

Refugees from Burma in the United States Video

Full Script

<i>Time</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Script</i>
00:15-00:54	Saw Bik	As soon as we came over here we met with our case worker and our interpreter. In the first week we were very confused. We came a long way and we had jet lag. The case worker helped us out a lot.
00:57-01:33	Ma Mae Ho Shi	Where we used to live, we didn't have anything – no pavement, no landscaping. We lived in a small hut – no paved roads, no streets. It was very refreshing to us to be here. The only sad thing for us is that we don't have friends here. We feel a bit down about that. Other than that, everything is fine and we're very happy. Also this is a city, so we are motivated to move forward and get a better life.
01:39-01:54	Dah Dah	When I see the bright lights here, my mind opens up, too. Over there, we lived very poorly and uncomfortably and we lived in a small space. I knew I had freedom over here and that makes us happy.
02:08-02:52	Mar Koe	When we first arrived we were quite happy. However, we mixed up night and day. During the daytime, we slept well but at night we couldn't sleep. Almost all the time we couldn't sleep. We didn't have any friends and we didn't know our neighbors. At that time, we didn't have any enjoyment.
02:54-03:07	Rebalka Koe	It was very cold and windy. We didn't have friends, so I wasn't happy. This was in the beginning.
03:08-03:32	Mary Lay	I arrived in America in 2006. At that time, there no snow. A month later the snow started falling. I had to go by foot to the refugee center, in the snow. It was very far.
03:34-03:53	Pain Paing	In our country we never saw snow. So when it started to snow here we really liked it. It started snowing more and more, and

		we became colder and colder. We thought it was so beautiful, so lovely. Then it started snowing more and more. It got colder and colder, so we don't like the snow anymore.
04:02-04:39	Mar Koe	Before we came here, before we got to America, we thought there would be a lot of things to worry about. Who are we going to live with? Once we are there, who is going to help us? I myself am not educated, so when we get there, how are we going to survive? Because I'm not educated, how will I survive? I felt so worried.
04:48-05:20	Kaung Kaung	Those who come here and don't speak English face a lot of difficulties. But, there's no need to worry. There are people in the refugee center who can help. Moreover, those who work in the refugee center can help the new arrivals.
05:23-05:45	Ma Mae Hu Shi	When I first came here, I didn't know any English at all – I could only spell my name. But right now I'm getting better. The first week, they taught English at the refugee center. After I got my job, the volunteers came to our house and taught us English. I'm still learning, they're still teaching us. I'm improving. If I go out, I can ask people where I need to go and I can tell them I'm from Burma.
05:45-05:46	Dah Dah	I understand a little English.
05:47-06:05	Ma Mae Hu Shi	We're improving. We learned some English from the Internet too, but mostly we learned through our work. When we go shopping we try and speak English too, so that improves our language skills.
06:06-06:51	Mar Koe	Now, it's much different from the first week when we arrived. Before, we didn't know where to go, what to do. We had no knowledge whatsoever. However, later on we went to school and met some friends. We became friendly with each other and the children also went to school. So now, our friends and neighbors have told us where to go, what to do, so things are getting a lot better than before.

06:52-07:54	Kuang Kuang	<p>The Karen are mostly very shy. When they are being asked something, they're very shy and they're not outgoing. In the U.S. people are not shy; whatever they want to say, they say it. They speak very openly.</p> <p>In America, if you are shy you won't get what you need and you will miss your chance. People don't know what you need. So, if you need to know something, you have to ask.</p> <p>When you arrive in America, whatever you need, you have to ask the caseworker. If you don't ask, you won't get it. So, if you need something, if you want something, you go to the caseworker and you say, "Hey I need this, or hey I need that."</p> <p>You have to keep this in mind, "I have to do this, I have to ask." If you don't ask, if you're not assertive, how will people know what you need? You have to do it, you have to ask if you want something. This is how you can improve yourself.</p>
07:55-08:59	Mary Lay	<p>For those that want to come to America, you've been taught in the camp before you come.</p> <p>When I was in the camp, I worked at IOM. They taught us about what to expect when we come here: "Try to learn English, try to understand more. When you have free time, don't be idle. Try to learn English."</p> <p>If you really want to come to America, and when you are here, in order not to face too much difficulty, some people have never been taught. When you come here, I encourage you to learn more English, so you won't face any more difficulties.</p>
09:00-09:02	Pain Paing	That's not true.
09:03-09:04	Mary Lay	Why?
09:05-09:10	Pain Paing	What about the old people who need to learn English? How do you teach them English?
09:11-09:17	Mary Lay	In the camp...

		We can't do anything for the old people.
09:18-09:48	Pain Paing	<p>Why can't we do anything for them?</p> <p>Even if they don't learn English, they can do things here.</p> <p>My wife seems to talk as if it's very easy, but for me it's not easy – it's very difficult. You have to do things step by step.</p> <p>She keeps saying "easy, easy, easy," but every individual is different. It's impossible for everything to be easy – people just have to try.</p>
09:57-10:49	Kweh Htoo	<p>The biggest difficulty I had was when a visitor came to the door. I didn't want to see any visitors, so I just hid. It's very difficult for me to speak to them. That was the most difficult thing for me.</p> <p>Another difficulty here is that everybody goes by car. Since we've lived our life in the country, it means we have to adapt our ways of life as people do in the city, especially with transportation. We have difficulty adapting, so we have to work at that.</p> <p>We had a hard time finding friends, but now we're friends with them, they're friends with us and things are getting easier.</p>
10:59-11:35	Saw Bik	<p>I was lucky because I got a job right away. I heard that some people had to wait several months to get a job. I work at Perdue, at a chicken plant. It's a two hour drive from here. I work in the deboning department. Deboning is taking apart the chicken with knives. We separate the top from the bottom. That's how I describe it in English.</p>
11:36-12:05	Kweh Htoo	<p>I arrived here on the second of July. Not until December 16th did I get my first job. This is the job I still have today – it's at a chicken processing plant. I work at deboning the chicken.</p> <p>At first I was very tired at this job. My feet, my legs were all aching. But later on, I got used to it. I've been doing this job for</p>

		over a year now.
12:15-12:34	Rebalka Koe	When I got to America I thought, because I'm not educated, how can I find a job? What could I do? What kind of job could I get? How do I live? I can't speak English. How do I earn a living? Those were the things I worried about most.
12:37-13:41	Mar Koe	To those in the camp, deciding if they should or should not come to the U.S., I say: "If we try, if we are ambitious and also if we want our children to learn, then it's good to come." In the future, our lives will get better because the living standard is high here. However, if we're not willing to try and we have no ambition, and we don't learn to speak their language, then it's not worth it to come here. For these people, it will be like them creating problems for themselves.
13:55-13:58		It costs \$1.40
14:00-14:01	(customer)	That's it?
14:01-14:02		Yes.
14:04-14:13		In this store, we carry stuff from Burma, Thailand and Karen states.
14:14-14:15		Are you off today?
14:16-14:17	(customer)	Yes.
14:19-14:59		After my parents got laid off from their work, we had to do something. My mom decided to start a small business. We started with a very small amount of investment. Now we've extended the business and you see how we are doing right now. My business is doing well, not bad. Most of the customers are from Burma and some of them are Karen refugees. Some Americans come shopping here too.
15:23-16:15	Mya Tha Tun	This machine is a handmade loom. This is a handmade loom. Here, we'll be weaving ladies' dresses and clothes. But first,

		<p>we're making a design for the loom and we're building it.</p> <p>We're building this loom for people who don't have a job, people from Burma who can't find a job. They can work here, making clothes.</p>
16:47-17:12	Rebalka Koe	<p>In the camps, our children could roam everywhere they wanted. However, here they can't do that. They go to school and come home. We have to take them to school and bring them back home.</p>
17:13-17:56	Mary Koe	<p>We wake up at 6 am and the school bus comes to pick us up at 7:15 am. They take us to school and we arrive there at 8 am. We get breakfast at school. At noon we have physical education class. Then at 2:30 pm the bus comes and picks us up. We arrive home at 3 pm and I do some homework.</p>
17:57-18:46	Baskar Reh	<p>I get up at 7 am. I get up later than my sister because my school is close by. I go to school around 8 am and get breakfast there. At around noon, we have lunch. Then at 3 pm I come home. The school is close to my home so we walk.</p>
18:46-19:13	Dah Dah	<p>There's a better education here. There's a better living standard. If you bring your children here, you're going to have a better education system and a better living standard. Over there, there's a lot of restriction to travel. Over here, there's a lot of freedom if you follow the rules.</p>
19:14-20:02	Kuang Kuang	<p>In the U.S., people are very lawful. They respect the law here. They are very clean and tidy here. When you are here, you and your family and also the mother and father have to obey the law. Men, women, mother, father, children must obey the law.</p> <p>The husband cannot abuse his wife. The wife cannot abuse the husband. The father cannot beat the mother; if he does, the police will arrest him. So, you have to be very careful and live according to the law. You have to look out for your family.</p>
20:27-21:43	Awng Hai N-Kum	<p>If you want to go as a refugee from Malaysia to the United States, you have to work hard. There are a lot of changes over</p>

		<p>here. When you're in refugee camps you have to be afraid of the police and other unnecessary threats. We have to be careful all the time.</p> <p>Over here, there's no such thing as that. You have freedom and you can work here as much as you want. You can go to school to improve your English. If you work hard over here, you can be a very successful person. You can make your dream come true.</p>
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