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PROGRAM	What is the Future of China Adoption?	BGT NO. .

[BEGIN TAPE]

TODD: [TAPE STARTS MID-SENTENCE] Focused on the teaching of, promoting the teaching of Chinese language in American schools K through 12. I know that there is a growing interest in that and I think some of the schools and districts are really just struggling to find out how best to do that, so we're trying to provide some resources that really help them put programs together so that students will be well served in that realm. And we do have more information on the website on that if you're interested, at AsiaSociety.org or Education Website, AskAsia.org. So there's plenty of more information there. And finally, I hope you all will use this as a resource just for general cultural activities, from exhibitions to performances and I think we left a postcard on the chairs with some of our family date programs which are now taking place on the first Saturday of every month, which is a wonderful opportunity for families to really explore various different cultures. And finally, the best way I think to keep abreast of everything that's going on here is to become a member. So we've left membership brochures for you and hope that you'll consider that as well.

Before we get do started, just one housekeeping reminder to everyone. If you take a moment right now to turn off your cell phones and pagers, just so we can have a seamless discussion without hearing the latest ringtones that have been released out there, that would be great. And for those who didn't get a chance when you were coming in to collect the bios for our participants and the new regulations that were released, we have those available that we can pass out. Are there any people who didn't receive those? So, well I can go forward and carry those in for you.

So to get to the real serious business here, tonight we're delighted to be able to have this very informed panel I think to really engage us in the discuss. And we're especially pleased to have the opportunity to partner with Families with Children from China to bring this program together. Representing FCC tonight and helping to lead our panel is David Youtz, who's the President of Families

with Children from China, the Greater New York Chapter. And he's held that office as president of that group since February 2000. I won't go into any of the full details because I think you have his bio in front of you, but in the interest of full disclosure, I should say that David is a personal friend, a longstanding friend of the Asia Society, in fact, a former colleague here. But in his capacity, as you can see from his bio, he's definitely well qualified to be leading us through today's discussion. And I think most importantly of all of those details on the list is he's also, he and his wife Mary are the proud parents of in fact, four parents, adopted from Guangxi Province, so he can definitely add a personal dimension to the discussion tonight too. So without further ado, please join me in welcoming David, who will introduce the rest of our family.
[APPLAUSE]

[OFF-CAMERA COMMENTS]

DAVID YOUTZ: Thank you very much Todd, it's a pleasure to be here. And good evening everyone and welcome. I want to thank the Asia Society for co-hosting with Families with Children from China, and I particularly appreciate the Asia Society's recognition that the future of China adoption is an important topic, not only for many of us who are adopting parents, but really for many of us who follow US-China issues and who are following all of these various developments in the ways that China is changing. Many people didn't really think of this as an important and changing topic, I think until very recently. But we're going to go through some of the reasons our issue has hit the recent news cycle. I'm very pleased that we've been able to assemble a very talented and highly knowledgeable panel to speak with you this evening. And I think if any group can shed light on the past, present, and future of China adoption, we have them here at the front of the room. I'll be introducing our distinguished panelists as we go.

Let me first just describe how we're going to structure the evening. Each of us on the panel will spend about five to seven minutes making a brief opening statement, and I've asked each of the panelist present one discrete part of our large topic. Following that, we will have a little discussion amongst the panelists. I would guess that a number of issues and ideas will be raised. We may have a little bit of disagreement or questions for each other. And then we want to leave plenty of time for questions from you, the audience. I believe we have until about 8 o'clock, so we'll cram in as much information as we can. It is very interesting and very complex topic, and so I'm looking forward to the conversation.

Actually Families with Children from China has had in mind for quite a long time to organize a panel or a public program or a conference on these sets of issues around American families adopting children from China. The rapid growth of this community and the many ways in which this is a unique social experiment make this I think a really fascinating and important topic. I've argued in the past that China

adoption in many ways is one of the most successful aspects of US-China relations in the last decade for so. After all, it seems to work for everyone. Children who need homes find homes. Parents who want children find children. Thousands of American families who have had no particular link to China in the past find themselves connected for life to China and Chinese culture. And finally, the orphanage system in China has benefited tremendously and visibly from the increased funding and the international visibility of international adoption. Our children themselves are even more remarkable, raised as Americans in American homes, but encouraged to take pride in their Chinese heritage and ethnicity. They frequently study Chinese language, dance, and art, and they're in their way, pioneering a new version of what it means to be a Chinese American. And at the same time, they're pioneering a new version on what it means to be an adopted person in the United States. These families with adopted children are spread out essentially across every state, at every income level, and with every form and makeup of family that we have in the United States. Moreover, these transracial families are very visible, and they've been warmly welcomed in American society at a time when attitudes toward adoption have been changing, when I like to think adoption is becoming better understood everyday, and more common and more normal. There are now something like between fifty-five thousand and sixty thousand children in American families who've been adopted from China, so this is no small community. In the late 1990s, China overtook Russia, Korea, the Ukraine, Guatemala, and a number of other countries to become the largest source of international adoptions. At first the number was running four thousand to five thousand children per year. In 2005, it rose to nearly eight thousand before falling this past year to about 6,500. These have been very successful stories and perhaps for that reason, they don't always make the news. This has been a phenomenon or movement that has slowly and gradually expanded across the country, but in some ways it hasn't really had a lot of public scrutiny.

As I mentioned, Families with Children from China had thought about having a big conference to try to look at the whole array of issues, but we haven't quite gotten around to scheduling it, when suddenly things changed and big news arrived in December. The announcement in December of changes in adoption regulations provided us with a pretty urgent reason to take a look at the future of China adoption. Suddenly we realized that adoption from China as we know it is going to change. The numbers of adoptions, apparently will decline. The highly diverse complexion of our adopting community is clearly going to change. Families in the midst of the adoption process are going to feel even more stress than an adoptive family usually does. Many of us who adopted before might now find ourselves ruled out of consideration. But the needs of parents really pale in comparison to the needs of children. In adoption after all, we always try to come back to what's most important for the child. Are all of the infants in the orphanages going to find homes if there are fewer foreign parents in line to adopt? Will domestic adoption in China increase enough to fill that gap? Are there actually fewer adoptable children available now, as the Chinese authorities

assert, and why would that be? Finally, what is China's motivation? Since China has been widely recognized as having one of the most attractive, fair, and transparent adoption processes in the world – and that's one of the reasons it's been so popular – why are they changing it now?

There's actually another important reason that we felt now is the time for a public program. Despite extensive news coverage over the past seven or eight weeks, there has been a great deal of confusion over what these restrictions actually are and what they mean. The media, in many cases, has not exactly helped to clarify the situation. Many news stories seemed more like sound bytes, playing up certain restrictions which caught people's eye. For example, obesity, age, even things like traffic tickets that might prevent one from adopting. Without going into any of the details or reasoning behind the changes, in many of these accounts, China comes off sounding highly arbitrary, even discriminatory or even bizarre. The very quiet way that China issued these new changes, there is no definitive list posted on the web center for the China Center of Adoption Affairs, for example. This also added to the confusion in the adoption community. However, when you read through the actual regulations, and we've made those available to you in your handout tonight, it's clear that the Chinese authorities have set out the rules in a pretty methodical way based on their view of the best interest of the child. So I think this simply hasn't received a kind of balanced or deep enough media attention to help most people in the American public understand what's changing and why.

This evening our plan is to explore this array of questions and issues a little more deeply, and many of these seem immediately to get to the toughest questions about adoption. Who should be permitted to adopt a child and whose rights are paramount? What will best serve the needs of children without families in a country like China that is rapidly developing, but still has a pretty high level of poverty? Is the rate of abandonment or maybe better said, relinquishments, is that rate declining in China? In other words, are there simply fewer adoptable children available at a time when more foreigners are looking to adopt than ever before? To what extent is this related to nationalism and embarrassment? And the sense that an increasingly modern nation should be able to care for its own children? So I think I've laid out about seventy-five really good questions. I'm going to put those out as a challenge to all of our panelists to try to bring out as much light as we can, and we're also looking for your contribution and your good questions.

As I mentioned, we're going to start with each panelist giving us five to six minutes on a particular aspect of these topics that I have assigned. And I've given them an order, so we're going to begin with my colleague Ann Hassan. Ann is with Spence-Chapin and she is the program coordinator at Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children here in Manhattan. You have her bio so I won't go through it extensively. Pam is going to speak to the impact on adopting parent, I'm sorry Ann is going to talk

about those specific regulations. She was actually at the meeting at CCAA in December when these were first released, and so I was delighted she was able to join us to give us the sense of that meeting and what those regulations actually are. Thank you Ann.

ANN HASSAN: Thank you. Can you hear me? No? Yes? Okay. I am going to have a PowerPoint presentation just outlining some of the specifics of the rules, which I now understand you also have in your possession. As David stated, I was present at the meeting where some of this was announced, and I was there really because the CCAA had asked me to come and speak about our home-study preparation process for adoptive parents, and I was focused on that. And then by virtue of being at the meeting, was able to get a first hand sense of some of the changes that were coming down the pipe that I knew was going to create a lot of interest and question. So I think that like David said, this has gotten quite a lot of attention and with that, some confusion and misinterpretation of some things. And I think that looking at some points at the specific language that's used in the regulations will help us to sort out a little bit of what the situation we're dealing with now. I'm going to try not to turn around too much but maybe just to make sure that I'm referencing the right slide. I'm just going to go through the major areas of where these new guidelines have been focused, and in some cases you'll see some quotation marks which is indicating that the language is coming from the new regulations. And there we go.

So as my previous slide stated, and I'm sure everybody knows, these new guidelines will go effect on May first of this year which means that any family who is just in the early stages of considering an adoption from China really would need to fall under the new guidelines. And I know one of my colleagues is going to talk about the impact it's had on that group of families who might have just been early in the process or just beginning to start. And one of the first rules that is very clear is that adoptive applicants must be a heterosexual couple and married two or more years at the time of application. So this is one area that's gotten a lot of attention in that it does completely eliminate the possibility of a single applicant adopting from China. Historically, in China it's been a wonderful opportunity for single applicants earlier on in our program. Up to maybe a third of our prospective applicants for China were in fact single applicants, but this has really been decreasing for many years and was quite a small number for agencies over the last couple of years, and now you see it's really closing the door. The other thing that's new here is that previous to these guidelines, there was not a length of marriage requirement. Now they've set it at two years and that is if it is a first marriage for both spouses. If there is a previous divorce for either spouse, and on more than two of those per person allowed, then they want a couple to have been married for five years at the time that they're making an application to China.

Second area would be around the age of prospective applicants, and for a non-special needs adoption, both parents must fall between the ages of thirty and fifty. Previously, the range stretched to fifty-five and you see that for special needs adoption, there still is that flexibility built in. But the other piece that's also significant is that both members of a couple must be in that range. In the past if one member was under fifty-five, lets say, and the other was older, there was some flexibility there, and that is no longer going to be the case. Both applicants must be "fully healthy," and this is language that came right from the guidelines that you have and it's obviously something that's up for interpretation and question about what that truly means. But the wording is "fully healthy physically and mentally," and it's clear that the following conditions that are not acceptable, and those include: AIDS, mental handicap – again, wording from the CCAA's regulations – and infectious disease at an infectious stage, blindness, that would be in both eyes or blindness in one eye without a prosthesis, and deafness. Also, unless a parent is adopting a child with an identical disability, so for instance if an adoptive couple is deaf, they would be permitted to adopt a child who also is deaf. Dysfunction of limbs caused by impairment, incompleteness, numbness, or deformation, severe facial deformation. This one I had to take right from the text. And this is one that I think has been challenging for agencies and trying to sort out a little bit. I think that the general consensus is that something like multiple sclerosis would fall in this category and other issues that really impacted on mobility of the body. And then severe diseases which require long term treatment and affect life expectancy. And I think that life expectancy is really sort of a key piece of that and they noted, as examples, malignant tumor, lupus, epilepsy, also they specifically stated there. So that's another area that we have to look at very carefully. They would like to see ten or more years after a major organ transplant, so that's really straight forward, they really laid it out. And then getting into the issue of mental health, they do specifically cite schizophrenia as an issue that would not be acceptable, and then state that they want to see two or more years after a mental health diagnosis and medication for something like depression, anxiety, and that really is pretty clearly stated.

And then lastly the, like David said, much talked about issue of weight which has gotten a lot of attention. Here they're looking at the body mass index which must be no greater than forty, which is grossly potentially morbidly obese. You've seen probably everybody, some various clips in news bytes where they're talking about how you have to be skinny to adopt from China. It's something that I think has gotten a lot of attention and I think it is important here, as David said, to really look back at what the rules actually are. And from the above in terms of medical issues, we are interpreting that minor, stable conditions that don't impact on somebody's good health or life expectancy will continue to be acceptable, as well as isolated issues, surgeries, things that are in the past and are over, we're still feeling are going to be accepted.

Applicants must also be financially stable and so that means by definition from the CCAA, that one spouse – at least one spouse – must have stable employment, and that they would like to see an annual income of ten thousand dollars per family member, including the child who's going to be adopted. So a couple who is coming to adopt a first child and doesn't have any children at home would need to make a minimum of thirty thousand dollars per year, and relief funds including welfare and unemployment would not be counted in that number. And finally, net assets of eighty thousand dollars or more for the family. Most applicants must have graduated from high school or received vocational skills training equivalent to that. Again this wasn't an area that we had specific direction from CCAA on in the past, and they go on to say that no more than five children under the age of eighteen may be in the family, although some exemptions for special needs adoptions may be possible. And finally, that the youngest child in the home must be a year or older if a family is to come back to adopt another child.

Then we get into the area of arrest history, and this is another one that's gotten a lot of attention and there I think has been some mixed understanding, so it's helpful to look at the guidelines that agencies receive from the CCAA. And I took the overarching quote that they gave us, which is that "Applicants should behave honorably, with good moral characters, and abide by regulations and laws." But they go on to say that "situations where one spouse has a history" – and we're talking about ten or more years ago at the time of adoption, so a fairly distant history – "of fewer than three criminal records of slight severity will be considered on a case-by-case basis." So again there certainly is some area for interpretation but I think that the general understanding and consensus at this point is that minor things that may be considered youthful indiscretions, including perhaps a DUI or a petty sort of shoplifting issue that was in someone's distant past would not necessarily preclude them from being able to adopt from children. They do though, say that the following issues would not be permissible, and those include domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse or abandonment. We're interpreting that to mean being the perpetrator of one of those things. Use of narcotic drugs and alcohol use where the individual has not stopped drinking for a period of ten years. So again if it's in the distant past, there may be some room to look at whether that might be possible.

And then at the end I've provided some of the additional areas that the CCAA highlighted as important. These are things that certainly are less attention-grabbing than some of the other things that we're hearing a lot about amidst all the changes. But I think that certainly to those of us who represent adoption agencies and parents, we agree that they're really important things, and that is that prospective parents should have a healthy and realistic perspective on adoption, and be able to provide a warm family for their adoptive child and meet his or her needs. Further, they should be well prepared for potential risks associated with inter-country adoption and must state their willingness to participate in post-adoption follow-up

which is something that's very important to agencies and the CCAA as well. And I think it might just be helpful to bring this back into the context of what was presented to us as the big picture from the CCAA. In terms of being present at the meeting and what I learned by virtue of being there, it really was certainly going down the list very much like this with not a lot of additional information given. There were a lot of questions about areas that seemed a little bit unclear, and there wasn't a lot of clarification given at that time. We were told that things would be coming in writing and that agencies would all be notified at the same time and in the same way, and that is indeed what happened. But I would say that certainly from the CCAA, this was all presented in the context of their wanting to do what they consider to be in the best interest of the children that were in their care at that time. And so that certainly is the way that this is presented and an area that of course, there has been quite a lot of debate about, and I think we're going to hear a lot about it in all sorts of different ways tonight, so. Thank you.

DAVID YOUTZ: Thank you very much. And we'll have a chance to come back and ask questions specifically on this issue. I'll give you an opportunity to ask questions to specific panelists. But I think for now we'll go on and hear from all of our panelists at once. So I'm going to turn next to Pam Thomas. Pam is well known to many adoptive families. She served as the China adoption program director for Brightside for Families and Children from 1995 to 2006, and currently she is the executive director of the New York based Homeland Adoption Services. She's also a co-founder of Homeland Children's Foundation, a not-for-profit organization which provides educational and other orphanage aid in China, and she is herself a parent to a twelve year old adopted daughter. Pam.

PAMELA THOMAS: Thank you and it's really nice to have the perspective from someone who was there. It's really challenging to have new families call and go over the list with them. The impact with which these guidelines have hit our community of prospective adoptive parents has been profound. When we looked at our last year's applicants list carefully, we realized that forty percent of our applicants last year would not qualify under the new guidelines, and that was a real eye opener to us. Families everywhere have been expressing tremendous disappointment and sadness, overwhelming sadness at not being able to either begin or complete their families by adopting children from China. Families are struggling to understand how the needs of the children have so rapidly and dramatically diminished. Applications that will be received at the CCAA prior to May first of this year will be grandfathered in under the old rules. And so a mad rush has begun among a number of parents to try to get their dociers in before that deadline. In twelve years, I can't remember a more stressful situation in adoption and everyone is working double time to try to help those families who won't qualify under the new regulations.

For those of you who are not familiar with the process that

adoptive parents must go through in order to apply for an adoption from China, I'd like to give you a little overview. Each family has to complete an approved home study in their state of residence which involves sharing detailed information about their background, their health, their resources, and attitudes towards parenting with a licensed social worker, including a visit in their home. They must undergo criminal and child abuse clearance which includes submitting to fingerprinting multiple times. They have to participate in many hours of adoption preparation training where they'll gather information about the issues common in international adoption such as racial identity, abandonment, and attachment. Then adoptive families here in the United States must become approved to apply in China for a US visa for their newly adopted child. This US-CIS process involves a formal application. It involves submission of vital record copies, a completed approved home study and fees. They must then again go through a FBI fingerprint clearance and wait for the results. Then families must also gather a group of documents that the China Center of Adoption Affairs wants to see. Things you would expect that a foreign entity would want to know about your family. They include a letter of application, medical and financial information, letters of occupation and income, police good conduct reports, home study, passport pages, photos and more depending on their individual circumstances. And then these documents have to be authenticated which means that each must be notarized, certified, and sealed by the State Department of the state in which the document originated and by the Chinese Consulate in the United States that serves that state.

So you can see the vigor and dedication that parents have to bring to this task in order to adopt at all, let alone meet the deadline of May first and you can imagine the stress level that parents are now feeling who are in this situation. This current process has to be executed correctly at each step along the way which is creating an atmosphere of tremendous stress, both for the families and for the adoption workers. Any hitch or hold up along the way may eliminate someone's chances to become a parent. Any change in bureaucratic procedures has the potential to eliminate them from the process, such as something that we know about, the recently enacted regulation in New York State requiring all adoptive parents now to undergo an additional FBI clearance. And this went into effect on January 11th, 2007 and we were notified on January 16th that the process was in place. And thanks, really in part to a very organized response from agency reps and David Youtz from FCC, we were able to get the turn around time on this FBI clearance down from ten weeks, which would have eliminated everyone in the process, down to one week or, or less now. It's happening in three to four days, so that's good. Our state officials were great, they got right on board and helped our families. And also our local US CIS officer, Manuel Hernandez, has been a one man tour de force in helping our families to accommodate their needs in expediting their clearances, so.

DAVID YOUTZ: I also give Pam a lot of credit for chasing that down.

PAMELA THOMAS: Thank you David, I'm a little bit of a pitbull. Anyway Mr. Hernandez, just so you know, is willing to fax clearances to your agencies to shave a little time off the process, which we really appreciate. We have to now turn away many applicants on a daily basis and it's really breaking our hearts. Some of these are parents who have already adopted and qualified and had hoped to build their families in China and now will not be able to. You know some have had, may have had a divorce some time in the past and now have remarried in their forties and they can't five years to begin a family, so there is a tremendous amount of sadness. Singles who made up almost a third of adoptions from China prior to the implementation of the quota are now not accepted at all. So China is of course still open for adoption, and I think that's really important to remember and to note. For those who qualify, China presents an opportunity to adopt a child in a remarkably predictable – except for the waiting time – and organized fashion. Accountability is built into the system of having a central authority, the CCAA in charge. And while no background information is available about our children, the medical and social histories that are prepared by the orphanages on behalf of each child is detailed and it's increasingly accurate. Orphanage life in China, at least in those orphanages that have participated in international adoption programs, has improved dramatically over the last twelve years or so. And correspondingly, the condition of the children adopted from those orphanages has also improved dramatically. The relatively new waiting child program which is still opened to parents who are over fifty-five years of age has allowed children with preidentified medical conditions to find families and the care that they so need and they deserve. So I do hope that everyone of you out there rushing to make that deadline will make it. And I also hope that if you're considering an adoption from China, that you will continue toward that goal. As for the rest of us, because I no longer qualify either, there are many ways that we can continue to help the children in China's orphanages, through FCC's charitable initiatives and other organizations and foundations. I, I and many still believe that there's a tremendous need for help.

DAVID YOUTZ: Thanks very much Pam. I'm going to turn now to Dr. Amanda Baden. Dr. Baden is an assistant professor at the counseling program at Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey. Dr. Baden has both personal and professional experience with adoption. She was herself adopted from Hong Kong and raised in a transracially adopted family here in the United States. She is a licensed psychologist with a clinical practice in Manhattan and specialization in transracial adoption. And in addition to all of that, she is also a waiting parent. I've asked Amanda to speak on still another angle of our topic tonight, in particular that set of issues around what is in the best interest of the child and how do we understand that and identify that. Thanks, Amanda.

AMANDA BADEN: Can you hear me? Thanks, David. The question of the best interest of the child, it's been a question that we've been asking in

the field of counseling psychology, social work for many, many years when it comes to adoption. I also have to excuse my, I have a really bad cold so I may cough in the middle. When I think about what we're talking about with these new regulations, in some ways I feel like we're going through the stages of grief. As a psychologist, I've worked with many people who have to grieve over loss and adoption is really associated with loss and my experiences having been adopted from Hong Kong in 1969 and growing up in a community where there were virtually no other Chinese adoptees, when China opened its doors to international adoption, I was shocked. I was surprised that there was going to finally be a community of Chinese adoptees. So if we put our perspective in looking back into our past, the history of Chinese adoption is a pretty short one, really. And so I always wondered in my experience, having seen how changes happen very rapidly within this community of international adoption, how long this could go on. I wondered when it would stop. We were excited by this idea that people could extend their parenting years, that they could think about being parents for longer periods of time, later into life after they've tried a lot of different other ways of forming families, perhaps, or decided that this was the time that was right for them. But I never expected as a child/young adult, that this would happen. And when I heard in the early 90s that China was opening its doors, I was shocked.

What it seems to have happened to me is that families have expressed this dismay over being excluded, and certainly anger over the decision to change the regulations. Other families have expressed understanding but simultaneously have felt concerned about children waiting for families, children who've already been adopted from China by what might be considered now unacceptable adoptive parents. Also their own plans to adopt more children have also been changed. So I wondered when the discussion was happening about what was going to happen and change in China, whether it would actually close its doors to international adoption, whether like many adult transracial adoptees have sometimes suggested it would they suggest that many more adoptive parents would need to be Asian as well? These are other regulations that I had wondered if those would be put into place. Now that the restrictions have been put into place and I'm in the position of being a waiting parent, I certainly empathize with those who are reflecting on their status when they adopted. In essence, many families are asking if these criteria when I or when we sought to adopt, we would not have been able to do so. I or we, as the case may be, would have been rejected. So these grief and loss issues that we already contend with makes our emotions run high. How many of the families in the FCC community felt they rejected or deemed as not being good parent material when they sought to form families through birth or through IVF or through adoption domestically? So, so much of that has already happened for many of our families that this just brings back a lot of those memories. And when families did choose to adopt from China, they finally found a community of others who were in similar circumstances, with similar demographics. And they'd finally become comfortable and formed identities as transracial and international families. But then the proverbial

rug was ripped out from under them. So these rules have really shocked us. So we have to go through that anger and sometimes that denial that comes with grief, and certainly the sadness is I think starting to hit a lot of people around us.

The end of the era has come in that way but perhaps we may be able to question some of these changes, question in my particular opinion, question the changes around issues such as mental health regulations. Certainly as a psychologist and someone who works with a lot of adoptive families, I think it's actually really beneficial for families to be seeking counseling and help in raising their children and dealing with issues of depression and dealing with issues of anxiety. So when we have these regulations that suggest the parents shouldn't be addressing those things or may have to hide those things, that's when of course I become concerned. When I logged into, when my husband and I logged into CCAA and we were told that the wait might be as long as fifteen months for a referral, I did my research and was trying to find out why were these estimated periods of wait increasing so much. What I found out was, there were different reasons being given by the CCAA from fewer infant abandonment, improved economics for rural families, increased interest in domestic adoptions. I also heard speculation ranging from the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the fear that the international adoption program would change altogether. So when I shared this information with family and friends, people were surprised as well. They said, well you seem like a perfect match for this, right? You're an adopted person, you're Chinese and you do all this work with adoption. Why wouldn't they be wanting you to come so quickly to adopt these children? Well of course I couldn't help but agree with them, [LAUGHTER], but I also said from knowing from my experiences as a Chinese adult adoptee who's also – I'm also [UNCLEAR] with my birth family – how can I ever hope to prefer that more children would be abandoned so that I can get my child sooner? How can I ever hope that some of these children wouldn't be raised in their birth country with people of their own ethnic background? Might it not be better for them in some ways, and in many ways?

One of the other things I wanted to address was some of the anger that I saw expressed on the listserv for FCC and in other places, blogs, etcetera, where people have talked about the changes in the regulations. I think this anger has created another challenge for FCC families, and it comes in a few different formats. First of all I understand that families feel discriminated against, judged, devalued, or concerned that the children are still in orphanages. The explanations that some parents have offered for the changes in regulations have ranged from some understanding and acceptance to outrage and quite negative characterizations of the Chinese government and culture. Clearly the anger and recriminations that China can negatively impact the children, over whom this controversy is waged. The negativity that can become attached to China, and its citizens, and its government can become internalized for the children so that they may feel discomfort and ambivalence in connecting to Chinese people and being Chinese. As I know that Hollee is going to be

talking about the similarities between what happened in South Korea and their international adoption program and what's happening in China now, I also have seen those patterns, we've talked about those patterns. In many ways if the regulations hadn't changed, might they have developed a quota or some other change that would have resulted in different families being able to be approved for adoption from China? That alternate path also could have led to some competition among potential adoptive families, as well as the potential to use other criteria like personal finances or connections that could lead to inequitable placement decisions.

In fact when we look at domestic transracial adoptions, especially those of African American children, it's easy to see that policies, norms, and acceptable practice around adoption are likely to go through many changes. So what about the best interest of the children? As David mentioned, one clear problem is the lack of knowledge regarding the numbers of orphaned children available for adoption, as well as the health status of those children. Much skepticism has been offered to suggest that the CCAA might be exaggerating or may be misreporting the information on the status infant abandonment and its frequency. My question has turned to why so much skepticism, I guess. I think that there is in some ways, we're talking about a major culture clash here in terms of what we value and how we see the best interest of children from, we can see the differences in the simple things between a Chinese American family and a Caucasian American family. How many sets of clothes do you see your typical Chinese American child wearing when they're walking around versus a Caucasian American child? They're very different in the way that they choose to raise children with some of the values and beliefs that they have, and so in sort of judging those differences, we may then be rejecting learning from the differences as well.

Lastly I'm going to talk briefly about some of the children that I work with. I do some groups with children and in one of my recent sessions with the children, I was working with a group of eight year old Chinese adopted girls. And as we were working on a different task, they brought up what they had been hearing around the house and around the schoolyard, etcetera. And those are always interesting conversations. And I also know everyone's politics, the parents' politics, all those things. So one of the girls said well you know I heard that people can't adopt babies from China anymore. They're not allowed. And so another girl echoed that statement and said she said that her moms, and she has two moms wouldn't have been able to adopt her if they had had those rules when she was adopted. She went on to explain to the other girls that you can't adopt from China now if you're older, too chubby, or single. These were her words. The girls reacted to that news and expressed disapproval. They didn't want the rules to change. They wanted their parents to be just as viable as any other parents. So they were struggling with this knowledge that people from their birth country had changed the rules to ones that could make them question the validity of their adoptive families and the family

structure. In essence they're wondering, if China doesn't think it's okay for single moms to raise someone like me, then what does that mean about my family? Might they think there's something wrong with us? So I think it's really important when you're thinking about how to talk about these rules with, and talk about the changes with your children, to be mindful of the way we characterize Chinese culture, characterize their rules. In essence, we're characterizing their heritage, their history, and so if you're feeling ambivalence or anger and frustration, certainly that's part of that stage of grief, and I think it's helpful to recognize it as such. Thanks.

DAVID YOUTZ: Thanks very much Amanda. Our next panelist is going to speak on I think a related set of questions, Hollee McGinnis is a well known educator and speaker in the adoption community. In 1996, she founded an organization called Also Known As, a non-profit adult intercountry adoptee organization which provides post-adoption services to adult adoptees and to adoptive families. She has a Masters degree in Social Work from Columbia University and she currently is the policy and operations director at the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute here in New York. In addition, McGinnis, also known as Lee Hwa Yeong, was born in South Korea and was adopted by her family at the age of three. So, Hollee, thank you.

HOLLEE MCGINNIS: Thanks. Hi everyone. I have a PowerPoint also, [CHUCKLES], whenever it comes on, it'll come on. Okay, there you go. I'm trying to give a little bit of historical context for these changes in China by talking a little bit about adoptions from Korea which is really the longest history of international adoptions. And pretty much, international adoption as we know it today really started after the Korean War and with changes and legislation that happened afterwards. Essentially, after the Korean War in 1953, there were over a million South Korean nationals who emigrated overseas, of which fifteen percent of them were children who were adopted. According to the official statistics from the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, between 1953 and 2004, a total of a hundred and fifty-six thousand South Korean children were sent to predominately Western nations for adoption. And of those, roughly about a hundred and forty thousand of them were adopted into American homes and families. Therefore, one out of every ten Korean Americans in the US is an adopted person, and about forty-two thousand of them, Korean adoptees, were adopted into European families, half of whom were placed in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. So this is truly and international community, as is the Chinese adoptee community.

Although the first international adoptions occurred – I'm going to do a little bit of a brief review on international adoption and then talk about policy, US and Korea, and then talk a little bit about comparisons of Korea and China as well. The first international adoptions occurred in response to the aftermath of the Second World War and involved mostly children from ravished European nations, some

children from Japan, as well as children who had been orphaned by the Civil War in Greece. But like I said, the adoptions from South Korea were really the ones that initiated the large scale practice of international adoption we know today. [OFF-CAMERA COMMENTS] Thus between 1971 and 2005, Americans have adopted over a quarter million children from overseas. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, many mixed-race children were adopted by American families in the early 1970s. Latin America emerged as a significant relinquishing region for international adoptions by the mid-1970s, as a result of economic crisis, poverty, and social upheaval. The fall of the Iron Curtain and massive media attention the plight of children in such former Soviet states as Romania in the late 1980s resulted in the opening up of adoptions from central and eastern Europe. And of course most recently, an estimated 55 to 60 thousand children have been adopted from mainland China since the early 1990s as the result of population policies and gender preferences.

Today it's estimated that about thirty to forty children from over fifty countries are sent overseas for adoption globally. America receives the most children, but we also send approximately five hundred to eight hundred children overseas, also for adoption, mostly to Western nations. Although children from South Korea dominated international adoptions for over thirty years, thirty of the fifty years of international adoption, since 1995, China and Russia have surpassed South Korea in the total number of children available. And today, the top four sending countries to the US for adoption are China, Russia, Guatemala, and South Korea, and just this past year, Ethiopia reached into the top five.

Although the media tends to oversimplify the determinants of international adoption to maybe just the demand for children, such an analysis really oversimplifies the complexity of this geopolitical nature of international adoption. Some scholars have distinguished two waves in the development of international adoption. Although both waves were really motivated by humanitarian concerns, the first wave which lasted roughly until the mid-1970s has been described or characterized as the need to find families for children. And the second wave, after the 1970s is being shaped more by falling fertility rates and scarcity of infants for domestic adoption in the US and other western nations by the demand for children. So for certain countries, some supply-push factors that have contributed to the availability of children have included war, political upheavals, poverty, social and economic collapse, lack of contraception and sex education, stigma toward illegitimate births or gender discrimination, disruption of the extended family, lack of social welfare systems to support families, resulting in few alternatives besides the abandonment of a child. In wealthier nations such as the US demand-pull factors that have contributed to growing interest in overseas adoption include declining fertility rates, fewer infants available for adoption, and many other things that I have listed up there.

So this latter development of international adoptions of which adoptions from China have really evolved, have been characterized by this language of economics which really has transformed a practice that really was intended to be a humanitarian measure to provide one of several child welfare options for children in need of care to, in certain cases, a lucrative commercial business. But it's also important to really realize that this second half of international adoption has also really been dominated by both internationally recognized conventions as well as laws with both sending and receiving countries, so it has had a huge impact. Thus it's really vital for us to understand these politics and the policies around international adoption and the fact that public perception and media can influence these policies. In the US, for example, we had no legal provision for international adoptions until after the Korean War. They were all temporary immigration visas for a set number of kids, and this is hard to read but I listed some of the different legislation. So immediately after the Korean War, there was the Refugee Act of 1953 which allowed four thousand special non-quota visas for orphans to come to the US and it wasn't until 1957 that legislation that was passed, called the Orphan Eligibility Clause which became permanent part of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1961 which actually legally established international adoption as a viable option. I think it's interesting to note that the Orphan Eligibility Clause was passed before the Immigration and Nationality Act actually changed their quotas. That happened in 1965, so before that there was set quotas in terms of who could immigrate from certain countries.

The South Korean government also formerly set up overseas adoption program after the Korean War in 1954 with a presidential order, but it legally did not establish a permanent framework until 1961. Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, South Korea was ruled by military dictatorships, and international adoption was supported as a means of addressing some important problems in their country, including overpopulation. Thus international adoption also became part of Korea's national family planning and immigration policy. These national family measures that Korea had put in place included also a one child policy, sex education, contraception, legalized abortion, and economic incentives to reduce family size as well as overseas adoption. The government also has part of a reaction to the overpopulation, encouraged emigration which again international adoption fit in. So those decades between the 1970s and the 1980s saw the largest number of Korean children being sent overseas for adoption, which peaked around 6500 in 1976, with an all-time high of around 8800 in 1985, exactly three years before the 1988 Olympics. And I think there's some interesting parallels just in terms of timing that last year was the highest number of adoptions from China which is exactly three years before the Beijing Olympics. By the end of the 1960s, the majority of children that were being sent overseas for adoption from Korea were no longer mixed race orphans. Most of the children that were being relinquished for international adoption had been born to either young or married middle class mothers, and like many of the children today in China, were left anonymously at police stations or orphanages, to be found, of course.

So therefore a lot of the adoptees who are in their thirties and forties share in terms of the history that they would never be able to get information and of course, and I won't have time to talk about it, that's changed.

Over that same period of the 70s and the 80s in which the largest number of children were being sent overseas, twice Korea tried to stop international adoption practice. The first time was in 1976 because North Korea was making many public accusations of Korea's exporting of babies for profit. Korea implemented a five year plan for adoption and foster care which was aimed at reducing international adoptions, and increasing domestic adoptions, but eventually phasing it out by 1981. However, by the early 1980s, this policy was totally abandoned because the government completely failed to significantly increase the number of domestic adoptions. So in 1981, the government reversed its policy, they decided to expand international adoption and they incorporated it as part of an Emigration and Goodwill Ambassador policy with Western allies. However, reports in the early 1980s of trafficking, corruption in agencies, hastily sending children who were not available for adoption overseas, in addition to the massive international criticism by Western media of South Korea's adoption policies during the 1988 Olympics, in 1989 Korea again enacted a policy that would terminate international adoptions by 1996, except for mixed race children and disabled children. In 1994, with continuing low rates of domestic adoption, this policy would again be abandoned. In 1996, the South Korean government revised its adoption law and the new law now calls for an annual decrease in international adoptions by three to five percent with an eventual phasing out by 2015. Some small revisions have occurred and now there's pretty much a set quota around 2000 children annually being available for international adoption from Korea.

And I think that's one of the striking things that I realize is that China's response, rather than setting a quota on the kids that can go out, they're trying to set a quota on the parents that can come in, which I think is a very interesting twist because that's not how Korea had responded. South Korea continues now to try to continue domestic adoptions. In light of Korea's falling fertility rate, their planning was so good, now the rate is like 1.5 to every child. Now Korea's very panicked that they're not going to have anybody in 2015. So they've designed May 11th as National Adoption Day to again, try to promote domestic adoption and also have been considering financial incentives for parents who adopt domestically. However, despite all these efforts, there's still about ten thousand children that were available for adoption in 2005 and only 1400 of them were adopted domestically, and two thousand were adopted overseas. And it's very clear that in Korea, about ten thousand continue to be abandoned by their parents annually and there are about nineteen thousand children who are in orphanages still. So it's not helping the problem.

I think following the decades after the Korean War,

international adoption really expanded because of a number of different factors, both socioeconomic and political. And I think if you hear this and you put China, I think you can hear a lot of the similarities. At that time Korea faced, again problems of massive poverty, overpopulation, child abandonment. As it began, a major transformation from being an agrarian society into a modern industrial nation, and that certainly is what China has been doing in the past twenty years. In Korea, there was massive internal migration to cities, thus urbanization and the economic instability began to really erode away traditional family structures and supports. Industrialization also led to the abandonment of children borne to young, unmarried women who were recruited to work in factories, and thousands of other children were abandoned due to urban poverty, family breakup, neglect, and prostitution. In addition, cultural attitudes have contributed to the abandonment of children including the pervasive stigma regarding adoption, cultural preferences for boys, a belief that abandoning a child would provide a better future as well as nominal government support. And culturally, Korea and China have shared a five thousand years history together and many of the cultural values are really, truly shared by both nations. I think the history of adoption from Korea also really demonstrates the susceptibility of international adoption to changes in government policies and negative media attention, and there's a number of other countries who have also changed legislation and restricting international adoption. I think mainly, Russia and Romania are two examples.

I think over the last half century, international adoption has become a multinational and multimillion dollar industry, and it has indeed also improved the lives of thousands of children and their families. There is considerable controversy though, that remains regarding the practice, and that really is what leaves the future uncertain. Proponents of international adoption have argued that the practice exploits impoverished nations, robs children of the opportunity to be raised in their community of origin and identity, takes away resources that could be used to improve the lives of a larger number of children, and contributes to the problem of abduction, coercion, and trafficking of children. Supporters of international adoption on the other hand though have countered that the practice actually benefits children by removing them from the detrimental effects of growing up in an institutional setting or on the streets by providing them with permanent families. They help children who might otherwise have been marginalized in their societies because of illegitimacy, disability, or racial or ethnic prejudices, and provides children with families in a context where there actually is a little evidence that the elimination or restriction of international adoption would remove the actually problems of poverty that contributed to the abandonment of the child in the first place.

So although international adoption poses its own challenges, I think the sad fact is, is that poverty, war, natural disasters, disease, and discrimination leave many in the world, and particularly children, vulnerable. Although ideally all

families should be able to raise the children borne to them, the sad fact is that many children are abandoned, not because they're not loved or not wanted, but because families are not able to care for them. And according to a 2004 UNICEF report, it's estimated that there's a hundred and forty million orphans from birth to seventeen years of age in the world that needed care. So our focus really has to be on how do we address the needs of these children that balance both the detrimental effects of institutional care, which we know a lot about now, and the right to maintain cultural and ethnic ties, and therefore also the right for nations to make those decisions on behalf of those children. So I'm pretty clear that international adoption does not have the capacity to help these, all hundred and forty-three million orphans, but certainly it is an effective option and a testament that a generation of adopted adults can really speak to.

DAVID YOUTZ: Thank you very much Hollee. I think that's very helpful and a quite interesting context within which to look at everything else we're discussing tonight. Our next panelist has flown in for this event from California and we're delighted to have Amy Klatzkin here. Amy is an author, researcher and marriage and family therapist trainee. She is well known in the FCC community as the author of a number of books that many of us own and read on a regular basis. Those include most recently, *Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son: Abandonment, Adoption, and Orphanage Care in China* by Professor Kay Johnson, of which Amy was the editor. Amy also edited *A Passage to the Heart: Writings from Families with Children from China*, and finally she helped her daughter Ying Ying Fry write a book called *Kids Like Me in China*. Several of these books are available, I should mention, for sale through the Asia Society bookstore at a book table right in back. We've asked Amy to speak to us in particular because she has just returned in the last two weeks from a number of orphanage visits in Hunan, and I've asked her to speak on a particularly important set of questions related to the current status of orphanages and the current status of relinquishments in China. Thanks Amy.

[OFF-CAMERA COMMENTS]

AMY KLATZKIN: Yeah, my family goes back to China quite a lot and we lived there in the eighties and we go back every year or so, year or two. And we adopted our daughter Ying in 1993, the end of 1993. She was one of one hundred and something kids adopted from China to the United States, so it's a very different program. So my point of reference is going to be the orphanage in Changsha because I know the most about it and I'm going to make some extrapolations from there but I'm going to tell you very clearly the things that I know there's evidence for and things that I'm just posing as possibilities, and I'll try to keep those straight for myself as well as for you. Another interesting thing about Changsha is that Professor Kay Johnson was working there before 1990 at a time when international adoption was very strictly, well there wasn't an international adoption

law at that time although there were a few international adoptions going on in the 1980s, late 1980s from Changsha, actually to Quebec, especially to Quebec, a few, a handful. At that time, Kay was working very closely with them, everything was open, she saw all their books, things that are very difficult to do these days. But at that time they were very, very open about it. And they had developed quite an extensive network to find domestic adoptive families.

One of the things that Kay discovered in the late 1980s is that there is a myth that Chinese people in China do not adopt. In fact, they adopt in very large numbers. But for a long time, the regulations in China made it very, very difficult for most Chinese people to adopt because they already had a child and it was prohibited to make a legal adoption. The largest numbers of adoption, all of this period, in the last fifteen years, have been illegal, informal adoptions that are permanent. I mean they're very real but they don't have legal status and I don't have time to go into what that means for the children. It's been much harder all along for families to qualify to adopt from domestic orphanages and there is no equivalent of CCAA for domestic adoptions although there's rumor that there may soon be, there hasn't been. And therefore, every province and in some cases, every orphanage director is in charge of what he wants to do or she wants to do about that, which means that you have very enlightened orphanage directors who have had no trouble placing children domestically throughout the whole period of international adoption. And then you have orphanages like Changsha that really waive it on this, they have quite an extensive domestic adoption program going until international adoption grew. The orphanage directors changed and the new director really cut back on that. For a while he specified, we go back a lot, we became good friends with this guy and he would tell us for many years, he would reserve the youngest babies for domestic adoption because he said local people will only accept very, very young children. And the foreigners, this was probably about 1998, '99, when he first said this, foreigners think that a one year old is a baby so we give the older ones. And, and Chinese people do not think that one year olds are babies. We, we, he was doing that quite, quite judiciously for a while and then he decided that he wanted to just do international adoptions, probably because he had an enormous population of four to five hundred elderly people to care for, they were all state sponsored so there was no money coming in for them, and more than two hundred severely disabled children who could not be adopted, and they don't bring in any money, and the social welfare institutions were meant to be more and more profit centers, like everything else in China.

So, so there were a lot of, it's not exactly corruption but it's like he had to come up with the resources somehow, and I think that that was the reason that he decided really to, he was turning away adopters, domestic adopters, and we got to know a lot of the caregivers so we would hear these stories from caregivers saying, you know a family came by last week and they wanted to adopt a baby and they were

told there were no babies here and there were two hundred some babies there. So when my daughter was there in 1993, she was there for ten weeks, there were about twenty infants. We did go back to China but my daughter was not, she was kind of frightened of going to Hunan for a long time. She thought her birth mother might find her and take her away and now she's thirteen and so we go to Hunan and maybe her birth mother who's perfect will come and take her away. [LAUGHTER] So these things change over time. Now she loves to go to Hunan, but for a while she didn't want to go and so I went back for the first time in 1998 to make contact with the director again. And we went back, in '98 there were sixty healthy infants and toddlers. '99 I went, I took my family and we all went back and there were eighty. And the caregivers each time complained because it was a lot more than last year and they were getting staffing, they were getting funding for the number of kids that there were last year, and so they were always short and they were always underfunded and understaffed because every year there were more. We went back in '99. '99 there were eighty, 2000, there were over a hundred and the numbers went up and up, 2001, 2002, 2004, we were visiting. There were more than two hundred healthy infants and toddlers, or healthy enough to be adopted internationally which is a little bit broader term all in the orphanage, living in the orphanage, really, really a lot. In 2005, Changsha opened a new children's welfare center out in the countryside, it's in part of municipal Changsha but it's in the countryside. It takes about an hour to get there from the city and they moved all the kids out there. And this has been happening all over the country with lots of building projects and new orphanages built.

The shock of this trip, we just went back in December, is that there aren't babies in these orphanages anymore. One thing is the push for foster care, and that includes, I know all the provinces have been pushed to do that. In Hunan, they've pretty much done it. By now, they did it over the last year and it includes not just the healthy adoptable infants and toddlers, but also they're really trying to find long term, really permanent foster care for severely disabled kids. Foster families get assistance from the state, adopted families do not. So for a child with severe special needs, it's hard for families to adopt them because then they don't get any state support. This is all good, this is really good to have the kids out of institutions. But the other thing that everyone was saying, at every level and that's the officials and the current workers and the retired workers who know everything and know everybody in the countryside, we visited an orphanage out in the countryside in Hunan as well as the one in Changsha, and everybody at every level was saying there aren't healthy female infant abandonments going on now, it's not happening. Now this is actually something I've been looking for indications of for years. Because in 2000, 2001, social scientists, both Chinese and Kay, and there are a couple of others, were noticing in certain provinces and reports from orphanage directors who are very forthcoming with researchers, there were reports that suddenly we're not seeing babies, we're not seeing healthy infant girls anymore, as they had been in the past. And some of the researchers went out in the field in 2001, in Anhui Province, for example, and they

found out that a very cheap form of ultrasound called Ultrasound B had made it into the Anhui countryside and everywhere it went, it was being used for sex-selective abortions, basically to predetermine sex selection.

And what was happening was first born daughters have rarely been abandoned in China, even when there was a strict one child policy in the countryside. There hasn't been a strict one child policy in most of the countryside for many, many years now, and in fact the abandonments went up when the policy restrictions became more relaxed. And that was a big surprise, they actually expected that abandonments would go down. But, but they found that people were very, it's not that people don't want girls, it's that they have to have a boy. And in fact lots of people will say today that a boy and a girl, a son and a daughter make a family complete and that's a lot of rural people, that's a big cultural shift for China. First, that two is the ideal number of kids even in most of the countryside, but that it's great to have a boy and a girl because the son is going to take care of me in my old age but my daughter is going to come when I feel sick. She's going to care for me personally and so you get the son is the economic insurance and the daughter is that closeness. That's a pretty widespread view these days in what's supposed to be pretty traditional parts of the country. So what was happening before in these areas where we saw this sudden drop off around 2000, 2001 in healthy female abandonment is that people were simply no longer having the pregnancies that would have resulted in second or third, even fourth born daughters, families couldn't handle the fines and fees and punishments for that many over quota kids. And so that last born daughter without a son in the family, that was the one that was always at highest risk. And what was happening in 2001 in some of these studies was villages no longer had second and third born daughters. They were not being born. And they linked it up to the availability of ultrasound and that's been pretty well documented.

But we kept going back to Hunan and the numbers were going up and up and up and up and up. And then this year suddenly, boom, they fell. Now no one would talk about it, no one in officialdom would talk about sex-selective abortion but I think we have to put that out there as a real possibility and not so that we can moralize over it because I don't even want to go there, but as there may very well be a whole lot fewer healthy infants coming into the system. Hunan claims – and somebody may know whether this is true or not – but Hunan's civil affairs said to us, we have sent more children overseas than any other province in China and they have hardly any. So in 2005, they had more than two thousand children going overseas and in 2006, they anticipated barely over one thousand. And with a sharp, sharp fall off in the availability of healthy infants. So I think we have to put that out there as a real possibility. Nobody's done the field research that needs to be done to confirm this in Hunan but I have yet to hear something that explains that kind of sharp drop off that the availability of ultrasound would cause. And, and the thing is, it is illegal. Abortion is not illegal, but you're not allowed to use it for sex selection. For families

that are running over quota with children, anything they do is punishable. So the question is, what can they get away with and they'll do what they can to meet the requirements that they feel that they have.

One of the theories that I have heard is that this sudden drop off is caused by greater prosperity and I think gosh, if you just go to the cities and the villages immediately around cities, you do have the impression of just incredible, incredible modernity. We were out in the countryside a couple of weeks ago and very close to the city of Changsha, and the standard of living was fantastic relative to rural life. But there's at least three rural Chinas. There are the bands of rural China right around the big cities where they have ready markets for their goods and they can charge quite a lot for them. We went to a village that was raising bees and organic vegetables and charging top dollar – well top yuan – in Changsha for organic vegetables. But you get out in the countryside three or four hours from a major city and it is extremely poor, extremely poor. And there are parts of China, like northern Jiangxi Province, for example and parts in the west and where really things have not changed that much. So not only do I doubt – China is not moving to prosperity in any kind of an even fashion. It's a huge social stressor in China now. Prosperity doesn't happen with a sudden thing, like all of a sudden peasants are wealthy and they're not doing this anymore. I have yet to hear anything that comes close to solving this puzzle, but I can't prove that that's what's happening. It's just my best guess and the best guess of the people that have seen this pattern. It looks exactly like it did in Anhui a few years ago. So that's what I'm putting out there, and that is that it's very possible that this is not a cover up and this is not even in response to the Olympics.

And I'd like to go back to 1993 when we were adopting and the orphanages were vastly overcrowded and underfunded, and they were in terrible shape and they had very high mortality rates because they couldn't keep these kids alive. They didn't have the resources in those days and it was really tough and they really wanted international adopters to come and help with that situation. This is workers in the orphanages. And at that time, they went through and they cherry picked the babies. I'm going to use some of this terminology and I don't mean to offend anybody. I'm an adoptive parent too and I love my daughter and she loves me, but it is a business and it was a buyer's market then. And they cherry picked the babies and they sent the very best, and they said so, they told us so, the fifteen that went out of Changsha in the winter of 1994 during the moratorium. The tide has changed and now it's the parents who are being cherry picked and I think that's what those regulations are. The need is not there, that's the impression that I got, is that the numbers are going down and therefore now China has this huge back log of parents that are waiting and this is a way to cut down that enormous back log and say, okay now we are going to pick the very best parents according to our criteria.

And I just wanted to put out there that this is not just China that

does this. I went to the first ever adoption conference in Manitoba in October and I had several couples come up to me with their frustration, trying to adopt children from the United States and the regulations that they were running into. I was talking with a family that was trying to adopt a sibling set of older kids who were in foster care. You would think that the Arizona would be bowing down to these people, they were Filipino American kids and the mom in this family was Filipino, I mean was an immigrant to Canada from the Philippines and they were turned down because they hadn't been married long enough. So the sending countries do what they do, and we're doing it too. I was also interested in some of the things that Hollee put up there with China as the fourth largest economy and Korea as the ninth. Well I'm from California, if California were a separate country, we would be the eighth largest economy in the world and we are also a sending state, which is to say that more kids are adopted out of the state of California than are adopted in. So these things happen all over the place, including the very prosperous state of California, so.

DAVID YOUTZ: Amy, thanks very much. I think it's extremely valuable to have that glimpse into what's going on in China, as you've made very clear. We just don't know how much you can extrapolate across all of China. It doesn't seem that anything, really, can be extrapolated across this chaotic, fast moving country, but that's very, very helpful to have your recent glimpse. Right at the end, some of the statements you were saying about the latest situation of China's motivation brings us very well to our last panelist. I'm very pleased also to have Gongzhan Wu with us today. Gongzhan is the managing director of the China Adoption Program for the Texas-based Gladney Center for Adoption since 1994 and he is also the head of its New York office. Gongzhan graduated from the Shanghai International Studies University in 1976 and in the thirty years since, has been involved in many different ways in exchanges both cultural and of people, between the US and China. Those included a stint at the American Consulate in Shanghai, as a lecturer at the Shanghai International Studies University, as a Fulbright Scholar, and also as ESPN's Mandarin Language Service. Most recently, however, he has been involved for quite a long time since the mid-90s, really almost for the full life of China's adoption history and is one of those very knowledgeable people we regularly turn to when we need to know what's happening. Gongzhan has just returned and I do mean just, he got in at one o'clock this morning from Beijing. So first of all, thank you very much just for being here, but I had asked Gongzhan when I found out he was in Beijing this last week and speaking with CCAA, among other meetings, to give us the latest sense from Beijing and from CCAA on these restrictions and the feedback they're starting to hear back from the US. Thanks, Gongzhan.

GONGZHAN WU: Thank you David. If I say something that you don't understand or it's confusing you, that's because I'm still up in the air. Just to prepare for this panel discussion actually, just because I was in China, last Wednesday I made a request to meet Mr. Liu [PH], the general of CCAA in Beijing.

And I went there and just thanks for his generosity, he spent an hour and a half with me. So we had an extensive discussion on lots of interesting reactions after the new changes announced. So I'm trying to put some of the things that we discussed in here, just would like to share those with you. First of all for those new changes – actually the CCAA has been considering the implementation of those changes for the past two years. They have been talking about that with different people from agencies and just those changes particularly, just relating parents with obesity, disabilities, or even those over certain ages, etcetera. And CCAA chose this time to announce those changes simply just because of the ever increasing docier they have increased every month, and ever decreasing children available for adoption. So again, using the market economy return, that's a supply-demand issue. And Mr. Liu has clarified that is the sole issue that he has been facing, that he found so stressful because they have to deal with it in facing twenty-five thousand dociers in his office. What do we do? While at the same time only six or eight hundred children is available for children, so just mathematically it's very simple. You can figure out how much time he needs to just process those twenty-five dociers he has received, that CCAA has received. Plus at the same time that CCAA has continued receiving a large number of dociers, and even after the announcements of those new changes, that agencies are trying to help adoptive families and trying to speed up, to rush those into his office, which he has already factored in. In his work plan, he anticipated that. So he is asking, what should we do with those dociers? When we receive those docier, we need to find a child for them at the same time when they do not have enough children available for adoption. And that actually, thanks to Amy for your first hand observation from the orphanages, and even just in one province, and that as consistent with what they told me.

The reality is that in the past, the CCAA after the end of a month after they made a placement, their database still has a large number of children left so they can place those children next month. However, the situation now is reversed. Every month, after they place all the children they receive, they reviewed and are eligible for adoption, they still have a large number of families. So that's why the wait time is prolonged from six months, eight months, ten months, and now it's about fifteen to sixteen months and I don't want to disappoint the families in the process but the reality is, the wait could continue to get longer in the coming months, at least. So that's the reason why they have to just make some changes in order to put a brake in it, even though those new changes will affect the process in at least two years, so that's what he told me. Personally, I feel that the CCAA inevitably has become a victim of its own success, it's been a success for all those years as we all agreed that it's so well structured and it has been held as a model for intercountry adoption. In the past, CCAA has made tremendous efforts to standardize the adoption process in China, and I'm sure my colleagues here agree with me that we witnessed a significant improvement in the physical health of our adopted children, improvement of nursing at the orphanages, etcetera. So at one point the China adoption was a smooth and predictable process, with a great deal of certainty until recently, because

of the unpredictable land wait.

Mr. Liu also emphasized that CCAA believe that everything they do is to give priority to the best interest of children. I used the word at my colleague's suggestion: they're acting as birthparents, choosing profiles in the feelings that it is in the best interest for their children to be with traditional parents, parents younger than a certain age, or in relatively good health, so that's what they believed. And Mr. Liu and I also discussed why there are fewer children available for international adoption now, so I feel that he's pretty well informed. When I was in his office last Wednesday and I mentioned that *The New York Times* in January 23rd, there was an article, I think Asian politics and as soon as I mentioned that, he said yes, he had already read it in the Chinese translation. Then the following reasons had been cited during our conversation. And the first, he said just people talking about the one child policy. The one child policy is still implemented in China but there are at least two recent changes that may have helped the decrease in children available for international adoption. One is that Chinese families, even with one child are allowed to adopt children from social welfare institutes which is also consistent with Amy's observation. China's one child policy is aimed to limit the population growth. However, a couple of years ago, the Chinese government found that the adoption of children from social welfare institutes will not increase the population, as these children are already in the world. [LAUGHTER] So that's why the one child policy is loosening. People are talking about changing, but it's loosening in a way that Chinese families are allowed to adopt children from social welfare institutes.

Second, CCAA officials told me that with improvement of living standard of children and Chinese families in general, financially three thousand dollars donation from international families in equivalent to Chinese yuan, that is not a burden for many Chinese families anymore. So that is why Chinese families who are interested in China adoption may be able to do it, and some Chinese families even asked – I heard this a couple of times at different levels, both in Beijing and in the orphanages, that some Chinese families, because they want to have a child, so when they learn some children are being adopted by families from other countries, so they just say what is the donation they make? They offer double in order to complete adoption. So that's what they told me.

Another change just in regard to the one child policy is very interesting. We heard lots of stories from the media about implementing the one child policy so that many of the families who give birth to a second child or a third child were penalized. And the latest change is that China is not going to penalize the families with a second child or third child anymore, and actually they are awarding families with one child only. If you just promise to have one child only, then those families will get some economic incentives, I just learned the word from you – [LAUGHTER] – which means that each month those families will get about two

hundred yuan which is about twenty-six dollars a month, plus retirement benefits. One concern is if I have one child only or if I have only a girl, once they get married, then I have no child to take care of me after my retirement when I'm getting old. So if you have only one child, then these families will be taken care of, will get certain benefits that families with more than one child will not have. So those kinds of changes definitely will add a couple of new dimensions to explain why there is a shortage of children available for international adoption.

On the other hand, the consequences of this new policy to award those families with one child only is those families to give birth when they have the first child, and let's say it's a girl, they want to have a second child, they want to have a third child in order to have a boy and they will be able to keep those children, the second child or third child, even if it's a girl, and they will keep those children with them. Why? Because there is no penalty anymore. So this really surprised me, it's really something new. It's the kind of changes that will have provide consequences in the society.

The second reason they gave me is domestic adoption versus intercountry adoption. We talk about domestic adoption in China is increasing significantly, by thousands each year and maybe even more because when I asked for a number, I said well just do you have an idea what is the total number for domestic adoption each year? And they couldn't give that to me. It's not that they didn't want to give it to me because they don't have it. At the CCAA they don't have it. Why? Because CCAA was formed for intercountry adoption, so CCAA oversees all intercountry adoption. However, domestic adoption has been handled and managed at a provincial level. So that's why they do not, but they certainly gave the information that there is a significant increase in domestic adoptions in some of the provinces that they visited, they know. So that's one thing. So the change in perception of domestic adoption as well. Adoption is perceived as positive and charitable and in Chinese language, it is *hao xi*. That means it's a good thing, and the people are willing to do it opening, not like before when adoptive families will keep it as a life secret, and after adoption they will move to a new place because they don't want it to be known in the neighborhood where they live. This is probably similar in the early days in the US, or in many countries, and it has been changed in US a long time ago, but it has been changed in China as well. I feel that it will be interesting studying the co-relationship between the economic development and the social changes in a society.

Another thing is that social welfare directors seemed to be more interested in domestic adoption now than in international adoption, and that's another thing that the CCAA officials mentioned to me. To them, international adoption means more people work. These extremes are rigid CCAA guidelines that they need to follow, and these guidelines including that they cannot submit a child's profile to CCAA until the child is six months old. They made a public announcement in

newspaper, arranging physical examinations by designated hospitals providing updates every six months, particularly in the case of special needs children. International also means sometimes more risk for them, like what happened in Hunan Province, just as we all know, in February last year there was a report about baby trafficking, kidnapping in an orphanage in Hunan, and later on becoming a real issue. Some of those people were arrested, put into jail, and lots of cases are reexamined or reviewed. And even the US Embassy officers went to CCAA to review all those related cases to make sure those babies or children didn't come to the US from China adoption. So while I have to mention this – Mr. Liu didn't mention this – but I have to mention this because when I visited a number of orphanages in the different provinces, I did feel that incident had a psychological impact on orphanage directors in China, and they try to stay away from trouble. So that's what they mentioned, they feel that it's more work for them.

Another thing that a lot of people are concerned about is what happened to those children that cannot be adopted? People would think that there are lots of people in the orphanages if they restricted the number of international families, then what do you do? Where do those children go? One misunderstanding is that you feel all the abandoned children will end up with orphanages in China, which is not true. Not all the children who are abandoned will end up with social welfare institutes. For example, babies that are abandoned may even be placed – not necessarily illegally, as already Amy already mentioned this, by medical personnel, doctors and nurses from maternity hospitals. Maybe one biological parent gave birth to a child and left the child in the hospital. I don't have statistics with this but I know there are a large number of that, and then those babies easily end up with some families who are interested in adopting, in taking a child. Another example is individuals who found abandoned children will sometimes just keep them. I don't mind, just with one mouth, “with one mouth,” that's a Chinese way to say just one person, so will just keep him or her. Actually there were a number of times when I was in China that I read stories about just one man or one family trying to raise a dozen children he found from here and there. Certainly this has consequences. The consequence is in society, those children who do not have legal registration will have problems when they reach a schooling age or with some other things. Even seven, eight years ago when I was in Shanghai, before it became a real social issue, so the local government is trying to legalize those children so that it'd be able for them to receive formal education, receive other benefits.

One interesting statistic that I got this time when I was at CCAA, they said in one municipal city in China, that they found forty thousand such cases. And so forty thousand such cases times the number of provinces in China, that's a huge number, so that might explain and answer to some of those questions that people ask. Where do those children go? That's one of them. Another thing is CCAA is the only central authority overseeing adoption affairs, but it's not the central

agency that... okay. But there are children in some other governmental systems that CCAA cannot reach. And he mentioned those children living in the kind of social welfare institutes, but certainly those social welfare institutes are not the ones that we are familiar with. We're familiar with children's social welfare institutes where those children are available for adoption, but there are certain social welfare institutes that do not belong to the CCAA system. One good news for you at least is that CCAA is trying to coordinate the parallel governmental offices, trying to make those children available for adoption as well. So that's a part of their efforts over there.

Another interesting that's my own personal observation, that a changing relationship between social welfare institutions and the CCAA. I go to China almost twice a year, visit lots of orphanages and to meet officials at the provincial levels. And I found in many occasions, I'm Chinese, so they invite me to certain banquets or meals with orphanage directors and CCAA officials. And occasionally I saw those orphanage directors, and they try to, the Chinese word *gan bei*, when they drink liquor, sixty degree bottom up right? You all know this. And they say, okay, I will make ten toasts and each toast means ten placements, ten quotas. So I would do it in order to get more quota for the institutes. That's one of the PR efforts by certain orphanage directors. This is the first cup, ten quotas. Second cup, twenty. What I'm trying to say is they're trying to get more quotas from CCAA in the early days of China adoption. And now it's reversed, and CCAA officials including Mr. Liu – I heard this from the orphanage directors, not from Mr. Liu himself – the orphanage directors talked to me, Mr. Liu and the head of the matching department was here last month. They were trying to find if there were children available for adoption and they're trying to advise orphanage directors to say either those children will be eligible for adoption, so please send me their profiles to CCAA. So that's again their efforts. But I do want to say that their relationship between orphanage directors and CCAA officials reversed as well.

The orphanage directors also try sometimes when CCAA officials just went to visit them, they try to hide children, [CHUCKLES], from being seen by CCAA officials because they have to keep some of those children for domestic adoption, not for general domestic adoption, for those – a little bit about the Chinese culture and then you'll be familiar with the word *guanxi*, the contact, it means contact. As an orphanage director, sometimes they'll receive a note from a governor, from officials at different levels. They'll say, hi this is director so-and-so, this is a friend of mine and he wants to adopt. And in those occasions, the orphanage directors have to have children available to them to meet these demands from those different levels. And by the way, if you want to know the structure of Chinese social welfare systems, the orphanage directors are not appointed by CCAA officials. They are appointed by local government, so that's another thing. And this is what Mr. Liu and his colleagues told me, so just interestingly, the orphanage directors have to reserve some children for that purpose. That will add an additional dimension to explain why

there is a shortage of children available.

Finally, I want to a couple of things. First of all, I asked Mr. Liu, I said look, as you know there is perception that you do this because of Olympics 2008. Is that true? And he said no. And the reason, he said look, those changes we just announced, we hope they'll have an impact on the submission of dociers by May 1, 2007. But actually in talking about the placements, it will already be 2009, 2010, so really if you know that, then obviously it is nothing to do with Olympics in Beijing 2008. Another question I asked Mr. Liu is are you doing this really just because you want to limit international adoption in general? And Mr. Liu denied that as well, he said well just international adoption is a good thing. And the Chinese government and all the officials really think positively and do it positively, and he did express his concern though, he said that he hopes this issue will not be politicized. He said China adoption has been successful in those years just because we stayed away from politics. And had this issue been politicized, perhaps there would have been no China adoptions starting from day one. So that's another thing that he said.

To conclude my presentation, I also want to mention the numbers. Earlier, Pam mentioned that she found forty percent of families will be found by those new changes. And incidentally, I asked Mr. Liu what is your prediction for those new changes? And he said fifteen percent, and he said the fifteen percent, eight percent because of single parents, and about eight percent from other categories. However, I also learned two other interesting statistics, that one agency in Colorado, the feedback from one agency in Colorado find consistent with Pam, forty percent will be impacted. And there is another agency in the West Coast that also reported, they found over sixty percent. However, there are situations where we're talking sixty percent because that agency placed a large number of special need adoption. So we know that sometimes they are not as rigid in the past in terms of eligibility of adoptive parents. So fifteen percent and now when I talked to Mr. Liu and Mr. Liu realized that there will be more than fifteen percent. Thank you.

DAVID YOUTZ: Gongzhan, thank you very much, again I think tremendously helpful to have a very, very current perspective and that much more information directly from the minds of CCAA. I think that's something all of us have been wondering about so I really appreciate that addition. I'm very mindful that we now are actually at 8:30. You remember I had very carefully laid out that we were all going to say something for about five minutes and of course we all just had an avalanche of important things we needed to say. So I apologize for that. I suggest that we go directly to some audience questions because I really want to give you that time. I believe there is someone with a microphone who will come around. The usual house rules here at Asia Society are I'll recognize you, a microphone will come, please just stand and say your name and then speak clearly into the microphone. So I think the first question is here. You have the microphone? And if there's a particular

person you'll like to have answer, please let us know.

MONICA KRISTENSON: Hi, my name is Monica Kristenson [PH]. I don't know who might be in a position to answer this, but we talked a lot about infant adoption this evening and I'm wondering if there are people who could speak to the current realities of adoption of children over the age of two or special needs children currently. Is that changing at all in China or is that perhaps similar to the past?

GONGZHAN WU: Talking about the adoption of children over two years old or three years old or four years old, that's in the same category with infant adoption. That's imply because in the past, there were actually a large number of families who did adopt children from that age. In addition, because infant adoption started ten years ago, it has been going on for ten years, so many of the children who would have been two years or three years old would have been already adopted. Special need adoption, that's the thing that all of us agency people have been involved in trying to expand. However, there are two related news. One is there is an increase of domestic adoption in China of special needs children, and they cited Guangxi as one of the province, and last year there were more than a thousand adoptions of special needs children. So city officials are very, very careful to mention this because now many of us agency people have been really working hard on that program. But there might be an impact as well.

DAVID YOUTZ: I think the next question is the lady in purple in the back.

DIANA LEE: I think I can speak loud enough. My name is Diana Lee [PH] and I just wanted to ask you about whether or not, Mr. Wu or anyone from the panel, as to those families who may already be waiting but would nevertheless be preempt under these new regulations. I'm a waiting family so I'm grandfathered, so to speak, but I'm also of grandfatherly age, so [CHUCKLES], and I'm wondering if you get a sense from Mr. Liu and the CCAA whether or not we will somehow be affected. Even though it is as of May 1, I guess any sense of him that if there's a flood of these dociers coming in, they may push back the date or may look at our applications in a different way as a result?

ANN HASSAN: You know I think that many people share your concern but it's been quite clearly stated that they will not be applying new guidelines to folks who were clocked in before May first. And I think the other thing that those of us who have been involved in adoption in China for some time can also sort of report on that might ease some of the anxiety a little bit more is that, that's always how it's worked in the past so this isn't the first time that rules have shifted. For instance, I can't remember what year the initial single applicant quota was put into

effect but we were in a similar rush anxiety phase with a lot of single folks during that time as well, and they absolutely applied the guidelines just as they had told us that they would so, I think that most of us feel quite confident and would ease your anxieties as best we could around that.

DAVID YOUTZ: Yes.

TERESA GREENBURG: Hi, I'm Teresa Vatimidge Greenburg [PH] and I'm an adoptive parent with two daughters from China but I'm also the owner of Journey Love Docier Service, and I'm wondering if a number of families – [OVERLAPPING VOICES]. I have a two fold question, and having been at the roll out of these new requirements, is your understanding, because I'm hearing different things from my clients depending on what their adoption agencies are telling them, is that the May first cut off is a log in or it's a receive by date?

ANN HASSAN: It was stated at the meeting that it was a received by date, but I've heard similar dates and certainly I think that's also a source of anxiety for many people in trying to sort that out. The most recent information that we got very recently, our staff in China is a confirmation of it's a receive by date. I was going to ask Mr. Wu as well whether he asked that question and what his response was but certainly, it's a good question.

GONGZHAN WU: That's probably typical for China adoption, sometimes it's not clear. I attended a meeting and at the meeting I was able to speak to one of those deputy directors, a general at the meeting who confirmed that it should be the... what is that?

WOMAN: Date received.

GONGZHAN WU: Receive date.

WOMAN: That's consistent with what we've heard too.

GONGZHAN WU: However, in the documents that you receive, the guidelines and the new changes that you receive from CCAA, it did mention the log in date. So that's why I say it's typical.

TERESA GREENBURG: So it's still...

GONGZHAN WU: My suggestion personally would be try to do whatever you can and send it in by the end of March to make sure it's the log in. However, when I was in Beijing I talked to the same deputy director general, and she seemed to still think of the date it is received.

TERESA GREENBURG: Because there's such a back log
now –

GONGZHAN WU: But the staff continues to tell families that
it is the date of log in.

TERESA GREENBURG: Because there's such a back log
now with US CIS that families are really starting to panic. The other question and this
is more of a personal question for me, because as of right now I'm not eligible because
of the length of marriage situation, second marriage for both my husband and I, and
we're only two and a half years in. By the time we're five years in, he's going to be
fifty-five. Is it your interpretation or understanding that it's from the situation of the
family at the time that the docier goes into China or is it the time of the referral?

WOMAN: My understanding is that it is the time of the
application.

TERESA GREENBURG: Application.

WOMAN: Yes.

TERESA GREENBURG: So for instance, when we hit that
five year point, my husband will be fifty-five, we would be eligible to apply to China
to adopt again?

WOMAN: Not if your husband is fifty-five.

TERESA GREENBURG: I'm talking about special needs, not
a non-special needs child. It's okay –

WOMAN: It's such a personal situation but my understanding
is that all of those guidelines apply at the time that a docier is actually, down the road
they're going to look at log in, this is a special time, so at the time that the docier is
logged in. So that would mean that you would need to have celebrated your five year
anniversary at that time that all of those things [TRAILS OFF].

GONGZHAN WU: And also it's applicable to the adoption of
special needs children, the new changes.

DAVID YOUTZ: The next question is here.

TORY WILDE: I'm Tory Wilde [PH] awaiting my
application, my docier has been in China since November '05. I have a question about
the one child policy changes. I know you mentioned that they are awarding families

now that only have one child a certain amount of money every month, but it's not clear to me the second part of what you said with the new rules, and when did they become in effect, so to speak?

GONGZHAN WU: This new rewarding system actually is really new, it has just been announced nationally. However in many of the provinces they already started.

TORY WILDE: And you can have more than one child now without [INAUDIBLE]?

GONGZHAN WU: No they're still talking about the one child policy.

TORY WILDE: Okay.

GONGZHAN WU: However, there are exceptions like if both parents are one child, they might have some boost in there.

AMY KLATZKIN: Can I just add something to that? In most of the countryside, in most areas, couples have for some time had a different, slightly more lenient policy since around 1991. It's been different in different areas and it does apply to very densely populated rural areas. But say in most of rural Hunan, the policy has been one son or two children, so if the first child for rural families was a boy, then they could have only one. But if the first child was a girl, they were allowed to have a second child after several years. And it was actually in the implementation of that change that the spike in the number of kids coming into orphanages happened. And some areas also have just a two child thing. It's more complicated than it looks, and has been for more than ten years.

DAVID YOUTZ: We could probably take one more question if there's any other question from the floor.

SUSAN SACKS: Hi I'm Susan Sacks [PH], I have a six year old from China. Most of the information about what's happening in the orphanages and the availability of children is anecdotal and it relates to the orphanages that are involved in international adoption. Are there many other orphanages that are not participating in international adoption who may be experiencing stable or increasing levels of children?

AMY KLATZKIN: I can respond to that only about Hunan because we asked about that. I've run projects in Hunan for the Foundation for Chinese Orphanages, which is part of FCC New England, and we've been trying for years to get our money into the orphanages that don't do international adoption, so

there are ninety-plus orphanages in Hunan, of which twenty, close to thirty do international adoption and the others don't. So we've known this for years, and we say well we want to get the money to the poor ones, because we don't have that much money to donate, we want it to go where it's really going to count. And we would get the money into a place that was off anybody's radar and then the next year we'd find out that they were doing international adoptions. And we finally got straight what was going on in Hunan. It could be very different in other provinces but what Hunan's been doing is that all adoptable children, healthy and mild special need, for the past couple of years, have been moved to the orphanages that do international adoptions. And the only kids that are left behind are severely disabled, and so we just said well then that's who want to help, we want to get those kids. But we haven't specified that before and so our money was going into orphanages that were about to become international adoptions. But the word that we got in the field, not anecdotal but standing inside a social welfare institution in a rural county town, they don't have any kids there. They don't and they're not coming in. It's overwhelmingly disabled. I guess that's anecdotal but it's also – and more research needs to be done to follow through on this – but this was very consistent and it wasn't just officials, and it was also places that we were seeing and seeing the book of all the kids that are in this orphanage. So at least in Hunan and you figure, they send two thousand kids to the United States in 2005. That's one-fourth of the children from China came from that one province, so if they are seeing that sharp drop, that alone would have an enormous effect in addition to all the other things that you were talking about.

DAVID YOUTZ: Was there one more question that I missed?

JENNIFER: My name is Jennifer and my husband and I are in the waiting process. And we do meet the guidelines. We have one daughter who's four and my question is – Ann I don't have to call you tomorrow. When we waited for our first child, the wait was quite long, we were affected by 9/11 and by SARS, but barring that, the wait was about fifteen to sixteen months. We started in 2000, we didn't travel to China until 2003, and then it went significantly down to six months, eight months, nine months, eleven months, and now it's back up to where it was when we made an application for our first child. The reason for that then, we were told is because CCAA is pretty understaffed and there were a lot of children and not a lot of staff, and now I'm wondering if it's the reverse. If there's the same amount of staff and just too many dociers? I'm just wondering why it's the same amount of time. And also my other question is for people who already have a child, who adopted a child from China, or children, is that wait longer than for people who don't?

WOMAN: That's the easy one to answer. No, that's the same.

JENNIFER: Okay.

GONGZHAN WU: Your situation actually, now is different from 2002 and I use the Chinese saying that the rice pot is waiting for rice. That Chinese saying goes in describing the matching department now. As soon as they have certain children who pass the eligibility review, they will place them right away, so the rice pot is waiting for rice. So it's just now reversed.

DAVID YOUTZ: Well I hope you found that a very helpful and provocative evening. I certainly have. I would like to thank everyone for coming out on a bitterly cold evening, and a huge thank you to all of our panelist, that was a tremendous discussion, thank you so much. And thank you to Asia Society.

[END OF TAPE]