

# FOREIGN EXCHANGE

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Imagine relocating to a foreign country with your parents. You are very shy and highly apprehensive toward communication. The foreign language is hard, you miss your friends, and you want to go home. Your family ends up leaving, but you are told to stay.

"My parents were staying for one year. After one year my father told me that I was going to stay for one more year," Jasmine Lee said. After insisting that she should stay in the U.S. alone her father also insisted that she continue her education and go to a university. "I couldn't wait for them to leave, my father is so strict. I couldn't wait to be alone. I wanted to

go with them to the airport but I had a class." It was all surreal to her, when she returned home after class that day her parents would be gone. "They tricked me into coming here to learn." She laughed. "But I learned to enjoy it here it's so comfortable, it's slower than Korea. Korea is so fast, but I like the people, how cordial they are," Jasmine said.

"A reason why I didn't want to go back to Korea with my parents was because I didn't want to leave my friends here. The friends I met here have become just as good friends as the ones I have in Korea that I knew for years," Jasmine said. Two years ago Jasmine's father



approached her and told her that she would be moving to the U.S. Her reaction was appalled. Her father, a child development professor at a university in Korea, was moving to research to enhance his career.

"I didn't want to leave, it was so sudden," Jasmine said. At the time, she was a speech therapy major at Woosong University in South Korea. At the time she was confused and wanted to continue her education in Korea.

Jasmine Lee is a lively 19-year-old Korean international student who has been studying here at LBCC for two years in the American Language and Culture Institute (ALCI). "ALCI is like an American high school; we learn reading, writing, listening and grammar. Each class is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with two breaks in between. There are four levels in each subject," Jasmine said.

Jasmine's Korean name is Jin Hyung Lee. Her English teacher gave her the name "Jasmine" and, "He told me that he was having a difficult time pronouncing my name, so he said he'll name me Jasmine since my name starts with a J." She said she loves the name and that it gave her a sense of a new beginning.

"When I told my friends and others that I was going to America they would respond in awe of my opportunity. I was so afraid and anxious, but then I became excited because I was curious to see America," Jasmine said.

International students face various obstacles that may be normal for us, but overwhelm-

ing for them. Picture yourself standing in the middle of a grocery store, with your stomach growling and clusters of symbols you are unable to understand surrounding you. That is the situation of an international student during their first time away from home.

"When I first came to America I didn't know English almost at all. Learning English was difficult at first because my teacher teaches us English in English, which was hard to un-

**"Making American friends doesn't come easy because of my accent. But I love going to different places and meeting new people."**

Jasmine Lee

derstand at first. At Woosong, my old professor taught English in Korean, but I couldn't understand because she used very sophisticated words to teach English so I didn't understand at all," Jasmine said. "I learned more and more with friends, going to parties and being with my boyfriend," Jasmine said. She broke up with her boyfriend a while ago. He was half Japanese, half Korean; being with him and my other Japanese friends made me want to learn Japanese."

"Making American friends doesn't come easy because of my accent. But I love going to