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My family immigrated to Hong Kong in the early 90s, about the time I finished kindergarten. I embraced Hong Kong like a long-lost sibling. And like most siblings, she has influenced me in becoming who I am now. The Hong Kong education system enforces a lot of memorization. At that time, I hated it. Who would want to memorize a thousand names and places anyway? But I was proven wrong. Only when I went to the US did I finally realize that enduring those long years of memorization would prove useful to me.

For two years of my college life, I am adapting well in school, despite the work load and the fact that I’m an international student. My memorization skill has come in handy with all the information that I have to chew on. It has helped me digest all kinds of facts and figures that come with living in a foreign land. It is something that I know will be useful in my chosen field of international relations. Memorization will facilitate my learning of different nations in this global community of ours.

At the same time, I love to read. There is a Chinese saying comparing reading to medicine, noting that it can cure foolishness. I know it is true. Before I memorize something, I have to read it first and what I enjoy reading most are historical stories.. I chose to major in international relations precisely to be involved in creating history, experience history. Reading a country’s history is one thing but being able to do something to enhance her condition – politically, socially, emotionally, physically is something.

There is something about history that draws me to it- the way we learn about our past, how it affects our presents, and if learnings from the past can guide us in the future. And if I can do that by being a diplomat, it will be a privilege. Hong Kong has a lot of international students. As such, I was exposed to different nationalities. This has helped my interaction with them, enhancing my communication skills. When I came to the US, I became one but it hasn’t stopped me from forming a relationship with them.

I am an international orientation leader in my school now. I talk on a daily basis with students from Honduras, Italy, Germany, Japan and Korea. There may be cultural differences but I always try to set it aside and see them as me, a student in a foreign land. That way I am able to understand them, their pains, their joys, their questions, their fears for I experience them, too. It is, in a way, a stepping stone in becoming a diplomat. Hong Kong has helped me laid out a map on my education. Now, I’m doing my part. With my US education, I know I’m two steps ahead.