

Kaung Khant Toe (00:01)

Okay. Can you start with the brief introduction?

Nyein Su Toe (00:04)

Yeah. My name is Nyein Su Toe. Most of the people here, they call me Su only. I am from Myanmar. Now, most of the people know I said Myanmar, and it is like one of the Southeast Asian countries.

Kaung Khant Toe (00:21)

Okay. Can you please describe Myanmar for those who are unaware of it?

Nyein Su Toe (00:25)

Okay. It is like, I would say it is like it is a little country which has everything. We have seas, we have mountains, and we have lots of natural resources also and the country is located in between the China and India.

Kaung Khant Toe (00:44)

Okay. How is life in Myanmar?

Nyein Su Toe (00:48)

It is typically, we have it so easy when it is compared to the tri-state like here, because over there, people are pretty chill, and we are not rushing for each and everything like we do in here. But of course, they are considered a developing country. We have so many downsides. One is camp to the living standards and then the income and the general GPT and everything. But in terms of the human beings, the human life quality over there is also fairly good.

Kaung Khant Toe (1:25)

Interesting. Can you elaborate on what you did at your job and your education back there?

Nyein Su Toe (1:30)

Okay. I graduated from one of the universities in our country because over there during my time, they only have the government funded university. We do not have any private university. So, I learned the Russian language and I graduated from one of the government universities. And then after that, I finished that, I studied... During my study over there also, I started learning the English. And then after I graduated, I used to work at the airport and the airline for almost nine years. After that, I moved to the corporate and the embassy, like the business environment. The last job that I did is the membership officer. It is the last job that I did before I moved here.

Kaung Khant Toe (2:20)

Okay. Do you have any memory that you are especially fond of back in Myanmar?

Nyein Su Toe (2:27)

Yeah, it is a lot. Lots of good and bad memories over there. Mostly are the good one because I live together with my friends, my family, and everything. Those are the memories that we cannot replace at all. But there are a lot of the downside also, especially during the COVID, because the country is not financially stable enough to support the people over there. Sometimes it is so... I do not know. How can I say that? It is so sad to see that people near you are dying because of the lack of the medical support and then you cannot do anything at all. The memories over there, I would say they are mixed with the 90% of the happiness and the 10% of the sadness.

Kaung Khant Toe (3:20)

Okay, thank you for being honest. About your migration here, can you elaborate on your reasons? Like why you got here to the United States?

Nyein Su Toe (3:31)

Okay. Actually, I was not supposed to be here at first. Next three or four years, I might come later because my parents and my brother, they are moving here with the immigrant visa. But I am the overage, like over 21 years old, so I am not supposed to get the immigrant visa together with them. But likely, because of our country situation, like the COVID and we have some kinds of political instability over there. The embassy do me a favor and then they just fasten my visa process, and I got a visa. I want to learn a lot of the things and I want to be like they... I want to continue for my education and everything. This is the main reason for me actually to move here and of course, I have to stay together with my family. For me, my home is where my parents are living. So, if they decided to move here, I have to come along with them. I did not have much of a choice, actually.

Kaung Khant Toe (4:42)

Okay. So, like you said, you have little time to prepare for the trip. So how exactly did you prepare with the little time that you had?

Nyein Su Toe (4:51)

I remember exact day because I only got the visa on the December third year. This is what I remember. December 30th, 2020, I got the immigrant visa in hand. And then we... Oh, no, it is January 30th. Sorry, it is January 30th. And then we left from our country on the February ninth. So, it is like only nine days in between for me to prepare everything. And also, that country is extremely far away, at least we have to spend the almost 24 hours, including the transit times and everything. So, it was incredibly stressful for me to wrap up everything because I was still working over there for my job when I know that I have to go over there. So yes, it is so difficult for me to wrap up doing the things, packaging and then moving the thing and hand over my job to the other things is the biggest challenge for me when it comes to the moving.

Kaung Khant Toe (5:53)

Okay. So how did you feel exactly when you first arrived in the United States?

Nyein Su Toe (6:00)

Honestly, it is a little bit different from what I expected because It is not expected... Because everybody, especially in our country and most of the Southeast East Asian country, people thought that the United States is the best. Of course, this is one of the best countries, but there are also lots of downsides like here, especially when it comes to the human communications and then those kinds of mental issues and everything. I was like, It is just okay. This is my honest thoughts, actually. It is not that much good like we expected and what people are talking about.

Kaung Khant Toe (6:49)

Okay, thank you for being honest again. Can you elaborate on some challenges that you faced upon moving to this country?

Nyein Su Toe (6:58)

Okay. The very first challenge, if I honestly say, is a job because I used to work like the white collars over there. I graduated and I used to work for the international clients and also for the embassy, which is like

the high-income salary job over there in my country. But of course, the salary is nothing compared to here. The pay rate is pretty different. But when I came here, as I am not graduated from the United States, I accept myself that I cannot get the job like what I did in our country. So, I am just doing whatever that I got, and I try to continue my education. This is a very tough one and this is the most challenging part, restarting everything from the very beginning.

Kaung Khant Toe (7:53)

Okay. I am quite sure you have experienced some culture shock. May I hear a few examples?

Nyein Su Toe (8:00)

Yeah, because over there in our countries, peoples are not that much rushing. I mean, of course, they are rushing in their own way, but they are not that much tough like here. And then the most the culture shock is like we welcome like most of the like foreigners and the guests or whoever came to our country who are not a part of our nationality. But here, most of the people, I would say like the 90% of the people, they welcome, but like the 10% of the people, some people seems like they just do not want to accept the strangers at all. So, this is the culture shock. This is the hidden dark secrets of the United States. Nobody mentioned about that before I came here, and I never heard that. People are experiencing that. But after I arrived here and when I talked with the other Asian people and then the people around me also, at the time only, I just discovered that they are also having the same problem and they have those kinds of issues also. This is like the kinds of the strange experience and the culture shock for me.

Kaung Khant Toe (9:13)

Okay, interesting. Now that we discussed the challenges, what about we talk about some aspect that you enjoy about the United States?

Nyein Su Toe (9:22)

Oh, yes, I enjoy here. I mean, of course, the living standards is higher. And then the worst thing here is if you are trying, if you are trying, if you make sure that you are doing your thing with all of your full efforts, is a lots of growth opportunity here. You can find the infinite opportunities here. But in our country, the country is small. The political situation is unstable. And also, it is a still developing country. We have the longest civil war history in the world. so, because of all those things, even we try our best sometimes we did not get what we deserve. So, this is the best things about the United States. If you make sure that you are trying your best, eventually, after five years or something like that, you will definitely get one place that you deserve.

Kaung Khant Toe (10:47)

Surely you get somewhere that you want to if you give the effort, which is what you are trying to say? Correct?

Nyein Su Toe (10:55)

I mean, sometimes even if you put like the full effort in some country and in some situations you can get the full result at all because there are so many burdens over there. So, for example, like in our countries, people are not supposed to work until they graduated because there is no part time opportunity over there. Nobody is even working part time, like the fast-food restaurant and everything. Also, they are only hiring at least like the high school graduates or something. But for the university you cannot work at all. You have to go there, over there like the full time. So

here is completely different. You know, you can continue your study when you can try to support your family and when you have, you know, at the same time, you can get your permanent job also.

Kaung Khant Toe (11:46)

All right. Continuing on that. So as a student, are there any significant differences between the school system from here and Myanmar?

Nyein Su Toe (11:56)

Because over there I would say like the teacher-focused education system, because we cannot choose our teacher. We cannot choose our class. I would say like it is always like that and then for the major, also, the minute that you committed to that major, if you want to change it, you can change it, but you have to restart everything. They do not have any like the credit card system or something like that. And then for the professor, also the department, they just assigned the people like the professor, but here, we can choose that. We do not have that option. It is just only one professor teaching the class. And then every student who need to take the subject, they have to go into that. And then the classroom size is pretty different. Also, the classroom size over there is pretty big, at least, like compared to the here, because here I am just saying about in terms of the community college because for the community college maximum is like thirty over there is something like 40 to 50 in the one class. It depends on which university you go. So yes. And also, like here I think the teacher and the professor, and the students are more intractable. And then the professor pays more attention to their students. This is what I felt like as of now, I am not sure when I moved to the like the four-year university.

Kaung Khant Toe (12:12)

Interesting. We did touch on this once beforehand in the conversation, but can you elaborate on your dreams and hopes again, please?

Nyein Su Toe (12:20)

I am sorry?

Kaung Khant Toe (12:21)

We did mention this topic before in our interview, but can you elaborate on your hopes and dreams, please?

Nyein Su Toe (12:27)

Uh, yes. I want to graduate, like, as soon as possible. Like within next two and a half years or something like that. Of course, I will finish within a year from the Middlesex after the I will move to NJIT or the Columbia or the Rutgers. I am still deciding that. So yes, I really want to focus on the same kind of business analysis and if not the data analysis but the business analysis and same kind of software field like the front-end developer. This is what I really want to begin. And then after working here for the 2 or 3 years to get the experience, I want to get a master's degree or so. Yes, this is like my draft plan and my future goals for next five years.

Kaung Khant Toe (13:22)

Now, do you have a message for people who may be afraid of immigrants or people who are

unsure of how immigrants are entering the country as of now? (She understood this question as “Do you have any advice for incoming immigrants?”)

Nyein Su Toe (13:34)

Okay. Um, I would say that take the challenge if you think that, everything that you have to give, I mean, like everything that you sacrifice because you definitely have to sacrifice yourself here. You have to adjust from exceedingly small trivial things like the weather and the eating style do the all the biggest things like the education system, what environmental difference and everything. If you think that you can survive also challenges and you are okay to do that and you are willing to do that and you can legally move to here, I mean, do not be afraid the challenges come here and try your best. And then after five years later you will see the bigger results.

Kaung Khant Toe (14:21)

Now that you sent a thoughtful message to people who are keen on becoming immigrants, do you have a message for people who are here but are afraid of immigrants? People who are citizens here who are afraid of immigrants?

Nyein Su Toe (14:40)

I do not understand what you, uh, like your question, please?

Kaung Khant Toe (14:43)

Yeah. Som do you have a message for people who are already here? Citizens that are afraid of immigrants?

Nyein Su Toe (14:51)

Oh...they do not want the new immigrants to come. Yes. It is okay. No problem. Um, to be really honest, United States is built with the immigrants. Even some of them are, you know, while some people um, already have their citizenship here. They are third or fourth generation or fifth or sixth generation, but they are great, great, great generations used to be the immigrant. So, everybody accept that this country is built with the immigrants. So yes, I mean, do not be afraid us as long as we are not doing illegal things. So yeah, of course I know that some people are taking too much of advantages of that, but I think we like people shouldn't follow stereotypes and then label that, oh, all the immigrants are bad, all the immigrants are taking the advantages and they didn't do anything and they are taking the money, you know, just open your eyes and then change the things, and then you will know that gradually that we are also the part of the people who is trying to help the country in terms of like the financially and as a human resources also.

Kaung Khant Toe (16:03)

All right. That is all the questions I have for you today. Thank you so much for your time.

Nyein Su Toe (16:07)

Thank you. Thank you for your time.