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I got my Chinese law bachelor degree in 2006. When I was a freshman in 2002, I really felt confused about my future – should I pursue my graduate study in China or overseas, or start to work after graduation? After a long time struggling, I set up my mind to pursue my study overseas. The

main reasons are that in China, the graduate education takes at least 2 years (some schools take 3 years), but here it takes me only one; and study abroad can enrich my experience – I really wanted to know what studying abroad was like, especially in the U.S., such a country with a well-developed legal system.

Somebody once said that U.S. is a common law system country and China is a civil law system one, they are so different that what you learn makes no sense in China. But I think in such an economic and culture globalization epoch, such a difference doesn't affect the study. One-year is not long for studying, so what I want to learn is the thinking of law, the methodology of law, rather than the rule of law itself.

Concerning why I chose Hastings, the first reason of course is that Hastings is one of the excellent law schools in U.S., which is founded in 1878 – the first law school in California. Some of my friends don't know this school. It's not because Hastings is not excellent but because it is the only independent law school in University of California system, which has no other discipline setting, so it's not as well known, compared with universities like UC Berkeley and UCLA, but in the law field Hastings is very famous. Besides, the location of the school is satisfying – the climate of California, the beauty of San Francisco attracts me. San Francisco is an incontrovertible wonderful city with nice weather and convenient transportation. Students here are friendly, and professors are affable and helpful.

It really took me a period of time to adapt myself to the way of studying here. In a Chinese law school, you need not spend time to prepare for class for the reason that we have no case law. When we have class, basically the content is law theory and institutional analysis. But here is totally different. The case law requires that students spend a lot of time to do reading assignments to prepare for the next class. Inasmuch as we do most discussion during class about the cases, you can't understand if you don't read the cases in advance. At the beginning I was not used to it, so I was at a loss when holding the textbooks, which are more than 1000 pages each. It was hard to complete them at first, even without taking notes. Now this is not a problem for me. In class, the Socratic method was demonstrated incisively and vividly. Normally a new

theory will be induced from a case. The student introduces the facts of the case and the professor intervenes with questions to lead students' thinking, then analyzes the court's judgment, then concludes the induced theory. So the students must concentrate on class and take part in discussion. That's very different from classes in China. What's more, the atmosphere of class is so active – professors are impassioned giving lectures with ample gestures.

As far as I am concerned, studying overseas is a wonderful experience that enhances both ability of independent living and independent studying. I pursued studying here just after I graduated from Chinese law school without work experience. That makes sure of the consistency of study because somebody once said if you work, it will be hard to stop to go back to school; but the disadvantage is also obvious – too little social experience. Without work, you don't know what exactly you should learn; the pertinence of study is then less strong. Some of my classmates in the LL.M. program practiced as lawyers in their own country before they came here, so they are clearer on their goals when they choose classes that will be helpful to their future work. That is one recommendation I might tell other students thinking about an LL.M.