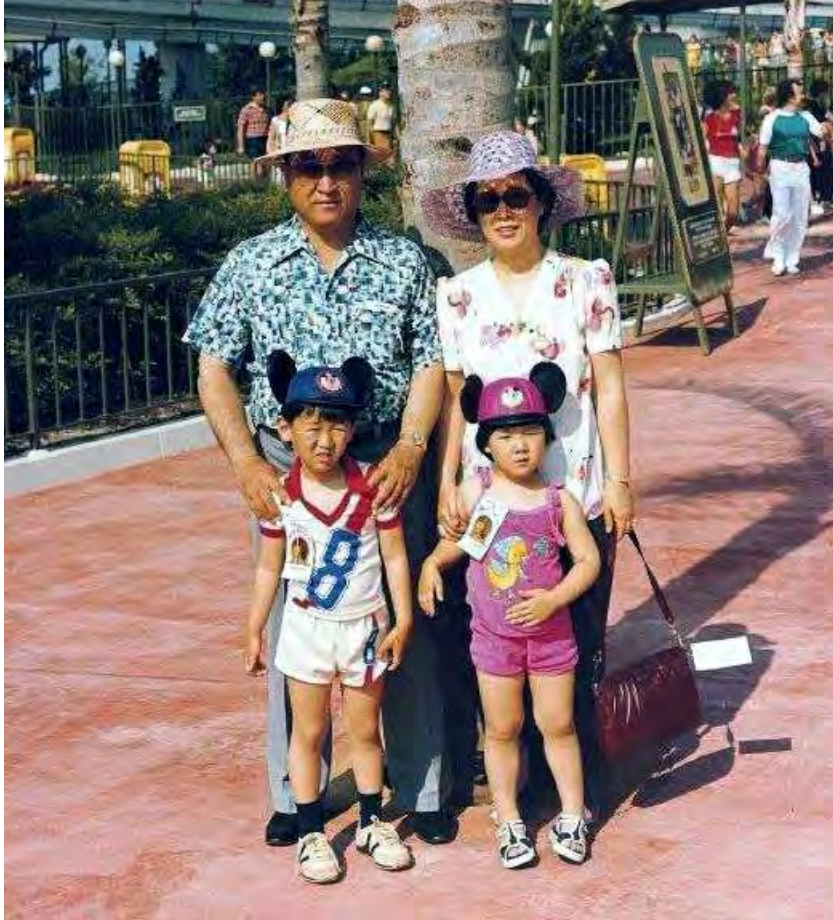


Top deck, back of the bus – observations on the E3

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This morning a mother, looking late 30s but probably younger in age, got on the top deck of my E3 bus with two kids around year 5, a boy and a girl. It was busy and she was almost shouting at them where to sit. She was trying to be strict and in control. The boy had his DS and the girl ended up with her mother's blackberry. The moment two seats became free the children jumped and moved to sit together, not interested in their mother's directions, happy to sit side by side. Occasionally from three rows back she barked at them with no real authority, in a routine of anger.

As I got ready to get off at Northfields, I searched back down the deck, and saw her childhood's lonely, anxious eyes set in a face getting heavier and older. Staring into nowhere. It's hard to be responsible and in charge when you have never felt someone care for you, to nurture your mind, your heart and your destiny. And there she sat, on her own, not thinking that anything good could happen to her today, not even conscious of what made her afraid.

I felt like stopping short my journey to the office, inviting her for a cup of tea, or taking her shopping; finding a way to let her know: that someone somewhere, up there, cares for her deeply, more than she could ever imagine.