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My dad's passport is full of stamps from all over the world. From South Korea to Mexico, England, and Spain, they all tell the story of his life and my heritage. My dad was born in South Korea but moved to four different countries before settling in the United States. Each move meant that he had to learn a new language and culture, but he never forgot where he came from. His journey taught me that you can belong to many places at once and still be proud of your heritage.

My dad still remembers the 5 years he spent in Korea. He told me that he had lots of playdates with his friends and had such a good time there. But when he was 5 years old, he had to move to Spain because of my grandpa's work. It meant that he had a whole new culture and language to learn when he didn't even know how to say "Hello" in Spanish. Once he was in Spain, my dad went to an Elementary school there. While it wasn't easy at first, he met friends who were generous and thoughtful and helped him adjust. One day, my dad got invited to his friend's house for lunch. While he and his friend were playing, he could smell something from the kitchen. It smelled like seafood, but there was something different about it. It was nothing like he smelled before so it made him curious. When he sat at their table, he saw yellow rice and fruit. His friend taught him that the yellow rice was called Paella and the fruit was Papaya. Since he came from Korea and knew what rice was, he was just curious why it was yellow. He took his first bite, and the rich flavor of the seafood mixed with seasoned rice filled his mouth. He even thought to himself, "I could eat this every day!" Since then, he wasn't anxious to try new foods anymore, and he realized that being open to new things helps you feel at home anywhere.

As he spent more time in Spain, he naturally learned about Spanish holidays such as *Semana Santa* (Holy week), *Dia De Los Reyes Magos* (Three kings day) and *Carnival*. He celebrated by gathering with his family and eating delicious Spanish food. The harsh yet sweet sound of the Spanish language and the savory scents from their dishes slowly started to feel like home. However, that didn't mean that Korea was no longer his home. Even in Spain, grandma would cook Korean dishes every once in a while. Whenever

my dad ate them, it reminded him of his first five years in Korea. They would also celebrate Chuseok and Seollal, eating Tteok and Mandoo on those special days. As he was young, he didn't completely understand what those days were for, but whenever my dad looked up in the sky on Chuseok, there would always be a full moon looking down on him. The same moon that his Korean friends would have seen seven hours ago.

When my dad was older, he moved to England for three years, then back to Spain, and finally to the United States when he was 18 years old. Each move got a little easier because he learned how to adjust. After he met my mom and had me, he wanted to make sure I knew about my Korean heritage too. My dad sent me to Korean school and we would talk about everything in Korean. My mom cooked us Korean dishes like bulgogi or Teokgook. So thankfully, when I first visited Korea myself, it wasn't completely unfamiliar to me. But I still felt nervous because there were many new things I didn't know about. However, I got a chance to go to a Korean elementary school with my brother. And even though my Korean wasn't perfect back then, I could still make good friends, just like my dad did when he was in Spain. It was exciting to live the life that my dad always told me about. It felt like a dream, or like I was in a book or a movie. As I've only visited Korea during the summers, it was always very humid and scorching hot. So whenever I think about Korea, I can still feel the heat along with the scent of their unique spices, and the soft, polite sound of the language.

My father's passport stamps taught me that home is not just a place on a map, but the traditions and memories we carry with us. Like the first bite of Paella he took in Spain, I want to be as open as he was when he was my age, embrace the new world with curiosity instead of fear, knowing I'll always keep the Korean heritage that my dad left inside me. I wonder if I keep going back to Korea every summer, it'll someday feel like home to me just like it does to my dad. Maybe someday, I will stand under the sky on Chuseok with my own children, looking at the moon, the same one that watched over my dad in Spain and in Korea. As I look up, I'll know that I carry a part of my dad in my heart forever.