**Privileges**

**October 20, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can study abroad because both of my parents are very supportive that I study in USA.

*Situation:* One of my good friends who is studying in a college in China was chatting with me on Skype. He also wants to come to America to study, but his patents are not allowing him to go abroad and won’t give him financial support. I realized that I’m so lucky that my parents have given me the opportunity to come here.

**October 21, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can live on campus because I applied a room in the dormitory in time.

*Situation:* I was helping my friend looking for a new apartment because he has some terrible roommates who share an apartment with him. He even cannot study in his room. I asked him why don’t live on campus, he said there is no vacancy in the dormitory. I’m so lucky that I don’t need to deal with such problems.

**October 23, 2011**

*Privilege:* Bus travel for me is free in West Lafayette and Lafayette because I am a Purdue student.

*Situation:* I always go to Wal-Mart with my friends; the city bus is very convenient and we don’t need pay. This policy is beneficial for students as it really helps minimizing expenditure.

**October 25, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can live in a single room in a graduate residence hall because I’m already 21.

*Situation:* I went to my good friend Kelvin’s room. Obviously, it is not good as I expected, it is a double room and very crowded. Therefore, he always complains they don’t have air conditioning in their room. I am therefore extremely grateful for the room I have.

**October 27, 2011**

*Privilege:* I don’t need to buy a meal plan because I live in graduate residence hall and therefore I can eat in restaurants of my choice.

*Situation:* Many of my friends are under 21 and most of them live on campus. So meal plan is mandatory for them. However, most of them cannot use all of the meals every week, which results in some money wastage.

**November 10, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can buy a car here, because everyone who has a driving license can buy cars in America, which is not the case in China.

*Situation:* I just got my international driving license hence was able to purchase a car. I found this to be extremely convenient. In China for instance there are a lot of requirements which one needs to fulfill in order to qualify purchasing a car.

**November 12, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can afford to buy a gift for my friends.

*Situation:* I went to Toys’R’us to buy some gifts for my friend’s daughter. His daughter is 2 years old. It was wonderful to see her so excited and filled with happiness upon receiving the gift. This made me realize that many people out there do not have the privilege to cherish such a moment.

**November 13, 2011**

*Privilege:* Having a car helps me drive around campus even in extreme weather conditions.

*Situation:* Today it rained heavily. While I sat in my car I watched people who were walking in the rain. This made me realize that I was so lucky that I can posses my own car. I am so grateful that my parents have provided me with funds to purchase a car.

**November 15, 2011**

*Privilege:* I am not bound my religion to restrict the type of food I can eat. I can therefore enjoy all sorts of meat.

*Situation:* I have a friend who is a Muslim from Saudi Arabia who cannot eat pork and can only have koshered meat. While at Purdue he can only eat vegetables and seafood. Therefore he has a lot of problems having a good meal.

**November 18, 2011**

*Privilege:* Given the number of international students at Purdue I have the opportunity to be friends with people belonging to different cultures and backgrounds.

*Situation:* It has been a while since I came here, now I have several friends who are international students from different countries. I have learned some different ways to communicate with friends and experiences different culture.

**November 23, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can sleep over at night, because I’m a boy.

*Situation:* I live without my parents since I was 12 years old. So it is normal that I sleep over at a friends place. Most girls’ parents do not allow them staying out all night.

**November 24, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can choose the class that interests me.

*Situation:* Today I registered classes for the next semester and I chose some interesting classes like a bowling class. In most Chinese colleges there are only a limited classes one can choose from.

**November 28, 2011**

*Privilege:* I can marry someone I am in love with.

*Situation:* In my hometown, there are some places which are conservative and only believe in arranged marriages. Therefore the parents decide who their children would get married to.

**November 30, 2011**

*Privilege:* In the United States I can get married even while I am in college.

*Situation:* In China there is a law whereby one cannot get married while in School. This poses a lot of problems for people who want to pursue higher education while being married. I was surprised to see that Purdue even offers different residences to married students.

**Reflection**

After making this diary and thinking about the various privileges given to me has made me realize that we tend to take these privileges for granted. There are so many people out there who do not have the same opportunities and therefore we should be grateful.

I mentioned that I have the opportunity to study abroad unlike so many people who would give anything to have the same privilege. Unfortunately this is dependent on several factors including financial standing as well as parents’ approval. I have a cousin who is one month younger than I am. I have known him my entire life and he always wanted to study in the US. However, his parents do not want him live alone especially when its so far from home. I also feel sorry for him. Therefore not everyone could enjoy this privilege.

Actually, I worked for 3 years before I came here. In China, people at my age usually have already graduated from college. However in the United States there is no age to pursue higher education. After applying to Purdue I also applied for a single room in a graduate residence, as I was 21 years old. Living in a single room has greatly helped me this semester. As this is the first time that for me to study abroad, and all the freshmen around me are younger than me, which makes me feel terrible. Sometimes I even doubt that whether it is too late for me to start college. Now, I have come to realized that there are so many privileges I have taken for granted including having a single room, being able to drink and even the insurance fee is dependent on our age. My dad always tells me ”it is never late to study”. Therefore, my parents thought I’m not a child any more; instead I am an adult now. As a result, they have given me the financial support to purchase a car. I’m so grateful about that. What I want to say now is I am have come to terms with my age. These privileges have changed my perception about my age.

I noticed that Purdue even offers different residences to married students, which is a new thing for me. This means that we can get married even during college. If we compare this to colleges in China, it is quite different. People will be forced to quit college if one gets married in China. It is a big problem for people who want to pursue higher education while being married. In my perspective, it is unfair for them. This would also adversely affect the educational level of the country.

I also mentioned the privileges about religions and gender. Although I don’t know a lot about religions, it seems to very restrictive. I have a friend who is a Muslim from Saudi Arabia who can only have koshered meat. He has to go somewhere far away from here to find a restaurant where he can have koshered meat in order to have a good meal. On the contrary, not being bound by religion I can eat whatever I please.

I’m not sure whether Americans have a gender preference for their children. This is a big problem in China. Most of the Chinese families want to have a boy but not girl. It is normal that parents usually allow their sons to sleep over at night. On the contrary, parents always are worried about their teenage daughters when they are out of home, even during the daytime.

Buying cars is a great privilege, especially for me, belonging to the capital city of China. There are some limitations about purchasing new car in Beijing. People who want to buy a car have to qualify. This qualification depends on our birthplace, which means that the people who were born in Beijing are able to purchase a car. Otherwise, people not being born in Beijing have to pay taxes for at least five years to get this qualification. There are other policies including the lottery system—it is a system that will generate some random numbers. Therefore, when we finally get the qualification; we still need to wait for a random turn to buy a car. This turn is decided by the lottery system. Sometimes it will take us one month if we are lucky enough, sometimes it will last three months or more. Driving is also restricted in Beijing. Cars can only be used on different days depending upon whether the last number of the license plate is odd or even during workdays. Because of these reasons, I am extremely grateful for the privilege that I can buy cars and drive to wherever I please.

In conclusion, after some analysis of this diary, I have realized that I have been taking all these privileges for granted for that I should be grateful. It has also changed my perception about my own age and that it is not too late for me to pursue higher education.