Vietnam

by Quang Huynh

When I was 5, my parents had gathered enough money for just me and my mom to go to Vietnam. I remember being having a giant grin on my face as I heard that we were going to go to my hometown. It was a very big surprise for me and that joy spread through me. Also, I had a puzzled look on my face as I thought about the aspects of an airplane and how it would feel to be in an airplane. Today was the day. It was the day where I left to see my family for the first time and I couldn't wait. I was already at the airport waiting for our flight. I remember waiting in the lines, having had a hard time apprehending the security and boarding crew. All I knew was that I am going somewhere far, far away from home. Firstly, our flight was to New York City. I didn’t remember much in the NYC airport, as I probably slept through it. But then we had a flight to South Korea. We didn’t know that much English since I was only 5, and had moved from Vietnam to America only 4 years ago. Due to our lack of English at the time, we had to ask people by pointing to our boarding pass. Since many Vietnamese people were going from South Korea to Vietnam, we had to ask them for some help to our plane. While my mom and another person were speaking in Vietnamese about where our flight is, I met this girl who was around my age. I don’t remember what we were taking about, but I do remember us having a fun time bursting into tears as we told each other jokes. Once we were on the plane, they sat next to us. I remember the flight to South Korea as particularly difficult to sleep and restless, as a man who sat next to us kept leaning on me. I eventually went to sleep, trying to ignore the man’s snoring. I suddenly woke up in a thump as the plane was shaking and wobbling. I thought our plane was going to crash because the plane was tilted down, preparing to land. I just tried to look out somebody’s window to see that we were still fine. We were above the clouds. Once we landed, my mom had to get our suitcases. She wasn’t strong enough to get hers, so she asked somebody to assist her. Once we got our suitcases, my mom and I headed to the South Korean airport. I remember it as particularly big and filled with technology at the time. The girl who I met earlier and I were talking. I don’t remember what we were talking about again, but I just remember that we were talking. Once we arrived, my mom looked at our boarding pass to see that the girl was on our plane once again. So, once we came into the Vietnamese airport, the girl had to go somewhere else. it was just me and my mom. We were coming out of the airport to greet our family. Vietnam was particularly hot, since I was living in New York, a state considered very cold to others. Being the 5 year old I was, I went to an ice cream vendor and asked my aunt if my cousin and I could go get some ice cream. The ice cream was selling for ₫10.000 each. Then we went to my home. We had 2 houses at the time, one that my grandpa just bought and our other home. We first went to the one that was recently bought to see a KFC building and the big Prudental plaza next to our house. Then we went to the other house to greet my cousins and aunts, and uncles. I remember my cousin was just born. Her father was my uncle. Her name was Phương Ví. My other cousin, Phúc, was around the same age as I was, being 3 months younger than me. So, I mostly played with him. My third aunt (dì ba) was also pregnant at the time, along being the mother of Phúc. Now, the baby was named Bill, and he is a boy. But at the time, dì ba told me that she wanted a boy for me to play with. I wondered if it was a girl then how was I supposed to share toys with her. Either way, it was a boy. But during the week, we went to a carnival and bought some food. Also, me and Phúc went down a lone street into a playground with other children. So, we went running as fast as we can, climbing up the big slide and then sliding down it, yelling to the top of our lungs. But back to the playground story, there were ball pits and ropes, even a toy room. We stayed there for at least an hour before eventually going home. We had shown my grandparents, who are very loyal and loving, our parrot. My grandma said we can only keep it if we took care of it. So we did. Unfortunately, it flew away when we went outside. We wished good luck for it. We never told my grandparents that it flew away, but I think we told them that it got eaten or \like that. Then we went to sleep. After a week in Vietnam it was time for us to go home to America. We said our good byes and then took a taxi to the airport. When we went home from Vietnam, I showed my dad all the souvenirs that I got and he came over to me with his hands wide open and wrapped his arms around me.

