

Short Application Essay

Born in Taiwan, I came to the United States when I was five. Armed with only two words (“hello” and “popcorn”), I braved the uncertainties of a complex, new environment. Twelve years later, my vocabulary is considerably larger and I have adapted well to my surroundings. At the same time, I have neither forgotten my native culture nor its language.

My ties with my native Chinese culture remain as strong as ever. I visit my relatives in Taiwan regularly almost every summer and have traveled throughout China. And to everyone’s continuing surprise, I have yet to forget how to speak Mandarin. Nevertheless, twelve years in America has made its impressions upon me as well. I am as “American” as anyone my age. The songs I listen to, the sports I play, and the way I speak are all a reflection of that. In short, I am a combination of both East and West.

Nevertheless, I sometimes wonder whether speaking Chinese at home and visits in the summer are enough to maintain my ties with my native culture. Often, when I see my parents reading old Chinese literature or poetry, I feel that I am only in touch with half of what I am. This sense of loss has led me to seek out my old roots. I turn to the East to rediscover what I have lost.

Yet, I cannot resign myself to merely studying my own culture and language. I want to be able to apply my knowledge as well. To me, pursuing a career in business is a very pragmatic solution to my future welfare. My father is a businessman in Taiwan and I have had numerous opportunities to watch him work. Through him, I have discovered my own interests in the business field. I find the way business operates in the East to be very exciting. At the same time, my father has soothed my sense of morality by showing me that it is possible to be an honest businessman in Asia.

Before I learned about Duke, I had made up my mind to study economics and to ultimately pursue a career in international business. I had come to see this path as the best combination for fulfilling both my aspirations towards knowledge and my pragmatic goals of a future livelihood. China, my planned area of focus, is an expanding market with a dearth of skilled business professionals. But I had misgivings because I wanted a school with a strong focus on the humanities as well. Thus, I find Duke University exciting and perfect for me. It gives me a strong economics curriculum, but still allows me to pursue my interests in the humanities. With economics at Duke University, I will have access to a wide array of studies both within and beyond my chosen major. I will have an edge in the business world by virtue of Duke

After attending Duke (if I am accepted, of course), I will have a clear path before me. My studies at Duke should virtually guarantee me for any graduate business school. And, after my graduate studies, I will be able to realize my dreams. Perhaps, I will be able to serve as a bridge between East and West.