

## *A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic*

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Even though the residents of New York's Chinatown have mobilized in protest a number of times, Park Road is still closed to car traffic (with the exception of public buses), which has negatively affected the local businesses. The state and federal governments provided financial assistance to residents who lived in the areas surrounding Ground Zero. Residents living in the immediate area received the most assistance, followed by those in the Chamber Street area, and then those living south of Canal Street. The authorities assisted them in paying their rent, and even with healthcare.

The terrorists who carried out the September 11 attacks had carefully planned each step beforehand. They had sent people to the United States to learn to pilot aircraft, pick a time to attack, and to arm them for the hijacking. They had predicted that the inside of the hijacked aircraft would contain a large amount of jet fuel, allowing the civil aircraft itself to be used as a highly lethal weapon. Then they recruited men who dared to sacrifice themselves for such a purpose. It was their cleverness that allowed them to commit such grave crimes.

Immediately after the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred, the mayor of New York City went to Ground Zero to assess the situation. By that afternoon, the governor of New York had arrived to conduct an inspection and discuss strategies for rescuing victims in the disaster area. On the third day, the president came to tour the scene of the incident. He praised the fire department and police force for their speedy response to the attacks and their bravery in conducting rescues. At the same time, the president took the opportunity to express gratitude to the many service members who had sacrificed their lives on that day.

In a single month, the president visited Ground Zero three times, one time also visiting the firehouse in Little Italy at 55 Baxter Street and the area's public primary school to express sympathy and console the victims. Thirty years ago, ninety percent of the students of that school were the children of Italian immigrants; however, now seventy percent are members of the Chinese Diaspora, which shows the speed with which Chinese immigrants have come to Little Italy. After the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, there were trucks carrying away debris twenty four hours a day. Ground Zero became a place that tourists visited to pay homage to those that died in the attacks. In the beginning, one had to line up for several hours before seeing the ruins. Many foreign leaders who came to the United States would also stop by the site of the attacks to pay their respects.

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After the September 11 attacks, the nation's airports were in an urgent state of affairs, and still are to this day. The government has expended a great deal of energy and resources to prevent further terrorist attacks. Security inspections at the airport have become extremely strict. Not only must passengers walk through a metal detector, but their wallets, handbags, belts, and shoes must be scanned as well. Also, liquids are prohibited. Because of the security checks, passengers have to check in two hours before their flight is scheduled to depart. Although these measures unjustly waste many people's time, there is nothing to do but accept them and cooperate for everyone's safety.

People must also go through the same type of security checkpoints when entering courts. Although it adds to everyone's inconveniences, it ensures safety. Americans are very cooperative and orderly when going through security checkpoints; they enter the line and wait their turn. After the September 11 attacks, the United States military mobilized to attack the nation of Iraq in an effort to prevent terrorism. The initial victory was won very quickly by the United States; however, terrorists began to carry out an underground guerrilla war, terrorizing public places and American security checkpoints with car bombs, every day killing two or three American soldiers. The United States government was unable to manage the attacks, and so too were their British allies. The British government decided to withdraw their troops during the beginning of the following year. The September 11 attacks had made the entire world sensitive and nervous.

The September 11 attacks happened over ten years ago, but news about them is still broadcast on television stations from time to time, especially new terrorist attacks. Next to the site of the attack, where the twin towers used to be, the "Freedom Tower" is being constructed. There were many different opinions about the design of the tower, and only after much deliberation was a consensus reached, with work beginning only several years ago. If the Freedom Tower were being built in another country, it would most likely have already been finished some time ago. Although the PATH train from the World Trade Center to New Jersey has been planned for a long time, it is being delayed by the construction of the Freedom Tower, as well as other construction taking place in the area. When the construction of the Freedom Tower is finished, the World Trade Center area should flourish again, and most importantly Park Row will be open to traffic again, which will give a boost to Chinatown's businesses.

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In the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System, if there is warning of a possible terrorist attack, the threat level is orange. If the threat level is red, then although the situation is very serious, one could argue that it is relatively safe because the police and military are all on alert to deal with any possible threats. If the threat level is orange, then passengers at the airport will see soldiers from the National Guard patrolling the area.

In the past seven years, there have been many times during which the threat level was orange. During times like these, cars crossing bridges or tunnels will often be stopped and searched by police officers especially large trucks. The resulting traffic wastes people's time, especially during commuting hours, and people complain bitterly about it. How can it be that even during threat level orange people are safe? The reason is that security forces are especially vigilant, and suspicious things are reported by citizens.

### **Thirty five: Honest and benevolent elderly people, saving up during youth and seeking pleasure in the golden years**

My Uncle and Aunt Yu were the first people to help me out when I first came to the United States. Uncle Yu treated people well and was kind-hearted by nature. He had worked hard many years and had experienced many hardships, yet he still ardently loved his family. The majority of his wages he sent to Mainland China and Hong Kong to support his family. When I arrived in the United States, Uncle and Aunt Yu had only been there two or three years, and had two daughters living in Mainland China. In those days, letters from the United States to Mainland China had to be sent through relatives in Hong Kong. Uncle and Aunt Yu were finally able to reunite in the early 1970s when they suffered a series of illnesses and passed away. It was only several years later in the late 1970s when Mainland China and the United States established formal relations, and family members of people living in the United States could apply for immigration. It is a shame that Uncle and Aunt Yu's two daughters were unable to immigrate to the United States. May Uncle and Aunt Yu rest in peace, and may the next generation of their family prosper.

People in the United States are generally happy-go-lucky types, spending whatever money they make, and some even using credit to buy things with money not yet made. Some people will go on vacations even though they do not have the money, and banks make a business of selling vacation loans.

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A few months before turning sixty five, citizens in the United States can apply for retirement money from the government, and can also apply for health coverage. They usually receive a new health insurance card in the mail several months before turning sixty five. It is important for elderly people to carry their health insurance card with them at all times so that it can be used in the event of a medical emergency. This type of insurance covers visits to the doctor and stays in the hospital, but does not cover prescriptions for pharmaceuticals. There is another insurance policy available that covers prescriptions and charges a monthly fee of twenty five to thirty dollars. If you have insurance, then no matter whether you need to stay in the hospital, have surgery performed, or receive nursing care, it will be covered by insurance. When filling a prescription in the United States, there are two types of medicine to choose from: brand name and generic. Brand name medicine is produced by the company that owns the patent to the drug. Exclusive rights to manufacture a drug usually expire about ten years after the patent was granted. Generic drugs are made by companies other than the original patent owner, and are relatively cheaper than brand name drugs.

The elderly are respected in the United States, and they can be found participating in many organizations that deal with government policy and the community. Nearly every community has a center for the elderly that provides affordable meals as well as many different kinds of entertainment and activities. When using public transportation, the elderly can purchase tickets at half price. Public transportation also has seats reserved for the elderly and the disabled. Public stadiums and theme parks also have reduced ticket prices for the elderly. The elderly also receive preferential treatment in some theaters, restaurants, coffee shops, and even stores. The elderly also receive some preferential treatment from the government when applying for residency or citizenship. People over sixty years of age who have lived in the United States for twenty years or more do not need to take any tests when applying for citizenship. The elderly make definite contributions to society, so it is right that they be respected and receive preferential treatment in some areas of life. When the elderly cannot independently take care of certain aspects of daily life, such as cooking, cleaning, buying groceries, and washing, the government will send a nurse to their homes to care for them and assist them with daily life.

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Modern real estate developers are very clever, and noticing that many elderly people have money they have applied to the government for free land on which to build housing for the elderly. The level of service provided in such communities is usually very high. There are doctors, nurses, security guards, pharmacies, and hospitals provided. In addition there are markets, restaurants, and coffee shops. The resources provided are many in number and of high quality; the elderly people living in such communities can receive five star service. Of course, this type of luxury comes at significant expense.

Generally services for the elderly are provided entirely by the government. Of course there are elderly people who live in government housing for the elderly that is paid for entirely by the government, and the subsidies given the elderly are quite large. Housing for the elderly that is held by private companies is subject to strict regulation by the government, and there are regularly scheduled inspections.

The elderly in the United States are provided with all kinds of care. Health care for instance is very thorough. Even if an elderly person does not have any serious medical condition, he or she can schedule checkups regularly with the doctor. If he or she does have a medical condition, then a doctor will examine the situation thoroughly and prescribe treatment when the cause has become clear. Elderly people with relatively bad economic circumstances can rely on money from government assistance and welfare. Life for the elderly has become carefree, and life expectancies have already reached to eighty and ninety years of age, and are steadily advancing towards one hundred years.

**Thirty six: Government health care provided to the elderly through Medicare is not as good as care provided to low-income citizens through Medicaid.**

Since the burdens we carry in life are so heavy and we expend all of our energy, when we reach old age we experience all kinds of illnesses. This is especially true of the oldest of the elderly, who commonly suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Such people can recall things from decades ago as if they were before their very eyes, and yet they cannot remember what happens right in front of them in the present. Many elderly people rely on wheelchairs because getting about is inconvenient for them. There are two main types of wheelchairs. One type can make three hundred sixty degree turns and is powered electrically, but is more prone to crashes and can cause injuries. The other type is designed to be pushed by someone else, but is relatively safer.

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Since the economic situation for the common people has improved there has been an increase in projects for the public welfare. Health care facilities have become more and more advanced, and new medications are more effective. Many new medical instruments are able to diagnose illnesses with greater precision than ever before and allow physicians to effect a cure. With people paying more attention to exercise, proper nutrition, and healthy entertainment, people's life expectancies are getting higher.

In the past, healthcare was not advanced because there were economic hardships. In those times, people in their fifties were considered old, and those in their seventies were considered to be of an advanced age. To reach seventy years of age has been most people's wish since ancient times. Today, a person in his or her fifties is considered to be in the prime of life, and seventy years of age is not seen as being all that old. It is very common to come upon people in their eighties and nineties. This is because people now know they ought to take exercise, control their food intake, refrain from smoking, drink less alcohol, and to cooperate with physicians' instructions and treatments. Even though air and water sources have become more polluted, life expectancies have risen.

When it comes to old age, the wealthy tend to fare better than the poor. For example, a wealthy person will have a large home with gardens and grass, a garage, a pool, housekeepers, chefs, cleaners, drivers, and gardeners. When wealthy elderly people leave home to travel, they are accompanied by their children or close friends, they buy first class airline tickets, and they stay in five-star hotels. These are all luxuries that a common person cannot afford to enjoy. Such wealthy people are open-minded, and they use their money for their own enjoyment. However more conservative people who do not spend all their money give their money to the government or the next generation when they pass away. Many people are very active when they age, and spend their money on activities, eating well, and fun because when you reach an advanced age and cannot do things independently, there is no use for the money.

Most members of the middle class own a home and have savings of up to one million dollars. Today's upper classes are those with savings of ten million dollars or more. Members of the middle class tend to have yearly incomes ranging from one hundred thousand dollars to five hundred thousand dollars, while the annual incomes of the wealthy tend to be in the millions of dollars.

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Many elderly people have high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and other medical conditions. Other than medications that cure illnesses, there are many types of supplements and vitamins available due to advancements in pharmaceuticals. Many elderly people's homes resemble small pharmacies because of the many medications and supplements they take. Although many elderly people are able to think clearly and can take their prescribed medicines themselves, others suffer from a declining memory and rely on others to administer their medicine. Many of the medications prescribed by doctors must be taken indefinitely once they have been prescribed. Many times the best treatment for elderly patients is exercise.

Many of today's elderly in the United States were still young when they immigrated. After working hard for several decades and perhaps creating businesses, they enjoyed some success and raised a fortunate family. When you enter old age, visiting the doctor, staying in hospitals, and purchasing prescriptions all become very expensive. If your body is weak and you have many illnesses, then it may become necessary to hire a nurse, the expense for which must come out of your own pocket. If you qualify for government benefits reserved for low-income people, then you can receive free healthcare through Medicaid.

Many middle class people try to qualify for government health benefits by giving their property and investments to their children or close relatives. However, this can lead to other kinds of problems, especially if it is difficult to get the money back from the children when it is needed. Many of the elderly were very hard-working during their youth, entering the middle class through their own enterprise. After getting old, they can live together with their children and grandchildren, receiving care from them and taking pleasure in the joy family brings.

Jobs helping the elderly with daily life are often held by new immigrants. The cost of employing someone to help an elderly person with daily tasks such as eating, dressing, and cleaning is approximately one thousand eight hundred dollars a month. If there is a relative living with the elderly person, than one nurse should be able to provide sufficient care, but if the elderly person lives alone, then a second nurse is necessary. Hiring even two nurses is still cheaper than paying for a nursing home. Elderly people are often unable to rely on their children for care because their children have families of their own to care for. Elderly people must live healthily in order to be happy. You cannot be happy when you are suffering from many illnesses.

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Some people study diligently or work hard creating new businesses, but do not find success in their studies or business endeavors. Although they may have some savings, they are never able to achieve much with it due to lack of skill with investment and administration. However, worrying about the allocation of property is not necessary.

When someone reaches sixty five years of age, he or she can begin to rely on social security payments to guarantee an income to live on. Those who held jobs will have retirement money as well. Those who did not accumulate enough savings during their working years can rely on government assistance in the form of welfare. This type of life is carefree because there is no need to worry about how to divide up one's wealth between children. In American society, a child raised in a poor family can study hard and become successful, but there is no guarantee that he or she will support his or her parents when the time comes for them to retire. Providing for the elderly is a responsibility often taken up by the government instead. For those of the elderly with children, it is considered lucky even for the children just to come regularly and treat them to a meal. For those of the elderly without children, although they can live carefree, they cannot avoid feelings of loneliness.

The United States is a large country with a flourishing culture. The dead are treated with courtesy and respect. Everyone is permitted to be interred when they die, no matter whether it is in the suburbs or in New York City. Throughout the five boroughs, even in Manhattan, there are small cemeteries. Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island each have many of their own cemeteries. Since in the past space in the city center was very narrow, cemeteries were placed in the suburbs. However, with the constant growth of the city, the suburbs eventually became city centers as well. The cemeteries that were already there received government protection and were respected. With increasing real estate prices, cemeteries are also being affected. Many years ago, people sold cemeteries several hundred or even several thousand acres of land, and now there can be much profit made in selling space for graves.

In addition to interment, there is also cremation. Most cemeteries also have areas to place urns. There are also sea burials, in which the ashes of the dead are dispersed over the water. The ashes can also be dispersed from a plane in flight.

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In the United States there are many senior centers that provide leisure activities for people over the age of sixty. These centers do not provide housing for seniors, but are rather places for seniors to eat meals and enjoy various activities. Senior centers in New York city are open five or six days a week from Monday to Friday or Monday to Saturday, from 9AM to 5PM. Affordable lunches are provided for as little as fifty cents. Lunches consist of bread or rice, chicken or pork, vegetables, milk, and fruit etc. The senior center in Chinatown also has places to play Mahjong, chess, ping pong, as well as places to practice T'ai Chi, calligraphy, and painting as well as an auditorium and a place to learn how to use computers. Occasionally group trips are organized. These activities are all either free or charge very small fees. Funding for senior centers is provided by the government and various organizations. Many senior citizens spend the day doing activities at the senior center from Monday to Friday, and then spend the weekend with their children and grandchildren, enjoying the family life.

### **Thirty seven: There are often many good jobs available in society waiting to be chosen.**

The most valued positions in society differ from nation to nation. Amongst traditional professions in the United States, medical scientist is the most revered. Even though their salaries are far from the highest, medical professionals receive a great deal of respect from people. Doctors do not need to take any risks either, due to the availability of malpractice insurance. However, becoming a doctor is far from easy. Your grades must be excellent, especially in biochemistry. After graduating from college, you must pass the MCAT exam in order to enter medical school. Many fail to pass the test. Even if you pass, you must then begin five arduous years of intense study. Those with superior grades advance, and the rest drop out. After graduating, you must complete a residency of at least two years, and then pass the board examinations. If you do not pass, then you can take the exam a second time. Only when you pass and receive your board certification can you truly be called a doctor. Since the medical professions is one that relies on knowledge, all that is needed to start a medical practice is a clinic, a telephone, a desk, a stethoscope, and an examination room. Currently it is very popular to specialize in a particular area of medicine. General practitioners will often undergo further training and another examination in order to become cardiologists, gastroenterologists, neurologists, OBGYNs, and other types of medical specialists.

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The second most respected profession in the United States is that of a lawyer, followed by that of a certified public accountant. University professors are another group of respected professionals. Professors have advanced academic degrees, often holding post-doctoral positions, and possess knowledge in abundance. They are the elite teachers of the world. Of course, their position cannot be evaluated on the basis of income. A professor's income is not high, but professors receive society's respect because of their knowledge and their efforts to pass that knowledge down to the next generation. Professorial work is not particularly taxing and there are few risks. Most professors are able to live a stable life. Jobs teaching primary school students or kindergarten students are more stressful because young children often do not interact well with teachers and it is difficult to be strict with them. Undergraduate students on the other hand are more mature, and the job of teaching them is more akin to giving guidance, so there is a greater discrepancy between the grades of the good and bad students. Some successful doctors and lawyers will return to university to teach and pass on their knowledge rather than continuing to practice their professions. Many high level government officials will enter professorial positions in University as well. Some presidents and vice presidents have taught at universities after leaving office because of the respect the position receives.

Government positions are also generally very good jobs, however when an elected official's term in office is over, he or she returns to being a common citizen. In many other countries, government officials are not restricted by elections and will continue to rise in the ranks of government if they perform well. For most officials, working in the government is akin to working in a large company. There are different levels of management, with the highest being department heads, who are nominated by the president. The head of the Department of Defense is usually an intellectual, and does not have the power to initiate military action. The president, commander in chief by title, does not conduct military affairs himself either. The officials responsible for carrying out military operations are soldiers educated in military academies. The head of the State Department is also nominated by the president, and often does not have an educational background in international affairs; however, the officials who carry out the actual work in international affairs have received relevant educations, but they do not have the qualifications to become head of the department. Other countries are different and have department heads who are qualified in their respective areas.