

## TIB Transcript: The Adoption of Sisterhood

In the wake of the 1990s, Japan became host to a most infectious issue of homelessness. My birth family fell victim to this economic despair. Fortunately, my parents were discerning enough to put me up for adoption before I too incurred this life. For that decision, I am grateful. That decision is what brought me into the beautiful family I have today. My mother is from North Carolina and my dad from New Jersey, both very white. However, the two little girls they decided to adopt were very much Japanese. The good news is that, today, this racial difference doesn't matter. The bad news is, back when my sister and I were much younger, not only did it matter to us, but it seemed to become a target of great concern to almost everyone else around us.

Going to school in a predominately white suburban setting, I remember being in elementary school and being teased by kids for having a flat face and coal black "almond eyes." By the time I got to middle school, kids got a little more creative with their slurs. I became a "Jap," I was yellow, and, God forbid, if I didn't get an A+ on any given assignment I was labeled a "phony Asian" or a "disgrace to my people." It was the insults that targeted my physical appearance and my stereotypes that barely grazed the surface of my pride, they were all things I couldn't help and I honestly didn't care. What cut deep, were the insults that targeted not only me, but my family. Once kids found out that I was adopted, they began to claim that my birth parents wanted to get rid of me because I wasn't good enough, that my adoptive parents aren't my real parents and that, since all Asians are naturally supposed to go to top tier schools, being raised within the walls of a white household was "contaminating my chances of going to Rice University." Rice... very clever.

It was then I decided to seek refuge in the comfort of my mothers words. She told me that my sister was going through the exact same experience in school and that no matter what, we must stick together. That through the power of love and sisterhood, we could both stand against our bullies and show them that words that aim to criticize, victimize, and dehumanize could be turned into outlets of strength, bravery, and beauty. This I believe. I believe that the love I received from my parents and the bond I share with my sister supplied me with the aptitude to overcome. I believe that sisterhood outweighs ignorance. And most importantly, I believe that I have only one thing left to say to those who bullied me so many years ago, thank you.