would have a good life.

Olimpia Morales

### **My First Time in the U.S.**

I came to the U.S. in December 2010 to live with my husband. He lived with his mother in an apartment. I felt happy.

My husband had a good job here. The next day we went walking through the city and looked at different places. Once a week we went to a restaurant.

After six months, we got an apartment and brought our children. We were happy because the family was together. My son felt happy in school. In my country, he studied English. He said, "I like New York." He had a lot of friends.

I got my first job in 2011. I worked in a factory in Brooklyn. I sewed clothes for two years. Later the factory moved to another city. I didn't get another job. Now I take my children to school. I'm a homemaker at this time. I like New York because my family and I have many opportunities for jobs and for school.

Songsong Chen

## **My First Day in the U.S.**

I came to the U.S. in 2014.

When the plane landed, my husband was already there to pick me up. It was night. I saw the ground covered by light, so beautiful. There was a traffic jam on the road, so I arrived in Chinatown at 1:30 am.

I felt so hungry and tired. We went to a restaurant. Many people were there to eat. I heard them talking in my language.

The next day, we woke up at 12 pm. At first, we went to go shopping by train. The train had one hundred years of history.

We went to City Hall. I saw many buildings. I knew they were so famous. I could see the Statue of Liberty. So far away, I wanted to go there. We took a lot of pictures. I thought the air was fresh. I liked the sunshine here.

Jennifer Alonzo

### **My First Day in the U.S.**

My first day in the U.S. was in December 2011. I felt happy because I hadn't seen my father for twelve years. We went to "Rincon Salvadoreno." We began to speak of our family in Honduras. After that we went to Manhattan.

I loved Manhattan. It had always been my dream to come here one day. We went to Times Square, to Rockefeller Center, to Central Park, to Bryant Park, to the Brooklyn Bridge and other places.

Then in January 2012 I went back to Honduras. For four years I spent a couple months here and the other months in Honduras. But in 2015, I came to the United States to visit my father and my boyfriend in April - but on May 4, 2015 my boyfriend asked me if I would marry him. Of course I said "Yes." I began to plan my wedding.

My wedding was on July 17, 2015. On this day I moved with my husband to Brooklyn and I began to study English because I wanted to learn the language.

Since I got married, my life has changed for the better because my husband is a very good person. For me he is the best. We have traveled. We have gone to Miami, Washington, Tampa, Sarasota, Daytona Beach, and Disneyworld. We have shared many things, good and bad - but always together. I am happy to be here, but I miss my family in Honduras. It is soon that we will be together again.

Lihua Bao

### **My First Day in the U.S.**

I came to the U.S. in 2008 with my son. We arrived at the airport at 2:30pm. We waited for my husband to pick us up. We waited for my husband for about an hour and a half, but he didn't come. We were worried because we didn't have any money or a cell phone. We couldn't contact my husband. I was scared and cried.

When a woman saw me crying, she asked me, "Do you need help?" I said, "I can't find my husband and I can't contact my husband." So she lent me her cell phone. Then I called my husband, and my husband told me, "Don't worry. I'm stuck in traffic. I'll be there in thirty minutes." Then I thanked the nice woman and we waited for my husband to pick us up.

After my husband picked us up, we went home. Then we had a celebration and ate buffet for dinner with my parents-in-law and sister-in-law and brother-in-law. We were happy because we wanted to be together in the future.

Garivia Escobar

### **When I Came to This Beautiful Country**

I came to the United States in 1994. I was fifteen years old. I came to this country because my mother was here. My sisters and I were happy because finally we were together: my mother, my brother, and my two sisters were all here.

But I was also disappointed because when I got to New York, it wasn't how I had seen it in photos. In the photos, it was like a pretty flower, and I remember I asked my mother when we would leave New York and she answered, "We're staying in New York."

We stayed at my aunt's apartment at 79<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brooklyn. I didn't like my aunt's apartment because it was very small with one bedroom, a living room, a small kitchen, and a small bathroom - and there were already three adults and one baby living there: my aunt, her husband, their baby, and my brother.

I felt strange because we came at night and the food was different. The next day I wanted to go back to Mexico. I missed my grandparents and our large house and large yard.

One week later, my uncle took us to get pizza. It was the first time my sister and I had had pizza. When we ate it, I didn't like the flavor. But we liked the drinks. Of course, it was soda.

The next month, my mother and my brother found an apartment for us with two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and one bathroom.