

Living in New York Is A Test of Who I Am

Peter J. S. Chiu

Last September, I left my parents, my wife and my friends for a completely strange place almost ten thousand miles away. Though both "New York" and "Columbia" have been known to me, since I was a schoolboy, it was a day dream for me that I could be there some day. But it so incredibly happened to be true. Aboard the jet plane, the thought of being on the way to New York and Columbia as a student made me quite excited. In the meantime, however, I was very sad and lonely.

Two days after my arrival in this monstrously big city, I was in a class of about 100 medical students, trying desperately to jot down what the professor said. The difficulties in understanding and communicating with people around were a great burden; I was tired, nervous and almost in despair. I soon realized the only way to survive is to fight bravely or go home in disgrace. Things improved after I met Bob --- a student of Anatomy from New Mexico. As a young man of good and modest character, he has kindly helped me a lot in the school. Moreover, this valuable friendship lessened my feeling of loneliness in the class at the beginning.

In an apartment very close to the medical center, I studied as hard as I could. The gigantic skyscrapers, colorful department stores, movies, etc. didn't appeal to me very much. I confined myself to a small world. Every day I went to and fro between the apartment and the school. All I had in my mind was how to survive the first year at Columbia.

Mencius said, "Gentlemen keep away from the kitchen." I never cooked myself before I came to the States. Every evening after the school was over, I came home tired and hungry. It took me one and a half hours to prepare and to finish my supper. I then took a nap; otherwise I couldn't study at all. Occasionally, particularly when an exam was coming, homesickness

crept into my heart, Many times I would pray I could return and see people at home. The ripping sound of the jet that flew through the sky high above rent my heart.

My wife came here to stay with me last April. We live together happily despite the fact that we depend on just a petty amount of fellowship from the University. Most people we have met here are very friendly and helpful. Sometimes their kindness caused in me a feeling of guilty, that I had never helped others as much as I can.

I usually hold a pessimistic view of my future. In other words, I worry too much. perhaps this is the reason why the encouragements from the people around me warm up my heart to a great extent. As a Chinese student, I feel strongly responsible for those who are good and kind to me. Consequently,

I work very hard for myself as well as for them. It is a great comfort to me when I know that my first year in the school is a success.

To tell the truth, I enjoy living in the States very much. Above all, here is an excellent place for study. It is not hard to adjust oneself to a new environment if one keeps learning patiently and with hardship. The dingy side of a metropolitan life will become tolerable if one can think of the other bright side. As long as I know the real purpose of my coming here, a problem such as the racial prejudice is by no means a problem existed to me. I used to rely on my parents, but now I realize I am trying to be an independent man. with my wife I am creating a new life with bare hands on this new continent.

綠杏的同學們：

敝人是北醫藥學系第一屆畢業生，後來進入台大藥理學研究所，於去年九月到哥大醫學院唸藥理學博士學位。茲附上一篇拙作，略述過去一年在紐約的私人經歷與感想，算是敝人第二次向綠杏投稿，還望多多指教。但願以後能作較實際與具體的提供，給有志來美深造的同學們當參攷。

紐約市內，北醫同學有十幾位，我暑假曾到費城及波士頓，那邊也有北醫畢業同學，年輕的北醫有如此的成就，實在是主其事者的努力所促成的，當然，同學們本身的奮鬥是最重要的因素。

希望不久將來能見綠杏出版，也祝福各位健康快樂，順利。若蒙不棄，請有空來信聯絡，竭誠歡迎。敝人住址如下：

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