

Conversation:

- Where are you from originally? How long have you lived in the U.S.A.? Do you plan to live here permanently? Why or why not?
- What are some reasons people emigrate to live in other countries?
- What are some difficulties people face when they live in another country?
- What is culture shock? Have you experienced it before? What surprised or confused you when you first came to the United States? Explain.
- What do you like about living in the U.S.? What do you dislike about living here or what do you miss most about living in your own country?

The Bright Lights of Freedom

Harold Hongju Koh is Dean of Yale Law School, where he teaches human rights and international law. From 1998 to 2001, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Born in Boston, Koh is a lifelong Red Sox fan. The essay you will hear and read about his family's immigration story and his beliefs about freedom based on his experiences.



Source: NPR "This I Believe" at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5199021>

Part I. Listen for Main Ideas

Read the sentences below. Then listen to the essay, "The Bright Lights of Freedom." After you listen, choose the sentence that is the main idea of the essay.

- The U.S.A. is the best country in the world.
- Freedom makes people too rebellious.
- South Korea is an unstable country.
- People living in countries where governments allow human rights and freedoms are happier.
- The bright lights of freedom.
- Dictators are bad rulers, and they make the people in their countries try to leave.

"Once an Asian dictator told us to stop imposing our Western values on his people. He said, 'We Asians don't feel the same way as Americans do about human rights.' I pointed to my own face and told him he was wrong."

Part II. Listen for Details

Listen again for answers to the questions below.

1. Where were Harold's parents from?
2. When did Harold's parents immigrate to the U.S.?
3. What were the two reasons they came to the U.S.?
4. Where was Harold born?
5. What is Harold's occupation?
6. Why did Harold's father like living in the U.S.?
7. Why did Harold travel a lot?
8. According to Harold, what is the factor that makes people's futures bright or dark?

Part III. Listen for Words

Listen and fill in the spaces with the words that are missing.

I believe that freedom is contagious.

My parents were born in South Korea and came here more than 50 years ago. They came for the _____ and for the freedom. They grew up under Japanese colonial rule, _____ to speak Korean or even to use their Korean names. When their country was divided after World War II, my mother and her _____ were trapped in North Korea. In desperation, they hiked for days to the border to be picked up and _____ back to Seoul. But even there, they _____ under dictatorship.

For less than a year in the 1960s, Korea _____ democracy and my father joined the diplomatic corps. But one day, _____ rolled and a coup d'etat toppled the government, leaving us to grow up in America.

My father savored freedom like he savored _____ air. He loved the freedom to _____ his passions: for John F. Kennedy, for Fred Astaire, for Ted Williams. Driving down the road, he would turn and exclaim: "This is a great, great _____. Here, we can do what we want."

During the summer that Nixon _____, I was visiting Seoul. Someone tried to assassinate Korea's president and he declared _____ law. I called my father and marveled that Korea had never enjoyed a _____ transition of government. Meanwhile, the world's most _____ government had just changed hands without anyone firing a shot. He said, "Now you see the _____: In a democracy, if you are president, then the troops obey you. In a dictatorship, if the troops obey you, _____ you are president."

And so I studied law, became a law school _____ and dean, and eventually a human rights official for the State Department. I traveled to scores of _____. Everywhere I went -- Haiti, Indonesia, China, Sierra Leone, Kosovo -- I saw in the eyes of thousands the same fire for freedom I had first _____ in my father's eyes. Once an Asian dictator told us to stop imposing our Western _____ on his people. He said, "We Asians don't feel the same way as Americans do about human rights." I pointed to my own _____ and told him he was wrong.

As my time in government ended, I traveled to North Korea. In the eyes of everyone -- children, workers, government officials -- I saw the lifeless, unfocused _____ I had first read about in Orwell's *1984*. I saw people whose aspirations had been _____ by a government that would not provide for their most basic needs. As we flew out of a darkened Pyongyang, I looked down to see where my mother had crossed the _____ so many years ago. As we approached Seoul, suddenly the landscape glowed with millions of lights. I _____ that the only differences between the bright futures to the South and the dark futures of the North were the governments that _____ them.

That is why I believe in the bright lights of freedom.

Part IV. Vocabulary

Find the words below in the essay. Try to understand the meanings from context and answer the questions. Confirm your answers with a dictionary, as needed.

1. The first line of Harold's essay says "I believe that freedom is contagious." What does this mean?

Write three other things that are contagious:

2. Harold writes that his parents were trapped in South Korea. What does that mean?

3. Harold's parents hiked to the border. What did they do?

Have you ever gone hiking? If so, when and where?

4. A "coup d'etat" is a French expression that English has "borrowed." Read paragraph 2 again and write what you think this expression means:

5. After moving to the U.S., Harold's father savored freedom. What does "savor" mean?

6. What is something you savor?

Part V. Reflect and Discuss

Read the questions and tell your classmates your responses.

1. Harold's parents faced a lot of difficulties when they lived in Korea. What was life in Korea like under Japanese colonial rule? What was it like after WWII? Explain.

2. Explain in your own words how Harold's father views freedom.

3. What happened in Korea when Harold visited Seoul?

4. According to Harold's father, what is the difference between a democracy and a dictatorship?

5. Why do you think Harold decided to study law? Explain.

6. Do you think that people everywhere basically feel the same about human rights? Why or why not?

7. How does Harold compare South Korea with North Korea? How are the people and the governments different?

8. What freedoms or opportunities do you appreciate having in the U.S.A?