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# Fourteen Life Stories of Foreign Students in the U.S.A.: Reader for Students of English as a Second Language

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M. Thesis  
K145r

READER FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

FOURTEEN LIFE STORIES OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE U. S. A.

16088

BY

MANOON KARUTHANANG

This material is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International Training,  
Brattleboro, Vermont, The United States of America

December, 1976

Recorded material is available in the M.A.T. resource center.

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Brattleboro, Vermont

This material by Manoon Karuthanang is accepted in its present form.

Date

Dec 1976

Principal Advisor

D. Clark

Reader

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Manoon Karuthanang

December 1976  
School for International Training  
Brattleboro, Vermont U.S.A.

## ABSTRACT

The following stories were written basically from my experience as a foreign student in the United States. Some stories portray actual incidents which I experienced during the five years of my life in the U. S. My purpose in writing these stories is to provide cross-cultural reading material for the English as a Second Language class and to provide an orientation handbook for the student of English as a second language whose language level is intermediate to advanced. The stories provide hypothetical situations and aspects of language, customs and the culture of the Americans which the student should know.

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\* These materials are also record<sup>ed</sup> on a cassette tape. The tape is available in the M.A.T. resource center

## How To Use The Materials

### Out of the Classroom, For all Overseas Students:

Read the story which is relatively important to your present situation first. You do not need to go through every story chapter by chapter. For example, you can begin with "Love: American College Student Style", listen to the mini-drama on the tape and think about the story for a few days if you are in love with an American girl.

### In the Classroom, For Teachers

The teacher should study the materials thoroughly before he/she presents them to his/her students. The class should spend the major part of its time in small group discussion and/or panel discussion after finishing each story. Keep in mind that the materials are tools which you may use to increase inter-cultural insight and cross-cultural awareness in your student.

Manoon Karuthanang

## Take Off

(adapted from "Touch Down" by Ammerman & Econopouly)

by

Manoon Karuthanang

"Go to an American school?" Chit wanted to think over the news that he received after meeting with his Peace Corps Volunteer teacher one November afternoon. His teacher mentioned it to him after the final examination. Chit left the teacher's room and took a long walk back to his dormitory. His teacher said that Chit would have a better chance if he attended the last two years at an American school in America. It could give him the necessary help and guidance in getting ready for college and see to it that he took the required courses. Also, it would give him a chance to improve his English which we hadn't used much out of the classroom. Chit had to admit that all this made a certain amount of sense to him. He had always had some ideas of going to a college or a university in the United States. The first time was when there was a competitive examination for an American Field Service scholarship. Unfortunately, Chit was late for the second written examination. Needless to say, he didn't have a chance for an interview and lost his first golden opportunity.



Chit didn't want to be a teacher in a village school as his father had been. The work was too unchallenging for him. And besides, it didn't bring much recognition, experience, or the money he wished to have. Chit was thinking of becoming a director of a college in his hometown. This would be more interesting than teaching year after year in a small college. Besides, think how proud his family would be if he were to become a "pu aumnui gan" a director of a teacher training college after he graduated from an American university.

"Well, here is another golden opportunity", Chit thought as he arrived at the dormitory. "I have nothing to lose and I know American teachers and students are very nice people."

December 20, 1971 was the most exciting day in Chit's life. He recalled later that it was the day that his new ways of life began. His family, friends and teachers crowded the Don Muang Airport terminal to see him off.

Chit had a brand new dark blue suit on. The suit was a present from his older sister. His older brother, who was a Buddhist priest, had hired a professional photographer just for that special occasion. With "pounwg malai" around his neck, Chit stood among his brothers, sisters and friends to have his picture taken. Chit's father was beside him most of the time. The old man's face reflected deep concern. Chit smiled occasionally to

reassure his aging father that everything would be all right. His sister, who had raised Chit since his mother passed away, shed her tears as Chit walked to a departure gate. As for Chit, he had mixed emotions. He smiled with drops of tears on his cheek as his P.C.V. teacher shook his hand.

"Chit, I am proud of you and I will be seeing you in the United States." The Volunteer was from Illinois. Chit has never heard from him since he left Thailand. Chit did not forget to say good-bye to his sweetheart. She was not at the airport. Three days before they went boating together. "She will write me if she is truly in love with me", Chit thought.

It was 10:30 p.m. when the plane took off from Don Muang Airport. Chit was lucky. His father had reserved a window seat for him. From 4,000 feet above Bangkok, Chit took a last look at the Bangkok skyline which gradually faded away as the plane increased its speed and climbed to an altitude of 6,000 feet. A few minutes after taking off, Chit could see only the dark sky. It did not take a long time before a person who was sitting next to Chit found something for amusement or just to kill the time. That person was unknown to Chit. For a man, he had very long hair. Chit had heard a lot of stories about hippies from his friends. However, he tried to be friendly with the one who was sitting next to him.

"Hey, man. What's your name?" was the question from Chit's fellow

passenger.

"Chit. My name is Chit. What's yours?"

Instead of giving an answer, the hippie laughed until his tears came out. The laugh was loud enough to draw attention from nearby passengers. Although he was very annoyed, Chit kept his cool. Before he could repeat his question, the hippie pointed at Chit's neck and mumbled the words clearly enough to be heard: "Dumb Buddhist!"

"This is only the beginning," Chit thought as he turned away from the hippie. "It would pass as time goes by," he felt. "All Americans are not hippies. American students are nice. They don't have long hair and they don't insult a friend from overseas." Chit remembered that advice given him by the P.C.V. teacher.

On December 21, 1971, at midnight, Chit found himself among a crowd of strangers at the London Airport terminal. He was twelve hours behind schedule. Bad weather delayed the flight between Munich and London. To make matters worse, Chit couldn't find any of his luggage at the airport. The plane was leaving for New York in 20 minutes. The announcement was made so rapidly and so unclearly that Chit could not understand a word of it. Chit did not know who to turn to for help. There was no policeman around. He was sure that his luggage had been stolen.

"All my clothes, food, and valuable gifts are gone", thought Chit.

"What am I going to do?" Sitting there in misery among the unsmiling strangers, Chit saw his dream of life as a director of a college fading away.

Take Off

Things To Talk About & Think About

1. What was the real reason for Chit's going to America? Was it a valid reason? Where did Chit get the information about going to America? Who advised you as to what is good for you? Are you realistic about your plans?
2. What motivated Chit to want to become "pu-am nui-kan"? Are his reasons good ones? Ambition and disillusion sometimes lead students to needless trouble. Has this ever happened to you? What can you do about it?
3. Before Chit took off from the airport, what was his attitude toward his future life? Was it reasonable? How did he react to the hippie on board the plane? Why did that man laugh so much when Chit pronounced his name? How do you think you would react if you were a Buddhist and you heard the comment, "Dumb Buddhist"?
4. What do you think are the reasons for Chit's preconception about American teachers and students? Do you have the same preconceptions as he? Why?
5. Chit seems to be very sure of his high English proficiency, yet he had trouble understanding the announcement at the airport. Why? Do you think you would have the same problem? Have you ever noticed any differences when native speakers of English speak with each other and when they speak to a non-native speaker?

6. During the long trip across continents, there can be a lot of inconveniences and disturbances such as a missed flight, lost property, or the delay of a flight. Some of these problems can be eliminated. How can you be prepared to meet the minimum problems?

Hi Dere!

by

Manoon Karuthanang

Asheville, N.C.

At 10:00 a.m. a Greyhound coach came to a full stop at the Asheville bus terminal. A nervous-looking young man named Chom stepped out of the bus. He was the last person to get off the late bus here. He hesitatingly approached a bus driver and finally managed to get his attention only to increase the nervousness of the young man.

"Yeah. Dis iz Asheville, all right", said the driver. Apparently, Chom had difficulty understanding English. To his total surprise, everybody he spoke to did not speak normal English, if it was English at all! Their accent was outlandish to him. It sounded very funny and very strange to his ears. Chom tried to think of some similarities to his native dialect. "Yes," thought Chom, "these people are speaking a dialect. But what kind? My teacher never mentioned that there were dialects in the United States."

Again, Chom hesitatingly walked into the arrival building, never losing his nervousness or the worried expression on his face. Chom looked around the lounge as if he expected to find some familiar faces. The college was fourteen miles from the bus terminal. Chom was supposed to call his friends at the college in order to get a ride to the place. He

had been advised not to take a taxi for two reasons: "It's expensive and dangerous".

The phone rang and then there was a click, followed by a voice: "Hello. This is a recording from the administration building of Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina. Due to the Christmas vacation, the office will be closed until December 30, 1971. In case of emergency, please call 298-9910. Merry Christmas."

Chom was amazed. He stood in the phone booth for a few minutes thinking of what to do next. He thought of walking to the college. Fourteen miles was not very far for him. Chom used to walk a lot in his country from his village to the nearby small town. But now he had a big suitcase with him. Walking was out of the question. Chom did not think that the situation was urgent. He did not want to bother anyone by calling the emergency number.

As Chom was trying to make a decision, he wondered what had happened to his suitcase. To find out, he walked back to where he got off the bus. There it was, a suitcase so big that he could hardly lift it. Inside were books and clothes which belonged to him. There were gifts from his native land which he had to present to many people when he arrived at the college.

"Hi dere. Yo need sum help?"



Chom's body jerked from being surprised by the voice. He turned around to meet two rows of white teeth which looked as if someone had pasted them on a black face of a huge black man.

Chom answered, "I beg your pardon, sir, but what did you say?"

The black man said, "Ah sade di y'uh need some help wi yo' luggage?", pointing at the big suitcase.

"I'm sorry," said Chom, "but I can not understand what you said. Excuse me, if you please."

The two rows of white teeth disappeared from the friendly black face. The black man took a few steps backward. With great confusion, Chom dragged his heavy suitcase into the lounge of the arrival building where he sat for three hours before a policeman came up, asked him a few questions, and took him to the college.

Hi Dere!

Things to Think and Talk About

1. What could Chom have done instead of sitting in the bus terminal for three hours? What would you do if you were in a similar situation?
2. Chom knows English at a conversational level but he had trouble understanding the bus driver and the people in the South. He does not know that dialects exist in the U.S.A. Would it be of some help if he did? Why?
3. Who was the black man who offered Chom help? Was Chom cautious or avoiding conversation with the man?
4. Do you have any knowledge of any "accent" or "dialect" in the United States? If so, how would you use it once you are in the U.S.? If not, do you see any need to familiarize yourself with those dialects? Explain your answer.

## The Boy Who Never Smiled

(adapted from "The Girl Who Never Smiled" by Ammerman & Econopouly)

by

Manoon Karuthanang

My name is Tong. I go to a school in Boston. My friends, Noi, Boonma, and Kim, go to the same school. We live together in a small apartment near downtown Boston, Massachusetts. This is the neighborhood where other Thai students also live.

We came to the United States in the spring of 1974. Two years ago we went to the same school in Bangkok, Thailand. My father is a professor in a well-known university in Bangkok. He is a kind and understanding person. Although he is conservative and religious, he never interfered nor disapproved of the activities of my life. I lived with my family in a garden house. It was surrounded by trees and rich vegetation bearing oranges, durians, mangoes, coconuts, and other tasty fruit. It was a beautiful place to live, and I think of it often. I think about the cool evenings when I sat and talked while eating delicious "kwaw neiw mamowng" on the porch of our garden home, and I think about the warm days when I

enjoyed swimming in the cool water in a "klong" near my home. My friends, relatives, and my family were kind people. They filled my life with the joy of companionship.

I left my family in Bangkok to come to school in America because there are many good schools here. Someday I may return to my pleasant garden home, take a job in a university as a professor, as my father did, and live in Bangkok for the rest of my life. It will be a happy occasion to meet my girlfriend after long, lonely years.

I usually think of Bangkok in the winter when the days here are cold and the evenings are bleak. In winter I do not laugh and smile here as I did in Bangkok. I cover my modern fashion skirts and pants with a great black and brown overcoat, and wrap myself against the biting wind and think about the afternoon sun in Bangkok.

Our apartment is very small and it is crowded with four of us, so my friends sometimes go out into the street and stand in the cold to watch the snow falling. I look through the window at them. There they stand in their strange and solemn coats. I remember how they used to laugh. They do not laugh now. They look cold and unhappy, so different from the way they looked in klong water. People who do not know my friends say they look evil and ask, "Why don't they ever smile?"

Is the cold the reason that people do not seem happy here? Why is it that so many of them are in such a hurry? Is it the cold or is it the big city? I think it must be the cold because Bangkok is a big city, too, but people there walk at ease and seem more friendly. Here in Boston people seem unfriendly. Some people, in fact, do not like those of us who come from Thailand. They call us names, and tell us we are stupid, lazy and other bad things.

In one way, I am very fortunate. I speak English well and I can read and write it, too. My school in Bangkok taught English and it was my favorite subject. Some of my friends who do not know English are doing poorly in school, even though some of their teachers speak Thai. Many are even failing their courses.

I am surprised at the changes in some Thai students, especially girls. I knew some of them in Bangkok and they were good students or, if not that, they were obedient students with good manners, as Thai women should be. Here many of them begin to follow the fashion and customs which are not practiced in our country: dating with several boys in a week, drinking, smoking and, worst of all, premarital cohabitation. Some of these girls talk to each other, and often to boys, with harsh words. They say terrible things about the old customs of Thailand.

Some of the boys are trouble-makers. They disrupt the class and

and say terrible things about the teacher. A few of them have been spoken to by the police, or even taken to the police station, and among those boys some of them have grown mean and discourteous. I have heard of a few boys who are addicted to marijuana. I worry about my close friends, Noi, Boonma, and Kum; will they also turn against the school, their teachers, and me?

I wonder about such changes. What has caused them to happen? What has made my friends so hostile when once they were kind and friendly? Could it be financial pressure, homesickness, and young age? Is it the cold that they do not feel at home? Is it the difficult language, the rushing traffic and unsmiling faces, the obscene words? Or is it something deeper than this?

I will soon graduate from high school and then go on to college in a town in northern Texas. Perhaps things may get better when I leave Boston. I know the weather is warm in the South and besides, as I was told, the southerners are friendly people.

The Boy Who Never Smiled

Discussion Questions

1. Tong thinks nostalgically about Bangkok. Do you think his description of life there is realistic, or has his judgment been influenced by the passage of time?
2. What seems to be the main causes of Tong's culture shock? What are some misunderstandings about Bangkok that Tong mentions?
3. Tong lived in Boston where there are many Thai students in the neighborhood. Do you see the disadvantages and/or advantages in this? If you were Tong, would you live with Thai friends or American friends? Explain your answer.
4. Tong seems to dislike some customs of America, especially the freedom of sexual activities. If you are a girl, what is your reactions to his ideas? If you are a boy, do you approve of his ideas? Explain your answer.
5. If Tong were from a rural area of Thailand, would he have more or fewer problems living in Boston?  
  
American society is a mobile one, which means that people keep moving here and there all the time. Do you think people in northern Texas will be different from the people in Boston as Tong thinks? If they are, how will that help the situation?
6. Some of the things you have discussed here apply to your present

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situation, others do not. What are some of the similarities and differences?



## The Dean's List

(adapted from "The Diploma" by Ammerman & Aconopouly)

by

Manoon Karuthanang

It was early in the fall semester, the first day of school after a long and boring summer, when I found a white envelope along with a few letters in my campus mailbox. Inside was a letter from the Academic Dean. On behalf of the faculty and staff, he had sent me a letter of congratulations. I was one of the top three students on the Dean's List.

I suppose I ought to have been proud of this honor. Actually, I was very ashamed of it. I was proud of my friends and myself; I was also ashamed of my friends and myself. You may be confused and think that I am crazy, almost as confused as I am. To prevent the confusion, let me tell you the rest of the story.

My friends and I were students from Dnaliah. Our story was typical. It was a story of thousands of Dnalian students who somehow found their way to American schools, got part-time jobs washing dishes, cleaning houses or even working in a factory. None of my friends' names appeared on the Dean's

List that semester - and they did not seem to care one way or the other. All of them, however, maintained their grade point average high enough not to be suspended from school. They are my good friends. The first year we did many things together, cooking, studying and traveling. We got along very well.

Soon I got bored of being around with these people. Everything we did soon turned into a routine. Besides, it took a lot of my time which I should have spent studying. Finally, I decided to give them the "cold shoulder". I locked myself in my room or in the library whenever I knew that my friends would come for a visit or to get together for a Dnalian dinner. I had decided to study and keep away from all outside distractions.

In time, I learned the language at a rapid rate, spoke the language well and was as 'American' as the other students in the school. I also learned to make fun of my Dnalian friends who still spoke their not-quite-perfect English. It was I who led the first "humiliating game" on the new Dnalian student who hesitantly approached the classroom on his first day. I felt the strange triumph for the first time. It was so much fun to see the stupid look on the Dnalian student's face, who thought he knew English better than the other foreign students. I was so proud of myself when I finally gained recognition from a group of American friends as a result of the game. Although I felt guilty, recognition was worth paying a high price for, I decided. Certainly it was worth getting rid of my conservative

Dnalian friends who would never get anywhere with their not-quite-perfect English.

For the most part, things went nicely from then on. My ex-friends realized what I was up to. I was a good student, and did well as the year progressed. From the fact that I was around with American friends most of the time, I soon spoke English fluently. My American friends and teachers accepted me as a member of the great American majority.

The only problem was the feeling of shame when my Dnalian friends spoke their not-perfect English in front of the class, and my oriental looks. I thought many times of changing my last name to fit in with the American nickname which had been given me (by American students, of course).

I came to America four years ago. I did not realize that I would remain in this country for so long. I enrolled at a small college for the summer semester and within a few weeks I felt at ease. I learned to adapt myself to the environment quickly. I did not realize at the time that there were many things too subtle for me to recognize. I soon went back to the old problem again.

Students from many countries attended our college. Among those, Americans were the majority. There were students from Japan, Thailand, India, Peru, England and many other countries. There were also quite a

number of Dnalian students like me. I did not see the difference at the beginning. I began to feel it a little at a time.

It started when a group of American students (not all the Americans) made fun of the Dnalian students. They said that Dnalians were "really weird" in the way they dressed and the way they went around most of the time in groups. "Those Dnalian guys are queers!", someone shouted. A loud laugh followed. I laughed with them. That night I felt guilty for the first time that year. After that event I came to the point where I had to make a choice. I knew very well what choice I would take. I needed friends that I could spend time with, without losing their recognition of me. The best friends were those who enjoyed themselves at the expense of others. We laughed at Dnalians and other foreign students. For these friends I had to pay a full price. I had paid half so far. It was not easy but in the end I would pay it in full.

And I did just that. I even paid an extra price for the friendship, to remove any doubt that I wasn't Americanized, to deny the suspicious look at my oriental features. I not only joined the crowd, I led it. I laughed at Dnalian students. I ridiculed Dnalian dress, religion, food, government, and every detail of Dnalian tradition. I learned to be ashamed of my Dnalian heritage. And as a result I gained recognition, made friends and got good grades.

And as all of this was happening, I knew that somehow it could not, or should not succeed. There were students (Dnalian, Americans and others) who looked at me with contempt. In the meantime, my American friends had drawn me closer into their group. The trouble was more within me. There were those nights of guilt, my inability to look my Dnalian fellow students directly in the eyes, my growing uneasiness as I looked at myself. My problem of oriental looks, which I thought had disappeared, was now brought sharply into focus and I knew that it had never really disappeared at all.

How long, I wondered, could I bear this feeling? Is there a limit to the price I have to pay for friendship, admiration, popularity? I wondered what being American was really like. I had come thousands of miles from Dnaliah, worked and sacrificed a lot of things to feed my ambition. And now I achieved recognition. I wondered, "Was it really worth it to be on the Dean's List?" I had paid for it with long hours of study, Dnalian friends and my Dnalian heritage. There were things this honor did not represent: my own identity as a Dnalian, dignity, pride of my country, and self-respect. For one brief moment I regained the awareness of who I was. Sympathy with my Dnalian friends was back and I was proud of them, of their determination to maintain Dnalian identity - and at the same moment I was in despair of myself.

I would graduate from college soon. I had to decide whether to go on

to graduate school or return to my country. To a certain extent, I knew that I could not go on collecting my good grades and expecting to be successful playing a game with those American friends. But, how about my own identity, my Dnalian friends, and my country? I had rejected all of them. Would it be wise to play two faces and escape reality forever?

I thought these thoughts holding the Dean's letter in my hand. I knew I was facing a critical point in life where a wrong decision would lead me into wreckage forever. I was looking at myself honestly - and I knew what I would do.

I would show the Dean's letter to my American friends. That could mean more recognition and triumph.

The Dean's List

Discussion Questions

1. If you were the boy in the story, what direction would you take?  
Explain your answer.
2. Create a situation for the boy several years later after this story.  
Write the concluding paragraph for the story. Compare your story with those of your classmates.
3. Why are some of American students "anti-foreigners"? What do you think causes this kind of attitude and behavior?
4. Prejudice and discrimination exist in most parts of the world where there are minority groups. How do prejudices against other people begin? As a victim, how would you cope with the problem? Ignore it or hide your identity?
5. The boy in the story seems to feel that he has a practical reason for changing his name. Does he? If so, what is it? Ridiculous as it may sound, the boy also wants to change his appearance so that he will look American. What is your explanation of this tragedy?
6. The boy is proud and also ashamed of his Dnalian friends and of himself. Why? Obviously, he has a problem. What is it? Do you have solutions for him? What are they?
7. Do you think you might want to become an American citizen? If so, what

are your reasons? Is it possible to be totally satisfied with life once you change your citizenship?

Do you think that, while you are here, you will want to be like an American? Why? Why not?

8. How well do you know your own country, your heritage, and important customs and traditions? Are you proud of these things? Are you ready to protect your own identity against the influence of many foreign customs while you stay abroad?
9. Are you prepared to face "culture shock" when you return to your own country?



## Wibool's Summer Job

by

Manoon Karuthanang

(Note: The following story is basically true. The name of the person was changed but the places, background, and events of the story are true.)

Wibool was sad and worried. It was clear to him that he would be laid off from work within a few weeks. He would hear a last message from his work supervisor before he got off in the morning.

Wibool was not a scholarship student. He had come to the United States two years ago and enrolled in a small private college in Swannanoa, North Carolina. Among many Thai students, Wibool was one who had to go through a lot of hardship because of financial pressure. The reason could be that he was from a low income family, unlike many Thai students who were sent to the U.S.A. by their rich parents. Wibool's family owned a small rice farm where they grew just enough rice to feed the family. The family could not afford to give Wibool financial support. However, Wibool was not disappointed. In fact, being poor increased his ambition and created strong will power in him.

The college offered a work-study program which Wibool participated in with willingness. As every student, he worked fifteen hours a week on campus. In return, he received room and board. For Wibool that was fair enough. Without the work-study program he would have had to drop out of the college.

When summer vacation came, Wibool did not let time pass him by. He got together with a few friends and set out to hunt for summer jobs. A work supervisor at the college reminded Wibool and his friends of a new regulation concerning a working permit. The new rule prevented foreign students from working off-campus without being granted a working permit from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Wibool did not ignore the regulation. He sent in his application for a work permit two weeks before the vacation began. He knew that there would be a long wait for a reply. He also knew that if he didn't get a reply, he would be forced to violate the regulation. He had worked the summer before, but things had not been so difficult as it was this year. When the new regulation was issued, thousands of foreign students who supported themselves through college by working on odd jobs, were either arrested, deported, went on working illegally, or they had to drop out and become illegal aliens.

These students were willing to work long and hard hours during the summer to earn enough money for their expenses in the following school year.

That year things got very difficult for Wibool: the strict regulation

from the INS, the high unemployment rate among American citizens, and inflation. Rumor had it that many college students were arrested and deported. Employers were subject to the new law - if they knowingly hired undocumented workers, they could be fined up to \$1,000 per illegal worker.

Besides all these obstacles, Wibool also had to worry about his sick mother in Thailand. He hoped to work as much as he could to earn some extra money which he would send to his mother so that she could pay for her medical bills. After two months of waiting, Wibool finally received a reply from the immigration office. He was granted a work permit.

Looking for a job was not easy for Wibool. He did not have transportation. His friends gave up the idea and decided to stay on campus and work for the school. Wibool went on by himself. He searched the town, went to more than 20 places, including all the big and small factories in town, where he left an application at every personnel office. If there was anything that discouraged him it must have been the sign at the personnel office door which read, "Don't call us; we'll call you."

Wibool waited for almost a month before he got a call from Beacon Blanket Company in Swannanoa. The vacancy was an unexpected one. A man who worked on that job had had an accident and left the job. It was not an easy job for a man of Wibool's size, but he took it anyway.

The factory was about three miles from campus. The problem for Wibool was he had to walk to work in the dark every night because his working hours were from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Despite this trouble, Wibool liked his new job. His wages were considerably good. Wibool got along very well with all his fellow workers. An old man who operated a machine next to Wibool called him "grasshopper". Wibool didn't mind it and from then on he was known as Mr. Grasshopper. Wibool was a good worker. He was loved by the work supervisor and everyone who worked on the same shift. Then one day, things returned to where they had begun. After distributing pay checks to everybody, the work supervisor came up to Wibool and handed him his last pay check.

"Grasshopper", said the supervisor with a sad tone, "I'm sorry to tell you that this is the last one you'll get from us."

Wibool understood. The factory had found a new man for the job. They could not stand seeing a tiny boy like Wibool wrestling with a 500-pound cotton bale. So they asked him to look for an easier job. Wibool folded his last pay check with his oil-stained hands and put it carefully in his pocket where he kept a photograph of his mother.

Walking back to college that morning was unbearable for Wibool, tired from hard work and a sleepless night. He began to feel a spasm in his eye muscles. Wibool always expected hardship from living in the U.S.A. He

knew it before he came to this country. Unfortunately, he did not foresee the circumstances he then had to deal with. A week ago, Wibool had received news of his mother's death. His father asked him to return home to attend the funeral. Wibool did not have enough money to fly home. He did not know anybody well enough to borrow the money, either.

As Wibool was thinking these thoughts, tears began to roll down his cheeks. Bad feelings, sadness and a sense of despair overwhelmed him so much that he did not realize he was walking in the middle of the road. Before anything could be done, it was too late. A car came around a curve at high speed and it happened in one instant: the sound of a horn, wheels squealing on the road, a loud scream. Wibool's body flew into the air and - flop! - it landed several yards from where he was hit. After that, no part of his body moved. In his right hand there was an oil-stained check and a worn-out picture of his mother which he held onto with a dead man's grip.

Wibool's Summer Job

Things to Think and Talk About

1. Would you commit yourself to unforeseen circumstances as Wibool did?  
Note that Wibool was from a low income family and he also knew that he would have to deal with financial pressure once he was in the U.S.A.
2. Do you plan to work while staying in the U.S.A.? For what reason will you have to work?
3. Most overseas students in the U.S. normally want to complete their study before returning home. Once they are faced with a problem, either with the law of immigration or with the school, instead of seeking help from home or returning home, they go underground and become an outlaw. What do you think are the reasons for this kind of phenomenon? Do you think there is a way to deal with this problem? If so, what is it?
4. Re-write the concluding paragraph of Wibool's Summer Job. Feel free to use your imagination. If you let Wibool die the story ends there, but if you let him live you will have a very interesting story.

## Junior Varsity

by

Manoon Karuthanang

(adapted from "For Boys Only" by Ammerman and Econopouly)

Witoon had made up his mind. Playing for the junior varsity soccer team was not a rewarding experience for him. He had been thinking of joining up with the varsity team but the problem was that he was too small to risk being hurt from playing against bigger boys like Joe and Jim on the varsity team. As Witoon was thinking this, he saw the ball suddenly come toward the goal. He launched his body in the direction in which the ball was coming, reached out his hands, and caught the ball in mid-air. His teammates shouted, "Good catch, Witoon!" The loud cheer was followed by some boys who ran up to Witoon and gave him a friendly pounding on the back. Witoon threw the ball far onto the field. As the ball moved from his goal, he returned to his quiet thinking once more.

It had happened last spring. Witoon was asked to come to a meeting. The soccer season was approaching. The head coach wanted to recruit as many men as he could. At the meeting Witoon sensed some strange feeling from the group. He was the last person who was introduced. No one cheered

or clapped as he stood up. The coach called out the names of some of the veteran players and announced that Joe would be the captain of the varsity team. Jim, a boy the same size as Joe, would be in charge of the team when Joe was absent. Witoon had seen these boys play soccer before. He did not like the way they played. To Witoon, Joe was too slow as a center forward and Jim was clumsy as a right back. The only advantage they had in the game was their good physical build. Other than that, Joe and Jim were just ordinary soccer players.

The day after the meeting was a try-out day. Everybody was excited and enthusiastic about the try-out. The coach blew a whistle to call everybody together and divided them into two teams. Joe called out his men. Witoon was not included on Joe's team. Jim called his men and included Witoon because he did not have enough men to make a team; so he asked Witoon to be the goalkeeper.

When the try-out ended, Joe's team won by 1 to 0. The goal was made by accident. One of Witoon's teammates had knocked the ball into the goal during a fight for the ball. The following day, a list appeared on the bulletin board. Witoon's name was on the junior varsity team. Witoon did not say anything or make any kind of protest. It seemed clear to him that in order to join the varsity team he must pay the price to Joe, the captain of the team.

Witoon never skipped the practices and he really worked hard at it. In a few weeks Witoon became a skillful goalkeeper. One day before the first



game, Witoon was given a uniform which he wore on Saturday afternoon when the J.V. played a team from another college. Witoon realized with a touch of pride that he had gotten better since he began. During the first few games of the season, he didn't allow any goals and his team won many games. Witoon began to see some hope of joining the varsity team in the near future.

As Witoon was thinking all this, Joe and Jim suddenly appeared on the scene, along with their varsity teammates. The J.V. team was practicing on Sunday afternoon as regularly scheduled. Witoon had just caught a ball and was ready to throw it back into play. Joe, with a pocket knife in his hand, approached Witoon and asked him for the ball. Witoon knew immediately what was going to happen if he handed Joe the ball. Joe would puncture it to stop any practicing of the J.V. team on the field. When Witoon refused, Joe's face turned red with anger. Ignoring him, Witoon turned and got ready to throw the ball.

"Hey, boy!", said Joe, "Are you going to give me the ball or do I have to take it from you?" Witoon stopped for the second time. By then, his teammates were shouting and telling him to throw the ball to them. Witoon glared at Joe with deep emotion. He did not want any trouble but this Joe was asking for it.

"Listen", Joe said. "Don't get sore. I'm just kidding." Witoon knew he wasn't. "If you give me the ball I will see to it that you play on our team."

Finally his time had come. The time to be approved by Joe, the time to join the varsity team, to ride on the team bus, to get out of class early, and to travel to play away games. "It's time", Witoon thought. He hesitated a moment and finally decided to . . .

Junior Varsity

Things to Think and Talk About

1. If you were in the same situation as Witoon, what would you do? Write a conclusion to the story, explaining your answer. When you complete the story, read it to the class and compare your story to your classmates.
2. In this story, it is obvious that there is a cultural conflict between Witoon and Joe. Can you point out some details of the conflict? Ask your teacher about the characteristics of American youth, their value system, and compare it to yours.
3. Do you think all American boys who play soccer, football, and other sports behave as Joe did? What do you think about Joe's violent nature? Was it his personality or was it a misunderstanding? Keep in mind that Joe was an adolescent.
4. How would you use sports as a means of establishing friendship? Would you demonstrate your skill in one of your traditional sports or teach your foreign friends to play such a sport? Why or why not?
5. What do you think about competition in sports?

"Wait 'Til You Try Their Home-Made Apple Pie!"

by

Manoon Karuthanang

One of my American professors, who had lived for five years in Beirut, Lebanon, had an American friend who is still living there even now. Once the professor asked his friend if he had ever had an upset stomach from eating Lebanese food. The answer was simple and typical. His friend told him that he had had only one upset stomach - which he got the day he arrived and which he has had ever since.

There are approximately 24,000 Thais in America in 1976. You can be sure what every one of these Thais misses the most about Thailand is Thai food. None of the Thai students I came across said they didn't want to eat spicy, hot food. In fact, if Thai students were allowed to cook their own food in the dormitory, there would be very few Thais who would want to eat in a school cafeteria.

Many people instinctively take their native food along wherever they go. This instinct could be the old hang-up which people grow up with. I am not suggesting that you should bring a lot of food with you to America. But I only want to bring to your attention some of the facts about food

which you will have to face while visiting or studying in America. If you are not aware of this problem you may spend more time in the kitchen than in the library. Here are some of the remarks made by Thai students in America.

Samart: American food is nutritious although it does not always taste as good as Thai dishes. Some American food, such as milk, is likely to give a Thai an upset stomach. In my first week here, I couldn't drink milk without getting an upset stomach. It took a few weeks before my system got used to it. For Americans, there is no question that milk is good for your health. I was told to drink a lot of it if I wanted to stay healthy. Now I drink at least five glasses of milk a day instead of water.

Wanchai: I was not crazy about the food they served at the dining hall. It was badly prepared. Sometimes they served left-over food. I got so sick from the left-overs that I ate very little there. By ten o'clock each night I would get hungry but find nothing to eat except soda pop, candy bars, and crackers from the vending machine. That stuff is bad and expensive.

Noi: You know what makes me very upset here? I gain a lot of weight from eating very little. Eating food I dislike but gaining all of these pounds is what really drives me crazy. I don't know if there is anything wrong with me or not but it must be the food (again, I don't eat much, either!) I never eat breakfast because there is absolutely nothing for me

to eat. What am I going to do? I want to lose some weight. I am too fat now.

Pornjit: I am very choosy about what I eat. To me, good taste is as important as good quality. I am fond of spicy food. Unfortunately, spice is very hard to find around here (Asheville, N.C.). My mother sent some stuff to me from Thailand. But sending food here is inconvenient and expensive, too. So I sometimes order something from Chinatown in New York or San Francisco. It still costs money but there is no problems with customs or taxes as when you have them sent from Thailand.

Sming: There are a few typical American dishes which I particularly like, steak dinner and ice cream for dessert, for example. Working for two years with a food service taught me a lot of things about what is and what isn't typical American food. Most of the dishes which are prepared at home, in a restaurant, or in a cafeteria, are a product of recipes from many countries of the world. When the immigrants migrated to America, they brought with them their native food or recipes for their native dishes along with their customs, religions, and many other things. Italians contributed spaghetti and pizza. The British shared ham and cheese sandwiches. The Germans brought frankfurters and the Chinese never go anywhere without chow mein and roast duck. As far as I know, among the few dishes that Americans claim as their typical dishes are the hot dog, the hamburger, steak, and fried chicken.

Without any exaggeration, I can say that the American diet is not tasty or delicious to Thai people. On the other hand, it is high in nutrition - proteins, vitamins, and many more minerals which are good for the body. In other words, Americans aim at quality rather than taste as far as food is concerned. Organic food is becoming more and more popular nowadays. Another piece of advice: do not expect good food from the cafeteria at every meal. If you have the opportunity to eat someplace else (say you are invited to dinner at an American home), don't turn it down the first time you are invited. Home-made American food is supposed to be good (and in fact, I know it is!). Besides, at dinner you will find out that Americans are a warm and generous people in their own home, as you might have heard before. (Especially on special occasions such as Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.) Your attitude toward the American diet may change after you have dined with a typical American family.

Wait 'Til You Try Their Home-Made Apple Pie!

Things To Do, Think and Talk About.

1. In terms of taste and value, is food your major concern in daily life?  
How would you cope with the different taste of foreign food?
2. Have you ever thought of using your native food as your I.D. card (in terms of making yourself known to the world)? Or have you ever been embarrassed by your native diet (for example, eating raw meat, or snails)?
3. Can you cook any of your native dishes? For men - would you cook if you were asked to? Why or why not?
4. Sming seems to have made a good statement on the American diet. What do you think about his remark? Do you know anything about the American diet which Sming did not mention? What are they? Do you like it and can you cook it?
5. Organize an international dinner. Include a variety of dishes from as many countries of the world as possible. If you can't cook international dishes, try to find regional recipes of your countries. Invite many people to the dinner and when you serve the food, observe carefully who takes what kind of food. Normally, people who favor a country or regional area will take one of the dishes among all the choices, according to their favorite background.



"I - I - I, ah, I - I . . .!!?"

by

Manoon Karuthanang

Most Thai students, upon arriving at an American school, share one common problem. That is, immediate language difficulty. Normal spoken English will sound very rapid and incomprehensible. Much vocabulary which is commonly used on campus will be unfamiliar and hard to understand. Off campus, students may experience even greater difficulty in communication with local people whose vocabulary, intonation, and accent were rarely heard by Thai students before their arrival in the U.S.A.

The following passages are remarks made by some Thai students who, at the time of the interview, were studying in the United States.

Premjit: I had a lot of trouble dealing with immediate language problems.

Before I left Thailand, I took A.U.A. courses for three months in addition to my normal English class at school. I thought my English was good enough to get by. My God, it wasn't true at all! I did not have enough practice in listening comprehension. American people here speak so fast. Some speak with an intonation and an accent which I had never heard before, not even from my American teacher in Thailand.

Daranee: I had to ask people (Americans) to talk slowly to me. Even so, I couldn't understand them. The problem was intense in the classroom. When I had a question about the lesson, I couldn't make a sentence fast enough before the teacher moved on to another subject. And when the teacher asked me a simple and easy mathematics question for which I knew the answer, I had to translate from Thai into English before I could answer the question. This kind of things upset me a lot.

Pipop: I was not sure of my language proficiency when I left Thailand.

Now I realize that it was very low. I was very discouraged in the classroom, especially in the lecture classes. I felt most uncomfortable and helpless in class discussions. Whenever I tried to say something, there would be giggling or confusion from my classmates. So most of the time, I remained silent in class discussions.

Chai: I had little problem understanding American people. My problem was making myself understood! I got embarrassed and often angry with the question "What?" or "What did you say?" Some Americans expect too much from you. They want to hear perfect intonation, accent, and every detailed pronunciation. Well, I just couldn't do it.

Pas: I was totally lost. Many times I thought of giving up everything and going back to Thailand. It was discouraging and frustrating when you knew that you could study mathematics but linguistically you were handicapped. I would have taken some intensive courses in English if I

had had the money to pay for them. I am failing a few courses here because of my language problem.

Meson: I have a lot to catch up with in reading assignments. I am a very slow reader in English. I wish I had read a lot more books in English before I decided to come to study in the United States. My teachers are understanding. They are giving me more time than the American students to do my term paper. But I feel kind of uneasy about it. I want to be treated the same as an American student in every reasonable respect.

Wanchai: My English teacher was amazed by my ability in writing when she read my term paper. At first, she did not believe that it was my work. When I handed in the third one, she was convinced that my knowledge in grammar was better than that of many American students. The only problem was my inward personality. I have a hang-up from the traditional Thai classroom where the teacher had definite authority over his/her students. But here in an American classroom, the students are more active and free to express their ideas and sometimes their feelings. As a Thai, I couldn't do that very well. I hope I will learn gradually as my speaking ability improves.

Utama: I don't like how American English sounds. To me, British English is superior to American English in many ways. I adore British intonation and accent. It sounds more sophisticated than the American accent. I know I am not the only one who has this idea. Many students

from overseas say the same thing.

Garin: I read a lot of stories, folktales and novels. There are a lot of unfamiliar spellings in those stories. The words like "ain't, gotta, yeah, gawd, etc." cannot be found in the dictionary. At first, I thought they were wrong spellings. But after seeing so many of these kinds of words I was sure that it couldn't have been a mistake. So I asked my teacher for an explanation. He told me that they were colloquial expressions, slang, or words in special dialects. I was dumbfounded. I never knew that English had such a great variety.

Boby (a nickname): Hey man, I neber had trouble with English. It ain't mi problem eny longer. I can speak it, understand it, just like that! (He snapped his fingers.) I ain't got eny foreign accent in me. You see, I speak real English now. Oh well, I think I gotta take off now 'cause my baby (girlfriend) is waiting' for me in the cah. See yuh. Bye now.

Opas: The English which I brought with me from Thailand to use here in the U.S.A. was not very helpful. I didn't pay attention to this subject when I started learning it from first grade through twelfth grade. What I learned from class in Thailand did not help me at all to speak, write and read as well as I wished. It could be that, in Thailand, in English class, we were allowed to speak Thai with the teacher who taught English. When I

went home, I was never expected to review my previous lessons. So learning English in Thailand was just a day by day activity for me. When I arrived here on an American campus, I felt the shock of my neglect of the subject. I realized how right and how wrong I was. All I can say now is, "Shame on me!"

Manoon: My memory of the hard time in my past with English as a second language is unforgettable. Even now, I am still not clear of what was/were the cause/causes of all the trouble. I will tell you my story to shed some light on this simple yet mysterious problem for many people.

Yes, I have trouble with English all the time. I am not ashamed to admit it. After all, it's not my language! As far as I am concerned, I have the right to learn it as well as to leave it. For the time being, I want to learn it because I need it as a tool to become academically successful in the field I am studying before I return to my country.

Then, what's the problem? The problem is that I want to learn the language my own way. My child ego keeps telling me I must have my own way - the situation everybody wants to be in: a pleasant, warm, secure and friendly atmosphere in the language classroom instead of a tense, insecure, pushy and authoritative atmosphere. I strongly believe that I learn most when I am in a relaxed situation in front of a friendly teacher (though not necessarily cheerful or personable). Well, after five years in the

U.S.A., I was not lucky enough to have my own way. For example, the following episode:

One afternoon, I was fifteen minutes late for advanced English class. My lateness displeased my instructor greatly. And it also created a lot of tension among my classmates. The instructor told me I shouldn't be late for her class. (Nobody should be late for her class unless they can't help it.) The way she put it made me feel like I had just broken into the Watergate and had gotten caught! It was clear to my classmates and me that this teacher wanted to embarrass me. My reaction was quick and severe.

"Manoon, the class begins at one o'clock...not fifteen past one."

"I know, Mrs. X and I'm sorry."

"What were you doing?"

"I was finishing my 'Dear Family' letter. I had to rewrite it. And it was supposed to be in yesterday."

"Could you say that again?"

"My 'Dear Family' letter should have been handed in yesterday."

"No, that wasn't what you said."

At that point, I was totally embarrassed. I was quite obvious what the teacher was after. My speech was being cross-examined by this old lady. My anger and embarrassment grew in proportion.

"O.K. ....My 'Dear Family' letter was supposed to be in yesterday." (So what, I thought.)

"That's not correct. You see what happens when you come to class late."

She turned to one student in class and asked her to correct the grammar of my sentence. That student said she didn't know the correct sentence. The teacher turned to each student, one after another. No one knew the right answer. During this time I was standing, waiting to hear the correct sentence. Finally, the teacher wrote it on the blackboard. I was overwhelmed with embarrassment and anger.

"Mrs. X., I think there is a better way to learn English. Don't you know a pleasant way to teach me without pressure and embarrassment?"

The whole classroom was deadly silent. The teacher glared at me with the eyes of a wild animal but she managed to control her temper.

"I am trying to help you correct your mistakes. Do you wish to learn?"

"I am sorry, but I don't want to. Not at this moment. My feeling is too strong."

I left the classroom immediately. I didn't know what effect it would have on my classmates. The only thing I knew was I couldn't stand that kind of teacher.

"I - I - I, ah, I - I . . .!!?"

Things to Think About

1. Do these remarks and the story seem real to you? Imagine yourself in the same situation as those students. Write your own remarks, telling your problems, experiences, and trouble you have had with the English language.
2. "The student's attitude toward the teacher can be an obstacle in learning a language." What are your opinions of this statement? In Manoon's story, the problem seems to be unconsciously serious. Obviously, there is a personality conflict involved. What do you think is Manoon's attitude?
3. The first impression lasts the longest. This is applied also to language learning. Do you think the teacher in Manoon's story made a good impression on her students? Do you like her way of correcting mistakes in the classroom? Why or why not?
4. In some cases, students are not aware of their language problem, especially those who have lived in the U.S.A. for a long time. The common problem among these students is that they believe that eventually they will absorb the language. What are your opinions about this kind of attitude? Do you believe that it works or doesn't work?
5. WARNING. If you know that your English proficiency is inadequate, do not hesitate to take English as a Second Language courses if they are available, since such courses will provide you with the linguistic knowledge you need to succeed in school in the United States. Good luck!



As We See Them

Part I: Thai Impressions of Americans

by

Manoon Karuthanang

After many informal meetings and talks with many Thai students in the U.S.A. who were studying in American schools, I would like to convey to you some of their ideas, attitudes, and problems on "culture shock". Please notice the differences and similarities of each student's remarks.

Patcharin: American men were very strange. They seemed shy and unaggressive with women. I kind of like them better than Thai men who push women around so much. I wanted to be like an American woman. They were free to talk and to express their ideas and feelings with men and among women. I think that Thai women should have more freedom than they do now.

Sopee: American people in general are friendly as long as you don't get personal with them. Most Americans do not like to share personal problems with friends. They go to professional people or to experts to whom they pay handsomely in order to tell the experts (a psychologist, a psychiatrist) their personal problems. This I can understand but what I can't understand is why the American values privacy more than he does friendship?

Kitti: There was one good thing about having an American as your acquaintance. That was to become competitive. This was what kept me studying most of the time. An American friend of mine who was in economics class was a good example. Both he and I were fighting for the economics major's top award of the year. I won. That friend of mine cried out of disappointment. For a man his age (25 years old), crying is not an everyday event.

Udom: I cannot separate friendship from courtship. American women confused me a lot. Once I went out with a girl who I thought was very nice and pretty. She seemed to like me a lot, too. Then one day she went away for the weekend with another man. Do you know how I felt? I felt humiliated. My pride was hurt and almost destroyed. When I asked her why she had done that kind of thing, she told me, "America is a free country." Well, that did it. It concluded our courtship as well as our friendship. I'll never fall in love with an American woman again.

Sman: I had heard a lot of people say terrible things about American women. I had seen love scenes in American movies which were the only source of American culture in my hometown. What people said seemed to be true. When I came to America, I discovered that there was very little truth in the movies and in what people had said about American women.

Opas: Being a foreign student is what separates me from the rest of the world. My language problem leads me into all kinds of trouble.

Just a few days ago I had a fight with an American boy who laughed at my pronunciation of the word 'thirty'. I told him the time by saying "three-thirty" and he kept teasing me for an hour. That was too much to bear. Sometimes I wonder why I have to speak English when the American does not speak or intend to study my language.

Tong: Some Thai students here take themselves too seriously. They think that the main idea here is studying. It may be true, but as for me I want to learn from something else besides books and classes. So I just take it easy and enjoy myself once in awhile. Americans are a fun-loving people. They work hard and they play hard. That's the kind of thing I want to be able to do.

Jirapan (a 40-year-old teacher): During the past four years, I thought very little of my religion (Buddhism). I can speak for many Thai students that we as Buddhists are isolated from our religious practice mainly because of the lack of encouragement from our country and from the schools we are enrolled in. Religions are dying at a rapid rate among college students everywhere in this country. I think it's about time to bring back faith and morality to our young people of the world.

Part I: Thai Impressions of Americans

1. Seemingly, according to the remarks, there was not enough orientation for the Thai students before they left their country. Apparently, they are disoriented and experience the great impact of "culture shock". As you prepare yourself, how would you do it? And why do you think it's necessary to have some cross-cultural orientation before you leave your country as well as have it during the first few months in a foreign country?
2. As you may very well know, commercial movies and rumors are not reliable sources for cultural orientation. However, movies have a great deal of influence on many people. What kind of thing should you look for to learn about American customs and culture? Would you use a movie as a resource for your cross-cultural orientation? Why or why not?
3. According to his remark, Opas has apparently rejected the world and finds himself in his own "cultural cocoon". On the other hand, Tong opens himself to the new environment, meets people, and has fun. Who do you think would get the most benefit from the time he spends in the U.S.A.? Explain your answer.
4. Sopee and Udom do not know how American friendship differs from Thai friendship. Do you know the differences? If yes, what are they? If no, look for the answers from resources such as books, people who have lived in the U.S.A. and if there is an American available, ask him to explain whatever he knows to you.

5. Imagine someone trying very hard to convert you (to change your religious beliefs). Then, write a short paragraph explaining what you would do when confronted with this situation. Be sure to write whatever comes into your mind first.

As We See Them

Part II: Love: American College Student Style

by

Manoon Karuthanang

My friends always call me Dang although my full name is Dangdatcha Sriboon. I was elected chairman of the English Club when I was a senior at the Teacher Training College in Mahasarakuni, Thailand. I had many foreign acquaintances. It was of high prestige to have a "farang" friend and be able to chat in a foreign language at that time. My ambition went far beyond making friends with Americans in Thailand. I wanted to meet more people in the United States. Vieng, a friend of mine who had an ambition similar to mine, came to me one evening a few weeks before I left Thailand for the U.S.A. Vieng told me he had heard many stories about America for this reason but he has never made it. At a farewell party he told me a story of the prettiest, blonde-haired, blue-eyed high school girl who, according to Vieng, was very sexy and generous to all men. At the end of the story, he whispered in my ear, "If you could think of me when you find one like that in America, bring her back with you." We both laughed heartily, not knowing then that our stereotype of American girls was not quite right. I left Thailand with little thought of doing what Vieng asked

asked me to do.

Ever since I had heard Vieng's story, I have been keeping an eye on every girl on campus. Last fall break I ran into one who more or less fit Vieng's dream girl. Her name was Maliza. She was a beauty.

On our first date, Maliza and I went for a walk after a movie one Saturday night. The moon was coming up over the dark skyline of the Blue Ridge mountain range. It was a warm evening but, as we walked down a dirt road near a river, a cold wind moved into the valley.

I was very polite to Maliza. She asked me a few questions about Thailand and Thai customs of dating. I told her I had never dated anyone in my life. She smiled with disbelief. Her smile lit up a flame in my teen-age body. Suddenly, my desire to embrace and kiss Maliza increased. I tried to get the message across, but Maliza ignored it totally. It was getting late and both of us would have to head back for the dormitory soon. Finally, I came directly to the point.

(The following drama accompanied with a tape.)

Dang: Mizzy (her nickname), what would you do if I kissed you now?

Maliza: Are you crazy? Why? I don't think you should do that in the first place. Don't you think it's too soon?

I felt a chill run over my spinal cord. For one moment, I was speechless. I never knew that American girls would resist kissing on the first date. A sense of shame and embarrassment ran through my blood as Vieng's words kept ringing in my ears . . . "sexiest girl, generous to all men".

Dang: Ah, well . . . I don't know. But I think if we like and respect each other, there is nothing wrong with a little kiss on a first date.

Maliza: Oh, Dang. What do you know!? Let me tell you this. For you, there is nothing wrong, right? Because you have nothing to lose. But I do! You see? Therefore I must be careful.

Dang: Oh, come on!

Maliza: How can I make sure you wouldn't lose your respect for me after that?

Dang: Mizzy, I'm not an American man.

Maliza: All right, you are not. But you're still a man. How can I know what you would think of me if I let you do what you want?

Dang: That's simple. I will like you more, of course.

Maliza: And tell everyone that I am easy, huh?

Dang: (putting my fingers over her lips) Shhh. Don't say that. No man on earth would do any such thing to you.

Maliza: You are sweet.

Dang: Just to you, Mizzy.

Maliza: And your Thai girlfriends.

Dang: Oh, no! Nobody else but you.



I held her hands in mine and looked into her eyes which were glimmering in the half-lit night. Our bodies moved closer. Suddenly, a light shone on our faces. It was the headlights of a car coming toward us. The car stopped a few feet from where we were standing.

A man's voice: Hi there. It's cold out here, isn't it?

I recognized the voice. It was Mr. Renko, a security guard.

Dang: Yes, sir. We are going to the dorm now.

Mr. Renko: Okey-dokie. Take care. Good night.

He drove off. Maliza remained silent during my conversation with the security guard. We walked hand in hand back to her dormitory. It was after midnight when we got there.

Maliza: Goodnight, Dang, and thanks a lot for a nice evening.

Dang: Don't mention it. Ah! Mizzy, when do I see you again?

Maliza: We see each other every day.

Dang: I know, but I meant . . . like tonight.

Maliza: Oh. I have to think about that. I have a midterm on Monday.

Dang: How about next Saturday?

Maliza: My parents are coming to visit. And on Sunday, an old friend is coming to see me.

Dang: Well, maybe we can talk a little between class change tomorrow, OK?

Maliza: OK, Dang. Good night.

I began to sense some strange feeling. Maliza was not the girl in Vieng's story. Her behavior seemed totally different from that of an American girl in my imagination. That night I went to bed unusually late. Was there something wrong? I began to worry and wasn't sure if I had said something offensive to Maliza or not. The next morning after class, I met with Maliza one more time. This time I was a little nervous.

Dang: Hi, Mizzy. May I talk to you for a second?

Maliza: (coldly) Yes, but be quick. I have another class in five minutes.

I was stunned by her coldness. "How she had changed overnight!", I thought.

Dang: Well, I just want to see you and talk to you . . . .

Maliza: But what is it about? Look, Dang, by going out with you just one evening, it doesn't mean that we own each other.

Dang: I know, Mizzy. I just want to be your . . . .

Maliza: Be my what?

Dang: Your friend.

Maliza: Well, then, friend. Please leave me alone.

Maliza walked off without saying "Goodbye" or "See you". I got the message and, at the same time, the answer to my question: Vieng's story about an American girl was wrong!

Part II: Love: American College Student Style

1. What are the cultural conflicts in this drama?
2. What can possibly be Maliza's reason for withdrawing from Dang? If you are a man, discuss your reason with a friend who is a woman, and vice versa.
3. Are dating customs among young people different from American dating customs? How and why do you think there are and aren't differences between the customs?
4. What do you think of Dang after you have read and listened to his story? Does the drama change your viewpoint on American girls? Explain your answer.
5. Imagine yourself in the same situation as Dang (for boys) and write a paragraph describing your feelings after Maliza walked out on you. As for girls, write a paragraph expressing your ideas and attitudes towards the American way of dating as far as you know. Tell also if you like or dislike the system and explain why or why not.

## Some Varieties in American Regional Dialects

by

Manoon Karuthanang

When someone mentions the word "dialect" the audience usually imagines a picture of an old man with a white beard chewing cheap tobacco as a speaker of a dialect. To many Americans, the word "dialect" carries a negative connotation. Ask your classmates, teachers or anybody if they speak a dialect or if they have a particular regional accent. The answer may be something like these: "I don't have any accent.", or "I had (such and such) accent but now I speak standard English."

Professor Albert H. Marckwardt wrote that many Americans refuse to speak or admit that they speak some sort of dialect for the reason that they neither have any interest in speaking dialects nor have the feeling of warmth for the language of the land where they were born. <sup>1</sup> This statement may sound unfair to many Americans who speak and are proud of their dialect. Unfortunately, I have to agree with Professor Marckwardt on the statement. My reason for the agreement is based on my experience as a foreign student.

<sup>1</sup>Marckwardt, Albert H. A Common Language, London: Cox and Wyman, Ltd., 1964, p. 66.

Among many American friends I have, very few of those friends of mine told me that they speak a dialect.

Recently, I read a book which was written about American regional dialects by a dialectologist named Roger W. Shuy. According Shuy, whether he/she realizes it or not, every American speaks some sort of dialect.<sup>2</sup>

Shuy explained further in his book that: "The word 'dialect' is associated with speech communities, a group of people who are in constant communication. Such a group speaks its own dialect. . ." <sup>3</sup>

Under normal circumstance, a man who lives in a particular community also shares similar language habits with other members of the community. The speech communities are made up of people from the same occupation or profession and the larger speech communities are made up of people who live in a particular geographical region. In a mobile society, such as American society, it is difficult to make a distinction and draw a line between each dialect. However, there are some ways to find out the differences in the regional dialects. For example, one way to find out the pronunciation difference is by having informants pronounce key words which dialectologists generally agree are pronounced differently by people who were born in and/or have lived in a particular region of the country, then analyze each informant's pronunciation either from your own phonetic script or from a tape

<sup>2</sup>Shuy, Roger W. Discovering American Dialects, Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>ibid, p. 2-3

recorder.

By using key words provided in Shuy's Discovering American Dialects, I wrote a short story and had some of the people that I know were born and/or have lived in a particular region of the United States for ten years or more tell me the story. I recorded their voices on a tape recorder just for samples of American regional dialects. From listening to the tape, you will hear some differences in intonation, accent and the pronunciation of the same words, the same sentences and - less likely - you might hear a different story.

Mary's Story

by

Manoon Karuthanang

(This material accompanied with a tape)

Mary lives on a farm with her husband and her sister who has a good sense of humor. They have an old barn and a chicken coop which has many holes in its roof. On the day Mary got married, her father gave her a cow and a hog; her mother gave her many oranges and tomatoes.

One morning there was thick fog on the farm and it was hard to find the way around. The cow ran into a barbed wire fence; the careless hog fell into a creek and drank water until its stomach bulged like a balloon.

When the evening came, Mary began to cook some food for dinner while her sister, Emmy, was reading in front of a fireplace. Mary's husband came into the house and told her that Mrs. Penny and her foreign friend were coming for dinner. Then he said to Emmy: "Miss Emmy, you'll wash these greasy dishes and spoons and empty the garbage can before the guests arrive, won't you?" Mary said that wasn't a good joke, but Emmy laughed anyway.

Key Words

|        |         |           |         |
|--------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Mary   | roof    | fog       | foreign |
| on     | many    | wire      | Miss    |
| farm   | married | careless  | empty   |
| with   | father  | creek     | wash    |
| sister | cow     | stomach   | these   |
| humor  | hog     | bulge     | greasy  |
| barn   | mother  | fireplace | spoon   |
| coop   | orange  | Mrs.      | won't   |
| which  | tomato  | Penny     | anyway  |



Some Varieties in American Regional Dialects

Things to Think, Do and Talk About

1. "To many Americans, the word 'dialect' carries a negative connotation."

Do you agree with this statement? Why and/or why not? Explain your answer. Find out if the statement is true among the people from your country.

2. Write your own definition of the word 'dialect'.

3. Listen to the tape of samples of American regional dialects. Note the certain way each informant pronounces the same key words. Try to identify the difference and discuss them with your classmates and your teacher.

Far Out!

The following dialogue took place in a public park. It was an interchange between an Afro-American youth and a female researcher. The speech was defined by a dialectologist named Kochman as "a fluent and lively way of talking characterized by a high degree of personal style".<sup>1</sup> Claudia M. Kernam, a researcher, called the speech "rapping". The language used in this dialogue is widely known as Black English or 'Afro-American' speech. It is one form of American dialects.

The dialogue that follows was abridged and adapted from the Kernam article.

<sup>1</sup> Claudia Mitchell Kernan, "Signifying and Marking: Two Afro-American Speech Acts", The Nacirama, ed. James Spradley Michael Rynkiewicz (Boston, 1975) p. 97.

(This dialogue accompanied with a tape)

Two young men in their early twenties walked into the park, sat down with the researcher, and one of them began the conversation this way:

Young man #1: Mama, you sho is fine!

Researcher: That ain't no way to talk to your mother. (laughter)

#1: You married?

R: Um-hm.

#2: Is your husband married? (laughter)

R: Very.

#2: Hey, that's neat.

#1: Hey, lady, tell me what's a nice gal like you doin' here by yourself?

R: I been waitin' for you guys.

#2: Right on. She really somethin' else!

#1: I mean you have somethin' particular in mind?

R: I wanna listen to your talk and den I gonna write a book about you.

#1: Baby, you a real scholar. I can tell you want to learn. Now if you'll just cooperate a li'l bit, I'll show you what a good teacher I am. But first we got to get into my area of expertise.

#2: Whew! Right on, man. That's super cool.

R: I may be wrong but seems to me we already in your area of expertise. (laughter)

#2: She's far out! That's heavy, man. She gonna blow my mind.

#1: You ain' so bad yourself, girl. I ain't heard you stutter yet.  
You a li'l fixated on your subject though. I want to help a  
sweet thang like you all I can. I figure all that book learning  
you got must mean you been neglecting other area of your education.

#2: Talk that talk, Ole. That's really out of sight. I can dig it.  
(laughter)

R: Why don't you let me point out where I can best use your help?

#1: Are you sure you in the best position to know? I'mo leave you  
alone, girl. Ask me what you want to know. Tempus fugit, baby.  
(laughter)

Far OutThings to Think, Do and Talk About

1. Compare the meaning of the following words with their standard meaning and spelling. Then think of occasions when these words are used and the people who would use them:

mama, baby (babe), sweet thang, gal, lady, guy, man

2. Write the correct standard spelling for the following words:

|          |            |            |
|----------|------------|------------|
| sho      | fixated    | wanna      |
| gonna    | ain, ain't | a li'l bit |
| I'mo     | gotta      | somethin'  |
| waiting' | uh-hm      | stutter    |
|          | nothin'    |            |

3. Explain the meanings of the following expressions by writing a short paragraph answering these questions:

- Who uses these expressions?
- When are these expressions used?
- How do you feel about these expressions when you hear someone say them? Would you use these expressions sometimes?

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| talk that talk | I can dig it             |
| far out        | to blow someone's mind   |
| Hey            | (to be) heavy            |
| That's neat    | (to be) cool, super cool |
| Tempus fugit   | out-of-sight             |
| Right on!      | (to be) something else   |

Dialogue 1:

A New Student

Part 1: Arrival Day

by

Manoon Karuthanang

(This dialogue accompanied with a tape)

New Student (NS): Excuse me, sir. Can you direct me to The Experiment?

American citizen (AC): You want Putney or the main campus?

NS: I'm afraid I don't understand . . .

AC: Well, what's your program? MAT, ISE, ICT, WIP, BBE, ? ? ?

NS: I still am not clear . . .

AC: Boy, you must be a new student. You need to see an FSA anyway.

NS: Sir, what's an FSA?

AC: Nevermind now. I don't know the full word myself. By the way, what was your original question?

NS: I beg your pardon?

AC: No, that's not it. I mean, what did you want me to tell you about SIT?

NS: I'm afraid I don't understand.

AC: (losing his patience, looking up until the pupils in his eyes can hardly be seen) My Gawd!

abbreviations:

SIT - the School for International Training located on Kipling Road in  
Brattleboro, Vermont

MAT - Master of Arts in Teaching, a program administered on the SIT campus

BBE - Bilingual and Bicultural Education, a branch of MAT

ICT - International Career Training, another Masters degree program  
administered on the SIT campus

WIP - World Issues Program, an undergraduate program on the SIT campus

ISE - International Student of English

Dialogue 1:

A New Student

Part 2: Registration Day

by

Manoon Karuthanang

(This dialogue accompanied with a tape)

New student (NS): Excuse me. Can you direct me to the registration center?

U.S. student (USS): Well, you got a permit to register yet?

NS: I'm not sure. What's a 'permit to register'?

USS: It's a punch card marked PR on the front.

NS: I don't think I have one. Where shall I go?

USS: First, go over to the registrar's office in the Ad. Building, room three hundred thirty three, on the third floor. Pick up a permit to register and then go over to the gym. If you have a permit to register, you won't need to stop at station 1, so go right on to station 2 and get in the nearest line. While you are waiting, fill out all the slots on the card in your packet and be sure to put your last name first. They'll stamp your packet and give you a blank fee bill. Then go back to your academic advisor in the Ad. Building. He'll help you make out your class schedule. Be sure to fill in all the cards. Finally, pay your bill at 'receipts audit' at the financial office in room three hundred and thirty seven on the fourth floor of the Ad. Building and get your I.D. OK?



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NS: Whew! Can you repeat everything again?

USS: Ahhhhh! . . . Sorry, I have to go to lunch. Good luck!

NS: Wait! Where is the gym? What is Ad Building? Oh no!

Vocabulary in the dialogue

Ad. Bldg. - Administration Building

gym - gymnasium

University vocabulary (not in the dialogue)

class card - a piece of paper (often an IBM card) authorizing entry into a particular course

pre-requisite - prior work required as a condition of admission to a course

transfer course (credit, work) - academic work completed at another institution and being submitted as a substitute for some requirement.

units - a figure representing the hours and charges for a class; thus, a class meeting three times each week for one hour each time is designated a 3-unit class. Students commonly register for approximately 13 units per term and tuition is calculated either on a fixed sum per unit multiplied by the number of units or on a fixed average sum which allows the student to take a few more or a few less than the average number of units.

audit - a recording device that permits a student to take a class without receiving a grade or any credit

credit - a recording device which permits a student to receive both a grade and appropriate credit for a class. (There is sometimes a tuition difference between audit registration and credit registration. Audit registration may violate immigration regulations!)

drop/add - a procedure which allows a student to cancel his registration in a class which is given at an inconvenient hour and to enroll in another class without repeating the entire registration process.

flunk - a standard term equivalent to failure. Classes are commonly graded with letter-grades: A, B, C, D, and F (which means "flunk").

cram - study for a test at the last possible moment but with intensity

final - terminal examination in a class or course

take-home exam - examination which may be written at home (there are many types of examinations: oral exams or "orals", open-book exams, true/false exams, multiple-choice exams, paper and pencil exams, etc.

quiz - a lesser examination

pop quiz - an unexpected quiz. When one finishes a quiz or when the quiz ends, one must hand in one's paper.

The preceding was taken from "What Do You Say?", an article by Robert B. Kaplan, in The Asian Student, Orientation Handbook, 14th ed. 1975-76, pp 24-25

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