

Travel to Alaska

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In July 1990, I decided to go to Alaska alone. I had a great desire to go there by car but from reading the National Geographic Magazine, I learned that my Toyota Tercel was not powerful enough to drive the long distance from Palos Verdes Estates, California, all the way to Alaska, nor to drive on the tough roads in Alaska. At the American Automobile Association, (the Triple A / the AAA), I bought both air tickets and traveler's checks. I also made hotel reservations through the AAA.

Early in the morning of July 5th, an airport shuttle van picked me up. It was a pick-up service between passengers' homes and LAX (Los Angeles International Airport). We only had to call the shuttle service and tell them the name of our airline and the departure time. They picked us up much earlier than the flight schedule since they had to pick up several people at different locations.

The jet from Los Angeles to Juneau was full of passengers. From the jet, I saw many small dark green islands in the blue-gray calm ocean near Sitka. The dark green land and mountains were lying at the edge of the ocean. I expected that it would fly directly to Juneau, but it stopped in Sitka. A man around 60 years old, got on at Sitka and sat on my left. We said, "Hi" to each other. The man did not look Caucasian, Oriental or African American. As he didn't look like a tourist, I asked him where he was going. He said that he lived in Sitka and would visit his daughter in Juneau. I told him that it must be very harsh to live in Alaska because it was very cold. He replied, "No, it isn't hard to live in Alaska. I was born and raised in Alaska. I don't feel it is very cold in Alaska." Twenty or twenty-five minutes after we had left Sitka, the man pointed out the window and told me, "Look at that. That is a glacier. Mendenhall Glacier." I saw a whitish pink-gray sky, dark blue-green mountains with some white snow, a slight blue-white river between the mountains, dark green, almost black woods, and a green grass area with many houses from the jet window. The man told me again, "Mendenhall Glacier" at the same time he pointed out the river between the mountains. I realized that the slight blue-white river was a glacier.

The van from the Breakwater Inn picked me up and started driving through a green field with a lot of pink wild flowers. The field looked as if it were a pink and green carpet. As soon as I put my luggage in my room, I headed for downtown Juneau. Mountains rose into the sky just across from the hotel. Through the bus window, I saw some houses in the woods halfway up the mountains. The houses were connected by long stairways to the road. It must be very slippery to walk on the stairways when it was winter. I saw many tourists downtown. I also saw many dark-skinned Oriental faces. They were neither Japanese nor Koreans. Their skin was darker than Japanese or Koreans and their face structures were

different from those of Polynesians or Micronesians. Their skin color was similar to Vietnamese but their face structures were different from Vietnamese. I had a great curiosity about them. I asked one of them who was waiting for a bus. He answered that his parents came from the Philippines. I wondered why so many Filipinos live in extremely cold Alaska.

I went to the Information Kiosk at Marine Park and received several books about tours in Alaska. I decided to join the Glacier Bay Cruise for the next day. Then, I walked along the Gastineau Channel and I reached a huge cruise ship at a dock. It was not cold in Juneau. It was around 8:00 P. M. but I could see the sun. At the hotel, I tried to sleep but I couldn't because the guest or guests in the room above mine were walking around a lot. The footsteps bothered me. I opened the curtain a little to see outside. It was 2:00 A. M. and it was light enough to drive without headlights.

At Juneau International Airport, I waited for a staff member from the tour agency for around 30 minutes. A happy-looking man, around 25 years old, appeared and announced about the Glacier Bay National Park Tour. He explained that we would fly to Gustavus by small propeller airplane with four or five tourists. I saw blue-gray sky and some parts of the sky which were whitish yellow-gray, dark blue-green mountains with white snow, some almost black-green islands in the dark silver-gray ocean. The ocean was so calm and its surface looked as if it were frozen. It took around 45 minutes to Gustavus. From Gustavus, as a large tourist bus full of tourists traveled through a wooded area of tall Sitka spruce trees, I felt as if I were traveling among many huge Christmas trees. I could see a small amount of light gray sky at the top of the tall trees. The bus tour guide told us that we could borrow binoculars at the Glacier Bay Lodge. At the gift shop there, they sold Eskimo dolls, Eskimo masks, fur boots, sweaters, etc. An Eskimo clay doll which was a little smaller than my fist caught my eye. As the doll was made of clay, it was entirely a dark orange, which was almost light red-brown. The doll held a small basket and there were some red berries in it. Its face was painted and her eyes and lips were smiling. I thought that the doll would be very expensive but it was only \$12. I bought it without hesitation. I rushed onto the tour boat but as soon as I got on, I realized that I hadn't borrowed any binoculars at the lodge. The binoculars had slipped from my memory while I had been admiring the clay doll.

There were around 60 tourists and a lady park ranger on the boat. Some people were staying inside the cabin and the others were standing on the deck. I was staying in the cabin and was looking outside through the window. The sky was covered with slightly blue-gray clouds, and dark blue-green mountains were lying between the sky and the calm blue-gray ocean. The scenery didn't change for an hour except sometimes I saw small rocky islands and large rocks in the ocean. Once in a while, the ocean color changed to slightly brown-gray according to the sky color.

The boat started moving deep into a fjord-like inlet which was surrounded by dark green mountains. Some distant mountains looked dark blue-green with white snow on them. I left the cabin and sat on a bench on the deck. I was wearing a cotton shirt, a wool sweater,

a Pendleton wool jacket, and a pair of cotton pants but I felt cold outside. Sometimes the ocean color changed to dark green-gray due to the mountains' color around it. I had expected that I would still see a lot of snow in Alaska but the snow was only on the high mountains.

The boat moved into the midst of the floating ice. The park ranger told us that we were close to a glacier. I saw an icy blue-white river sticking out into the ocean between the mountain valley. The boat moved toward the glacier and turned parallel with it. The front edge of the glacier stood up vertically. I heard sharp clicking sounds which were similar to how ice cubes sound when they crack in a glass of water. I thought that the glacier was cracking and some ice would come off soon. The boat stayed in the same place for 15 minutes but no part of ice from the glacier came off. I still heard a lot of clicking sounds as if the glacier would flow into the ocean immediately but nothing happened. The surface of the glacier had both parallel and vertical black lines on it. It also had many vertical cracks in it. I thought that a glacier should flow into the ocean constantly because it was a river of ice. A river was supposed to be running all the time. The boat started moving among the ice chunks and arrived at the place where there were a lot of small pieces of floating ice. A high and wide glacier appeared in front of me. The glacier had more parallel black lines in it. The boat stopped parallel to the glacier. I could hear the clicking sounds clearly and often. The boat stayed in the same place for 10 minutes. A small piece of ice came off from the cliff of the glacier. As soon as the ice dropped into the ocean, there was a small splash. Then a medium-sized piece of ice dropped into the ocean and I saw a splash again. Before the splash disappeared, a large amount of ice came off from the ice cliff and dropped into the ocean. There was a huge splash and it made high waves. The boat changed its position and put its bow into the wave.

Afterwards, I returned to Juneau from Gustavus in a large jet full of passengers which took only 20 minutes. After I arrived back in Juneau, I registered for a One-Day Tour of Barrow and I walked downtown. Some of the buildings made me remember Western movies. The buildings were two stories high and all the buildings had covered sidewalks beside them. A part of their second floor hung over the sidewalk as if the second floor were a roof. One of the souvenir stores sold such Eskimo products as masks, boots, stone carvings, and dolls. The dolls were made of bread. They were three inches (7.6 cm) high and two inches (5 cm) wide wore Eskimo parkas. They were so cute that I bought two of them. I saw several beautiful amber necklaces but I couldn't judge whether they were real amber or plastic. I looked at the tag and read "Made in U. S. S. R." When I returned to my hotel, I asked the bus driver, around 25 years old, how far he was going and if he returned downtown using the same route. I couldn't remember the destination but I was told that the bus would return downtown by the same route. I asked the driver if I could continue to ride on the bus to the last bus stop and return to my hotel. He permitted me to do so if I paid double fare, one dollar. I thought that I would be able to see the city of Juneau by riding on the bus. There were five or six passengers on it. The bus drove past the front of my hotel

and started driving through an area of Sitka spruce trees and then it arrived at Juneau International Airport. Then it ran through a residential area and stopped. The driver said, "Mendenhall." I realized that Mendenhall Glacier wasn't so far from my hotel. It took at most 30 minutes from my hotel to Mendenhall Glacier. Then the bus was running through Sitka spruce woods again. I felt that Juneau was a city in an evergreen wood. The wooded area was very dense with tall trees. The bus started running through a residential area again but there were a lot of trees among the houses. The bus arrived at a harbor, and then it returned along its way to downtown.

On July 7th, I was going to join the Mendenhall Glacier Tour. That day was Sunday and there was no public bus service. I walked for 25 minutes and reached downtown. I got on a Gray Line Tour bus according to a guide's instructions. The lady tour guide told the tourists that they would take us to a salmon farm first before Mendenhall Glacier. The guide who looked around 23 or 24 was very active and talked happily. I thought this must be her full-time job otherwise she couldn't handle around 100 tourists smoothly. From one of the tourists' question, I learned that the guide was a university student. She told the tourist that many university faculty members had part-time jobs during summer, otherwise Alaska would have trouble taking care of the tourists. Inside the salmon factory, we could see some live salmon in a huge glass cylinder. A souvenir store sold such salmon products as purses, wallets, business card cases, and smoked salmon. The salmon skin was dyed red, green, or gray. I saw the same things when I went to the Canadian Rockies. When I told one of my Japanese friends about the salmon-skin products, she laughed at me. She said, "Mice might eat the wallets and purses." I bought a piece of gray-colored salmon skin. If someone saw the actual salmon skin, they would not laugh at me.

The scenery on the way to the glacier was familiar to me because I had passed through the area by bus the previous night. Mendenhall Glacier was neither as high nor as wide as the glaciers which I had seen in Glacier Bay National Park. The height of Mendenhall Glacier was one fifth and its width about half of that of the glacier in Glacier Bay National Park. I saw only a couple of small floating ice chunks in the lake. It looked like ice would not come off the glacier actively. As the ice cliff at the end of the glacier wasn't high, I could see far along its top surface. One part of the glacier surface was covered with dark chocolate-colored dirt and another part was slightly blue-gray white. The glacier surface was rough with many cracks. There were some small islands in the lake. The islands were covered with various heights of evergreen trees. I walked toward the glacier. Some rocks whose surfaces were very smooth were partly covered with yellow-brown moss. Sometimes ice covered the rocks and moss covered the ice.

After I arrived downtown, I went to the Tourist Information Kiosk and made a reservation with Ice Cap Helicopter Sightseeing for the next day. I walked to the dock where the large cruise ships anchored. Before I came to Alaska, I had had a chance to talk to Mrs. Togo, who would be traveling to Alaska at around the same time that I was. She was the wife of Toyota America's President. Mr. and Mrs. Togo used to live in Rocky

Point, Palos Verdes Estates, California, where Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt and I lived. It took two minutes from our house to theirs on foot. Mrs. Togo was in her late 50s or early 60s. She was very full of life, sweet, charming, and extremely intelligent. She understood current economics and politics in the world very well. I really enjoyed listening to her and talking to her.

I saw a large cruise ship in the far distance. As I got close to the ship, I saw its name. Mr. and Mrs. Togo must be on the cruise ship. A boy wearing a uniform was standing in front of a gangplank laid between the ship and the wharf. I asked the boy if Mr. and Mrs. Togo were on the ship. The boy asked me to wait for a while and used a transceiver. I didn't have a plan to see them but I wanted to leave a message for Mrs. Togo. The boy told me that they were not in their room but they were not off the ship. I wrote a message in a hurry and said, "I am enjoying my trip in Alaska. I will go to Anchorage tomorrow. From Kyoko Saito." I handed my message to the boy and asked him to give it to Mrs. Togo. The boy asked me again to wait. I waited for around 15 minutes and Mrs. Togo appeared. She invited me to wait for her in her room until she had finished eating dinner with her friends. At that time, I was wearing a pair of gray worn-out pants, a sweater, a cotton shirt, a wool jacket, and a worn-out pair of canvas shoes. I never thought that my appearance was shabby but when I looked at the passengers who boarded or came off the ship, they were all wearing very nice clothes. I thought that Mrs. Togo would feel bad if she took me into her room because her friends must be financially, socially, and educationally the best in the U. S. A. and Japan. I had a great desire to see inside the ship but I didn't want to bother Mrs. Togo, so I refused her invitation.

After that, I walked around downtown. I entered a souvenir store where I saw small Eskimo dolls. Individual dolls were depicted doing five kinds of daily activities: fishing, knitting, canoeing, dancing, and sewing. The dolls were cute and only \$8.00 so I bought two of them. A beautiful Eskimo stone sculpture caught my eye in the window of an art gallery. The stone was dark green and depicted an Eskimo who was going to throw a spear. I liked it very much but the price was \$700. I couldn't afford it. It was raining and on my way back to the hotel, my canvas shoes were wet and a lot of bubbles appeared around my shoes. Every time I stepped on the ground, the bubbles became large and as soon as I lifted my foot from the ground, the bubbles became small. It was because when I had washed my canvas shoes, I hadn't rinsed them enough. In my hotel room, I looked at the Eskimo dolls which were knitting and fishing. They were very lovely. I regretted that I hadn't bought all five.

July 8th was my last day in Juneau. I had a reservation for Ice Cap Helicopter Sightseeing. They would pick me up at my hotel at 11:30 A. M. It was raining but I headed for the souvenir store to buy the other three Eskimo dolls. The air was extremely fresh. Only a couple of cars went by me. It was very quiet. The greenery looked so fresh, young, and shining and it seemed as if the houses were hiding quietly among the green trees. I bought three more Eskimo dolls and returned to my hotel in a hurry. I started standing in front of the hotel at 10:00 because there was a possibility that they would come earlier than

scheduled. It turned 11:30 but nobody came. I waited and waited but nobody came. It turned noon. I heard a lady's voice behind me. She told me that the helicopter would not fly due to the bad weather.

I went downtown again to receive my refund for the helicopter tour. I had really wanted to see the glacier from the helicopter rather than receiving my money back. I was thinking about what I should do before I went to the airport. I had enough time until I left Juneau. My jet would leave Juneau at 6:00 P. M. I saw an advertisement for the Juneau Ice Field Helicopter Tour on a small building's door. I thought that there might be some short-time tours in Juneau. I told the lady who worked at the office about my cancellation of the helicopter tour. The lady told me that her company's helicopters were flying. She called somewhere and told me if I could go to the airport, I could board the helicopter. I decided to go by taxi to the airport in Douglass instead of to Juneau International Airport. I didn't care how far away the airport was. I just didn't want to miss the helicopter tour.

As soon as I arrived at a building at the airport, a man around 25 years old came to me and took me inside the building. About 10 people wearing navy blue boots were sitting on the benches. The man told me to sit on the end of the bench and to put on a pair of navy blue, plastic, waterproof boots. He explained with words and gestures what to do if an emergency happened. I told him that even though he explained what to do, I could not survive if the helicopter crashed into the ground. He replied to me that it was required to explain how to survive an emergency.

Five of us boarded the helicopter. It headed for Gastineau Channel and flew over the channel for a while. The city of Juneau covered a very small part at the bases of two green mountains whose summits were covered with clouds. After the helicopter passed the city, it turned left and headed for the mountains. The helicopter entered the clouds and flew in the clouds for a while. After it passed out of the clouds, I saw a green valley under me. Some part of the valley still had white snow in it.

Soon after we passed the valley, a glacier was getting close to us. The surface of the glacier was brown-gray and it had a lot of cracks as if they were waves. As the helicopter flew over the glacier, I could see deep inside the cracks which were called crevasses. As crevasses went deeper, they looked blue-green. The helicopter landed on the glacier, whose surface was not rough. The surface looked as if it were covered with granular sugar. It was much easier to walk on the glacier than to walk on icy roads. The only thing I had to watch out for was not to fall into the crevasses. We took off again and the helicopter flew over the glacier and started flying over the edge of the glacier. The surface of the glacier was dark gray but the cliff of the glacier which stood straight up in the river was a slight blue-white on its top and dark green-blue at the bottom. The helicopter started flying over green grassland. Then we saw light green grassland, dark green tall trees and the slightly blue-white glacier lying behind the trees and there were green mountains behind the glacier. They contrasted with each other beautifully. As the helicopter started flying higher over the glacier, I could see the glacier clearly as if it were an icy river or an icy road.

As soon as I returned to my hotel, I picked up my luggage and waited for an airport pick-up service van in the hotel lobby. Beside the front desk, there was a sign for a restaurant. The arrow to the restaurant pointed to the second floor. The restaurant must be located on top of my room; that's why I'd heard a lot of footsteps.

At Anchorage International Airport, I had to wait for a pick-up service van from the Best Western Barrott Inn where I had a reservation. It was around 8:00 P. M. but it was light. The van came but the driver refused to let me get in it because he had to pick up the airline crew members. I thought that many crew members would get in the van and no seat would be left for me. Only five crew members got in the van and there were many empty seats in it but I had to wait for another van for a while. Nobody was around me. I was waiting alone for a van. I finally arrived at the inn around 10:00 P. M.

At 7:00 o'clock in the morning on July 9th, I was waiting for an airport pick-up service van in front of the hotel. I was going to Barrow at the top of the world. I wore a pair of polyester pants, a wool sweater, and a Pendleton wool jacket but I felt very cold and my teeth were chattering. In the van, a man in his mid fifties sat beside me. We talked about Susan Butcher, who had won a dog sleigh race twice in succession in Nome, Alaska, but not that year. The man told me the reason why she didn't win the dog sleigh race that year was one of her dogs' condition was bad.

I boarded a Mark Air airplane full of passengers. Half of them looked like tourists and the other half did not. Gray-white clouds floated in the blue sky and there were dark green mountains under the sky. The city of Anchorage was shining in the morning sun between the dark green mountains and dark gray ocean. After Anchorage disappeared from my sight, I saw only plains of dark green wilderness for a while. Sometimes I saw rivers snaking across the plains. A lot of clouds were closing in. A summit of a huge white-capped mountain was sticking out of the clouds. It was Mt. McKinley. After we passed Mt. McKinley, the jet flew over the dark green plain for a while. I realized that there was a brown-silver line on the plain. It must be the pipeline and the road built from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. The jet started flying over a brown-green marshy area with many small lakes. The jet landed on the marsh which was Prudhoe Bay. Half of the passengers got off the jet. They were working in some oil fields there. Jets were their only transportation to get to or leave Prudhoe Bay. I didn't see any mountains or hills in Prudhoe Bay. I only saw a flat brown plain around me. After we left there, the jet started flying over the ocean which had many floating ice chunks. The ice made me recognize that I was in Alaska.

Barrow is at the top of the world. It is deep inside the Arctic Circle and very close to the North Pole. As soon as we landed in Barrow, we got on a bus which looked like a school bus but it was supposed to be a sightseeing bus. I saw two sleeping children on the bus. They looked like Orientals or Eskimos. I thought they might be Orientals because only Eskimos lived in Barrow so that the Eskimos didn't have to use the sightseeing bus. Then I saw an Oriental couple around 30 years old. I asked them in English where I might sit.

The man answered that I could sit anywhere. From his English, I judged that he was Japanese because he had a strong Japanese accent. He was a pilot for Japan Airlines and lived in Anchorage. The two sleeping children were his.

A Caucasian guide around 25 years old got on the bus and explained about the tour in Barrow. He instructed us strictly never to go too close to the dogs. We saw Eskimo houses from the bus. Some houses had their roofs decorated with antlers. All the houses were made of wood and looked shabby. I saw some motorcycles and trucks. I asked the guide how they brought in the wood, trucks, and motorcycles to Barrow. He replied that they brought in those things by boat during summer. I also asked him if they had water piped into individual houses. He said, "Yes." I asked him again how they protected their water pipes from freezing. He only said, "They don't have any freezing problems."

In October 1988, three whales had been trapped in the ice in Barrow and couldn't get to the ocean. Eskimos in Barrow had cut a part of the ice and made a passage to the ocean but before the passage was finished, one of the whales disappeared. Every night the TV news talked about the whales. While I was watching the news, I wondered why the Eskimos tried to rescue them instead of eating them. Whales must have been a very important food source for them. I asked the guide why the Eskimos in Barrow didn't eat the three whales which were trapped in the ice in 1988 instead of trying to save them. The guide replied to me that the whales were not the right species which the Eskimos were permitted to eat.

I saw light brown-green land around me instead of a white icy area. It was tundra. I saw small yellow and pink wild flowers in the tundra sometimes. Those flowers might be fire weed and tundra roses. There was a lot of floating ice in the ocean. While I was walking on the tundra and shore, I realized that there were only old people who looked over 65 around me. I had expected that many young people, rather than just old people, would be interested in Alaska. Coming to Alaska might be expensive for young people. Two large whale bones around 15 feet (5 m) long were facing the Arctic Ocean, standing as if they were arches.

We entered a large building where we watched Eskimo shows like dancing, singing, and drumming. One of the Eskimo ladies told about their handmade products such as boots. She explained to us about the material of the boots and she emphasized that using the intestines of seals as thread was very important. The seal-intestine thread never leaked water but synthetic fabric threads weren't waterproof. The lady explained how to make the seal intestines into threads. Some Eskimos sold their handmade bone carvings. Their masks were made of seal intestine, too. The intestines were opened and molded on face-shaped models and then dried. The masks were decorated with animal fur.

The Eskimos showed their trampoline which was made of thick animal skin. A child wearing a special fur coat and boots stepped on the trampoline. Around eight Eskimos held the rope around the trampoline and lifted the trampoline into the air. The child was tossed high into the air and landed on the trampoline. They lifted the trampoline several times but the child never fell on the ground. The child had curly hair and brown skin. I couldn't judge

whether the child was a boy or a girl so I asked one of the adult Eskimos about it. The Eskimos around the child laughed at the child and nobody gave me the answer. I asked the adult Eskimo if the child wore that beautiful fur coat every day. The lady answered that the coat was only for such ceremonies as weddings and festivals.

All the tourists went to the Top of the World Hotel, and ate lunch at the restaurant. I expected that they would serve Eskimo food but they served American food and Mexican food. I never dreamed that I could eat enchiladas, Mexican food, in Barrow. The supermarket in Barrow was the same as that of the mainland. They sold the same things as other supermarkets in American cities: chicken, beef, canned food, milk, potato chips, candies, cookies, etc. Only the prices were different from other supermarkets in the mainland. For example, one head of broccoli was \$7.00. The same broccoli ought to have been around 50 cents in southern California. Not only fresh food but also all other items were very expensive in the supermarket in Barrow.

I thought that if I had a chance to visit Barrow again, I would visit there during winter, so I could see the difficult life with only snow, without the sun, and beautiful aurora.

When the jet took off from Barrow, I saw flat brown tundra below me. There were a lot of pools or lakes on the tundra and some pools reflected the sunlight and they were shining brightly a whitish orange.

July 10th was my last day in Alaska. I walked around downtown Anchorage and went on the City Tour. After we had visited the Aircraft Museum, we headed for a residential area which was close to downtown. Around 15 people were standing with fishing poles on a bridge. The driver told us that they were fishing for salmon. They could catch salmon close to downtown Anchorage. There were many small airplanes on the lake or on the river in the residential area. The airplanes could be used both as seaplanes and normal land planes. It looked like people in Alaska used their own small airplanes as their transportation just as people on the mainland used their cars.

After the tour, I went to a museum where I saw the old style of Eskimo life. There was a caribou-skin tent on display with a woman mannequin wearing a fur coat sitting in the tent. The woman looked as though she were making something using animal fur. An animal skin box or basket was hanging in the tent and there was a baby in it.

At an art gallery near the museum, they sold many Eskimo art products: stone sculptures, bone carvings, ivory carvings, and masks. I saw a small Eskimo sculpture which was dark green stone, depicting an Eskimo holding a spear. Its face was white stone. It was \$50. I had only \$80 in my pocket but I couldn't help buying it. Only \$30 was left in my wallet but I was very happy with the Eskimo sculpture. While I was walking to my hotel, I observed the city again. Many flowerpots were suspended from poles. All the pots were filled with orange marigolds on the top and small dark purple flowers on the bottom of the pot. The orange and dark purple contrasted with each other beautifully.

As soon as I arrived at my hotel, I prepared for leaving. I went to the front desk and asked about the airport pick-up service van. The clerk told me to wait for the van in front

of the hotel. The van came so I tried to get in the van but the driver refused to let me get in. He told me that he had to take the airplane crew members first and he was not able to permit me to ride in the van with them. I had to wait for a while; then the van and the driver returned. I thought that the next time must be my turn. A different man came out of the hotel and he drove the van away. I worried about missing my airplane because I didn't have enough money to stay in a hotel an extra day and to buy an extra air ticket. I went to the front desk and asked the clerk what was going on. He asked me to wait for the van for a while. I was extremely worried about missing the jet and my financial situation. I had only \$30 worth of traveler's checks. I told the clerk that taking me to the airport was a part of the hotel's service. The van arrived and five airplane crew members and three Caucasian passengers got off. I realized that I was an Oriental, and that was why the driver refused to let me ride in the van with the airplane crew members even though the crew members worked for Alaska Airline, on which I was flying. I asked the driver to take me to the airport. The driver said, "My job is over. Another driver will come." I couldn't wait anymore. I got in a taxi and headed for the airport. The taxi driver looked like an Eskimo or an American Indian. I asked him why there were many Filipinos in Alaska. He told me their ancestors came to Alaska as laborers for the Alaska railroad. I paid him \$18 for the taxi fare. I had only \$10 worth of traveler's check and a small amount of cash in my purse.

From the jet, I saw a carpet of green grass with pink flowers beside the runway. I also saw many small airplanes on the runway. Beyond the green carpet, tall dark evergreen trees stretched into the light blue sky and white clouds. There were dark blue mountains under the white clouds. As the jet flew higher, the city of Anchorage was getting smaller and farther behind. Then the jet flew over the mountains, which were covered with snow.

After I paid for the airport shuttle van fare from Los Angeles International Airport to Mr. and Mrs. Bernhardt's home, my wallet was empty, except for several small coins.