<u>Creating A Cultural Identity</u>
An Examination of the Current Movement Toward
Bi-Cultural Socialization of Chinese Adoptees

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April 2, 2001

Creating A Cultural Identity
(Abstract)

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Existing research highlights the existence of a movement toward bi-cultural socialization of Chinese adoptees in the United States. This thesis lays the groundwork for examining the necessity of such a movement in terms of a child's well being and development of a healthy identity. Data collected by the present study suggests that bi-cultural education, rather than bi-cultural socialization, more accurately characterizes the effort of adoptive parents, who have minimal exposure to and limited understanding of Chinese culture. Pending further research, this thesis proposes that exposing the adoptee to her or his birth culture through bi-cultural educational opportunities may enhance the parent-child attachment, which in turn enables a child to develop a positive self-esteem. Security of attachment and cognitive development, however, are more critical to confidence and healthy child development than nurturing identification with Chinese culture. The growing phenomenon of Chinese adoption merits future research to continue to improve the experience of families who become multiethnic through international adoption. The implications of this research pertain not only to adoptive families but also to the international community that questions the practice of international and transracial adoptions.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all of the children and family who participated enthusiastically, whether indirectly and directly, in this project. To all the parents who opened their homes and families, I sincerely hope that these findings will prove insightful in your amazing stories of love, struggle, and triumph. To each little girl whom I have met and taught in Chinese language classes, may the joy and confidence you feel in your early years permeate the rest of your lives. To present and future adoptive families, may your experiences be filled with reward.

This research is also dedicated to my family as an extension of my own upbringing as a Chinese woman born and raised in the United States. As an American-Born Chinese (ABC) woman, I have often thought about the effects of Chinese culture on the shaping of my goals, values, and identity. I am very thankful for the influence of my Chinese parents and the love that they showed me unconditionally. However, in spite of this awareness, being "Chinese" does not always come up in my everyday life. Even for a child raised by native Chinese parents in the United States, I find that preserving culture is often relegated to a lower priority. Thus, "culture" is a broad concept, and as generations of multiethnic families grow larger, we must be conscious of how the term is used. We must also be careful about our expectations and ideals to ensure that policies and plans of action ultimately enhance, rather than reduce, the overall well being of individuals around the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I. Introduction

Many parents adopting internationally feel obliged to continually modify their parenting tactics in hopes of minimizing and preventing any suffering endured by their adopted children. Currently, parents of Chinese adoptees in the United States are embracing a movement toward bi-cultural socialization of their adoptees and families. This thesis presents current research and a proposal for additional research regarding the necessity of such a movement in terms of a child's well being and development of a healthy identity. It hypothesizes that certain attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization are more prevalent and relevant to the experience of Chinese adoptive families. This introduction briefly describes bi-cultural socialization in its historic context, the hypothesis, findings and layout of the thesis.

In the United States, the increasing trend toward transracial and international adoptions[1] in the past few decades has generated more in-depth interest and research in both fields. Traditionally, transracial adoptions referred to the adoption of black children by white families. Arnold R. Silverman, a professor of sociology in Long Island, compiled a literature review to assess studies on the outcomes of transracial adoptions. As the numbers of these racially intermixed families began to rise, social workers began to question whether "transracial adoption was diminishing and destroying the integrity of [the Black] community" (Silverman 1993, 104). Black social workers ardently opposed transracial adoptions; however, studies have revealed that "most minority children in transracial placement adjust very well to their mixed-raced environments" (Silverman 1993, 104). The self-esteem of transracial adoptees did not differ from same race adoptees or biological children. Thus, Silverman suggests that transracial adoptions do

not affect the overall well being of the child but, rather, usually serve in the child's best interest. One study reviewed by Silverman (Simon and Alstein 1992) revealed that of non-Black transracial adoptees, 82% surveyed felt pride in their racial heritage while only 11% of black transracial adoptees "professed that they would prefer to be white" (Silverman 1993, 114). In general, "transracial adoptees do not deny their racial identification nor, for the most part, do their adoptive parents" (Silverman 1993, 116). Silverman concludes that "so long as the number of minority children needing permanent homes exceeds the number of minority families able to accept them, transracial placement is a resource that should not be ignored" (Silverman 1993, 117). Thus, scholarship largely supports the positive outcome of transracial adoptions.

In the event of international adoption, concerns arise not only about race, but also about ethnic culture. The issue of "culture" became particularly visible in transracial international adoptions because children cannot deny the outward manifestations of their race. Many critics of international adoption argue that children should not be stripped from or deprived of their "cultural roots." Many critics of international adoption argue that international adoptions deprive children of their "mother culture." South Korea, the main foreign country from which U.S. citizens adopted children since the 1960s, eventually buckled under criticisms such as these from the international community and placed heavy restrictions on international adoptions (Bartholet 1993, 92).

As fewer Korean children became available for adoption, U.S. parents had to turn to other countries. Since 1989, U.S. citizens have adopted more than 20,000 Chinese children, primarily girls. In the year 2000, China was the number one country from which U.S. citizens adopted internationally. Adoptive parents of Chinese children face

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[1] "Transracial adoptions" refer to "the joining of racially different parents and children together in adoptive families (Silverman 1993, 104). "International adoptions" thus refer to the joining of parents from different countries.

many issues including the inability to track their child's birth history (since Chinese

adoptees are necessarily abandoned) and the desire to help their child maintain some

traces of their ethnic culture. Although parents differ in their approaches, evidence

indicates that these adoptive parents have largely accepted the idea of bi-cultural

socialization for their Chinese adoptees (Klatzkin 1999).

The word "culture" is a highly elusive term that loosely refers to clusters of

concepts. Culture may refer to the language, food, traditions, custom, and ritual of

particular place and people. The values, worldview, and perception of the world that a

person possesses are also part of one's culture. These clusters of characteristics may be

ethnically or regionally determined. A study on the psychological impacts of bi-cultural

socialization conducted by Teresa LaFromboise, Hardin Coleman, and Jennifer Gerton

defines "culture" from a behavioral perspective. They believe that the continuous

interaction of cultural structure, individual cognitive and affective processes, biology, and

social environment will determine human behavior (LaFromboise et al 1993, 396). One

factor that must be remembered is that people and society determine cultures. Since the

world constantly changes, consequently, so do cultures. "Culture" cannot be thought of

as a static or timeless entity, but, rather, as an ever-evolving concept that cannot be

confined to a single dimension. "Socialization," on the other hand, refers to "the process

by which societies induce their members to behave in socially acceptable ways" (Crain

2000, 197).

Bi-cultural socialization, then, refers to the joining or blending of two cultures

through socialization. This concept involves a "*double-consciousness*, or the

simultaneous awareness of oneself as being a member and alien of two or more cultures"

(LaFromboise et al 1993, 395). The actual term 'bi-cultural' may be defined as the process

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International adoption is often referred to as "inter-country adoption" and the terms are used interchangeably.

by which children come "to acquire the norms, attitudes, and behavior patterns of their own and another…ethnic group" (Rotheram and Phinney 1987, 24). Though the degrees of bi-cultural socialization vary, the concept implies cultural competence in two cultures. Rotheram and Phinney's research on ethnic identity development defines 'bi-cultural competence' as "the ability to function in two different cultures by switching between two sets of values and attitudes" (Rotheram and Phinney 1987, 24). LaFromboise et al (1993) measure cultural competence by a "strong personal identity"; "knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of the culture"; "sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture"; effective language communication with the given cultural group; an ability to "perform socially sanctioned behavior"; "active social relations within the social group"; and an ability to "negotiate the institutional structures of that culture" (LaFromboise et al 1993, 396). Competence varies in degrees and the more of these qualities an individual possesses, the more likely he or she will be able to function effectively within a given culture. Given all of these factors that contribute to cultural competence, one can imagine "the difficulty involved in developing cultural competence, particularly if one is not raised within a given culture" (LaFromboise et al 1993, 396).

Research on bi-cultural socialization has traditionally referred to immigrants or children of immigrants (Elovitz and Kahn 1997; Tang and Fouad 1999). However, as the numbers of international, transracial adoptions has increased, the theories have also been applied to the experience of internationally adopted children. As Tessler, Gamache, and Liu's 1999 studies show, the predominant philosophy among parents who have adopted from China is that some level of bi-cultural competence, achieved through bi-cultural socialization, will ultimately help their children function with more confidence in this society if not Chinese society as well. Due to physical differences, the Chinese adoptees cannot escape their association with Chinese culture; thus, parents must determine how

to reconcile the physical differences between their child and themselves. As far as the parents of Chinese adoptees are concerned, "one goal of bi-cultural socialization is to empower children to respond confidently and securely to racist remarks" (Tessler, Gamache, & Liu 1999, 21). Tessler, Gamache, and Liu (1999) conducted a study that indicates parents of Chinese adoptees are largely embracing a movement toward bi-cultural socialization to enhance the overall well being of their children.

The purpose of the current research is to examine the current movement toward bi-cultural socialization. Since the Chinese children adoptions are a relatively recent phenomenon in the United States, the impacts of bi-cultural socialization efforts will not be adequately assessed until the children themselves enter adolescence and adulthood. Indeed, Kevin Wickes and John Slate, in a study regarding adjustment of transracial adoptees, found no studies addressing the role of cultural identity, assimilation, and acculturation in self-concept or adjustment among transracial adoptees in general (Wickes and Slate 1999, 258). Therefore, very limited research currently exists on Chinese adoptions (Hong 1997). Although studies of children internationally adopted from South Korea may provide some insight, Chinese children adoptions possess significant distinctions that must not be overlooked. For example, Chinese children are adopted in a different era. The attitudes of parents adopting in the 1990s and the society in which they live is becoming increasingly focused on multi-cultural awareness and diversity, which alone may alter the experience of the children adopted from abroad. In this decade, more emphasis has been placed on cultural preservation and respecting the different cultures and beliefs of individuals within this society.

This thesis is written as a proposal for continued research. Ultimately, it aims to understand the role of bi-cultural socialization in a Chinese adoptee's adjustment and development of a healthy self-identity. In addition to reviewing the existing literature on

the bi-cultural socialization of Chinese adoptees and ethnic development of transracial adoptees, the present study employs exploratory interview data to understand the current attitudes and approaches of adoptive parents in raising their children. These attitudes and approaches will be assessed in terms of Tessler et al's (1999) four theories of bi-cultural socialization: assimilation, acculturation, alternation, and child choice. This author hypothesizes that certain approaches, namely acculturation and child choice, will prove more prevalent and effective among adoptive families.

The findings of the present study suggest the importance of maintaining a balanced perspective on socialization. At the onset of this study, the researcher was concerned that some parents may not realize their boundaries and limitations as U.S. citizens who often encountered Chinese culture only because of their decision to adopt. In undertaking bi-cultural socialization, adoptive parents are trying to "socialize" their children into a culture that is not their own, and, therefore, they cannot consistently reinforce that culture at home. The adoptees are generally adopted at an age when they cannot remember their lives in China. Furthermore, the Chinese culture that the adoptees did experience in China was not primary Chinese culture itself. The adoptees lived in orphanages and institutions throughout rural China, which means that the culture from which they came is actually only one of many subcultures in mainland China. Furthermore, "rather than emphasize Confucian beliefs, many adoptive parents choose to emphasize Chinese cultural celebrations" (Tessler et al 1999, 99). The "bi-cultural socialization" provided by Caucasian parents primarily entails celebrating holidays and eating Chinese food.

Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that the existing theories and approaches do not adequately describe the experience of adoptive families attempting to teach and present a culture in which they were not socialized. It is proposed that rather

than "bi-cultural socialization," the efforts of parents are more accurately defined as "bi-cultural or cross-cultural *education*." The author coins the concept "bi-cultural education" to describe teaching a child culture from third-hand, rather than first hand, knowledge. The adopted children will most likely not learn Chinese culture through socialization. Thus, their "bi-cultural socialization," as defined by Rotheram, Phinney, LaFromboise et al, will be minimal. They most likely will not understand the intricacies of Chinese culture and the social pressures and values. Furthermore, their knowledge of Chinese culture will largely be shaped by parental discretion.

The ultimate goal of "bi-cultural education" is to help the child live a happy and well-adjusted life by possessing a confident sense of self and positive self-identity (Klatzkin 1999). In terms of the well being of the child and the issues that impact her or his well being, the present author finds that the movement toward bi-cultural socialization must be examined in the context of psychology theory on attachment and cultural learning. These two theories compellingly address the most essential factor of healthy emotional and cognitive child development: responsivity[2]. The findings of this thesis suggest that as parents attempt to bi-culturally educate their children, they may be exercising increased responsivity to their child's needs. When defined more as bi-cultural or cross-cultural education and pursued realistically (within parental resources, time, and energy abilities), bi-cultural 'socialization' can thus improve parent-child attachment, which ultimately may enhance a child's perspective of her or his place in the world. This author proposes a longitudinal study of attachment in which she hypothesizes that healthy attachment is the most crucial determinant of Chinese adoptee identity development. The role of bi-cultural education, though not essential in and of itself, may

be significant in that the responsive parents who attune to their children's needs may very well be the same parents who embrace the current movement toward bi-cultural socialization.

This proposal for continued research first establishes the historical and social contexts of international adoption and bi-cultural socialization. It will then present the existing research in the field. The approach of this study will be described in the context of the existing data. The methodology will then precede the findings. A detailed discussion of the research will follow the findings leading the reader through the preliminary conclusions of the researcher generated from this study and her proposals for future research. The proposal closes with bi-cultural socialization in the context of international adoption, and the implications for the continually growing phenomenon. The researcher agrees with Elizabeth Bartholet's, an advocate of international adoption and professor of law at Harvard University, position "that the benefits of international adoption far outweigh any negatives and that international adoption should be encouraged with appropriate protections against abuses" (Bartholet 1993, 91). Thus, this research will also address the specific argument against international adoption that insists on preserving culture despite the current experiences of children.

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[2] "Responsivity," in terms of Attachment theory, refers to the accurate, sensitive responses of the caretaker toward the child's needs which, in turn, enables the child to develop a confidence in which to explore the world (concept will be elaborated in the "Discussion" chapter of this thesis) (Karen 1998).

II. Historical and Social Contexts for International Adoption

History and Policy of International Adoption in the United States

The first wave of international adoption began in the U.S. in the late 1940s. After World War II, veterans and their families adopted children from other countries in benevolent concern. Between 1948 and 1962, families (largely Caucasian) in the United States adopted 840 Chinese children (Silverman 1993). In more recent years, "international adoptions in the U.S. have averaged between 6,500 and 10,000 per year" (Tessler et al 1999, 6). According to the U.S. Department of State statistics, Korean adoptees, from fiscal years 1989-1994 (with the exception of fiscal year 1991) dominated the numbers of international adoptions in the United States. Starting in 1995, however, Chinese and Russian adoptees have outnumbered children from other countries. From fiscal year 1995 to 2000, Chinese adoptees have totaled 22,420 while Russian adoptees have totaled 21,274 (U.S. Immigration Statistics). Reportedly, "Americans adopt more children internationally than any other country" (Ryan 1999).

Parents choose to adopt internationally for a variety of reasons. As domestic law has evolved to protect the rights of biological parents, adoptive parents have little security even if they do succeed in adopting a child. Through international adoption, the adoptive parents most likely will not have to deal with the biological parents reclaiming the child. Furthermore, foreign adoptions, which require approximately twelve to eighteen months for the entire process, transpire significantly faster than domestic adoptions. However, even in international adoptions, there are no guarantees. China may declare a moratorium as it did in April 1993 and instantly halt international adoption. This power is in the hands of a government that U.S. adoptive parents cannot control.

Parents must acquire an "Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition" from the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in order to determine their

qualifications as adopters. To briefly describe the adoption process, adopting parents must participate in a homestudy to determine their eligibility to adopt. They must compile a dossier with all of the required materials for adoption and receive INS approval. The dossier must then be officially translated and sent to China. Upon receipt, CCAA (described later) will process the documents and match the family with a child. The parent(s) must then travel to China to receive the child. After returning to the United States, the parent must acquire citizenship for the new family member and then complete post-adoption papers. On October 30, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed a bill (effective February 27, 2001) granting automatic citizenship to children born abroad as soon as their adoption is finalized in their country of origin (CCAI Circle Fall 2000). This bill will facilitate the adoption process for parents and enable them to bypass this previously tedious step of the adoption.

History of Adoption in China

According to an estimate published by The World Factbook 2000, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has an estimated population of 1,261,832,482. The actual population size is likely even higher. This large number implies that one out of four people in the world live in China (Hertsgaard 1997). To put this population in perspective, "although the PRC and the United States are roughly comparable in size, China has only one fifth as much arable land and four times as many people to feed" (Tessler et al 1999, 84). Overwhelmed by so many mouths to feed, the central government began population control campaigns starting in the 1950s. Various strategies such as encouraging later marriages, spacing children apart, and having fewer children failed, forcing the government to take more extreme measures. In 1979, the central government implemented the One-Child policy.

People around the world have since heard the horror stories surrounding the One-Child Policy in China. Although, officially, women cannot be forced to abort a child, they risk huge fines or forced sterilization if they violate the one-child policy. In addition, officials often threaten peasants in the countryside—destroying families and homes. In an effort to curb the population growth of the state, the one-child policy has created an environment of terror resulting in abortions, sterilizations, corruption, and fines. Between 1949 and 1974, the population growth exceeded 2 percent. Since the 1970s, the annual population growth rate has remained at around 1.5 percent (Carnell 2000).

As of March 2000, reports indicate that "China has promised that, although family planning must stay, its enforcement will become more flexible, allowing for more categories of Chinese to be allowed to have more than one child" (Rennie 2000). This relaxation of policy, though uncertain in its actual implementation, is in response to international criticism as well as domestic upheaval. As "only-childs" bear the entire burden of their family's expectations, China has seen an alarming increase in student suicides, mental breakdowns, family murders, and other manifestations of unbearable pressure. Furthermore, China's statistics reveal the disappearance of millions of girls. For every 100 girls, 120 boys are born in China according to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Rennie 2000). Although many people assume that "missing girls" are caused by infanticide, in fact, many parents simply do not report the birth of girls, sell their daughters, or abandon them in hopes that they will be taken to an orphanage for adoption. Before the one-child policy, fewer than 200,000 adoptions occurred per year within China, that number rose sharply in the 1980s when adoptions numbered 400,000-500,000 per year. Of these adoptions, 27-36 boys were adopted for every 100 girls (Carnell 2000). The stark contrast between the number of boys (many of whom have special needs) and the number of girls adopted reflects the subordinated position of

women in Chinese culture. Consequent to the cultural preference for males, who can carry the family name and serve the parents, girls receive far fewer resources than boys do. As overpopulation remains a primary concern for the Chinese government, despite changes in policy and social order, traditional cultural values continue to conflict with political priorities. Thus, the abandonment of children, particularly baby girls, will likely continue.

The People's Republic of China opened its doors to foreign adoptions beginning in 1989. At that time, foreigners could adopt orphans on an ad hoc basis. Unfortunately, China's system could not support the increasing number of adoptions and China closed its doors until 1994 (Riley 1997). By 1995, China had re-opened its doors and Chinese children accounted for twenty-two percent of all international adoptions into the United States (Tessler et al 1999, 4). That same year, however, the Human Rights Watch Report entitled "Death by Default" blamed mass infanticide of infant girls on the one-child policy. Such international criticism along with foreign concerns about the poor conditions of the orphanages caused China to close orphanages to foreign visits (Tessler et al 1999, 91).

Parents cannot legally give up their children for adoption in China. Thus, children can only be adopted as orphans from orphanages. Since a parent cannot bring their child to an orphanage themselves, the best way to ensure their child's status as an orphan is to abandon them in a heavily trafficked area such as a bus station, park, or police station. Although China's decision to permit international adoptions is not clearly understood, one theory Tessler et al (1999) cites is that such contact with the outside world would create a humanitarian response to China's 'one child per family policy' (Soled 1995).

China's Adoption Requirements

The China Center of Adoption Affairs (CCAA), established in 1992, formally processes all of China's international adoptions. In 1996, China reevaluated its adoption policy and discouraged second adoptions as well as adoptions by parents with children from previous marriages. According to the Chinese Adoption Law published in November of 1998 and U.S. immigration laws, one adoptive applicant must be a U.S. citizen and the applicant must be at least 30 years of age and no more than 55 years of age. Applicants age 30-49 qualify to adopt a healthy abandoned child from infancy to 10 years of age. Applicants 50-55 years of age can adopt a healthy abandoned child between 2 and 10 years old. For a single male adopting a female child, the age difference between the adopter and the adoptee must be at least 40 years. A single male can adopt a male child regardless of age difference (CCAI adoption packet). Parents can request an age range for their adopted child but no guarantees are made.

China requires that at least one adopting parent has to travel to China to pick-up their child. Strategically, this required contact with the culture establishes a connection between the adoptive parent and their child's birth culture. Parents adopt *in* rather than *from* (the case in Korean adoptions) China. Tessler states that "the process of adopting often marks the beginning of bi-cultural socialization for the parents" (Tessler et al 1999, 27). This process also strengthens the parents' awareness of their child's birth country.

CCAA, located in Beijing, is responsible for matching all families with Chinese children and issuing the travel notices required for families to travel to China to pick-up their children. The actual parent-child matching process in China remains a mystery. However, people speculate that CCAA "will mainly consider your age, your health, your annual income, and any record of misdemeanors" (Tessler et al 1999, 33).

Arguments Supporting International Adoption

Since the popularization of international adoptions in the past couple of decades, the practice has attracted many friends as well as foes. Supporters of international adoption use various arguments to support their perspective. Proponents cite the humanitarian contributions made by families who adopt internationally and transracially by providing homes and families to children, who would otherwise idle away in orphanages or on the streets (Porter 1993) as an important positive outcome of international adoption. Furthermore, money contributed by adoptive parents to their child's birth country will be used to improve the conditions of the orphanages. As verified by parents who have adopted from China, money from international adoptions has been directly given to China to improve conditions in the orphanages from where they adopted. Parents "will be asked to donate $3000 in $100 bills to [their] child's orphanage…monies will in turn be used to care for the remaining abandoned children, including those with special needs" (Tessler et al 1999, 39). On a personal level, proponents argue that the internationally adopted children will receive an abundance of love because of the profile of the adoptive parents. Parents who adopt from China are older (age 35 at the youngest) and have often decided to adopt as a result of repeated inability to have their own children. In a study conducted by John Triseliotis, he concludes that "most inter-country adoptions are adult centered" (Triseliotis 1993, 120), which, contrary to popular belief, indicates that the child will be cherished by the parents. The parents have gone through so much to adopt, they are not merely picking up a charity write-off; rather, they have gone through pain-staking efforts to be able to raise a child. Elizabeth Bartholet perceives the potential benefits of appreciating the differences that arise from the mixing of racial and cultural heritages "while at the same time experiencing their common humanity" (Bartholet 1993, 90).

International adoption advocates further argue that this option serves in the child's best interests. Children who are internationally adopted must have orphan status[3]. If they remain in their birth country, these homeless children "will face virulent forms of discrimination" (Bartholet 1993, 97) due to ethnic and orphan status. Adopted children will have access to resources and opportunities unavailable to them in their birth countries.

Arguments Critiquing International Adoption

Despite endless research that indicates international adoption ultimately contributes to the child's best interest, opponents criticize the practice. These opponents have protested loudly enough to impact adoption in places such as South Korea. Korea, at the peak of international adoptions in the 1980s, came under the criticism of the international community for the large numbers of foreigners adopting their kids. Tessler refers to a study by Tate that suggests that many "opponents of international adoptions view the process as an economic exchange of babies for money between the first world and the third world" (Tessler et al 1999, 7). In general, opponents argue that international adoption is "a political institution by means of which the children of the poorer classes and of immoral youth could be controlled by removal, with the additional benefit of meeting the needs of childless, middle-class couples" (Bagley 1993a, 11). Some critics are concerned with transracial issues surrounding international adoption. Tessler et al (1999) refer to Smith's study that "ethical conflicts have also been described in terms of the best interests of the larger ethnic community versus the best interests of the child in regard to adoptions that involve transracial placements" (Tessler et al 1999, 8). In China, in addition to cultural issues that arise from international adoption,

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[3] In addition to China's requirement that adopted children are orphans, U.S. law also requires that internationally adopted children meet the legal definition of "orphan" ("International Adoption" 2001).

questions must be asked in terms of international adoption as a means to creating

sustainable improvements in the welfare of individuals in China: how does international

adoption impact abandonment? How does international adoption impact the status of

women?

Preserving Culture

Another concern of international adoption foes is the argument for "cultural

preservation." Some professional workers in child welfare "believe that no child should

be uprooted from his own national and racial culture and be forced to bear the burdens

of possible social rejection and loss of identity" (Kim 1977, 3). Internationally adopted

children are brought to a foreign country at an age when they would not realize that they

were adopted aside from physical manifestations. Since they tend to assimilate to the

foreign culture quickly by speaking the language, adopting the social standards, and

growing up as a native of the foreign country, they will not know their native cultural

background. Even attempts to educate the child about his or her background have

limited effectiveness because, usually, the adopted parent has no ingrained knowledge to

pass down and reinforce at home. With physical and ethnic differences, even if the child

becomes "Americanized," he or she may encounter conflicts as a minority. This

individual may not experience conscious rejection by his or her country of residence or

country of birth, but he or she might somehow feel empty or incomplete. One Korean

adoptee, Neil[4], who is now twenty years old, realizes that his lack of heritage knowledge

has always caused him a degree of insecurity in his upbringing. Even as the ideal

student—popular, class president, out-going—questions about his cultural identity will

always lurk in his mind because a piece of his identity—his cultural heritage—is missing.

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[4] Name has been changed for protection

Since the creation of a family relies not on "the genetic connection, but the day-to-day living together and nurturing of common human values ("Review" 1994, 42), how important is maintaining cultural identity in this increasingly interdependent world? Elizabeth Bartholet cannot find any evidence that "the challenge of establishing a satisfactory ethnic and cultural identity causes any harm to the international adoptee" (Bartholet, 1993, 98).   She believes that this argument against international adoption does not involve genuine concerns over the risks to children. Rather, she finds that children are being sacrificed for the sake of group pride and honor. Bartholet states, "the current tendency to glorify group identity and to emphasize the importance of ethnic and cultural roots combines with nationalism to make international adoption newly suspect in this country as well as in the world at large" (Bartholet 1993, 100).

On the other hand, ideally, each culture has so much to offer every other culture that the more individuals can integrate a multi-cultural perspective into their lives, the more comprehensively and meaningfully people can live their lives. Exposing peoples (especially children) to various cultures may enhance their perspective on life and the world. Although the children receive benefits from resourceful parents and the foreign country (in this case, the United States), substituting one culture for another may deprive these children of a wealth of opportunities as well as of a part of their own identity. Given all these considerations, is it even possible for parents to manifest their adopted child's culture into their lives given the fact that it is foreign to themselves?

III. Historical and Social Contexts for Bi-Cultural Socialization

History of Bi-Cultural Socialization

Orphaned children from Korea came to the United States after the Korean War in 1953 and soon became a primary source of adoptable children for U.S. citizens. The war produced many orphaned children. Only 715 Korean children occupied orphanages in 1951, and the total skyrocketed to 11,319 in 1964. Thus, the 1970s and 1980s brought a large influx of Korean adoptees to the United States (Tessler et al 1999).

Gradually, the inflow of Korean adoptees was reduced dramatically as South Korea came under the criticism of the international arena. In the 1970s, North Korea "chastised South Korea for permitting its children to be made available for international adoption" (Tessler et al 1999, 10). Then, during the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics, the media criticized the government in Seoul, Korea for exporting children as a commodity (Tessler et al 1999, 10). In 1986, adoptions from Korea numbered 6,275. This number plummeted dramatically to 1,516 in 1996 (U.S. Immigration Statistics).

Dong Soo Kim's study (1977), of Korean adoptee adolescent outcomes, attempted to assess the self-concept of Korean children who had been adopted by American families. According to the data he collected, "Korean adopted children were typically placed in middle-class, white, Protestant families living in rural areas or small cities…most families were not childless…most adopted two or three children, usually from Korean or other different racial backgrounds" (Kim 1977, 3). These families, Kim concluded, adopted children for the sake of the child rather than in hopes of finally creating a family: "the reasons given by them for adopting Korean children seemed to be primarily religious and humanitarian" (Kim 1977, 3). Overall, Kim concluded that these children had adjusted very well: "the children's self-concept was remarkably similar to that of other Americans" (Kim 1977, 5). Kim determined that openness in interactions, as a measure of

supportive family environment, proved to be the most important factor "in the positive development of self-concept…while interest in the children's heritage was not related at all" (Kim 1977, 5). Kim discusses Erickson's theory of human development and stipulates that:

> The critical task during adolescence is the establishment of positive ego identity…self-concept may serve as an index of one's future adjustment and self-actualization…can provide a fairly reliable and valid assessment of the general mental health or overall functioning level of adopted Korean children…also yield some predictive indicators for their future development (Kim 1977, 5).

Thus, Kim's findings clearly support that a "good home" contributes more significantly to development of an adequate self-concept than all other social forces and conditioning. He advises the "the differences between Korean ethnicity and the culture of the majority of Americans should not be overstressed in adoptive placements" (Kim 1977, 6). Overemphasis in either extreme creates pressures that may overwhelm the child. Ignoring the child's birth culture may send hidden messages that parents somehow wish their children did not possess Asian features while overemphasis on the birth culture may create confusion. The children most need "the kind of love which will establish a sense of security in them; from this should come natural acceptance of differences which will enrich their identification with Korean heritage" (Kim 1977, 6). A supportive family climate is the single most important factor in the positive development of a child's identity.

Despite the results of Dong Soo Kim's study, a recent literature review of the Korean experiences "concluded that these studies largely ignored multi-cultural issues for both the adopted children and their families, focusing solely on the child's identification as American" (Tessler et al 1999, 65). As a result, recent articles about Korean adoptees

coming of age suggest that, as teenagers and young adults, they feel a need to return to their roots (Hong 1997).

After the Korean War, many negative feelings existed toward Koreans, and those who adopted from Korea faced a society that was largely antagonistic toward bi-cultural socialization of American-Korean adoptees. The negativity also existed toward Vietnam. Some veterans hold grudges against Asian people, in general, "unable to differentiate among Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese peoples" (Tessler et al 1999, 149). One adopting parent expressed cognizance of potential conflict: "one other issue was critical in selecting China—family members who served in the military never fought against Chinese people, but along side them. We never want our children to have been the enemy of living relatives" (Tessler et al 1999, 149).

Early Introduction to Bi-Cultural Socialization

From the start of the adoption process, prospective parents from the United States begin cultivating a belief that Chinese socialization would somehow benefit their Chinese children. The travel requirement of the Chinese government mandates direct interaction between the adoptive parents and the birth culture of their child. Furthermore, many adoption agencies, such as CCAI, recommend openly reinforcing the child's culture and national heritage. Parents, grateful for the opportunity to raise a child, want to "express their gratitude to China for the gifts of these children" (Tessler et al 1999, 59). Furthermore, the experiences of many Korean adoptive parents and their matured adoptees reveal identity struggles as a result of alienation from their birth culture and complete assimilation into U.S. society.

One of the main reasons this issue of culture must be so directly addressed is that the children, inevitably, just look different. Most parents adopting from China simply will not be able to pass off the adoptees as their biological children and avoid pointed

questions from outsiders. Even for bi-cultural parents, one of whom is Asian, questions often cannot be avoided. Tessler, Gamache, and Liu concede that adoptees' "physical characteristics make them quite visible in their new homes in America" (Tessler et al 1999, 5).

Parents also hope that addressing the ethnic culture of their adopted children will help to ease future identity issues. Currently, "America is changing in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, and more interest is being shown in 'roots' and cultural identity" (Tessler et al 1999, 13). The "current wisdom is supporting a philosophy of cultural diversity rather than assimilation" (Tessler et al 1999, 20). Tessler et al (1999) cites studies that argue for this shift to begin at home, it is the family's "responsibility to develop a cultural plan that will help their child build an identity as a cultural and ethnic person" (Tessler et al 1999, 22). The socio-political context that leads Chinese girls to be available for adoption is also an issue that will inevitably need to be addressed among the adoptees. The unique circumstances of Chinese adoptions means that parents will uniformly have to encounter questions about the abandonment of Chinese girls and the social preference for sons in China. Since parents will have little to no information about the specific histories of their children, parents make an attempt to address identity issues in a compensatory manner. In general,

> Parents who adopt from China will be unable to satisfy their children's desire for personal biography, but many attempt to provide a cultural biography. Many of these parents find support in this cultural quest by joining together with other families with children from China (Tessler, Gamache, Liu 1999, 3).

Although many adoptive parents are focusing their energies on providing some exposure to Chinese culture, they also realize that dealing with the "adoption piece is part of [the child's] bi-cultural identity. If we focus on the bi-cultural issues without grounding

children in the adoption piece we will have seriously missed the boat and created much

anxiety for the children" (Tessler et al 1999, 160).

Stereotypes that Chinese Children Face

The adopted children are stepping into numerous stereotypes. Harold R. Isaacs' research in *Scratches on Our Minds* attempts to describe and deepen understanding of American images of Chinese people and culture. Through interviews conducted with 181 individuals deliberately selected as "representative examples of American leadership types, products of American education, religion, and politics" (Isaacs 1980, 13), Isaacs provides a wide range of images that have been affected by the individuals' biases and contact with the Chinese. Direct contact with the Chinese ranged from missionaries who had spent many years among the Chinese to individuals who knew very few Chinese and had never even been to the mainland. While opinions varied, in general, negative images accompanied positive perceptions. Even if people perceived Chinese as hard-working, wise, culturally rich, "notions of the Chinese as lesser men lie not too far below the surface" (Isaacs 1980, 97). From 1882 to 1943, the United States Government severely curtailed immigration from China in response growing the growing fear among Americans that inexpensive Chinese labor would reduce their job opportunities (Lowell 1996). This act reinforced the unfavorable attitude toward the Chinese. Even the missionaries, who developed the closest affections for individual Chinese, criticized the sinfulness, dishonesty and evil embedded in the culture (Isaacs 1980, 130). Not until World War II did perceptions of Chinese become wholly sympathetic. These images were short-lived, however, as the sympathizers realized that many of their sympathies were founded on false images of the Chinese. Many individual perceptions of the Chinese shifted multiple times because they were shaped by biases developed through limited contact and unmet American expectations.

Western missionaries had the first contacts and experiences with the Chinese and their culture. Such contact was limited in the sense that missionaries had specific

purposes and regardless of attempt to interact with the Chinese in all aspects of their lives, goals and expectations invariably shaped their contact. U.S. citizens, in general, have a history of contact with China imbued with a "parental" attitude, a sense of benevolent superiority and an attitude that began with the missionaries. In approaching such a long-standing and culturally rich people with such attitudes, Americans unsurprisingly faced many disappointments and unmet expectations. They developed perceptions that the Chinese were ungrateful, shrewd, and cunning. These images, in turn, were conveyed to the American public and left lasting marks on people's minds. Americans, from politicians to average citizens, tended to look "upon the Chinese as wards…to protect" (Isaacs 1980, 124). Despite this self-assumed role of parent, Americans proved inconsistent and motivated by self-interests—they did not pursue Chinese affairs with pure motivations of goodwill and benevolence. This proved strikingly true during World War II (prior to Pearl Harbor) when Americans were very reluctant to aid the Chinese against Japanese attacks. The United States' isolationist policies exacerbated the distrust between the Chinese and Americans creating more tension and mutual lack of understanding for the "other side." Images of Chinese society (and vice versa) as a whole have been shaped not by interaction of "equals," but rather of two proud nations, each expecting to be respected and recognized for its own merits.

Paralleling Isaacs work in a sense, Tessler et al (1999) hoped to uncover the underlying "societal attitudes [that] get communicated in real-life situations" to Chinese adoptees and their families (Tessler et al 1999, 146). Over half of the adoptive parents report "no problem at all" in terms of encountering negative reactions in various social settings such as the supermarket and in restaurants. Although these parents have not experienced many difficulties while their children are young, they "also expressed concern about whether social responses will continue to be positive when the children

get older or when they are not in the company of their parents" (Tessler et al 1999, 148). This statement reveals a concern with the visibility of their children's minority status.

Parents currently do, however, have to endure many tactless and disturbing questions. One mother emphatically expressed her frustration with questions such as, "How much was it?" while pointing to her two adopted Chinese daughters. Or, "Are they real sisters?" After adopting her first daughter, one mother recalls an incident at the museum when a complete stranger sneaked up from behind and picked up her recently adopted daughter. The stranger proceeded to run her over to her friends squealing with delight at this "little China doll." The stranger had treated her daughter as a commodity. Some strangers encountered later marveled at the fact that "she can talk!" as if they would not expect a "little China doll"[5] to talk.

Although the sight of these American & Chinese[6] families is becoming more and more common, many U.S. citizens still do not know quite how to respond to transracial families. Tessler, Gamache, and Liu expect that "the current wave of Chinese adoptions [will] be influenced by the history of Chinese immigration to the United States…this history appears to have different effects on how the adoptions are viewed by different groups" (Tessler et al 1999, 154). However, these earlier immigrants from southern China generally did not speak Mandarin and were less educated; therefore, adoptive parents are attempting to distinguish their children from these stereotypes. Although parents, in general, receive large amounts of support from families and friends, they are concerned about the future well being of their children, a condition not independent of social

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[5] The quotes employed in this paragraph were derived from statements made by parents interviewed for this study. Please see the chapter on "Results" for more details.

[6] Tessler, Gamache, and Liu use the term "American & Chinese families" to distinguish American parents (usually Caucasian), who have adopted Chinese children, from the traditional "'Chinese-American families' in which the ancestors of one or both of the parents emigrated from China, and from 'American and Chinese" families that are formed through ethnic intermarriage…'&' is used to represent the intimate connection between these non-Chinese-American parents and their Chinese babies" (Preface x).

attitudes. Thus, for these families, "perhaps full acceptance will come only when nobody reacts in a questioning way to [them]" (Tessler et al 1999, 154). This acceptance will require that society, as a whole, look beyond ethnic and racial differences. Although more emphasis has been placed on creating a multi-cultural America, much work remains "to be done to reinforce the concept of America as a nation that includes Asians as real Americans" (Tessler et al 1999, 172).

Positive stereotypes of Asian-Americans may also pose challenges for these Chinese adoptees in the future. Currently, Chinese people have earned the reputation of "model minority." Many people tend to think of the Chinese in this society as "hardworking, industrious, and very successful" (Sue 1999, xi). This belief has become so common place that people often forget the socialization of Chinese parents that creates this kind of discipline in their children. Rather, some people think that "smartness" is actually a genetic trait as opposed to a largely environmentally conditioned one. One mother commented, "although my daughter is the only Chinese girl in her class, I think she's almost at an advantage because people tend to think highly of Chinese students." The Chinese-American stereotype as a "model minority," however, cannot adequately categorize every individual. The "scratches on the minds" of U.S. citizens may thus create pressure, whether positive or negative, for ethnic Chinese adoptees. They may find the positive images of Chinese-Americans to be oppressive boundaries rather than freedom for self-expression.

The Movement toward Bi-Cultural Socialization

Parents hope that cultivating pride in racial identity will serve as a "defense mechanism" against potential social stresses (Michaels 1999). In *A Passage To the Heart*, a compilation of articles written by adoptive parents, may parents express the belief that the concerted effort to expose their children to Chinese culture fosters a healthy identity

(Huang and Kelly 1999). Meanwhile, many overseas Chinese persons indicate much difficulty understanding what motivates American parents to attempt bi-cultural socialization (Tessler et al 1999, 134). However, parents of Chinese adoptees, aware that their children may struggle due to their ethnic appearances, willingly embrace the movement to cultivate pride in their children regarding their ethnic heritage. Parents do differ in their approaches toward socializing their Chinese adoptees in the United States. According to Tessler et al (1999), approaches can be separated into four general categories: assimilation, acculturation, alternation, and child choice. Some parents believe that as a citizen of the United States, competence in Chinese culture is superfluous rather than essential knowledge (assimilation). Other parents believe that Chinese culture is a part of their child's life and thus encourage high levels of knowledge in Chinese traditions, language, and values (acculturation). Still other parents hope to strike a balance that will enable their children to feel comfortable in both American and Chinese cultures (alternation). Finally, some parents opt to allow their children to decide for themselves (child choice) (Tessler et al 1999, 3). In terms of deciding what exactly constitutes Chinese culture, "parents clearly do not all agree about the importance of specific facets of Chinese socialization" (Tessler et al 1999, 117).

The parents who are drawn to the growing movement toward bi-cultural socialization may participate in hopes of easing the transition from China to the United States and reduce the effects of culture shock. Stories published by the media may also reinforce the potential risks of future identity issues should ethnic culture be ignored. In 1996, the *Boston Globe* published an article entitled "The Riddle of Julia Ming Gale Chinese by Birth, Adopted by White Americans, She Looks in the Mirror and Asks: Who Am I?" This biographical portrait of a Taiwanese girl adopted by Caucasian parents in the spring of 1972 alerted adopted parents that delayed treatment of ethnic and cultural

differences, indeed, create gaps in the child's self-esteem and sense of self. Julia vacillated between rejection and acceptance of the Chinese heritage, more often than not resenting her association with the Chinese people. After many years, "her challenge is to learn to live with the duality created by that cross-cultural solution" (Lehr 1996, 4). She felt neither fully accepted by the Caucasian-dominated society nor a part of the Chinese community. Stories such as Julia's combined with identity issues encountered by Korean adoptees who had come of age inspired many adoptive parents to provide resources to educate their children.

Resources Available to Parents

Parents adopting internationally have increasingly available resources to help their children learn about their birth culture. A Chinese couple, Joshua Zhong and Lily Nie, founded *Chinese Children Adoption International* (CCAI) in September 1992. Originally operating from the basement of their Colorado home, CCAI placed its first group of children in March 1994. CCAI is now the largest agency in the United States for Chinese adoptions. As of October 2000, the agency, now located in Englewood, Colorado, has placed more than 2100 children. Unlike other agencies assisting in international adoptions, CCAI only does China adoptions. CCAI has placed children ranging from ten weeks old to twelve years old.

CCAI has over twenty staff throughout China to assist adopting families. In Colorado, CCAI continually expands its programs and offers resources to adoptive families. The agency has an Adoptive Parents Council in which parents can participate. It has also established a Chinese school, called the *Joyous Chinese Cultural School*, to encourage families to bi-culturally socialize their children. This cultural school makes its curriculum available to families throughout the U.S. and sponsors an annual culture camp for children to maintain contact with their cultural heritage. Adoptive CCAI parents have

also started Chinese language and cultural schools, such as *Little Treasures* in Boulder, Colorado. To help families keep in touch, CCAI publishes a bi-monthly newsletter. The agency has also initiated programs to improve the conditions of the orphanages in China. Currently, CCAI and the Chinese government are working on a joint venture, the *Lily Orphan Care Center*, in Hangzhou. This beautifully constructed "model" orphanage will provide a home for abandoned children as well as serve as a training ground for orphanage staff throughout China (CCAI Circle Fall 2000, 1). CCAI also instigated *The Chinese Children Charities Fund* to raise awareness and support for the many charitable ventures that have begun in China.

CCAI families form a very close-knit community to provide mutual-support and friendship for families adopting from China. In October 2000, more than 1500 parents and children gathered at Disney World in Orlando for a reunion. Ms. Qin Xiao Mei, wife of the Chinese Ambassador to the United States attended the reunion to show her support. She spoke of the adopted children as "'ambassadors of friendship between the two great countries in the 21st century'" (CCAI Circle Fall 2000, 4). This event was broadcast on October 30, 2000 on CCTV-4 China News. This monumental media coverage marks "the first time since China opened its doors to international adoption that the central government news media reported on the lives of adopted children in the United States" (CCAI Circle Fall 2000, 4).

CCAI's contributions to the adoption of Chinese children by United States' families can be seen as a model of the trends that exist in Chinese adoptions today. The mission statement of this agency strongly encourages the movement toward bi-cultural socialization. In this sense, CCAI strongly reflects the availability of resources for adoption families in Colorado and in the United States.

Another instrumental organization of resources for Chinese adoptive families is *Families with Children from China* (FCC), a grassroots organization instigated by a few families in New York City who wanted to provide opportunities for their children to develop their "Chinese" selves. FCC chapters spread rapidly throughout the United States, Canada, and Britain. Three goals guide the establishment of each chapter: "To support families who've adopted in China through post-adoption and Chinese culture programs; To encourage adoption from China and support waiting families; To advocate for and support children remaining in orphanages in China" (Caughman 2001). FCC, as a parent-inspired grassroots organization lacks a central governing body. Thus, any parent who has adopted a child of Chinese origin can form a local FCC chapter. Two other guidelines for establishing a chapter include 1) the chapter must be organized and run not-for-profit and 2) the chapter must be independent of a particular adoption agency.

Still other resources for adoptive families exist. These include a website, "ChinaSprout.com" started by a Chinese women in an effort to "help bridge the cultural gap between adoptive families and the birth land of their children" (Strong 2001, 9) and various heritage camps for adopted children to "experience" their birth culture (Sweetser 1999).

Chinese Socialization

China's history dates back over four thousand years, a legacy of which the Chinese are extremely proud. Throughout much of its history, "there was much uniformity in Chinese culture even though there was little idea of citizenship or nationhood until the twentieth century…[culture has defined] 'Chinese-ness'" (Tessler et al 1999, 98). Despite hundreds of local dialects, the written language remains uniform (with slight variations between simplified and traditional Chinese, which is a matter of form rather than regional

dialect) among the Chinese. Furthermore, important holidays and celebrations link

Chinese around the world regardless of the country in which they live.

Sing Lau's edited book, *Growing Up the Chinese Way: Chinese Child and*

Adolescent Development, attempts to succinctly characterize the way in which Chinese

parents socialize their children. For example, Chinese parents socialize their children to

control their impulses (Wu 1996, 13). In classrooms students are encouraged to achieve

through competition. Children must respect their elders: including teachers, parents, and

grandparents. In accordance with Confucian tradition, children are expected to fulfill

their roles as obedient children who conform, accept discipline, focus on the good of the

family rather than individual good, and bring honor to the family. Compared to U.S.

children in adolescence, Chinese children "appear to be less rebellious, less delinquent,

and more disciplined" (Tessler et al 1999, 98). Children who are socialized "Chinese"

embody Chinese culture as a result of their parents and environmental circumstances.

More important than traditions, *values* characterize Chinese culture and determine the

way in which parents raise a child.

Chinese Socialization, American Socialization: Combining the Two

As Americans and Chinese come together in families created through adoptions,

two seemingly opposite cultures coincide. Parents must decide how to socialize their

adopted children. The parents must determine the balance in which they will raise their

families. Parents need to define "Chinese socialization" if they hope to integrate some of

their child's ethnic heritage into her or his identity. In terms of "Chinese socialization,"

the structure of Chinese thinking on child development, unlike like Western theories of

development, lacks an empirical base. In other words, "Chinese perspectives on child

development are more like philosophies than theories of nature…Confucianism seems to

be the main focus as a theoretical framework for Chinese child development" (Lau and

Yeung 1996, 32). Chinese parents socialize their children based on their belief system. For parents who have most likely had very limited exposure to Chinese culture prior to their adoption, how are parents integrating "Chinese-ness" into the lives of their families?

Parents must also realize that "growing up the Chinese way is different than growing up Chinese-American with adoptive parents who are not Chinese" (Tessler et al 1999, 101). How are parents going about this type of socialization? Which elements of Chinese culture are introduced and which are overlooked? Rather than Chinese moral values such as modesty and submission to parents, adoptive parents most likely emphasize selective aspects of "bi-cultural socialization" such as—

> forming personal relationships with Chinese people, learning the Chinese language, eating Chinese food, and becoming knowledgeable about Chinese traditions in the same way that other children have learned the traditions of their immigrant ancestors…in the case of Chinese children, because they will be readily identifiable as Asian every day, the need for cultural identification and celebration may be even greater (Tessler et al 1999, 101)

Tessler states that Caucasian adoptive parents cannot truly have their children "grow up the Chinese way." Rather, bi-cultural socialization aims to "restore some of the positive things associated with the birth culture that these children left behind when they immigrated which can provide them with a sense of their cultural roots" (Tessler et al 1999, 101-102). Many parents devote tremendous time and resources to these efforts. Parents do, however, vary in their attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization because, in general, they also recognize the importance of helping their child fit into mainstream U.S. society.

IV. Research Background

Primary Research Data

The present research is founded on *West Meets East: Americans Adopt Chinese Children*, the only in-depth scholarly study of bi-cultural socialization and Americans who have adopted from China. The author will use the research that began in 1996 and was published in 1999 by Richard Tessler, a professor of Sociology and a parent of two Chinese adoptee daughters; Gail Gamache, a daughter of European immigrants; and Liming Liu, an immigrant from mainland China, as a springboard for this proposal. Their study provides comprehensive background on China adoptions, while clearly presenting many of the issues surrounding bi-cultural socialization. Their research uses survey data collected from over five hundred volunteer families in thirty-eight states to establish the existence of a trend toward bi-cultural socialization. While their research does not provide any conclusive data about the outcome of attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization, the authors identify four approaches of bi-cultural socialization among adoptive families and highlight potential concerns regarding the phenomenon of bi-cultural socialization. For those parents who choose to provide ethnic socialization for their Chinese children, Tessler et al suggest that they may invariably face many challenges.

Tessler, Gamache, and Liu's 1999 study addresses issues faced by U.S. citizens who adopted children from the People's Republic of China in the 1990s. Parents who have adopted children from China follow significantly different approaches in raising their children than did parents of internationally adopted children from countries such as South Korea. Largely drawing on experiences of Korean adoptees who became thoroughly socialized as Americans and now reportedly suffer from some confusion regarding their own identities, many parents of Chinese adoptees attempt to bi-culturally socialize their

children in an attempt to ease future identity issues. As these American & Chinese families (see footnote 6) occupy an increasingly larger percentage of the U.S. population, the social and political issues confronted by these families will become increasingly visible, thus requiring conscious efforts by families and society as a whole to help adoptees adjust to lives in the United States. The transracial ties that have formed within families have "fostered the birth and growth of a social movement emphasizing global rather than parochial thinking in which some adoptive parents consciously attempt to build a cultural bridge between the United States and China" (Tessler et al 1999, 2).

However, socializing a child bi-culturally in the United States is a formidable challenge even for Chinese-American families who possess "insider" knowledge to teach their children (Tessler et al 1999. In a predominantly English-speaking country, the task of teaching a child to be competent in Chinese language, culture, and values inevitably proves difficult. Thus, one can only imagine the challenges confronted by non-Chinese parents who usually have little or no knowledge of Chinese culture prior to the adoption of their child. Tessler, Gamache, and Liu explicitly state that "it would be a mistake to infer that a majority of these children will be truly bi-cultural. Full bi-cultural socialization would require more family foundation in Chinese culture than most adoptive parents realistically can have available to them or would want to provide" (Tessler et al 1999, Preface xi).

Despite the obvious challenges to their efforts, adoptive parents and other concerned members of the community have initiated a growing movement to facilitate the bi-cultural socialization of the Chinese adoptees. Through their studies, Tessler et al (1999) identified four approaches of bi-cultural socialization employed by parents of Chinese adoptees.

Bi-Cultural Socialization Theories

Using LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton's studies on bi-cultural socialization, Tessler et al (1999) correlated parental attitudes toward bi-cultural socialization in three different categories: assimilation, acculturation, and alternation. They then coined a fourth category "child choice."

Assimilation has been the predominant theory underlying the immigrant experience. As the "melting pot," individual differences are thought to blend together effortlessly in the United States. Unfortunately, reality has proved this illusion false. Rather, this theory suggests that new immigrants will eventually be fully absorbed into the newly encountered culture. Those who subscribe to this theory believe that such absorption and acceptance of the dominant majority in the foreign culture will serve in the individual's best interest and aid in adjustment to life in the new world, in this case, the United States (Tessler et al 1999).

These parents who exhibit characteristics of the assimilation model socialize their children in hopes that the child will embody an American identity transcending race and ethnicity. One Chinese-American adoptive parent observed that Caucasian parents could not realistically instill many subtleties of Chinese culture. This same parent clearly states a bias toward assimilation, "I don't think our children should be raised 'bi-culturally'—this is not China! Instill pride and understanding of Chinese culture…but our children are now Americans first" (Tessler et al 1999, 110-111). Some parents expose their children to Chinese culture for the sake of self-esteem—to overcome possible criticism and snickering for not being educated about the Chinese people. Parents who subscribe to assimilation, however, warily avoid overemphasizing multi-cultural roots and racial dissimilarities. One parent stated, "'I am very proud that my daughter is American. I believe this is the greatest gift we have given her after becoming her parents'" (Tessler et al 1999, 133).

The <u>Acculturation</u> model of bi-cultural socialization allows some room for the presence of an immigrant's birth culture. This theory proposes that new immigrants adjust to life in the United States through a process of interaction. He or she learns new ways of living while retaining elements of ethnic culture. Inevitably, most likely due to racial differences, people will identify these individuals as members of a minority culture (LaFromboise et al 1993). This theory suggests that individuals possess characteristics of a minority culture and adjust in the process of interacting with the mainstream culture (Tang and Fouad 1999).

In the Tessler et al (1999) study, parents also described the acculturation approach as "immersion." These parents often make a strong effort to find Chinese language instruction for their children, celebrate Chinese holidays, hire Chinese baby-sitters, and eat Chinese food regularly. Other parents believe that the entire family must socialize bi-culturally. One family in Tessler et al's study stated, "We are a Chinese-American family now…We have taken Chinese middle names to demonstrate that as our daughter joined our family, we joined hers…(we're learning Mandarin as a family)" (Tessler et al 1999, 109-110). For many adoptive families, however, cultural connections are artificially constructed and must be distinguished from the practices of ethnic-Chinese parents in the United States. Tessler et al's study describes the invariable result of bi-cultural socialization by parents who are not "bi-cultural" themselves. Nonetheless, many adoptive parents make concerted efforts. Parents who fit into the acculturation model undertake these efforts because they believe that Chinese culture is an essential element of their child's heritage.

The <u>Alternation</u> model is, perhaps, the most ambitious of the current approaches toward bi-cultural socialization. According to this model, new immigrants learn to "alternate" between their native culture and their new culture as the situation demands.

This theory argues that it provides the most viable context for immigrant adjustment because the "individuals who can alternate their behavior appropriate to two targeted cultures will be less anxious than a person who is assimilating or undergoing the process of acculturation" (LaFromboise et al 1993, 399).

Ideally, these parents want their children to be equally competent in both cultures so that they can feel pride as both Chinese and American; however, they voice uncertainty in their approaches, such as sacrificing American socialization and causing their children to feel marginalized from mainstream society. In this way, these parents, too, struggle to strike a balance in their children's lives. They want to draw from the best of both worlds and ingrain positive aspects of both cultures into their child's and family's life.

The fourth model, coined by Tessler et al (1999) is called <u>Child Choice</u>. They argue that this model represents "a uniquely American parental response to the issue of bi-cultural socialization" (Tessler et al 1999, 108). The adoptive parents mostly came of age in the radical era of the 1960s. Thus, these parents possess an ingrained desire for freedom of self-expression and independence from pressures of older generations. These liberal-minded parents believe in providing early opportunities and exposure to culture so that their children can make informed decisions in the future.

According the Child Choice, the child must be the central motivator in terms of nurturing her (or his) Chinese identity. Most of these parents expose their children to Chinese culture early so that they have the opportunity to make their choice based on some actual exposure to their birth heritage. They want to expose children to the Chinese language so that they will at least "develop an ear" for the sounds should they choose to pursue fluency in the future. Ultimately, these parents realize that their children will be American and do not think that Chinese values will function prevalently

in their everyday lives. By neither pushing nor denying their child's birth culture, adoptive parents who subscribe to the idea of Child Choice believe that their children must decide for themselves the role of Chinese culture in their lives. Every child is different and her or his well being is ultimately the top priority—this well being may or may not include intimate knowledge of China (Tessler et al 1999).

Thoughts on the Approaches

> *We are lions believing we are sheep, hiding behind a sheep façade. As long as we think we're sheep, however, we are bound to suffer. How can a lion be happy living like a sheep? There is no way to experience true enjoyment or fulfillment when we are not being who we really are (Welwood 1996, 56).*

According to Tessler et al (1999), the functions of ethnic socialization are to enable the child to develop a competence in the culture in which they will live their lives and to develop a positive attitude about their own subgroup in the United States. However, this socialization is subject to the discretion of parents who choose the areas in which they provide bi-cultural socialization.

Naturally, some overlap exists among the categories. Parents who emphasize acculturation may ultimately realize that their child will have to make the choice. All four theories share the importance of pride in one's ethnic culture. Even parents who emphasized assimilation wanted their children to learn and be proud of their Chinese origins. However, parents differed radically in the extent to which their direct involvement brought about such an education. Whether or not parents pursue bi-cultural socialization, many families join social networks such as FCC for the sake of community support.

Due to the heterogeneous nature of U.S. society, many Americans accept that an individual can maintain pride in ethnic origins while feeling like a "true American." The attitude that pervades among parents who have adopted from China aims to appreciate

distinctiveness of culture while decreasing marginality. Tessler et al's study predicts that children adopted from China will likely feel strong connections with both American and Chinese identities as a result of parental efforts. These researchers realize that despite exposure to Chinese culture, children will primarily identify themselves as Americans. Tessler et al does, however, identify families who think of Chinese culture as their own. These parents believe that it is their responsibility to construct a past for their children that incorporates knowledge of culture and personal data.

Although Chinese adoptees may well primarily identify themselves with the United States, Tessler et al address the potential stresses induced by social forces outside individual control. Parents embrace bi-cultural socialization in hopes of minimizing potential conflicts that their children may encounter as ethnic minorities. Since the Chinese adoptees are still rather young, and have not entered adolescence, the outcomes of the bi-cultural socialization attempts remain to be seen. However, a movement toward this phenomenon exists and parents of Chinese adoptees may reflect a new era of parenting practices. In terms of bi-cultural socialization, Tessler et al's identification of the Child Choice theory as a model of parental attitudes and approaches suggests that parents of Chinese adoptees possess distinctive attitudes and approaches toward raising an internationally adopted child.

Tessler's self-criticisms regarding the study he and his colleagues conducted include that the sample, drawn from volunteer participants, is not random; furthermore, the sample may overrepresent parents with more interest in bi-cultural socialization (since parents participated on a volunteer-basis) and underrepresent the opinions of fathers. The strengths of this study are its geographical and demographic diversity (including 526 parents from thirty-eight states) and the cooperation of families who provided a perspective during a period when the adoptees were still infants and toddlers and the

adoption experience was relatively fresh in their memories. Parents were (and are)

currently exploring various approaches to bi-cultural socialization and, thus, possessed an

open attitude toward the study.

Tessler, Gamache, and Liu's data reveals that not all parents agree on the need to

provide Chinese socialization. However, as a pattern:

> In the 1990s, general attitudes about parenting children adopted
> internationally have changed to include some degree of bi-cultural
> socialization as a goal, based on the assumption that knowledge and pride
> in one's birth culture will serve as a defense against intolerance and racism,
> as a source of self-esteem, and as a replacement for individual biography.
> (Tessler et al 1999, 12)

Using data from explorative interviews conducted with Chinese adoptive families in

Colorado, this researcher will attempt to assess this perceived "need" for some degree of

bi-cultural socialization as a source of self-esteem and, if applicable, identify the most

relevant approaches toward bi-cultural socialization. Tessler et al's study establishes that

a movement toward bi-cultural socialization exists but does not substantiate the

effectiveness of the phenomenon aside from the social advantages of improving relations

between the West and the East. They do not assess which attitudes are most prevalent

among Chinese adoptive families. Neither do they address the role of bi-cultural

socialization in relation to the well being of the child.

Other Relevant Research Data

In a twenty-year follow-up study of children adopted from Hong Kong to Great

Britain, Christopher Bagley assessed the adoptees from a psychological perspective. He

referred to studies of adoption in general that suggested that parental openness to their

adoptee's natural origins and cheerful recognition that their adoptees possess a special

status "lay the foundations for personality stability, ego strength, and good mental health

in their adopted children" (Bagley 1993b, 146). Bagley applied the "acceptance" or

"accentuation of difference" model to inter-country adoptions. He wrote that in terms of inter-country adoptions, this model would take the form of giving the child a knowledge of, and positive emotional orientation to, both ethnicity and culture of origin and theoretically produce the best outcomes in terms of identity development (Bagley 1993b, 146).

Through standardized tests of self-esteem, identity, and adjustment, Bagley conducted a longitudinal study. Between ages 12 and 18, Bagley noted the "striking degree" to which the Chinese girls had become Anglicized. At this point of the study, he decided that "cultural interest and awareness was an intellectual rather than an emotional orientation, and was not generally a core part of identity" (Bagley 1993b, 147-148). In comparison to a group of girls drawn from the general population, Bagley found significantly better self-esteem among Chinese adoptees. His team eventually decided that the key elements of ego-strength depended upon early resolution of identity struggles and strong bonding and relationships founded on love. Bagley concluded that "the very process of absorption into an accepting family and culture will diminish both interest in and need for a clear ethnic identity which is different from that of the adopted culture" (Bagley 1993b, 153). Bagley thus proved some of his initial hypotheses to be unfounded. Children with healthy identity development were more likely to be assimilated than bi-cultural. Although the findings of his study can be applied to the current wave of Chinese adoptions, the subjects of his study differ in terms of social and historical circumstances. The British adopted from Hong Kong (a British colony at the time) and at a time when a movement toward bi-cultural socialization had not gained momentum in the society as a whole.

Finding a lack of previous literature, Myrna Friedlander conducted a literature review in 1999 of studies on racial and ethnic identity development of international

adoptees. Friedlander questions the extent to which parents should "encourage their children, who already struggle with identity issues related to adoption, to identify with their countries of origin" (Friedlander 1999, 43). Friedlander identified studies indicating that children develop in cognitive stages. International adoptees first recognize that they differ from their parents in physically appearance. A young child will usually have difficulty associating with a particular nationality or ethnicity. Friedlander questions if identification with cultural origins actually provides the adoptee a base of security or is such an identification exacerbates feelings of confusion, isolation, and alienation. In her review, she found that "psychological health was more strongly predicted by level of attachment and by the perceived psychological similarity of parent and child that by the perceived similarity in physiognomy" (Friedlander 1999, 52). She concluded that attachment to the family and perceived mental similarity most critically contributed to adjustment and well being. In light of her findings, she warned parents not to lost sight of *individual differences*. Some children grieve the loss of birth family and culture, but many do not. Friedlander's study reiterates Bagley's (1993b) findings that bi-cultural socialization is not the most crucial factor in a child's identity. Although parents should emphasize ethnic pride, they should not do so to the detriment of the child's sense of attachment to the family and the community. Friedlander's study, like Bagley's, has some deficiencies in terms of application to the current experience of Chinese adoptees. It does not explore the movement embraced by Chinese adoptees. Thus, still very little is known about the ethnic identity development of the current wave of children adopted from China. The Chinese case merits further exploration due to the movement toward bi-cultural socialization and the availability of community support for the phenomenon.

Combining the findings of Tessler et al (1999), Bagley (1993b), and Friedlander (1999), the present study intends to further research efforts to study the current wave of

international adoptions from China. Using the four theories of bi-cultural socialization employed by Tessler et al (1999), the author finds it necessary to use theories of psychology to connect the findings of Bagley and Friedlander to Tessler et al. This well-founded suggestion for continued research will be elaborated in the "Discussion" chapter of this thesis.

Relevant Methodology

In a study conducted at the State University of New York at Albany and published in 2000, the researchers interviewed eight families to deepen knowledge of the cognitive, emotional, and familial experiences of internationally adopted children of color (Friedlander, Larney, Skau, Hotaling, Cutting, & Schwam 2000). Their study aimed to explore the development of bi-cultural identity in internationally adopted children. The authors used a qualitative analysis because "little is known about the development of biracial or bicultural identification in general" (Friedlander et al 2000, 189). They conducted interviews of parents and children separately. This study references the previously discussed study (Friedlander 1999) and states that, "it is not clear…if and how bicultural identification develops or whether it is necessary for healthy adjustment" (Friedlander et al 2000, 188). The 2000 study accumulated data from 12 Caucasian parents, four children of Korean heritage and four children of Latin American heritage. The researchers organized the results of the participants thematically.

The preliminary data provided in this proposal will eventually model the organization of Friedlander et al's study as the research systematically progresses. They categorized their questions as "initial questions," "questions related to racial/ethnic awareness," and "questions related to coping." The study uses an adaptation of Hill et al's (1997) Consensual Qualitative Research Method (CQR) to analyze the interview data. The researchers chose this method because "it recognizes the importance of context and is a

systematic, rigorous method for obtaining thick descriptions of participants'

phenomenological experiences…for managing large amounts of data" (Friedlander et al

2000, 190). They sorted the narrative data into domains and summarized each of the

participants' data. They arrived at categories through inductive comparison of the

narrative data across participants. Their method captured the "common and unique

aspects of the sample's experience, the categories, or themes [that] reflect the narrative

data within and across domains" (Friedlander et al 2000, 190). Through their data, the

researches distinguished nine categories: a) context of adoption; b) family self-definition;

c) knowledge of child's birth culture; d) relationships within the family and with others;

e) perspectives on adoption and cultural diversity; f) child's psychological health, well-

being, and self-esteem; g) experience with bias or prejudice; h) coping strategies; and i)

multiethnic activities (Friedlander et al 2000, 190). As they sorted the interview data, they

found that domain c) and i) overlapped.

Using the same reasoning, the preliminary, explorative data presented in this thesis

will be categorized and assessed. Through the current data, questions will be modified

and categorized accordingly in terms of relevance to the question of the necessity of bi-

cultural socialization. As the interviews progressed, the interviewer found that some

questions provided irrelevant data to the issue at hand. Further research will eliminate

such extraneous questions as well as clarify and expand on critical questions. Most

importantly, future interviews with the adoptees themselves will provide significant

insight into the attitudes, approaches, and significance of the efforts in helping the child

develop a healthy identity and security in her or his sense of self.

Hypothesis

Through interviews with families, the researcher hopes to establish the argument

that certain attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization are more prevalent

or effective than others. Based on Tessler et al's findings, she hypothesizes that, in an effort to nurture the child's self-identity, the acculturation and child choice models of bi-cultural socialization are the predominant attitudes and approaches of U.S. parents who have adopted children from China. Although the actual achievement of bi-cultural socialization seems highly unlikely, parental efforts may prove significant in the child's overall well being and development.

V. Methodology

Five families were administered two-hour open-ended interviews in the setting of their choice. Thirty questions were designed to assess each family's understanding of their attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization based on the findings of the 1999 study conducted by Tessler, Gamache, and Liu (see Appendix A). A qualitative approach, rather than a quantitative one, was employed to experience the "meaning behind the numbers" of the aforementioned study. Some interview questions were deliberately vague to prompt candid responses and generate an enriching discussion. Due to participants' enthusiasm for the subject matter, several modifications of the interview took place over the course of data collection. Those changes included extending the actual durations of the interviews to three or four hours, eliminating some demographic questions, and adding more specified questions regarding identity and socialization (see Appendix B). Previously interviewed families were then contacted by phone to discuss their responses to the additional questions.

The interviews began with introductions and the signing of a consent form (see Appendix C) informing participants of the nature and purpose of this study. Exempt status was obtained from the Human Research Committee at the University of Colorado for the implementation of this study. Immediate benefits of participation were described as potentially enhancing their child's well-being and improving parents' abilities to raise internationally adopted children through exploration of their own attitudes. For those who decide to explore the conclusions of this study, there may be an additional benefit of easing anxiety and tension as parents develop a better understanding of effective attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization. Participants were forewarned of the possibility of emotional sensitivity evoked by the personal nature of some of the questions.

All interviews were tape-recorded and each tape was assigned a subject number to protect the confidentiality of each family.

VI. Results

Demographic Data

Of the five families interviewed, efforts were made to select a diverse cross-section of sample families. Due to the influential resources offered by CCAI in Colorado, one family was interviewed who did not adopt through this agency in an effort to eliminate bias. One single parent was interviewed. A balance of families very involved in bi-cultural socialization and families not as active in the movement were sought out as well. One family was selected for the adoption of an older child. The same family also has biological children. A bi-racial family was also interviewed to gain the perspective of a minority parent. The families shared similarities as older parents—all the parents adopted in their early and late forties. With the exception of <u>Family Three</u>, all the mothers worked prior to adoption. In three of the five families, the mothers have remained "stay at home" moms since adoption. One mother has been unemployed for the past year, and the single mother continues her career. The fathers all have stable careers in occupations such as inventory control, engineering, and fire fighting. Five families totaled nine caregivers but only seven were interviewed. The mother of each family was present, two fathers were present or partially present. Unless otherwise indicated, quotes reflect responses of the mother. All of the families willingly and actively participated in the interviews.

Of the seven caregivers interviewed, six were Caucasian and one was ethnic Chinese. Two families had Caucasian biological children. Two families struggled with infertility, these same families attempted to adopt from other countries. Ages of adoption of the children ranged from three months to four years old. At the time of the interview, the children ranged from nineteen months to ten years old. Four families were

interviewed in the proximity of their child(ren). Four families chose to interview in their homes while one chose a local restaurant.

Family One was comprised of a Caucasian mother and father who had adopted two daughters from China at the ages of ten and a half months and eight months. The parents adopted after struggling with years of infertility. They had attempted to adopt domestically as well as from Russia. After failed efforts, they decided that China proved a viable option and the mother, who had grown-up with brothers and boy cousins, had always wanted girls in her family. At the time of the interview, the daughters were four years old and nineteen months. With her nineteen-month old, the mother participated in the interview at a local restaurant.

Family Two also has two adopted Chinese daughters. They had initially turned to adoption due to infertility. The parents adopted their first child at four months old only months after China first opened its doors in 1992. They adopted their second daughter in 1996 at the age of three months. The older daughter is now nearly nine-years old and the younger daughter is six-years old. The mother had relatives who had adopted from Korea, and, thus, she always felt drawn to Asian children and felt comfortable among Asians. When they first started the international adoption process, China had not opened its doors. After unsuccessful attempts to adopt from Korea and Vietnam, they seized the opportunity to adopt from China. They adopted their second daughter in 1996. The interview began initially with the mother in their home. The girls them came home from school and sat in the next room as the interview continued. The father participated in the last hour of the interview.

Family Three provided the perspective of a family with biological children. The mother and father have three biological daughters currently ages nineteen, sixteen and fourteen. They chose to adopt when their youngest biological daughter was ten years

old because they desired to have more children in the house and did not want to "start over" with an infant. So, unlike most families who adopt from China, they requested an older child. They adopted from China because they wanted another daughter and had limited choices due to their ages. They adopted their first daughter at the age of four from southern China. However, this daughter's U.S. medical records indicate that she had the physical development of an eight-year old at the time of adoption. Now, four years later, they have decided to compromise on her age and designate her as a ten-year old. As an older child, this daughter has memories of the orphanage and China and even had responsibilities as a nanny for the infants. Their second adoptee, currently seven years old, experienced a disrupted adoption from another couple, and thus came under the custody of Family Three. When she was initially adopted from China she was three years old, thus both girls are technically considered "older" adoptees. Only the mother was able to participate in the interview conducted in their home.

A single mom and daughter comprise Family Four. Coincidentally, this adopted daughter is one of the children who Family Three's first adopted daughter cared for at the orphanage. The daughter was eighteen months at adoption and is currently five years old. This single mom, who only decided to adopt later in life, had limited country selection due to her age, status as a single parent, and lack of religious following (she indicated that people affiliated with churches have access to international adoptions not available to the general public). She also requested an older child because she had to maintain her job and anticipated adopting a three-year old. However, at the time, China classified children over one-year old as an "older" child, and to her surprise, CCAA assigned her to an eighteen-month old daughter. She feels quite happy with the match now. Mother and daughter demonstrated a close relationship during the interview. The interview occurred at the condominium in the presence of her daughter.

Family Five was an inter-racial family. The mother is a Chinese-American whose family immigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth century. Most of her relatives reside in Hawaii today. The father is a Caucasian widower with a biological son, who the mother adopted when he was ten-years old. Their son is currently twenty-eight years old, twenty-four at the time they adopted from China. The mother, who admitted that she never had a particular fondness for kids, and the father, who adores children, decided to adopt "almost on a whim." Although the mother had suffered several miscarriages, she had never had a strong desire to become a mother. However, after their son moved away, and they became "empty nesters," they decided that adopting from China might not be such a bad idea. Due to the mother's Chinese heritage, they decided that China would be a logical choice, and they adopted a seven-month little girl from China. Their daughter is currently five years old. This animated couple participated in the interview together in the living room of their home as their daughter watched *A Bug's Life* in the family room.

Narrative Data

The organization of the following data generally follows the order of questions found in Appendix A, however, the data has been condensed due to overlapping responses. Thirty formal questions were designed to direct the conversation; however, parents proved willing to discuss their views at depth and thus often answered questions before they were formally asked. In this event, the answers were extrapolated and applied to the appropriate questions.

2. How did you decide to name your child? If Chinese name is kept, why?[7]

One of the first bi-cultural choices parents have to make regards the naming of their adopted child. Of the five families interviewed, only the single mother chose not to maintain her daughter's Chinese name as a middle name. All of the other families chose American first names for their children, either naming them after relatives or simply because they liked the name. All the children share the same last name as their adoptive family. In Family Five, the mother opted to retain her maiden name, and, thus, her adopted daughter took her father's last name. Family Two gave both their daughters American first names and middle names and preserved the two characters of their daughters' Chinese names.

Four of the five families opted to keep their daughter's Chinese name so that she could maintain a connection with her beginnings in China. Family Five expressed great confusion around the naming of their daughter. In China, all of the children from the same orphanage are given the same surname. This 'family' name is arbitrarily given and may be named after the name of the village, the last name of the orphanage director, or in the case of the fifth family, the orange tree behind the orphanage. The mother said that half of the children from her daughter's orphanage spelled their "family name" "Ji"

and the other half had the spelling "Gu." She showed the interviewer the character, which was arbitrarily written by a woman in the United States, and the mandarin pronunciation for this character is "Gu." A single pronunciation of a Chinese character has various meanings, making it difficult to know from a romanized version of a Chinese sound, the actual character for the last name. Furthermore, the pronunciation differs in Mandarin and Cantonese and other dialects of Chinese. Such complications arise when parents attempt to retain the Chinese name given to their daughters arbitrarily at the orphanage.

Family Two stated that they decided to keep their daughters' Chinese names as middle names "because it is part of who they are." However, ironically, at Chinese school, her oldest daughter was arbitrarily given another "Chinese name" much as Americans who study a foreign language choose a name for that language. The mother does not know exactly why her daughter's 'actual' Chinese name was not used, but she figures the teachers did not know that her daughter already had a given Chinese name. Her other daughter simply chooses to use her English name at Chinese school. Similarly, Family Five originally had not intended on retaining their daughter's Chinese name; however, the agency advised them to do so for fear of a future "identity crisis." If such an event occurred, their daughter could choose to use her Chinese name with legal documentation. The parent reported that they eventually became persuaded that "all adopted children have an identity crisis—it's not a matter of 'if,' it's a matter of 'when.'" Family One received similar counsel. None of the families could pronounce their daughters' Chinese names and either had to provide spelling or look up the spelling for the interviewer. Fluent in mandarin Chinese and proficient in romanization and the pin yin system of pronunciation, the interviewer has a sensitive ear for the proper sounds;

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[7] Please see Appendix B for the order of the interview questions.

however, initially, even she could not quite discern the middle names adopted by the four families.

The mother of <u>Family Four</u>, who had chosen to give her daughter English first and middle names, said that she wanted to her daughter to possess "a pretty name" of which she could be proud. She thought that a Chinese name would be too complicated and difficult for her friends to pronounce. Her daughter's given Chinese name generated much confusion as well. Her written name did not match any of the mother's pronunciations or the characters on official documents.

4. What were your reasons for adopting? Why did you choose to adopt from China? Did you choose Chinese adoption because you wanted a daughter? Does your perception of a Chinese boy differ from a Chinese girl?

As stated earlier, Families One and Two adopted for infertility reasons. <u>Family Three</u> simply wanted a larger family and did not want to "start over" given the age of their youngest biological daughter. <u>Family Four</u> is a single mother who "always loved children" but did not decide to adopt until later in life. <u>Family Five</u>, with one biological son, adopted "almost on a whim" when they realized they would "be bad empty-nesters."

The families chose to adopt from China largely because of the large population of children available for adoption. Families One and Three wanted girls as a personal preference. <u>Family One</u> also perceived that China really cared for its babies and the birth mothers received good pre-natal care. Families One and Two adopted a second daughter so that their first child would have a sibling. One mother claimed that, as an older parent (as with most parents who adopt from China), she did not want her daughter to be an only child—she wanted her to have family if her parents should pass away. <u>Family Two</u> claimed, "It was fate." The mother had an interest in culture and had a close college friend from China. Families Three and Four adopted from China due to their status and

the flexibility of China's requirements: age, older children, single parent. Family Five adopted from China due to the compatibility of the mother's Chinese heritage and also because of a chance contact with a Chinese adoptee. All of the parents adopted because they wanted to parent or continue parenting. China proved a reasonable choice for various reasons described above.

Three of the five families did not have a particular preference for a son or a daughter but knew that they would be adopting a daughter since they adopted from China. All of the families interviewed knew that since they chose China, they would adopt a girl. Since healthy boys are rarely adopted out of China, the families assumed that any boy adopted from China would have special needs. In terms of perceptions of Chinese boys and girls, families recognized that boys, in general, differ from girls and the differences are gender rather than race related. All of the families agreed that in the world of adoption, families learn to keep an open mind and stay flexible. The families all expressed contentment with their daughter(s).

9. How well prepared were you for cultural differences before you adopted your child? How much exposure to Chinese culture did you have before the adoption?

Each of the families defined "cultural differences" somewhat differently. All of the families did some reading about China, either through books acquired independently or through classes and newsletters offered by their agency (four of the five families adopted through CCAI). Of all the families, only one mother had formally studied Chinese history in a classroom setting. The single mother, who speaks many different languages, had never studied Chinese. She said that her exposure consisted of some "gross stereotypes" to which she did not attribute much validity. For all the families, informal exposure to Chinese culture included eating at local Chinese restaurants and Chinese friends at certain times in their lives.

Two families remembered the actual conditions in China, for which they did not feel they could have been completely prepared. One mother said that she had a "taste of poverty" when she vacationed in Mexico, however, the overwhelming poverty in China still caused her culture shock. Before adopting her daughter, this mother confessed that she had never desired to visit China.   The mother of the oldest adoptee also felt overwhelmed by the poor, harsh conditions in which her daughter lived. The fact that her daughter had memories of being beaten at the orphanage, proved difficult for her to handle as well. This mother, thus refers to the culture of the orphanage and the neglect of older abandoned children in China as the cause of her "culture shock." Although she believes that China does take care of its babies to a certain extent, during her visit, she realized the limitation of space in the orphanage. Older children must "pull their own weight" by nannying the infants or else move out on her own and work in a factory.

Family Two, on the other hand, felt a different attraction toward China and had always felt enamored by Asia. In high school, this mother recalls feeling attracted to Asian men. As a child, China seemed like such a faraway place and she remembers "trying to dig to China." She expressed that the opportunity to travel to China was "like a dream come true!"

Family Five had the most informal and formal exposure to Chinese culture. As an ethnic Chinese mother and ethnic Irish/Scottish father interracial couple (both socialized in the United States), both felt that they had already dealt with "cultural differences" in terms of dealing with social perceptions of interracial relationships. The mother and son had already experienced many of the questions that the father would encounter with their daughter. Nonetheless, when they actually arrived in China, they indicated that they had a bigger cultural gap than anticipated. Her great-grandparents immigrated to the United States in the 1880s; however, she believes that her family still possesses "Chinese

characteristics" such as family guilt and eating Chinese food. Her grandparents all spoke a dialect of Cantonese. Her family does not, however, celebrate many Chinese political holidays. Due to status of her mother's family as "landowners," their family experienced painful persecution. This adoptive mother has not "preserved" much of her ethnic heritage. She has a Bachelor of Arts in history and expresses a personal interest to learn about Chinese history. She emphasized that this interest is due to her personality and that her brother and sister do not have any desire to learn about Chinese history—they simply are not interested. Her husband did not have any specific exposure to Chinese culture aside from eating Chinese food at home and at restaurants.

As evidenced by the Caucasian parents, adopting children from China became their impetus to start reading and acquiring basic knowledge of China. They indicated that they could not adequately prepare for "cultural differences" because understanding and recognizing cultural differences required more thorough understanding and study of the culture. They reported that staying at the finest hotels and travelling with tour guides throughout China largely sheltered them from any severe shock they may have encountered through intimate interaction with people in China.

10. Are there identity struggles that you anticipate or hope to prevent as your child develops?

Future struggles that adoptive parents anticipate involve the status of their daughters as abandoned orphans. The parents do not want their children to be thought of as commodities. Three of the five families said that the question "How much did it cost?" disturbs them tremendously. Family Three also said that a potential struggle may arise due to the initial disrupted adoption of her second adopted daughter.

All of the families hope that their current efforts will prevent their children from experiencing a crisis or at least provide a foundation of confidence from which their

children can overcome identity struggles. One mother anxiously anticipates the day when her daughter understands the concept of a birthmother. She also expressed uncertainty about where her daughters will "fit" in society. This mother fears that something nasty will be said to her daughters and that it will break their hearts. She already feels defensive about their ethnicity. Although she is aware that all children deal with some issue or get picked on for something (such as being fat), she is very cautious about the ethnic differences of her daughters and wonders to what extent ethnicity is the cause of certain treatment toward her daughter. For example, in her daughter's ballet class, a blond-hair, blue-eyed little girl refuses to hold her hand. She admits that this incident may not be race related, but such incidents trigger the "culture concern." She will never know for certain if her daughter's race is the cause of awkward situations. Her expressed concern alluded to the potential stresses caused by environmental circumstances. Her daughters do not seem to feel comfortable among Chinese populations nor do the Chinese seem to accept her daughters. This mother fears that society will always treat her daughters as minorities. She has concerns about their self-esteem and hopes that her efforts to teach them about their birth culture will not cause them to feel marginalized from mainstream America. As U.S. citizens, she foresees that her daughters will not feel completely comfortable in their adopted homeland either.

The parents vary in their attitude toward "identity struggles." All of the families generally acknowledged that an identity struggle may be inevitable, a part of human development. However, parents varied in their approaches toward the phenomena. The approaches range from directly attempting to empower their children to passively handling things as they come. One mother immediately responded that she hopes to prevent any struggles, identity or otherwise. The anticipation that her children will experience some sort of identity struggle has served as a primary impetus for her active

involvement in the Chinese adoptive community as well as the Chinese-American community. Her children are "different," and she wants them to be able to take pride in those differences. Due to the visibility of their physical characteristics, this family believes that the "Chinese" part of her daughters' identities must not be neglected. Chinese culture is at the forefront of their identity, more so than their status as adoptees. These parents emphatically encourage their daughters that "being different is the best thing you can be!" and they believe that their efforts are successful thus far. They believe that this comfort with "difference" will act as the foundation for any potential struggles in life. Although they cannot foresee every struggle that may confront their daughters, they proactively take steps towards preventing potential issues they can currently "see."

Family Three attempts to empower their children as well. The mother is trying to create a primary identity for all of her daughters based on their sisterhood. She believes that through the support and love provided by their family environment (including home schooling), her children will feel secure and have support for individual identities. Though her daughters may not all look alike, she believes that their hearts are aligned. This mother reported that her older adopted daughter is very comfortable with her identity and even jokes about her adoption openly, despite all the negative experiences afforded by her past. She has a reported ability to find humor in potentially insulting situations.

Two of the five families seem prepared to just handle the identity issues as they come. They are not anticipating or trying to prevent any identity crisis in the future. Family Four possesses a very relaxed attitude in regards to potential identity struggles. With a doctoral degree in educational psychology and extensive work in developmental psychology, the mother recognizes the potential struggles that adolescents may encounter regardless of cultural heritage. She asserts that her daughter currently carries herself

confidently and with self-assurance. This mother said that she has the concerns that any other parent would. She worries that other children in school might act snobby or hurt her daughter's feelings. In her middle teenage years (14-16 years old), she realizes that her daughter will have many questions, an identity crisis perhaps, at which point she will have to find the answers for herself. She said, "identity is so intimately personal that each individual must figure out his or her own way." She referred to Erickson's identity crisis theory regarding "who am I and who will I be?" as a very natural part of her daughter's development.

Family Five initially possessed such a relaxed attitude toward identity struggles that they did not think it would even be an issue until 'professionals' convinced them otherwise. They then started to buy into the idea that all adopted children would have identity crises. Nevertheless, they also emphasized that "you get what you expect. If parents think that their children will have an identity crisis, then it may very well materialize." They think that adoption itself may be an issue as well as cross-cultural adoption. However, they accept that this is "just part of life" and part of who their daughter's life. They neither lament nor pity the situation. Their daughter is from China, and "she is a happy and spoiled little girl." They have provided the finest accessories for her and do not worry about her identity struggles. They will handle 'problems' as they come.

11. How do you define "culture"?

This abstract and vague question aimed to reveal potential simplifications and stereotypes that people develop about the concept of culture. All the parents struggled to answer this question and kept revising and 'editing' their definitions. In general, the parents separated along the line of "nature versus nurture"—culture as a concept from within or as a concept from the environment. Family One defined culture as "learning

something different, learning how other people live—their food and crafts." Mostly, culture is an individual's environment, acquired through learning and exposure. She then added that some aspects of culture are ingrained, for example, her daughter could "use chopsticks from the start."

Family Two defined culture as "people, place, and things that relate to a country specifically, traditions such as the dragon dance of China, food or holidays." Most importantly, culture represents a country and consists of traditions that have withstood the test of time. For example, spaghetti is an Italian tradition while beer is an Irish tradition. She hopes that "environment is not culture because we are trying to give our daughters 'their culture.'" She realizes that she cannot provide them with "immersion" culture but tries to replicate their culture through activities such as Chinese school and celebrating Chinese New Year in San Francisco. In this sense, she states that "culture is more within the person" and culture can be present without being physically present in the country of origin. China Towns, for example, symbolize Chinese culture. Her daughter observed that ethnic communities provide immigrants with communities "that look like their birth country so they won't get homesick." This family's definition of culture indicates a view that culture is an entity with certain traits that can be defined and captured.

The three other families provided even more vague and ambiguous answers indicating that "culture" is purely environmental. Three parents commented that even within the U.S., culture differs from place to place. Family Three simply said, "I don't know." This mother said that "culture" is hard to define because cultures exist within cultures. She said, for example, "the culture of the orphanage differs from the culture of China; the Culture within China varies vastly as well." As a Texas native, she commented that Texas has a unique culture of its own that differs from the rest of the United States.

Traditions such as celebrating holidays provide a taste of culture. Culture is a mindset. Another mother rattled off "language, beliefs, art, music of a certain group of people—beliefs in terms of things upon which people agree." She fondly commented that her daughter has a personal culture: she's a little duckling running to a flock—she always has a flock with lots of kids and friends." She stated very clearly that "culture is very learned rather than something biological or genetic—culture reflects the environment and cultures change." Her daughter's culture is that "she was born in China and adopted to the United States, her culture is the things she knows and sees everyday." Three parents commented that all of the girls adopted from China will have their own sub-culture: "the little girls adopted from China culture." One father carefully said, "it's everything that you do, the way to you think, traditions, the way you speak, the food you eat; culture revolves partially around language. It is so much a part of you it's tough to define—it's the air you breathe." His wife added, "it's what you are, how you think, and your perspective on life." They agreed that "it is one hundred percent environmentally determined. Culture differs from ancestry." While all the families recognized the abstractness of the concept of "culture," three of the five families emphasized that "nurture," rather than "nature," directly determines culture.

12. In terms of self-identity, what do you think is the role of culture? How much do you attribute to your child's Chinese culture?

The parents' responses varied depending on how they defined "culture." If parents thought of culture as an all-encompassing environment in which their daughters live, their answers reflected this perspective. Although parents differed in their specificity, four of the parents feel that Chinese culture will inevitably function subordinately, if at all, in their everyday American lives. Family One does not believe that "culture" is currently at the forefront of her daughters' identities. They just want to

"have fun and be little girls right now." Her four-year old is still at the age when she believes that she is at the center of the universe and the little one just wants to follow her sister. As for Chinese culture, this mother believes that it will play a lesser role in the future and will not define their culture because they, as Americans, will inevitably adopt United States culture.

For the family who immediately thought of "culture" as Chinese culture, the parents still attempt not to attribute all behaviors to culture. The mother tries to distinguish tendencies of children in general from "culture" or orphan flashbacks. However, she attributes "quite a bit, maybe twenty-five to forty percent" of her daughters' identities to Chinese culture. Although culture is important, she also emphasized the other aspects of their identity, such as academics and sports.

Family Three views the role of culture as primarily physical. This mother commented that her Chinese daughters' ethnic culture causes them to look physically different from the rest of the family. In this sense, her daughters' self-identities will consist of knowing that they visually differ from their family. In the first year after the adoption of her older daughter, the mother attributed much of her behavior to her birth culture. Then, she realized that she had seen very similar patterns of development in her youngest biological daughter, which made her realize that perhaps "culture" was not the cause of the behavior patterns she witnessed. This observation distinguishes the child's internal working model from the role of culture in the child's development of self-identity. This family believes that the family and culture of being sisters will be most important to their self-identity than their Chinese heritage.

Family Four also minimized the role of Chinese culture in terms of her child's self-identity. The mother stated that her daughter "has very little Chinese culture, biologically she is Chinese but she has very little Chinese culture" aside from exposure to the Chinese

grandmother of a neighbor who did not speak English and who nannyed her for awhile. She also loves Chinese food and Chinese restaurants. Since the mother is not Chinese, she does not want to reinforce a culture that is not her own. Chinese culture is "not so much related to my daughter's identity as it is something that I want my daughter to feel comfortable around." She wants her daughter to feel just as comfortable with Chinese people as with any other people. She hopes that her daughter's identity will comprise of multi-cultural influences and that she will have a better grasp on the world because of her exposure to various cultures and the various Chinese cultures.

Family Five, who defined "culture" essentially as everything surrounding an individual, expressed that the whole identity of self is developed through culture. The father referred to the United States' focus on the individual (as opposed to the entire society) and individual rights; in China, on the other hand, the individual is part of the collective. He thought, "such cultural values shape an individual's identity. Culture is everything in identity." As for the Chinese culture, it is one facet of their daughter's identity. She cannot escape her Chinese heritage because of her physical appearance. She may or may not choose to learn of her ethnic heritage. If she enjoys history, as her adoptive mother does, she may delve into Chinese history. The mother carefully reemphasized that her desire to study Chinese history is largely due to personal preference and that she loved studying German history and United States history as much as Chinese history. She said that though she has certain affections for Chinese things such as moon cakes, "Chinese culture is part of my ancestry but not my culture."

13. In general, how do you feel about maintaining your child's birth culture? What do you believe is necessary to maintain culture? What do you do to help your child maintain culture?

In terms of maintaining Chinese culture, all the parents interviewed realize that their daughters will be primarily influenced by United States culture since they will be raised in the United States by Caucasian (or "Americanized") parents. However, the parents differ in their attitudes toward "maintaining culture." Individual definitions of culture once again shaped the responses to this question. With the exception of one family, the families make an effort to attend community events such as Chinese New Year's celebrations. All of the parents cook Chinese food and dine at local Chinese restaurants. All of the parents hope that their children will have the desire to pursue knowledge of China, however, four of the five families realize their limitations as Caucasian parents. They welcome opportunities for their children to interact with Chinese families and have books about China accessible around the house. All of the parents have mentioned the value of learning Chinese language and the potential benefits of hearing the phonemes at an early age. The parents all act very positively toward their child's ethnic heritage and express some desire to make opportunities to learn about Chinese culture available to their children. However, "maintaining" birth culture is a daunting task and four of the five families do not think they have the necessary resources to "maintain" a culture foreign to themselves.

Family Two believes that maintaining her daughters' birth culture is "totally important." This effort has become a part of their family's identity. She has poured herself into it and participates in many Chinese organizations in which she is the only Caucasian. The entire family is pro-active in this effort and all four members attend Chinese school every Sunday together. They serve in many leadership roles and the mother has co-directed Chinese heritage camp for the past three summers, this will be her fourth consecutive year. In addition to Chinese school, Chinese dance, and the heritage camps, the family participates actively in Colorado's FCC chapter. The parents

believe that "it helps our children to see us in such active, leadership roles." The mother loves this involvement and believes that it has more to do with her own personality and interest in culture. Having grown up in an Italian "village" in a suburb of Rochester, New York, her grandparents quickly assimilated themselves and their children to the United States. They even changed their Italian last names to "become American." Given her family history, she always wore the label of an "Italian girl;" however, she knew nothing about what being "Italian" meant. She felt alienated by her unfounded label and always wished that she knew more about Italian culture. The opportunity to involve herself in Chinese culture has made her life "so much fuller." The family strives to share the (somewhat limited) resources they have unveiled to help other families who have adopted from China find opportunities to bi-culturally socialize their children.

The other families would fall under the theory of assimilation, while promoting acceptance of diversity. Family One believes that her children need to assimilate into the United States. Meanwhile, "they need to have an appreciation for China and a pride in China's history." Since, "we're Americans, we can't do that great of a job" maintaining Chinese culture for their daughters.

In terms of this question, Family Three thinks of culture as "multi-culture." The mother is only cognizant of her daughter's ethnicity "because it is obvious." They live in a neighborhood with children of mixed ethnicities: black, Hispanic, etc. They read Chinese books as well as books about other countries such as India, and Hungary for their "cultural education." She promotes multi-cultural understanding and awareness rather than strictly Chinese culture in their home. In this sense, she infers that her children have their culture in which they live and that there is no strict culture to maintain. She believes that the adoption of their second daughter has reinforced Chinese culture because there is another member of the family of Chinese heritage. Her adopted

daughters' culture resembles that of other adopted children rather than actual Chinese-Chinese children.

Another mother also emphasized the importance of multi-cultural exposure. She simply said, "I am not maintaining any culture because I am not Chinese—my efforts would be based on stereotypes and artificial." However, she welcomes opportunities to interact with Chinese and Asian people, and she exposes her daughter to many adoptive families and Chinese friends. She seeks opportunities to learn about Asian culture, in general. However, activities such as Chinese heritage camps are too expensive and somewhat artificial. She believes that the most effective method of exposing her daughter to Chinese culture is through interaction with actual Chinese kids. When her daughter is older, she is free to study China if she so chooses. They use chopsticks at Chinese restaurants and occasionally go to the Asian market.

In theory, one father likes the concept of maintaining culture, but he is not sure if it is necessary. He believes that other couples who are trying to "maintain culture" are passing on their perceptions of culture rather than the culture itself. They present a warped teaching of Chinese culture. His wife described an example of adoptive parents attempting to celebrate culture without understanding the significance of their actions. She received a note to dress her daughter in red for the "National Day" celebration. As previously mentioned, this mother's family was of the landowning class in China, and they do not recognize holidays that celebrate the communist victory in China. The naïve enthusiasm of other adoptive parents signified to her that they had no idea about the actual meaning of the day. These parents agree that "maintaining culture" is not essential. If done accurately, "it is nice." When their daughter attended Chinese classes, these parents refused to participate because they did not want their horrendous accents to inhibit her language acquisition. They believe that parents who attempt to learn

language alongside their children will cause more damage to the process. If she pronounces the tones inaccurately, they want her to "mess it up herself," not because of their influences. Furthermore, they feel that Chinese culture and language classes sponsored by the adoptive community does not model Chinese culture due to the lack of discipline the children have. Parents tend not to discipline their children, who thus often run amuck when the teacher attempts to instruct, very "un-Chinese." They strongly expressed, "maintaining culture inaccurately can potentially cause more damage than good." If parents in a community with limited Chinese resources believe that they can really maintain or accurately teach their children Chinese culture, their children may find themselves "embarrassed and shocked when they really encounter Chinese society." They believe that "acculturation and alternation models" are only possible in communities with large traditional Chinese populations, which most likely do not even exist anymore. "Culture is always changing," they said.

14. What does "bi-cultural socialization" mean to you?

In an attempt to define the concept of "bi-cultural socialization," four of the five families immediately described situations that they did not feel their families could attain. This consistency in the responses indicated a skepticism that parents possess about their own abilities to provide Chinese socialization for their children. They thought of bi-cultural socialization as an idealistic but unrealistic goal for their families. Nonetheless, they felt that bi-cultural education was worthwhile and willingly provided resources for their children to receive bi-cultural and even multi-cultural learning opportunities.

Family One defined true bi-cultural socialization as more than the efforts they make. This mother reported that bi-cultural socialization requires immersion and awareness, which made her question if she and her husband should push such an effort at all. She did not want to over-emphasize culture. She thinks that bi-cultural

socialization would essentially require a parent in each culture and frequent visits to both places. Family Three did not describe their activities as bi-cultural socialization either. The mother responded to this question, "putting two cultures together—we are more multi-cultural than bi-cultural." Another mother gave an example she considers as bi-cultural socialization, "a child of an Hispanic-American family, a first generation child whose family immigrated from Mexico. He or she would speak more Spanish than English at home and attend an English-speaking school. The family would celebrate Hispanic holidays and feel comfortable in America and Mexico." She added, in an attempt to "bi-culturally" socialize a child, the parents must weigh the factors and assess their capabilities and limitations. Since her daughter's environment is not Chinese, but, rather, American, bi-cultural socialization was not realistic.

Family Five defined bi-cultural socialization as "raising a child in two cultures." Although "the child does not necessarily need to be physically in two countries," these parents felt that the child needed to be regularly exposed to Chinese and American cultures. According to the parents, this exposure necessitates a larger Chinese community than the one present in Colorado. "Fluency in Chinese and more Chinese meals" would be necessary as well. Initially, she said that living in or near a China Town in a larger city (San Franciso, Boston, New York, Chicago, etc.) would facilitate bi-cultural socialization. After thinking aloud, she reminded herself that "even layers exist within China Towns, the communities have 'mutated' from Chinese-Chinese culture and may not even be 'real,' present-day Chinese culture." Her husband said that learning language does not equate bi-cultural socialization because the exposure to culture through this venue is often superficial. According to these parents, bi-cultural socialization is dependent on the larger environment in which a family resides. Both cultures need to be continuously present and available for immersion. They thought that bi-cultural

socialization might be possible in Montreal, Canada. They decided that true bi-lingualism may lead to bi-cultural socialization. The ability to switch easily and accurately between two languages (to speak both languages as a native—using the proper grammar and speaking on subjects in an appropriate manner) would indicate firm grasps of both cultures, since language cannot be separated from cultures. The father said, "culture depends on language but it is more than language."

Although Family Two defines bi-cultural socialization ("two cultures coinciding together") similar to the four other families, the concept means something a little different from the other families. Bi-cultural socialization would entail being a part of two cultures equally. Since her children are immersed in United States' culture, she makes a particular effort to provide Chinese socialization because she wants them to "have more than one place to feel at and call home." She wants her children to have the ability to alternate between Chinese and American culture comfortably. This mother has a niece adopted from Korea who feels prejudice from Koreans and not completely fit-in with Caucasians.

15. What is the first bi-cultural adjustment you had to make in the adoption process?

Each of the parents interviewed interpreted this question somewhat differently. The uniqueness of the parents' answers insightfully revealed the parents' perceptions of their initial dealings with differences between parent and child.

Family One's first adjustment entailed getting used questions such as, "are you babysitting?" In general, she did not encounter too many negative comments because of the wide spread population of Chinese adoptees in Boulder.

Family Two attended the Imperial Tombs of China exhibit with her newly adopted daughter. She also participated enthusiastically in events of the Chinese community, and

her and husband became the only Caucasian parents at their daughters' Chinese school. Both parents felt very comfortable as "minorities" in the Chinese-American community.

Family Three compares Southern U.S. culture to Chinese culture in terms of the man's role as the head of the household and other such cultural values and perceptions. Since she grew up in Texas, she had grown accustomed to the treatment of women as "second class," and, therefore, did not have any difficulty accepting Chinese cultural values. In her visit to China to pick-up her daughter, she simply "learned to keep my mouth shut for two weeks!" She thus identified a potential bi-cultural struggle as the view of women in China. The different perceptions of gender roles did not bother her as it did other parents in her travel group. Ultimately, she did not have to make any "bi-cultural adjustments" because she believes that "it's a small world and we're the same."

The single mother fondly recalls the first bi-cultural difference she encountered: potty training. The Chinese potty train their children very early and by adopting the Chinese method, this mother had her daughter essentially potty trained at eighteen months. She learned from the Chinese and appreciates the trouble she avoided by adopting a different method.

Family Five reiterated that they felt very relaxed with their situation because the wife had already encountered many of the awkward "racial" questions with her husband's biological son. While other parents may have felt agitated by differences, they welcomed questions from other parents. They used these 'opportunities' as 'sales routines' to encourage people to look into adopting from China. In fact, the husband used to carry CCAI brochures to hand to inquisitive strangers. They openly promoted China adoption and the opportunity to help the children in the orphanages with monetary contributions.

16. How did you feel about your child being ethnic Chinese?

All of the parents indicated that ethnicity never posed an issue for them. They just wanted a child to love. They treat their adopted child as they would a biological child and do not have concerns about ethnic differences within their parent-child relationship. However, as previously discussed, some parents worried about the treatment of society toward their daughters, in terms of prejudice and racial discrimination.

17. What is your attitude toward American socialization? What "American" opportunities do you provide your child?

Many parents had difficulty answering this question because they could not immediately define "American socialization." Based on Tessler, Gamache, and Liu's survey, the interviewer provided examples of American socialization such as dance classes, sports, sleepovers, movies, and the like. All of the parents acknowledged that since they live in the United States, their children would be immersed in this culture. Parents reported that "American socialization is inevitable." As parents with comparatively large resources, they can afford to involve their children in a wide-range of activities. Activities ranged from rock climbing at the local recreation center to brownies to dance and gymnastics classes to ski lessons to their school environment to sleepovers at friends' houses. All in all, "these girls are Americans." They parents want to provide their children with a good education and as many opportunities as possible.

Family One emphasized the importance of "letting them be little girls, American little girls." Parents reported attempting to expose their children to as many opportunities as possible so that they would be able to choose and pursue their interests as they got older without forcing anything on them. Family One also attempts to show their daughters "many different things" and expose them to different cultures in the world.

She believes that this broad exposure to other ways of life is important for any individual to enhance one's perspective of the world.

Family Two fumbled over this question and the mother balked at her own inability to define "American socialization." She mentioned gymnastics, sports, and American holidays such as the fourth of July. She then laughed at the bewilderment this question caused her. She said, "I have difficulty identifying what is culturally American. I can think of Chinese cultural things because I consciously think about them so much…I don't know…'hot dogs?!'" She mentioned talking to her girls of voting, people's rights, and the different role of women in different societies. However, since they are immersed in American culture, "it's what we do without thinking about it!" She then jokingly said, "You know I'm going to get off the phone and start wondering if we're doing enough American things!"

Family Three homeschools her children. The girls spend four hours a day in "school." In this way, the mother can meet their needs individually. The older adoptee has visual and auditory dyslexia. The girls attend Sunday school, Awanas (a Christian-based girl troupe), and practice target shooting. They have a family movie night and focus on their culture as sisters. They take camping and road trips and other such "all-American" families. She comments that the "large-family" culture differs from "small-family" culture, and the activities of their family are somewhat unique in that they have "friends built-in."

Family Five responded consistently with the previous families. They said, "we're in America, all of our opportunities are American. That's our life—it's life. We respect the individual and we belong in a system that values and protects the individual."

18. Do you view your child as American, Chinese, Chinese-American, or American-Chinese? How often do you think of your child as "Chinese?" How

often are you aware of her or his ethnic origin? Do you think that American or

Chinese socialization is more important?

Since "American-Chinese" is not a common designation, most parents view their children as Chinese-American. The parents defined this "title" differently, though. Parents agreed that American socialization would undoubtedly prevail. <u>Family One</u> defined her daughters as Chinese-American in that they are ethnic-Chinese but raised in the United States. <u>Family Five</u> also claimed that their daughter "is American culturally and Chinese by birth, thus she is Chinese-American." When asked the question personally, the ethnic-Chinese mother will respond, "American." Then, if she "feels generous," she will offer more information. She will say, "if you want to know where I'm from—Omaha, Nebraska. If you want to know my heritage, it's Chinese and my family has lived in America since the 1880s." The father is always aware that his daughter is Chinese because he "cannot see her pupils, but she's daddy's little girl." The mother confessed that their daughter makes her more aware of ethnic origins because her daughter will observe and make comments such as, "Your hair is black just like mine." To the mother, "pointing out differences generates more awareness." In response to these questions, <u>Family Five</u> quickly added that divisions caused by being older parents may be as significant as, if not more than, cultural and ethnic differences. As parents, they have difficulty connecting with the parents of their daughter's classmates, some of whom are younger than their son.

<u>Family Two</u> described her children as Chinese-American because "they are both Chinese and American." She is always aware of their ethnic origins; however, this realization does not influence her actions or treatment of them. They are still children, regardless of their race. She believes that both American and Chinese socialization are equally important. She believes that mainstreaming her daughters while teaching them to

value their differences is an absolutely essential balance that they are striving for but have yet to attain. She tries to weigh the benefits and consequences of each decision. Although she confesses that she allows her daughters to sometimes choose between "Chinese" activities and "American" activities, she always "holds her breath."

Family Three said, "they're Chinese, but they're mine." She looks past the ethnic affiliation and does not distinguish between her children. When people ask if her adopted daughters are her real children, she responds, "I didn't realize I had plastic ones!" She is always aware that they are Chinese simply because they look different; however, this difference simply exists just as boys differ from girls.

Family Four did not believe that any of these categories accurately described her daughter's affiliation. "The adopted culture" is her primary affiliation. She is "a girl born in China and adopted to the United States at an early age." She is "American with a little interest in Chinese culture." More important than any of these classifications, "she needs to feel good about herself and the person she sees in the mirror." This mother did comment that her daughter seems to be drawn to Asian or native American heroes such as Jackie Chan, Mulan, and Pochahontas. This mother, the educated psychologist, believes that such affections indicate healthy self-identity. She referred to studies of children who displayed very negative feelings toward dolls of similar racial features and said that children who do no like children or dolls that look like themselves may not possess a very positive self-image. In terms of awareness of ethnic origins, she said, "I'm more aware of how pretty, healthy, smart, and sweet she is rather than her ethnic culture." At all times, "I am aware that she's my daughter, and, a long time ago, I went to China and she came from there." However, such thoughts occupy a very low priority in her thoughts. Occasionally, events may trigger fleeting questions about her daughter's biological origins. Her daughter's dislike for milk caused her to speculate momentarily

about the origins of certain traits. However, this mother punctuated her response with, "heredity is not destiny—society is more influential than DNA!"

19. How would you rate your desire to learn about Chinese culture?

The interviews reveal that the desire to learn about Chinese culture has as much to do with personal desire as perceived benefits for the sake of the child. Each parent learns as much as they can depending on their time, energy, and resources. Although an interest may exist, in the process of raising a child (or many children), learning about Chinese culture must often take a lower priority. Family Two proved an exception in terms of limited time and energy. As previously discussed, these parents have a tremendous desire to embrace Chinese culture into their family. They insistently described their family as a Chinese-American family. They have enshrouded their house with Chinese décor and instigated many Chinese cultural opportunities for other families who have adopted from China.

Family One had a high desire to learn about Chinese culture before adopting their first child. The mother read books and attended cultural events if possible. She acknowledges that there are many things about Chinese culture she will never understand, but she realizes that "this is their heritage." She attempted to learn Chinese language and enrolled in a ten-week program before realizing the task would be virtually impossible for her. While Family Three attempts to educate her children multi-culturally, the mother does prioritize and relegates a higher priority to learning about Chinese culture because it impacts their lives most directly. The single mother also seeks opportunities to acquire more knowledge about China since it is her daughter's ethnic background. The father of family five candidly admitted that he has a "tourist interest" in China. He wants to learn the "veneer of the culture—the Disney Land approach." He has no desire to learn the language because of the effort required. However, he very

much enjoys the festivals, mostly because he likes to eat. As mentioned earlier, his wife's

love for history and connection with China inspired her to study Chinese history. Both

parents jokingly called their trip to China "a labor of love" because the husband had

never traveled outside of North America and the wife hates traveling. The ethnic Chinese

wife did not even use chopsticks before the trip—she forced herself to learn because she

"did not want to lose face" in China.

21. How does your daughter being Chinese manifest in your daily activities?

What kinds of opportunities does your child have to be exposed to Chinese

culture?

In terms of "daily activities," all of the parents mentioned Chinese culture books

available around the house that they try to share with their children. As mentioned

earlier, they cook Chinese food and attend various community activities such as the

Chinese New Year's celebration. Family Five orders special bean cakes from San

Franciso (because the mom loves them), and they give "red envelopes[8]" at holidays.

They seek opportunities for their daughters to form friendships with other Chinese

children. Four of the five families have attempted to or currently send their daughters to

Chinese language classes offered by either the adoptive community or the Chinese-

American community. Two of the families have hired private tutors for their daughters.

They have Chinese language tapes and music accessible as well. They will sometimes

shop at the Asian market. They also welcome opportunities for their daughters to be part

of a larger ethnic Chinese community. Family Three attended a Chinese church for a

couple of years following their adoption. They also found Chinese crafts to do with their

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[8] In lieu of gifts, the Chinese custom is to give red envelopes filled with money at holidays. "Red" is the color of blessings and good fortune. "Red" is also the color worn by a bride and the color used to celebrate events such as the birth of a child, particularly a boy.

family. Of the five daughters in <u>Family Three</u>, the mother said that, ironically, her youngest biological daughter most desires to learn about Chinese language and culture.

23. How much contact do your children have with other Chinese people? Other adopted children? Other American born Chinese or Chinese who immigrated to America at a young age?

The families ranged in their amount of contact with other Chinese children. All of the families have travel groups whom they could contact if necessary. However, variables that influenced the amount of contact depended on their neighborhoods and the efforts of parents to establish such contacts. It seems that the three families who had the most "natural" contact with either other Chinese adoptees or people of various ethnicities did not feel obligated to make a particular effort to cultivate relationships between their daughters and other Chinese people and children. The two families who are not naturally surrounded by diverse communities made more of an effort or feel the need to make more of an effort to expose their daughters to other Chinese children and families.

Currently, <u>Family One</u> has very limited contact with Chinese children—only monthly scheduled playgroup activities. They have a Chinese neighbor who they see occasionally in passing. The mother hopes to establish more friendships with Chinese-American families and wishes that her daughter's pre-school had more diversity.

<u>Family Two</u> has the most consistent "Chinese community." Although their daughters do not attend diverse schools or live in necessarily diverse neighborhoods, they make a concerted effort to provide such opportunities. As the only adoptive parents who send their daughters to the Taiwan-affiliated Chinese school in Denver, <u>Family Two</u> interacts with Chinese-American families on a weekly basis. They see other adoptive families at meetings about once per month. In addition to these activities, the parents

serve in active leadership positions such as coordinating the Colorado Chinese Heritage

Camps and informative discussion panels.

Since Family Three homeschools their children, they spend most of their time

together as a family. They had attended a Chinese church once a week, but their older

adoptee resented the environment. This daughter felt awkward in a Chinese community

because the church offered a Chinese class and she often felt criticized for not being able

to speak Chinese. The mother has concluded that contact with other adopted children

(not even necessarily from China) is more important for her children than contact with

other Chinese people, per se. Aside from contact with Family Four (with nannying

bonds), the adopted daughters of Family Three do not currently have contact specifically

with other Chinese people. There are domestically and internationally adopted children

in their Sunday school classes.

The single mother openly said, "I have her in contact with whoever!" They try to

arrange "play" times with other Chinese children. She hopes to have opportunities to

expose her daughter to "real Chinese" rather than "artificial Chinese" culture through

contact with Chinese-American families. She wants her to see their family interactions

and way of life; she wants her daughter to "understand the norms and rhythms of their

family." They attend the annual Chinese New Year's celebration, picnic, and adoptive

family reunion. However, contact with other Chinese people specifically is not her top

priority. She wants her daughter to interact with all different kinds of people and

approves of her friends based on personality rather than ethnicity. Given the area in

which they live, they often encounter other Chinese adoptees at the grocery store, at the

parks, and while doing other "daily tasks."

The daughter of Family Five has contact with all of the mother's family members.

They also have Chinese neighbors across the street with two young boys. They keep in

touch with the adoptive families in their travel group, and their daughter has a Korean adoptee friend who lives down the street.

24. Have you (as parents) experienced racism because of your child? Please describe.

The parents have all answered many questions regarding their adopted daughters, most of which they do not believe perceive as negatively intended. They tried to keep these questions and comments in perspective and not burden their daughters. They believe that the increasingly common presence of families who have adopted from China takes their situations out of the spotlight. They have not personally experienced racism as a result of their children, but they described instances in which people asked ignorant questions. All of the families described the generally high-acceptance levels of their daughters' ethnic diversity in their communities. All of the families live in the Denver Metro area, including Boulder, Arvada, Aurora, Lakewood, and Louisville.

Family One cannot recall experiencing outright racism because of her daughters. However, in Branson, Missouri (which she calls "a different type of America"), they received many rude stares and whispers. Generally, they receive many questions, most of which are pleasant. However, sometimes they are in front of her children, which concerns the mother because her older daughter is beginning to understand the implication of the questions. Both of their extended families have provided tremendous support. In the beginning, Family Two endured some rude questions but nothing blatantly offensive. They sometimes wonder if people are making racial slurs, but do not dwell on such possibilities. People often refer to her children as "Little China Dolls," a comment which she does not assign as positive or negative connotation.

Family Four also realizes that many comments are results of "good intentions gone awry," and this mother does not fret over insensitive comments. The "little comments

happen all the time and I'm not worried about these." The single mother does, however, possess fear about the potential discrimination that her daughter could face. As a daughter of a Nazi-concentration camp survivor and through history lessons and books, she fears that mass-level prejudices may someday arise. Examples such as the Nazis and Japanese internment camps in the United States alert her to the possibility of a Chinese-American war. Although she does not obsessively worry about these issues, they do influence some of her choices. She wants her daughter to feel American and look at herself as an American. As a previously non-religious person, the mother decided to start attending the Unitarian Universalistic Church, which embraces all people and all beliefs. Other Chinese adoptive families also partake in this liberal environment, and she believes that it will help her daughter with acceptance of all people and ideas.

Family Five pointed out that the "university community" of Boulder county minimizes problems with racism. Racism depends "largely on where you are." They do receive curious stares, more so with the father and the daughter than with the mother and daughter. They remember one incident when they were in Louisville, Kentucky. They went to a restaurant at about 5:00 p.m., before the dinner rush, yet they were seated in the back by the kitchen despite the availability of nice tables throughout the restaurant. They recall isolated, infrequent events that varied regionally. Most questions they receive are not intended maliciously. They said, "although some parents may interpret such comments as racial slurs, we do not get bothered by them."

Family Three's experience differed slightly since the older daughter was adopted as an older child and she has auditory dyslexia, she still has an accent when she speaks English. A Mexican little girl who lives two doors away said, "I can't play with you because you're too Chinese." The mother recalled another incident when they were visiting an Indian Reservation. The Native Americans thought that their younger daughter

was Navajo and treated the family very rudely. They would not serve them, and the family received many rude stares. She witnessed that "Native Americans are very protective of their children and highly disapprove of adoptions outside their tribe." The mother realized from friends with domestically adopted children that they also receive rude comments about adopting in general. This helped <u>Family Three</u> realize that many comments may have been directed more at adoption in general than racial biases.

25. Please describe specific incidents in which you felt pressure or relief due to your child being Chinese.

All the parents experienced some difficulty in responding to the previous two questions, which suggests that "racial and ethnic concerns" are not currently an issue. Although three of the five families may ultimately anticipate some racially caused conflicts in their daughters' lives, it is significant to recognize the current *insignificance* of racial tension in the scope of their everyday lives. Parents indicated that they had chosen to raise their children in tolerant communities.

One incident in which <u>Family One</u> felt "pressure" was when a neighbor lady asked "how can they be sisters" referring to her two daughters. The mother felt awkward because of the presence of her daughters. As for "relief," the "model minority" stereotype has generated many generalizations such as, "they must be so smart and driven because they are Asian!" People tend to assume that her children will do well in school, play the violin, etc.

<u>Family Two</u> struggled to think of an incident. As an example of pressure, the mother finally remembered that she, "initially checked on the demographics of their elementary school and the school was not culturally rich!" She was worried about the lack of diversity, but now feels that everything has "worked out fine." She also recalled reading an article in a magazine once entitled, "Asian Whiz Kids." She is aware of the

"model minority" stereotype, but tries to nurture her children to simply celebrate their "differences."

The mother of Family Three laughingly said, "When we go to California and Texas, our family, who love Mexican food, always gets better service at Mexican restaurants because they think that our daughters are Mexican!" They also receive better service at Chinese restaurants because of her children. Ironically, her youngest biological daughter had to teach both of her younger children to use chopsticks, though. The mother took this opportunity to emphasize, "the parent attaching to the child is more important than the child attaching to the parent." Her meaning: children simply want to be loved and will attach to their parents based on the parental effort. Race and ethnicity are not the issues.

Family Four sometimes wonders about the truth of the "model minority" stereotype. In school, her daughter was very well disciplined, which "does not come from me!" the mother said. However, "she is truly a bright girl, and the stereotypes have not hit her yet at the age of five." She fondly emphasized that her daughter was not emotionally deprived in China and has adjusted tremendously well. In this sense, she appreciates that her daughter was not adopted from a country experiencing political havoc. Countries such as Romania have reportedly adopted out many troubled children to the United States because their orphanages could not provide adequate care.

Family Five could not think of any incidents.

26. Do you send your child to Chinese school? Why or why not?

Every parent cited the "window of opportunity" for language learning as the reason they chose to expose their children to Chinese language. Whether through tapes, private tutors, or Chinese class, all the parents hope that through early exposure, they are providing their daughters with a foundation from which they can build if they choose to

continue study of the language. All of the parents thus provide Mandarin language instruction for their daughters. However, three of the five families informed the researcher that their daughters are from a Cantonese-speaking region of China. Most of the children adopted from China are indeed from the southern region and even their "native" dialects of Cantonese may differ. One adoptee, for example, spoke a different dialect than the one used by the orphanage at which she nannyed. Consequently, no one could understand her. Other opportunities available in Chinese school include exposure to positive Chinese role models, opportunities to interact with other families that "look like their own," and associating Chinese culture with positive, "fun" times.

Family One wonders, "Are we doing the right thing by trying to send our daughters to Chinese school?" They had heard so much about Korean adoptees who rue the fact that when they go to Korea; they are treated differently because they cannot speak the language. They enrolled their older daughter in an "immersion class" organized by adoptive parents in Boulder. Some members in this class hoped that they could eventually mainstream their daughters into the Bo Hua Chinese school for Chinese-American children. They had originally hired a tutor who moved. They did not care for the program in Little Treasures Chinese school because they did not like the curriculum and lack of discipline.

As previously discussed, the parents of Family Two attend Chinese school weekly with their daughters. Family Three had tried sending her older adoptee and her youngest biological daughter to Chinese school; but the adopted daughter did not care for the classes, and they have subsequently stopped attending. Family Four believes that "cultures and languages are only as big of a problem as parents make it." She does not have the energy or resources to take her daughter to the nearest Chinese school, which is quite a distance away. Since her daughter would speak Cantonese rather than Mandarin,

anyway, she does not feel guilty about not providing formal language instruction. They do however, have Chinese language tapes they follow occasionally.

Family Five provides opportunities for language instruction because of the "practical benefits." The mother matter-of-factly said, "it has nothing to do with culture. We simply think that Chinese will be an extremely useful tool in the twenty-first century. Knowledge of the language will provide job opportunities." Their economic perspective differs from the perspectives of the other families who valued language instruction more for identity reasons; however, Family Five also said, "early exposure may help with tone pronunciation."

27. What role do you play in your child's Chinese education?

All of the parents are very willing to support their child's Chinese education. They do as much as they can by way of books and tapes at home. Parents differ in their perspective on actual involvement in formal classes, however. When their adoptees are toddlers, parents can participate in parent-child classes offered through *Joyous Chinese Cultural School* and *Little Treasures*. However, as the children get older, parent participation in the classroom often results in the child's distraction. Family One drops her daughter off at school and tries to reinforce vocabulary at home. Family Two attends Chinese school with their daughters. Family Three reads books, in English, to her girls. Family Four simply tries to provide a multi-cultural education for her daughter. She is ready to support whatever her daughter shows interest in pursuing. Family Five refuses to speak Chinese with their daughter for fear of confusing her pronunciation. They provide many opportunities, however, and encourage her present love for Chinese class.

28. Do you have any particular cultural concerns given that your child is female? American stereotypes of Asian women, etc.

Parental responses to this question did not reflect specific concerns about "Asian women" stereotypes that exist in this society—in terms of exoticism and elusiveness. Their concerns, if any, centered on general concerns about being female. Their concerns do not exceed the concerns of parents, in general. <u>Family One</u>'s current concern is that her older daughter is "so beautiful, I don't want her to just get by on her looks." Despite her awareness that society treats "beautiful women" differently, she hopes that her daughter will be able to "live a life of substance." The mother of <u>Family Two</u> is currently trying to finish *Warrior Lessons*, by Phoebe Eng, a book about being an Asian woman, but has not drawn any conclusions. She realizes that she cannot be concerned with what she does not know and she hopes that her daughters will not encounter difficulties as Asian females. <u>Family Three</u> does not have any particular "Asian women" concerns, just "female concerns." However, she said with a smile that she looks forward to the potential benefits of being female such as rifle scholarships for women. On a more serious note, she worries about her daughters being taken advantage of (physically) as females. They recently had to deal with a rape of one of her daughters, and she hopes that the relationships they nurture as sisters and mother-daughters will ultimately provide each one of them with a network of support.

Family Four shared this general concern about her daughter as a "female." She said that currently her daughter is extremely flirtatious and very self-confident. This mother confessed that she will probably "die when my daughter starts dating—she's already been dared to "kiss" someone!" This mother expressed concerns "typical for any parent, biological or adoptive." She eventually acquiesced, "of course, she'll be able to date whoever she wants."

Family Five simply replied, "No."

29. How important is it to you that your child has other adoptee friends that she can trust? Interacts with other Chinese adoptee families?

Similar to the previously asked question about the contact with other Chinese people, parents' answers varied depending on the diversity of their environments.

Family One responded, "Very important. That is why we make such an effort to maintain the play group." She expected that as her children enter adolescence, they would have issues. At that time, this mother believed that friends, to whom her daughters can relate and share similar experiences when they cannot talk to their parents, would prove essential. Her daughters' sisterhood would, hopefully, provide strong support as well. She also hopes that their travel group will maintain close ties. This mother reported that since the children adopted from each travel group are usually from the same orphanage, they are, in a sense, the closest to "biological relatives."

Family Two agreed that "it is very important." Her daughters also have each other. She recalled the CFCC sponsored Korean adoptee panel (CFCC 1999) on which the Korean adoptee panelists all felt a special connection as "brothers and sisters" despite that fact that they did not grow-up together. Although her daughters have the natural sibling rivalry, they are extremely close.

Family Three said, "it's more important than I thought." Originally, this mother believed that the support of the "sisters" would be sufficient. However, her older daughter, has expressed a particular liking for Awanas because all of the girls in that group are adopted (though not from China)—she likes the environment of "people like her." The mother thus concluded that having adoptee friends is more important than necessarily having Chinese adoptee friends. While the mother thinks that interaction with other Chinese adoptee families may be important, she has not found one yet with whom her (large) family can connect.

Family Four also believes that exposing her daughter to other adopted children and non-traditional families is equally important to direct exposure to Chinese adoptees. As for her daughter's closest friends, she will let her choose and believes that she has a healthy balance of multi-ethnic friends.

Family Five said, "it is most important that [she] has friends she can trust." Their daughter has many adoptee friends and is exposed to "enough adopted children that she should not feel different." They commented that the stereotype of the nuclear family has long been broken and "children, in general, are more used to different types of families." The father said, "in fact, the nuclear family does not really even exist anymore." The current social climate is very open toward international adoption and a different academic attitude exists toward the subject. While it is "nice to have opportunities to interact with Chinese adoptees," they do not make a concerted effort nor do they "worry about it." Not surprisingly, many adoptive parents want to befriend this mother because of her Chinese heritage. However, their stereotypes of her quickly disappear when they realize that she is "just American."

30. What kind of support do you have as parent(s)? Group bonds with other families? Are your closest friends parents who have also adopted from China?

The friendships of the parents depend on the activities in which they choose to devote their time. Reportedly, children, whether biological or adopted, will change the dynamics of time and energy devoted to certain activities. Thus, four out of five families found that their social circles did change after adoption.

Family One's closest friends has become other adoptive parents. As older parents with children, they have largely drifted away from former friends. Through regular interactions with other families with adopted Chinese children, they feel they can relate better to these parents.

Family Two is so active in the community that they have a very mixed group of friends. In particular, their heavy involvement in the Chinese community caused them to sometimes neglect cultivating friendships with other Chinese adoptive families outside monthly meetings.

Family Three differs from the other families due to the fact that they are a "large family" and most friendships are within the family. Close friends of the father have two biological sons and are currently in the process of adopting from China, though. Family Five thus has friends with all biological children as well as friends with all adopted children. The Church community functions as their main support group. At the time of adoption, they attended one church with many supportive friends, and now that they attend a different church, they have new supportive friends. They have family friends through various associations. However, the mother imparted, "friends change at different stages of life: marriage causes friendships to change, as do kids." Reportedly, adopting children as older parents has simply propelled their family into yet another stage of life and different social groups.

The single mother would have liked to maintain more friendships with adoptive parents. However, some differences separated her from the larger CCAI community. She still keeps in touch with Family Three and appreciates having her perspective and friendship in her life. However, she encounters many adoptive parents frequently and, thus, does not feel deprived of their associations.

Family Five once again remarked that the generational gap between them and the parents of their daughter's classmates would undoubtedly generate awkwardness in the future. As older parents, they have the resources but no longer the energy. Their closest friends have not necessarily adopted from China. They do, however, have friends who have adopted from China as well as other places. They did find that they drifted from

their "empty nester" friends due to different activities. Their friends, who were dining at five star restaurants, could "not understand random trips to the zoo!" Their interests diverged. Initially, the mother worried about her friendships when she quit her job; however, her daughter's activities have brought her "a whole new circle of friends."

Summary of Data

Overall, the parents expressed high levels of responsivity to their daughters' needs. Although they varied in their attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization, each parent clearly wanted to provide the best life possible for their daughters. The openness of the parents and their willingness to expose their children to Chinese and other ethnic cultures reflected their desire for their daughters to grow-up well adjusted and confident in themselves. Parents were conscious that their children are "different" from most other children they encounter. They handle these differences differently. The most important factor seemed to be helping the children realize that many people are "different" or that "different is good." Whatever the approach, the researcher detected openness among the parents and willingness to meet their child based on their expressed needs. In their own ways, the parents are trying to create a balanced approach to their child's development and "touch on all parts of who they are." Each parent described various incidents that engendered shifting in their own thinking to meet the needs of their daughters. Whether anxious or relaxed, these parents reported that they simply wanted to be the "best parent possible" for their daughters.

All of the families adopted because they wanted to parent or continue parenting. All of the parents, even the ethnic Chinese mother, claim American culture as their primary culture and developed deeper interest in Chinese culture primarily as a result of the adoption. Any "cultural differences" the parents experienced surfaced between the parents and their daughters' birth country rather than between the parents and their

daughters themselves. Having attended some panels of Korean adoptees during their teenage years, one mother felt particularly reassured because all of the panelists described positive and strong relations with their adoptive parents. Furthermore, it seemed to this mother that all of the panelists, except for one (who most likely struggled in part because of weight issues), seemed extremely well-adjusted and emphasized the importance of having some background in their birth culture.

Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that the parents' backgrounds strongly shaped their attitudes and responses. The mother who pursued Chinese socialization whole-heartedly not only felt deprived of her ethnic culture as a child but also explained that she was extremely shy and self-conscious as a kid. The parents' attitude toward an identity crisis shaped their perception of the struggles they anticipated their daughters to experience. Their concerns about their daughters' potential ethnic concerns did not revolve around direct parent-child struggles, but rather, struggles resulting from larger social forces against minorities.

Parents differed in their definition of culture. Some parents viewed it as environmentally determined while other parents overlap it with birth ethnicity. Parents that defined culture as a complex, environment-specific phenomenon tended to view Chinese culture as a more distant aspect of their daughters' identities. The families that interpreted culture as a concept with innate characteristics approached bi-cultural socialization more deliberately.

Consistent with Tessler's findings,[9] the parents all expressed their desire for their children to take pride in their ethnic roots. Karin Evans[10], author and adoptive mother, reported that many parents "do the best they can, spoon-feeding their daughters bits of

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[9] See Appendix A for some results of a survey measuring parental attitudes toward Chinese and American socialization.

the culture left behind" (Evans 2000, 182). Whether through concerted efforts or indirect exposure, parents want to prevent animosity toward their children's birth country, China. They all recognize their limitations in exposing their daughters to Chinese culture, not only as a result of their own backgrounds but also due to the communities in which they live. Most of the families would not characterize their activities as attempts to bi-culturally socialize their daughters. Rather, they are trying to instill understanding and pride in their daughters for who they are and provide security in their identities as girls adopted from China. Simultaneously, due to the financial stability of these families, the resources they provide their daughters may classify them as "ultra-All-American" families—families who embrace "America's favorite past times" and more.

The fact that these parents did not biologically birth their children accounts for most of the questions parents have about their daughters' origins. Awareness of ethnic differences often result from questions about certain observations that may arise out of the phenomenon of adoption itself. Whether Chinese or minorities of other ethnicities, parents all attributed some significance to exposing their daughters to non-Caucasian friends. Exposure to other adoptees or individuals from non-traditional families, whether naturally or self-initiated, proved important to parents at various levels.

Most of the parents had a very balanced perspective on questions and comments made by curious strangers. They realize that people usually do not have malicious intents and, thus, have learned to handle them in stride. Thus, these parents have personally received very minimal racism as a result of their Chinese daughters. Among the interviewees, race and ethnicity were not significant obstacles in the current lives of the families who have become multi-ethnic through adoption.

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[10] Karin Evans wrote a moving book, *The Lost Daughters of China*, about the emotional journey of Chinese adoption, as experienced by her and her husband.

One mother concluded her interview session with some succinct thoughts, "the most important thing to me is the recognition of the adoption and background of my child. We maintain open communication and are not ashamed of the reality." She said that parents often project their own issues onto their children, when "kids just want to be loved." She does not want her daughter to learn stereotypes about Chinese culture, which is seems too large and diverse internally to "truly understand" through superficial exposure. People are individuals and she wants her daughter to have exposure to examples of "how real people live" their lives.

One father closed with one final statement: "it's the best thing that ever happened to me!" The mother added, "she's my mother's favorite, despite the fact that my older brother has children[11]." As an interracial couple, both of whom have fully assimilated into American society, the mother emphatically stated, "we do not buy into any of that white-guilt stuff that parents in this area may feel about 'stripping their children from their birth culture'." They are simply loving their daughter and providing as many opportunities as they can for her. They believe that "this is life" and that her circumstances are simply a part of who she is—no more, no less.

In general, the responses of these parents revealed a high level of conscientiousness in raising their daughters and concerns consistent with that any biological or adopted parent. Each of the families expressed an overwhelming affection for their daughters. Each parent reported wanting to provide the best life possible for the daughter(s) they brought to the United States. Though they differed in their precise attitudes about whether or not bi-cultural socialization is necessary, they all recognized their limitations as "Americans" in terms of teaching their daughters adequately about Chinese culture. Four of the five families provided opportunities for their daughters to

learn about Chinese culture without expectations of bi-cultural socialization. All of the families expressed very balanced attitudes in terms of remaining sensitive to their daughter's unique needs and developments. Interspersed throughout their responses, parents expressed a value for responsivity to their daughter's individual needs above the need for bi-cultural socialization. However, their willingness to provide the resources may be significant in the effectiveness of their parenting skills as well. Of course, this impression resulted from only a few hours spent with the families and their actual practices may diverge from their words.

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[11] Traditionally, Chinese grandparents favor the children of their oldest son.

VII. Discussion

Limitations of Analysis

Several limitations of the study must be noted. Firstly, many of these questions require some contemplation; however, parents had to respond immediately in the personal interviews. Due to the relative brevity of time spent with the families, observations regarding the parent-child relationship may prove premature. Thus, their responses may not have been complete or completely reflected their attitude. Furthermore, in families with two parents, only one interview was conducted with both parents present for the entire duration of the interview. Thus, the bulk of the data was collected from mothers who may not capture or accurately reflect the attitudes and perspectives of the fathers. Since the children are still young, their own perspectives and interpretations of their parent's attitudes cannot be accurately reflected. The kids were neither interviewed directly nor seen in enough of their daily environmental settings to determine their level of adjustment to life in Colorado. Careful analysis of inter data only functions as an indicator of the effectiveness of the parents' attitudes and approaches toward bi-cultural socialization but can make no predictions of the children's future well being. In addition, the families interviewed generally had some sort of connection with at least one other family interviewed, which calls the diversity of the sample into question.

The interviewer used her own subjectivity and sometimes bypassed questions she felt parents had already answered. However, in cases when repetition was permitted to occur, she found parents often generated more thorough responses. The interviewer's error results from premature assumptions that parents would not want to repeat responses. She also omitted some direct questions in the interest of time. Further

research would require more systematic interviewing methods and analysis of data such as those employed by Friedlander et al (2000).

Limitations exist within the research sample and data as well. All of the families interviewed reside in Colorado, which may create a biased perspective due to the limited access to Chinese culture in this geographical region. However, since CCAI, the largest agency for Chinese adoptions, is located in Colorado and most families interviewed adopted through this agency, they may have represented a minority rather than the norm among adoptive families in the United States. Since the families interviewed were intended only as pilot data, no conclusive patterns can be determined from their responses.

Significance of Data and Analysis

Despite the limitations, the interviews suggest certain models of bi-cultural socialization do indeed prevail among parents who have adopted from China. Regardless of the degree to which they expose their children to Chinese culture, all of the parents ultimately indicated that the choice to deepen understanding of Chinese culture would be their daughters, as they grow older. Thus, the hypothesis stated earlier is partially accurate in its prediction that the Child Choice model would predominate among interviewed parents. The hypothesis that acculturation would co-exist as powerfully as Child Choice was not substantiated by the data. Most parents recognize that "acculturation" does not adequately describe the experience of the adoptees because a majority of the adoptees are adopted as such a young age that they do not come to the United States with Chinese socialization. Furthermore, the culture to which they have been exposed is usually not Chinese culture itself but the isolated culture of the orphanage, and parents recognized that many of the children (except the adoptee of Family Three) have absolutely no memory of the time they spent there. Parents, who

encounter usually Chinese culture only because of their adoption, thus cannot provide Chinese socialization for their adopted children, who do not either possess ingrained knowledge of Chinese culture upon their arrival to the United States.

The data of this study found that attitudes and approaches do not necessarily correlate. The actual approaches and efforts of parents may fall into the categories of assimilation, acculturation, and alternation. For example, one family verbally reinforced the idea that the choice to pursue Chinese education and socialization would ultimately be their daughters. However, their activities and approach indicate a strong desire for the daughters to achieve the alternation model of bi-cultural socialization. Theoretically, parents realized that the alternation model is virtually impossible to attain because American parents raise their children in the United States; Chinese language fluency and the ability to flourish equally in both China and the United States are thus lofty ideals often unattainable by Chinese-Americans themselves. Data supports that categories of bi-cultural socialization theory overlap in the approaches of parents. For example, parents may currently approach assimilation theory but they keep an open mind about allowing their daughters to make the ultimate choice. Parents may also attempt acculturation or alternation, however, they acknowledge that their children did not come to the United States with previous knowledge of a minority culture (a necessary component of acculturation theory) and that they have limitations as Americans (rendering alternation theory virtually impossible). Data supports that parental attitudes do not determine their actual approaches in raising their children. Furthermore, the existing theories of acculturation and alternation do not accurately describe the experiences of adoptive families.

The data suggests that the attitudes and approaches of parents do not coincide with traditional bi-cultural socialization theory. Parental efforts should not be confused

with the conventional use of this term. Rather, parents are utilizing available resources and generating more resources for their children to take pride in their Chinese heritage and value their status as a minority in the United States. Parents expose their children to language, holidays, and Chinese cultural traditions in hopes that their children will accept this piece of their identities. Since the exposure is most often limited and learned through formal exposure instigated by parents rather than learned naturally in the home or social environment, the present author concluded that the term "bi-cultural *education*" describes the movement more accurately than "bi-cultural socialization." The children are not experiencing Chinese culture "first-hand" from Chinese parents or a Chinese society.

Various results of the interviews lead to the conclusion that parents of Chinese adoptees are actually pursuing bi-cultural education. For example, even the naming of Chinese adoptees represents the difficulty of actual bi-cultural socialization. Chinese is an extremely complicated language with subtleties that untrained ears do not realize. For example, every pronunciation has four tones, each tone has a different meaning and even characters with the same tone and pronunciation can have completely different meanings. The word "ma" can mean mother, hemp, horse, scold. 'Hemp' can also mean 'numb.' Although parents are trying to help preserve their daughter's connection to her roots by maintaining her name, parents may create more confusion by not only mispronouncing but by having no idea of the actual characters composing her name. Since the name was arbitrarily given in the first place and the translation to English often does not follow the systematic translation of romanization systems, this part of their child's identity may in fact only contribute the confusion rather than provide a true connection to her Chinese heritage. Since Chinese is not a romanized language, much confusion still occurs in translating pronunciations to English. In Taiwan, any given street name may be spelled differently on different maps and even different street signs. If a daughter chooses to use

her Chinese name in the future and a person with knowledge of the Chinese language asks which characters, will she be forced to respond, "I don't know?" Inaccurate pronunciation is the reason many Chinese people adopt English names; it is the reason my father goes by initials and refuses to tell people his "real name." Adoptive parents, must keep this concept in perspective when they choose to retain their daughters' Chinese names and realize that this effort is merely a superficial connection to the Chinese culture.

Interview findings reveal that parental attempts to provide "Chinese exposure" prove limited as well. All of the families eat at Chinese restaurants and cook Chinese food at home. The problem is, Chinese food differs depending on the region, and Chinese food found in the United States, particularly Colorado, cannot be thought of as "authentic." In a novel by Lilian Lee, *Farewell My Concubine*, a man who migrates south from the north describes the discord he experienced from eating "southern delicacies." (Lee 1994) In this sense, it is hard to even ascribe food to culture. When people think of Chinese food, they may think of "rice" and "stir-fry" and "soy sauce;" however, not every Chinese person eats rice. For example, people from certain regions prefer to eat the main dishes rather than rice, other regions eat noodles or sweet buns as their carbohydrate. While Chinese food may have certain "characteristics," it is important to not reduce Chinese culture to its foods.

Findings from the interviews on language instruction further suggest that the term "bi-cultural socialization" does not accurately describe the efforts of adoptive parents. Interviewed parents and many other families seek language instruction in Mandarin, Chinese for their children, which may not be their child's "native language." Interviewees and adopted other adoptive parents, such as Karin Evans, adopted children from Cantonese-speaking regions of China. Although the written language is uniform, dialects

differ vastly in various regions of China and are mutually unintelligible. In fact, outside of Beijing, very few people speak the standardized Mandarin dialect that is taught internationally. Even among teachers who instruct various Chinese cultural classes, their dialects and word usage differ slightly. After interviewing the principal of CCAI's *Joyous Chinese Cultural School*, it has become clear that the teachers there all share the perspective, that realistically, an hour a week in language class will only provide superficial exposure to the language. Their goal, rather, is to expose the children to Chinese culture and "let them have fun" so that they will have positive associations with their birth culture. The children can be in an environment in which they realize "they are not alone." They also see other families that "look like theirs." Although the *Joyous Chinese Cultural School* continually expands and attempts to provide more resources, the focus of the school is to create a positive learning environment, as opposed to providing the opportunity for actual bi-lingualism or bi-cultural socialization.

The exploratory data generated by the pilot interviews suggests that the movement toward *bi-cultural education* is actually also a movement toward meeting a part of their child's identity that may have been neglected in previous international adoptions: their birth heritage. The data does not support that parents are attempting to "preserve cultural identity." Rather, data suggests that parents who involve themselves in the "movement" are simply trying to provide a bi-cultural competence for their children to facilitate the acceptance of their histories as Chinese adoptees. The interviewed parents indicated that should their daughters express a desire to explore their ethnic heritage, they, as parents, would provide as many resources as possible.

Thus, this study provides evidence that parents value responsivity and suggests that the movement toward bi-cultural socialization may have arisen from parental desires to meet their children's needs. Whether or not parents choose to embrace this

movement, interview data suggests that parents who adopt from China may represent a shift toward responsivity. The interviewed mother who chose to educate her children through multi-cultural awareness and acceptance (rather than bi-cultural socialization) expressed responsivity in her willingness to meet her adopted daughter's self-professed need for adoptee friends. Another mother who actively exposes her daughters to Chinese culture reiterated that continuation of such efforts would ultimately depend on her daughters' expressed interests. Interviewed parents clearly indicated a desire for responsivity to their children's needs as a whole and, specifically, for bi-cultural competence. This key result of the data provides a significant base for continued research.

Future Research

The findings that indicate parents strongly desire to meet their children's needs may prove the most significant factor in the healthy development of their adopted child. The concept of *responsivity* must be further explored among parents of Chinese adoptees and international adoptees as a whole. The identification of this prevalence of *responsivity* among Chinese adoptive parents merits further research in the context of psychological theory. With the use of two theories in psychology—Attachment Theory and Cognitive Learning Theory—the present author anticipates the possibility of assessing the role of bi-cultural education in the adoptee development. Currently, no studies exist that assess the bi-cultural socialization in the adjustment and self-concept of international adoptees (Friedlander 1999; Wickes and Slate 1999).

The two theories employed will be described in terms of their relevance to the findings of the present study: responsivity and bi-cultural education. John Bowlby (1907-1990), founder of <u>Attachment Theory</u> and a major contributor to developmental theory, developed his theory based on the concept "that a child needs to be lovingly attached to a reliable parental figure and that this need is a primary motivating force in human life" (Karen 441). Attachment theory refers to the idea that the child develops critically in the first two years of life (primacy theory); at this time, the infant needs to develop a close relationship with a consistent and sensitive primary caregiver. The security of this relationship determines the child's well being and sets the stage for the child's ability to function effectively, independently, and meaningfully in the world. The primary caregiver becomes a secure base from which the child gains confidence and independence to explore the world. Biological underpinnings of the human race drive this initial need for love and affection became convinced that the mother/infant bond critically determines the development of the child. Moreover, infants possess an internal

working model[12] that can be nurtured by their environments (Crain 2000). Several studies have revealed that self-reliance in childhood and later life emerged from sensitive responsiveness to a baby's needs (Karen 1998, 177). Therefore, *responsivity* of the caretaker to the child's needs shapes the emotional development and future well being of the child. Although attachment theory is grounded in primacy, studies have shown that given the right care, individuals may be resilient and able to overcome trauma experienced earlier in life (Karen 1998). The ideas of attachment theory thus contribute essentially to the continuation of this study. The current movement toward bi-cultural education may be a product of an increasing trend of active responsivity among adoptive parents. However, *responsivity*, itself, of parents may ultimately prove the most essential element of healthy identity development[13].

Cultural Learning Theory also reiterates the key role of responsive adults in child development. L.S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) argued that social interaction stimulates intellectual growth. He found adult instruction essential for the advancement of the child's mind. However, "development has its own rhythms" (Crain 2000, 235) and does not follow instruction in any orderly manner. To determine a child's potential for new learning, a child's abilities need to be measured when provided with assistance. Vygotsky coined this *concept zone of proximal development*. Furthermore, Vygotsky wrote that "writing instruction should arouse the child's vital interest and correspond to the child's natural way of learning" (Crain 2000, 243). Later theorists (Rogoff et al 1984; Griffin and Cole 1984) have used Vygotsky's ideas as a springboard for their arguments that adults should attune to the children's level of interest in tasks presented before them (Crain 2000, 242). In other words, adults need to meet their children "where they are"

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[12] "Internal working model" refers to the concept that children possess an inner world shaped by environmental influences (Karen 1998).

cognitively if they are to help their children develop healthily and effectively. This theory of cultural learning is significant for parents who are trying to bi-culturally socialize their children. Vygotsky would argue that parents should provide the instruction that best promotes cognitive development in their children. As parents provide elements of their children's history, Vygotsky's theory would advise parents to monitor their children's abilities to comprehend such issues. Effectiveness of exposure to Chinese language at an early age may also depend on cognitive development and child interest[14]. Ultimately, this theory on cognitive development relies on accurate responsivity of an adult toward a child for healthy progress.

In light of attachment theory and cultural learning theory, parents who pursue bi-cultural education need to conscientiously determine if an emotional and cognitive desire to learn about Chinese culture exists. The ability to make this determination depends on the *responsivity* of the parent toward the child. As proposed by attachment theory, identity issues may arise from lack of parental responsivity to their child. Thus, responsive parents attune to their child's inner working model and can potentially facilitate their child's acceptance of her or his history as a Chinese adoptee. While, this acceptance may be influenced by bi-cultural competence, bi-cultural competence as an independent phenomenon may not be essential.

In terms of the movement toward bi-cultural education of Chinese adoptees, the phenomenon generates several issues that merit consideration as future studies arise. Interview data reveals conflicts that may imply that parents who become so deeply entrenched in "the movement" risk putting their own goals ahead of their children's actual needs. In conducting the interviews, the interviewer was informed of tension

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[13] Please see Appendix D for further explanations of Attachment Theory
[14] Please see Appendix E for more background on Cultural Learning Theory

resulting from falling out between parents adamant about bi-culturally socializing their children and parents convinced that their children would assimilate. One interviewee expressed feeling ostracized due to her conviction in assimilation theory. Another parent commented that "there is a lot of pressure from other FCC parents out here to pretty much 'define' their kids as 'Chinese'" (Tessler et al 1999, 114). The present researcher has also made observations within the adoptive Colorado community, as a teacher of Chinese language and culture classes at *Little Treasures* Chinese school, that much dissension occurs among the parents regarding the function of the school itself. In local schools, parents have differences of opinion in terms of "bi-cultural socialization" and "bi-cultural education." The parents all have a different perspective on "what works." Some people believe that the school should simply be a positive environment in which their children can interact with other adopted children and, hopefully, acquire some knowledge. Parents wish for their children to make positive bi-cultural associations (e.g. "Chinese is fun"). Other parents hope that their parents will be immersed in language and truly move toward bi-lingualism. Parents should monitor their approaches so that the child's needs are still at the forefront of their efforts. When it becomes a 'parental crusade,' they may lose sight of the purpose of their actions.

In addition to the previously discussed consequence of bi-cultural education, the effort to provide Chinese education may cause parents to further digress from responding accurately to their child's needs. Undue emphasis on bi-cultural socialization may result in the neglect of other pieces of identity development (Sugai 1999, 282). The responses of the parents to the interview questions revealed the potential creation of an identity crisis by the parents. With all of the literature that exists today regarding multi-cultural issues and immigrant struggles, many adults seem to have become ridden with "white guilt." Reassuringly, the majority of the parents interviewed maintain a very flexible and

healthy perspective about the actualities of their situation. They neither try to minimize

or dramatize the fact they have a daughter who they have adopted from China and will

raise in the United States. Identity issues may be interwoven with their children's

development, but they do not need to be anticipated ahead of time. Certain parents may

feel extremely guilty about the potential identity crisis their child may face as a result of

"cultural deprivation." On the other hand, based on the Chinese-American interviewed in

this study and articles written by Asian-American adoptive fathers, Asian-American

adoptive parents seem to approach socialization from the perspective of assimilation

theory (Sugai 1999; Lam 1999). For this point, families more involved in organizations

such as FCC must be interviewed. Data shows that parents are not currently

experiencing significant pressure due to the ethnic culture and racial appearance of their

children. They reportedly live in tolerant communities. Given the current era and

emphasis on multicultural awareness and diversity, many of their fears may never

materialize. Furthermore, issues other than "cultural deprivation" may cause the Chinese

adoptees to have identity struggles such as abandonment, the devaluation as a female,

the age gap with their parents, simply having parents who look different, and other

"China doll" grown-up struggles.

      Expanding on one issue that may prove more prevalent than lack of Chinese

identity: the issue of abandonment itself. In an effort to create positive images of the

adoptee's birth culture, many parents develop their own "acceptable" explanation of their

child's abandonment. Parents elaborate stories about how much their birth parent must

have loved them to abandon them in hopes that their children would live better lives. In

a controversially titled article written by Bruce Porter, an adoptive father, for the New

York Times in 1993, one explanation "seems about right to us." A woman he interviewed

for his article found an abandoned baby in a cardboard box near a notary office. She

thought, "'the mother of that baby went through a great risk to leave her so close to an official place, to make sure the baby would be found in time. To me, someone who would do that loved her baby very much, and wanted it to have a better life than she could give it…it was a brave thing for that woman to do" (Porter 1993, 45). Two interviewed mothers indicated that they also communicate about their daughters' birth mothers positively. These explanations may be accurate but they may also simply be the answer that adoptive parents hope is true to protect their child's feelings. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, one woman adopted from Korea in 1960 cautioned against such explanations. She said:

> I, too, was told by my adoptive parents that my birth mother gave me up because she loved me so much, and for years I feared that if my adoptive parents loved me so much, they also might give me up. This well-meaning explanation only perpetuates and confuses the issues of love, guild and abandonment. It isn't the birth mother who is 'abandoning' her child; it is the country of origin and its policies, social intolerance and cultural values that are abandoning these children (Bruining 1993, 6).

The interviewed single mother, also recognizes the potential fallacy of such explanations. She adopted her daughter from an area very near to Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, many wealthy businessmen have mistresses. If their mistresses become pregnant with boys, the businessmen will consider keeping the children, otherwise the mistresses simply abandon the girls. In these events, love for the child may not have been the real reason for abandoning their child.

The truth told, these Chinese adoptees may never know the exact reason for their abandonment. Some explanations may be more pleasant and easy to accept than others; however, in an effort to create a strong sense of self-confidence in their children, the necessity of continually casting a positive slant on biological parents is debatable. Vygotsky's cultural learning theory would argue that parents need to be responsive to their children's cognitive development and tell the story that best promotes cognitive

development. Although a younger child may need to hear positive stories, an older child may need to hear explanations more appropriate for their level of cognition. As another example, although still extremely rare, American parents have adopted some healthy boys. As of March 2, 2001, Chinese Children Adoption International (CCAI) has placed 2326 children, 30 of whom have been boys. When adoptees become aware of the political implications of their abandonment, the 'abandonment out of pure love' explanation may not suffice to explain the abandonment of boys in the society that so values male heirs. Under these circumstances, attachment theory would further argue that parents can best assist their children in reconciling their past by maintaining open and responsive to their child's needs and development.

The current movement toward bi-cultural education may also create resentment from children who are not ready to address "cultural" aspects of their identity. One of the Korean panelists who spoke at the CFCC meeting said, "If my parents had forced me to attend Korean cultural camps, I probably would have lasted five minutes and separated myself from the experience even more because I was not ready" (CFCC 1999). Clearly, children possess individual needs. In the previously discussed 1999 literature review of studies on racial and ethnic identity development of international adoptees, Friedlander questions the extent to which parents should promote ethnic identification when their children already struggle with identity issues related to adoption. She concludes that attachment and perceived psychological similarity most critically determine adjustment and well being. She also reiterates the prevalence of individual differences: some children need ethnic cultural exposure, some do not. The effort to bi-culturally socialize, in the end, may exacerbate a child's "differences" and cause the child to feel lost and unable to associate with either society—they may experience marginalization. Furthermore, parents and children may be disappointed by the results of their efforts.

Truly becoming bi-lingual in Chinese while living in the United States is a challenge that many Chinese-American families themselves cannot conquer. When a child goes to China and realizes the superficiality of their knowledge, they may suffer shock and disappointment. They must realize that they are attempting to learn about a perpetually changing culture outside of that culture. In fact, "culture does not reside in genes. It resides in experience" (Huang 1999, 235).

Data from this study reveals another illusion of parents in the movement toward bi-cultural socialization: the belief that increased interaction with Chinese-speaking families will increase their children's understanding of "Chinese culture." Chinese families are different from American families—they generally do not socialize with others as Americans do, and if they do, they do so with people with whom they speak the same language. Tessler et al (1999) also observe, "It would seem that Chinese-Americans have a much better idea of the problems that children adopted from China will face" (173). This statement is not necessarily accurate. Karin Evans notes that many Asian-American children parented by their birth parents largely ignore their roots (Evans 2000, 186). Thus, the environment and internal family dynamics shape the "problems" that children face, and the experiences of Chinese-Americans will differ from the adoptees. Parents who believe that relationships with Chinese-American families will strengthen their abilities to provide their children with Chinese socialization may also prove unrealistic.

Many immigrant communities attempt to "preserve their culture" only to find that when they actually return to their homeland, often, times have changed. Immigrants attempt to preserve their culture as they remember it; however, modernization, globalization, and other such phenomena prevent cultures from remaining static. Thus, even the China Towns around the world possess unique characteristics from each other, much less China itself. Then, one must remember that the various overseas Chinese

differ dramatically. The Chinese who live in the United States may have very different cultural practices depending on if they came from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, and other such places. It may even be possible that overseas Chinese parents raise their children with more conscientious efforts to include Chinese culture in their daily lives. Children currently growing up in China's urban areas, on the other hand, may actually be socialized under the influences of American icons such as Mickey Mouse, Big Bird and McDonald's (Evans 2000, 186). These examples elucidate the fact that uniform Chinese culture is virtually non-existent and even Chinese parents must often socialize their children based on environmental circumstances.

It is also significant to note that many Chinese children experience struggles as a result of cultural influences on their upbringing. Chinese children "do manifest many problems growing up…the depiction of the perfect Chinese family is also unreal…China has a long history of child and wife abuse" (Lau and Yeung 1996, 39). Furthermore, genders continue to be polarized in Chinese society, girls continue to have a subordinate and inferior status to boys (Cheung 1996, 62). In general, Chinese parents are very controlling of their children and place high expectations and pressures on their children. These rigid pressures inadvertently cause children to strive to perform well academically (Chao and Sue 1996). In short, the socialization methods of Chinese parents differ drastically from Caucasian parents, thus resulting in vastly dissimilar familial relationships.

Having discussed many of the potential risks involved with *bi-cultural education*, the present researcher must once again reinforce the potential benefits of the resources available through the movement toward bi-cultural exposure. The families interviewed in this study have all demonstrated high levels of awareness and *responsivity* regarding the benefits and risks of their efforts to raise their adopted children with exposure to Chinese culture. As encouragement and examples of internationally adoption parenting

successes, all of the Korean panelists (CFCC 1999) expressed tremendous amounts of gratitude toward their parents for all of the support they provided. Despite "identity crises" at one point or another in their lives, they have all achieved a level of comfort in their identities and acceptance of themselves. The advice that they offered today's parents could be summarized as:

> Make the resources that are available today accessible for your children if they ask, listen to your child's needs and accept them for who they are. If she chooses to explore her identity, do not take it as a personal rejection. If she chooses not to explore her birth culture, that's her choice as well, but always make the opportunity available. Acknowledge your child's differences from you. (CFCC 1999).

The parents and panelists all seem to embody the ideals of Bowlby's attachment theory: respond to your child's needs accurately. Thus, it is important to maintain a balanced perspective on the idea of "bi-cultural socialization." The author of this study thus suggests that for parents who decide to provide Chinese education to their adoptees, they not only need to utilize the principles of attachment theory but also that of cultural learning theory. As suggested by cultural learning theory, a child has a certain range within which she or he can learn, determined by an individual's development. Thus, parents need to attune to their child's development to determine how much cultural exposure is appropriate. Karin Evans reiterates that physical features of an individual do not represent "the culture from which they have come…they culture they embrace…[or the culture] they themselves might wish for the world to see them" (Evans 2000, 193).

In an e-mail correspondence between the researcher of this study and Richard Tessler himself, the latter conceded, "your hypothesis that, compared to nurturance in the family, bi-cultural socialization plays a comparatively minor role is probably correct." Thus, ultimately, while fostering a cross-cultural awareness will undoubtedly broaden an

individual's perspective of the world, this goal should not overshadow the importance of a child's development in a loving and supportive family environment.

The present researcher intends to continue the research on the role of bi-cultural education in healthy self-concept by conducting an attachment study on internationally adopted Chinese children, which, to the researcher's knowledge, has not been undertaken in attachment research. Based on the findings of the present thesis, Bagley 1993b, and Friedlander 1999, the continued study on attachment hypothesizes that the movement toward *bi-cultural education* of Chinese adoptees has a correlation with parent *responsivity*, which ultimately enhances the child's development and self-confidence. The researcher anticipates that the role of *bi-cultural education*, though not essential in and of itself, may be significant in that responsive parents who attune to their children's needs may very well be the same parents who embrace the movement toward "bi-cultural socialization" (as currently known to scholars and parents).

This systematic long-term research on attachment would begin with a larger sample of families than employed in this study and consistently train researchers. The overall structure of the study would be created based on the studies of Bagley 1993b and Friedlander et al 2000. The first stage of the research would replicate Mary Ainsworth's study of attachment[15]. Modeling Ainsworth's approach, initial assessment of the subjects would include a preliminary assessment of the home and parenting approaches. This stage of the proposed study would attempt to correlate the pursuit of bi-cultural education to primary caretakers who seem to nurture secure attachment. Within a designated period of time from this evaluation, the children would then be administered the Strange Situation Task[16] to assess the attachment between the child and the primary

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[15] Ainsworth began a longitudinal study in 1963 to observe mother-infant relationships (Karen 1998).
[16] See Appendix D

caregiver. At this point, the first stage of data would be assessed in terms of the hypothesis. To accurately assess the entire hypothesis, the studies would be conducted longitudinally and followed-up at time intervals yet to be determined (perhaps before the child begins formal school, during early adolescence, late adolescence, and early adulthood). This study would span at least until early adulthood as the child enters the working world, at which time Mary Mains' Adult Attachment Interview (Karen 1998) would be employed. Throughout the study particular efforts would be made to determine the role of exposing children to Chinese language and culture. The relationship between the parent and child regarding the issue of Chinese socialization would be measured as well.

Since such an attachment study has not been conducted on international adoptees, in general, not to mention Chinese adoptees, the results of this extended study would prove significant not only to the questions of this specific hypothesis, but also to the fields of international adoption, sociology and psychology. As more and more parents from countries such as Canada, Great Britain, and the United States adopt internationally, the implications of this study could potentially impact the lives of adults and children spanning all continents. The present author believes that she has provided substantial evidence for the continuation of this proposal for continued research.

VIII. Closing Remarks

The push toward *bi-cultural education* and exposure supports the practice of international adoption by substantiating the belief that parents are "doing their best" to provide better homes and lifestyles for otherwise orphaned children. This thesis provides overwhelming support for the love and *responsivity* given by parents who adopt internationally.

The movement toward bi-cultural socialization thus has significant implications on international policy. The parental efforts to learn about Chinese culture undoubtedly strengthens U.S.-China relations from a grassroots level. Several reports refer to adoptees as virtual "Ambassadors for China" (Tessler et al 1999; Zhang 1999; Iritani 2001). As citizens of the United States learn more about China and the Chinese gain increasing confidence that foreigners are respecting their culture and their people, social and governmental relations would ideally become increasingly positive and transcend relations built for the mere purpose of economic advantage. Although the continued practice of international adoption indicates that social ills continue to exist in third world countries, international adoptions indeed generate significant resources and funds for the developing countries. Already, each adopted child contributes 3500 to 4000 U.S. dollars to the orphanage and the orphans who remain in China. Despite concerns of international adoption on the orphan dilemma and the population control policy, children have opportunities to flourish. Furthermore, the efforts of parents in the United States, Canada, Great Britain and other developed nations symbolizes the joining of individuals as families. The current approaches adopted by multi-ethnic families created through international adoption demonstrate that ethnic differences should be recognized and celebrated rather than ignored. Meanwhile, by creating families through international

transracial adoptions, parents are also making leaps toward blurring the lines of inequality between different ethnic and racial groups.

The grassroots movements that are continually generating momentum will, hopefully, impact the international community and its policies. Although some individuals argue that the west can set a precedent by imposing stricter guidelines on orphanages in China (Burkhalter 1996), it is the role of individual parents who join in a movement that may influence Chinese guidelines more effectively. The efforts of parents and their adopted children, striving to reconcile the role of culture, will critically contribute to improving China's attitude toward foreigners and, perhaps, inspire changes in its policies. Meanwhile, policies of the international community require modification as well. Currently, international adoptions embody many inefficiencies and lack of coordination between the many levels of government involved. Within the United States, individual states regulate many adoption standards. While the United States has passed recent laws to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship for international adoptees, progress is slow (Hastings 2001). In fact, very few countries make serious efforts to design laws that facilitate placement of children in foreign homes (Bartholet 1993). United Nations efforts to facilitate this process include the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption. This convention involved sixty-six countries aiming "to facilitate the process and protect the integrity of intercountry adoption" (Ryan 1999). The United States reportedly participated actively in the development of this convention to advocate the protection of the child and prevent abuses of international adoption, such as abduction and trafficking. However, the outcome of this convention has highlighted many of the negative, rather than the positive, aspects of international adoption. This UN convention, in essence, permits international adoption only as a last resort. As a result, many advocates of international adoption suspect the actual effectiveness of the convention in

facilitating international adoption. The current lack progress of the Convention, to which the United States is not even yet a party, reflects the continued concerns that pervade the international community regarding the practice of international adoption.

The efforts of parents who are attempting to honor their children's birth heritage should ease some concerns about the practice of international adoption. One parent said, "I think the Chinese people have made a very generous gift and a very delightful one, and I want to honor that. I think China will always be a very significant and important part of who [my daughter] is" (Iritani 2001, B1). The evidence of the present study confirms that adoptive parents are continually modifying their parenting approaches to meet the needs of their children, thus, if parents perceive that their children need the development of cultural identity, they will respond. Furthermore, these efforts reveal that parents make concerted efforts to attune to their children and act with *responsivity*. Pending further research, increasing support can be generated by this study to affirm that children adopted from China are living healthy lives and developing confidence in their self-identities as a result of parental attitudes and approaches to raising their children. All children deserve a loving, nurturing environment and international adoption should be structured on the principle of protecting the child's best interests (Bartholet 1993). The movement toward bi-cultural education reaffirms the commitment of adoptive parents to nurturing their children and implies the creation of an increasingly global community joined by parents and children, regardless of race or ethnicity, bonded through love and relationships.

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APPENDIX A

How important is it to you that your child (or children)…

	Very important	Somewhat important	A little important	Not at all important
is proud of his or her Chinese heritage?	89.2%	8.4%	1.9%	0.6%
is exposed to Chinese culture?	77.6%	18.4%	3.4%	0.6%
is aware that he or she looks like other persons of Chinese descent?	67.9%	19.8%	7.4%	4.9%
learns about the area of China from which he or she came?	57.2%	32.7%	8.9%	1.1%
becomes friends with other Chinese children?	56.1%	29.3%	10.5%	4.2%
visits China as an adult?	52.9%	29.7%	9.3%	8.2%
has Chinese artifacts around the home?	45.6%	32.1%	16.5%	5.7%

Data is based on surveys conducted by Richard Tessler, Gail Gamache, and Liming Liu. The questions identified above are part of a list of thirty-two questions used by the researchers to determine parental attitudes toward integrating Chinese values, language and culture into the socialization of their child. 526 parents participated in the study (1993, 118).

How important is it to you that your child (or children)…

	Very important	Somewhat important	A little important	Not at all important
becomes friends with children of many ethnicities?	85.0%	13.1%	1.5%	0.0%
knows his or her extended family?	83.1%	13.5%	2.7%	1.0%
forms close relationships with people outside of the family?	72.4%	23.8%	3.4%	0.0%
learns about American history?	66.2%	28.9%	4.4%	1.0%
learns the American attitude of valuing healthy self-esteem?	63.3%	30.4%	5.3%	1.0%
learns to love his or her adopted country?	62.4%	26.3%	8.4%	3.0%
is proud of his or	59.1%	28.0%	8.9%	4.0%

her American heritage?				

Data is based on surveys conducted by Richard Tessler, Gail Gamache, and Liming Liu. The questions identified above are part of a list of thirty-two questions used by the researchers to determine parental attitudes toward the American socialization of their child. 526 parents participated in the study (1993, 119).

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions for Bi-Cultural Socialization

1. Name, occupation, parent age at adoption
2. Child's name
        age at adoption and current age?
        How did you decide to name your child? If Chinese name is kept, why?
3. Number of children—biological/adopted (please specify ages and country(ies) of origin). How do your kids get along?
4. What were your reasons for adopting?
        Attempts to adopt domestically (or in other countries)
5. How did you become interested in adopting from China? Why did you choose to adopt from China? (motivation to adopt)
        Why did you choose China over another country?
        Did you choose Chinese adoption because you wanted a daughter?
                Does your perception of a Chinese boy differ from your perception of a Chinese girl?
(6. How did you find out about CCAI?)[17]
(7. How long did the adoption process take?)
(8. How did you feel when you first saw your child's photo? In person?)
9. How well prepared were you for cultural differences before you adopted your child?
        How much exposure to Chinese culture did you have before the adoption? Formal? Informal?
10. Are there identity struggles that you anticipate or hope to prevent as your child develops?*
11. How do you define "culture"?
12. In terms of self-identity, what do you think is the role of culture? How much do you attribute to Chinese culture?*
13. In general, how do you feel about maintaining your child's birth culture? What do you believe is necessary to maintain culture? What do you do to help your child maintain culture?
14. What does "bi-cultural socialization" mean to you?
15. What is the first bi-cultural adjustment you had to make in the adoption process?
        (Describe your visit to China to pick-up your child. First visit?)
(16. How did you feel about your child being ethnic Chinese?)
17. What is your attitude toward American socialization? What "American" opportunities do you provide your child?*
18. Do you view your child as American, Chinese, Chinese-American or American-Chinese?
        How often do you think of your child as "Chinese"? aware of her/his ethnic origin?
        Do you think that American or Chinese socialization is more important?*
19. How would you rate your desire to learn about Chinese culture?
20. To what extent do you feel like the Chinese culture is something you share with your child?
21. How does your daughter being Chinese manifest in your daily activities?
22. What kinds of opportunities does your child have to be exposed to Chinese culture?
23. How much contact do your children have with other Chinese people? Other adopted children? Other American born Chinese or Chinese who immigrated to America at a young age?
24. Have you (as parents) experienced racism because of your child? Please describe. Reaction?
25. Please describe specific incidents in which you felt pressure or relief due to your child being Chinese.
26. Do you send your child to Chinese school? Why or Why not?
27. What role do you play in your child's "Chinese education"? (Just a driver or an active participant?)
        What is it like when/if your child does not participate in class?
        (How is your child's progress compared to her friends? Do you consider that good or bad?)
28. Do you have any particular cultural concerns given that your child is female? American stereotypes of Asian

women, etc.

29. How important is it to you that your child has other adoptee friends that she can trust? Interacts with other Chinese adoptee families?
30. What kind of support do you have as parent(s)? Group bonds with other families? Are your closest friends parents who have also adopted from China?

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[17] Questions in ( ) indicate revised questions deemed unessential to the present study. These questions were eliminated but may have been answered through responses to other questions or discussed pending time constraints.
* Indicates questions modified and added after initial two interviews.

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form for Research on Bi-Cultural Socialization and Chinese Adoptees

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Cindy Chang, an undergraduate student in the University of Colorado's Department of International Affairs, Campus Box 333, Boulder, CO 80309. This project is conducted under the directions of Dr. Eileen Wade, Department of Psychology, Dr. Kayann Short, Farrand Academic Program, and Dr. Vicki Ash Hunter, Department of International Affairs.

You are invited to participate in a research study about the bi-cultural socialization of your adopted Chinese child(ren). I am researching the approaches, goals, and impact of bi-cultural socialization in terms of the current well-being and projected well-being of your child(ren).

You will be asked to explain your attitude towards bi-cultural socialization and your perspective on your child's birth culture. The interview will take about one to two hours of your time. I will arrange with you a suitable time and location in which we can converse and pursue this line of research.

The potential risk associated with this study is the emotional sensitivity associated with discussing your family and issues encountered by your adopted child from China. Your family is a very personal aspect of your life, opening it up to questions may generate emotional reactions.

We expect the project to benefit you by helping you better understand the effectiveness of bi-cultural socialization. The approach employed by many adoptive Chinese parents to socializing their Chinese adoptees is a relatively new one, and there is much room for evaluation and continued improvement. Your participation in this study will not only benefit your family through added knowledge and discussion, it will also contribute to other families who are also striving to provide their Chinese adopted children with the confidence and self-esteem necessary for her or his overall well-being. The current research that I am undertaking will establish a foundation for future projected studies. Please feel free to request a copy of the proposal.

If you have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason.

In addition, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. If you so choose, your name(s) can be changed in the written paper. The audio tape used to record the interview will remain in my personal care unless otherwise arranged.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a subject, any concerns regarding this project or any dissatisfaction with any aspect of this study, you may report them -- confidentially, if you wish -- to the Executive Secretary, Human Research Committee, Graduate School, Campus Box 26, Regent 308, University of Colorado-Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309-0026 or by telephone to (303) 492-7401. Copies of the University of Colorado Assurance of compliance to the federal government regarding human subject research are available upon request from the Graduate School address listed above.

A signed copy of this consent form will be provided to the participant on the day of the interview.

I understand the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in the research project on bi-cultural socialization and Chinese adoptees.

Signature of Subject _____ Date _____.

Name (please print)_____Please change my name(s)
in the written proposal _____Yes _____no preference

APPENDIX D

John Bowlby (1907-1990), founder of attachment theory and a major contributor to developmental theory, became convinced that the mother/infant bond critically determines the development of the child. As a biologically evolved mechanism, infants possess an internal working model that can be nurtured by their environments. In ethological terms, animals possess an instinct, its responsiveness to specific releasers[18], and an ability to imprint. Imprinting occurs in a critical period, a "window of opportunity" in development, meaning that a "young animal will form an attachment to an object only if it is exposed to and follows that object during a specific time early in life" (Crain 2000, 40). Bowlby applied these ethological concepts to human development. Mary Ainsworth, initially Bowlby's research assistant, developed tests to measure Bowlby's theory and identified different patterns attachment among individual babies. Furthermore, Ainsworth concluded that babies use their mothers as a *secure base*, a term coined by Bowlby, from which they develop the confidence to explore the embrace the world.

According to Bowlby's theory, all children are attached; however, Ainsworth determined that attachment could be distinguished as secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-ambivalent. Secure attachment occurs in the first two years of an infant's life. The criteria for secure attachment includes a primary caretaker who responds accurately and consistently to the child's needs. Insecure-avoidant infants appear exceptionally healthy and independent; however, such an appearance may hide underlying emotional difficulty and disappointment caused by insensitive and rejecting primary caretakers.

Inconsistent primary caretakers may cause insecure-ambivalent attachment marked by "come close, go away" behavior. Insecure-ambivalent attachment causes individuals to vacillate between desiring emotional proximity and maintaining emotional distance. Attachment, Ainsworth concluded is the product of a caretaker's sensitivity to the child's signals and needs. Ainsworth found that *accurate responsivity* of the primary caretaker to the child's needs determined a child's emotional well being.

Numerous replicated studies on Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory have demonstrated that secure attachment predicts long-term physical and mental health (Juang & Nguyen 1997; Allen & Land 1999) closer relationships to peers and romantic partners (Allen & Bell 1995; Laible, Carlo, & Rafaelli 2000) autonomy and self-reliance (Allen et al 1994, Ryan & Lynch 1989), and adult academic and occupational achievement (O'Connor et al 1996). Retrospective studies of college students remembering secure attachment also indicate lower levels of depression (Kobak & Cole 1994). Insecure attachment, on the other hand, predicts difficulty in relationships, poor academic and occupational achievement, adult psychological problems, and substance abuse. Longitudinal studies (Sroufe, Carlson, & Schulman 1993) assessing children at infancy, ten years, and fifteen years of age reveal at age ten, securely attached children were more socially skilled, more self-confident, and less dependent on peers. At fifteen years of age, securely attached children proved more emotionally open and more likely to have close relationships with peers.

Bowlby initially conducted his studies among institutionalized children. He observed that institutionally reared children have difficulty forming deep attachments later in life. They often seem affectionless, selfish, and incapable of developing lasting ties

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[18] "Releasers" refers to specific external stimuli that cause a specie-specific response. For example, mother hens appear whenever their chicks are in danger—"close examination reveals that she is actually reacting to a very

with another person. Although these babies have their physical needs met, employees

do not have the time to interact consistently with them or respond accurately to their

needs. Thus, institutional rearing can have potentially damaging effects on individuals.

William Crain cites work done by Klaus and Kennell (1970, 1983) pointing out that

"throughout most of human evolution, newborns were carried about by their mothers,

and

in this maternal environment babies evolved responses and characteristics that facilitate

attachment right from the start" (Crain 2000, 60). By spending their first few months, if

not years, in crowded orphanages in China, children are clearly at risk for insecure

attachment. However, as clearly demonstrated by many internationally adopted children

who grow-up well-adjusted and live happily, the damage is not irreversible.

Eastern European institutions are notorious for the lack of child-care and resources

available with children. Consequently, United States parents who adopt from those

nations reportedly struggle intensely with attachment issues. However,

> There is a pervasive feeling among adopting parents, adoption workers,
> and health care professionals that Chinese children may be in better
> condition on arrival than children adopted from Eastern European
> orphanages. The rationale includes 'their birth mothers are more likely to
> receive prenatal care,' 'Chinese institutions provide better care,' and
> 'Chinese adoptees arrive younger and therefore have fewer problems.'
> (Miller 2000, 229).

Despite these beliefs, "a study…revealed that growth and developmental delays were

common" (Miller 2000, 229) among Chinese adoptees as well. This observation reveals

the reality of institutionalization regardless of the attempts to provide the most positive

and loving environments for children: resources are limited. Children adopted

internationally may still "grieve for lost caregivers and the familiar environment, foods,

and language. Overfriendliness and lack of anxiety around strangers are common at all

specific stimulus—the chicks' distress call" (Crain 2000, 38).

ages, and may signal attachment issues…Institutional care is not substitute for a loving, attentive family" (Miller 2000, 231). Because of this need, families who adopt children have a primary responsibility of creating an environment of nurture, support, and unconditional love, regardless of the age of the adopted child. Even after their primacy stage (the first two years of life), a child's well being will depend essentially on the family environment and nurture she or he receives as an equal member of the family.

Appendix E

L.S. Vygotsky (1896-1934), in his short thirty-eight years of life, became a commanding presence in the field of psychology (Crain 2000). As a Marxist, Vygotsky tried to create a psychology incorporating Marx's socialist ideas. While Vygotsky recognized that humans have biological needs, he argued that humans are part of an overarching social process and that human nature cannot be assessed apart from its social-historical context. Social interaction, in turn, stimulates intellectual growth. Vygotsky believed that children's minds should not be left solely to spontaneous development (as Rousseau argued). Instead, he argued that "children also benefit enormously from the knowledge and conceptual tools handed down to them by their cultures" (Crain 2000, 232). Teachers need to present materials to children and good instruction "should march ahead of development, pulling it along, helping children master material that they cannot immediately grasp on their own" (Crain 2000, 232). Thus, instruction propels the mind forward. However, Vygotsky found that development does not follow instruction in any orderly manner. Consequently, "the teacher cannot prescribe the manner in which the child learns…Development has its own rhythms" (Crain 2000, 235)

Vygotsky argues that adult instruction is absolutely necessary for the advancement of the child's mind. To determine a child's potential for new learning, a child's abilities need to be measured when provided with assistance. Vygotsky named this concept: *zone of proximal development*. Specifically, Crain cites Vygotsky's definition of this term as: "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Crain 2000,

236). Although assistance is offered in the zone, the task is accomplished almost

independently. This stage theory suggests that a child's potential for learning will vary at

different stages or his or her life. While Vygotsky recognizes the role of a child's inner

maturational prompting, "to fully develop their minds, children also need the intellectual

tools provided by their cultures" (Crain 2000, 239). Furthermore, Vygotsky also wrote

that "writing instruction should arouse the child's vital interest and correspond to the

child's natural way of learning" (Crain 2000, 243). Later theorists (Rogoff et al 1984,

Griffin & Cole 1984) have used Vygotsky's ideas as a springboard for their arguments that

"we should pay close attention to the child's interest and enthusiasm as we lead children

through tasks" (Crain 2000, 242). Crain reminds us that "education is most effective when

it is geared to the child's own interests and inclinations" (Crain 2000, 242). In other

parents, adults need to meet their children where they are if they are to help children

develop healthily and effectively. Scaffolding, the term coined by Vygotsky referring to

the provision of a structure for the child to participate in a task just beyond her or his

skill level, will aid in a child's development and promote emotional and cognitive

intelligence. To successfully scaffold, an adult must recruit a child's interest in an activity,

simplify the task within the child's ability, maintain the child's enthusiasm for the task

when distractions or frustrations occur, anticipate, indicate, and correct errors, control

frustrations by reducing unhappiness at mistakes, model correct solutions each step of the

way.