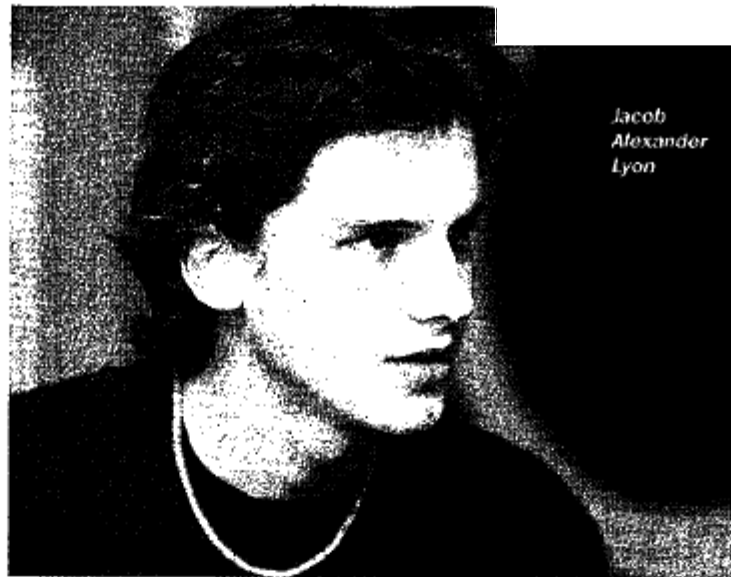




Hoda Ahmadi



Muhammad Imran



Jacob Alexander Lyon



Fatima Abu Bakar

to life in faraway land

...aten beef), a traditional delicacy in Botswana, but I've discovered that the TGIF outlets here serve something similar to it," he said.

Apart from the Malaysian version of *eswaa*, Peter has also discovered Chinese food. "I love Chinese food and Chinese tea. The food is simply heavenly here," he added.

For Kevin Lo, the good thing about studying in Malaysia is that it is much cheaper. However, the 17-year-old A-Levels student from Brunei also notes that the friendliness of the people is a major factor in helping him decide to pursue his higher education here.

"The people are so friendly and nice and very helpful," said Kevin, who is studying at Inti College.

Kevin enjoys hanging out at mamak stalls until 2am and having supper with friends, and particularly likes the night scene in KL. "In Brunei, there is no such thing as 24-hour mamak stalls or restaurants operating after midnight," he added.

Kamila Mametkulova chose Malaysia to do her business administration course because it was cheap. After more than a year here, the 20-year-old Uzbek is glad to have come here.

"When I first came, I could not speak a word of English. Today, I speak fluently thanks to all my Malaysian friends," said the girl from Sedaya International College.

When asked what was interesting about studying in KL, she said it was the cultures of the different people.

"It was lonely at first but I adapted pretty fast and soon I made many friends and we enjoyed hanging out at shopping malls during the weekends and having meals at small restaurants," she said.

"Here, you can be yourself and no one will judge you for what you wear or what you do. That's what I enjoy most," said Kamila.

For Karveen Puddoo, 22, from Mauritius, learning to fit into the Malaysian way of life was easy.

The graphic design student from LimKokWing Institute enjoys Indian food and hanging out at mamak stalls.

"I love eating at Komala's Restaurant which is famous for North Indian food as it is quite similar to the dishes at home," he said.

Karveen also enjoys hanging out in Bangsar during weekends and holidays. He visits the various places of interest in Malaysia with friends. "I do not feel homesick as I e-mail my family every day."

To rid himself of homesickness, Muhammad Imran watched Hindi movies for two weeks when he first arrived from Pakistan last February. According to the 20-year-old computer science undergraduate from Sedaya, he chose to study here because of the various courses available.

"In terms of food and culture, it is not really that different from Pakistan, but what's different is the people, they are very friend-



Kamila Mametkulova from Uzbekistan reading in the apartment she shares with her fellow international students.

ly," he said, adding that he would probably miss his Malaysian friends more than anything else when he completed his course.

During his free time, Muhammad hangs out at Suria KLCC and the Bukit Bintang area. "I find these places interesting and full of colour."

Mass communications student Lesego Goitsemana came to Malaysia in April last year to study at LimKokWing Institute. The 21-year-old who hails from Botswana fell in love with KL but found the food too spicy for her taste.

"I have a problem with spicy food and I find the weather too hot and humid," she said, adding that the weather at home is hot and dry.

However, Lesego discovered the beauty of the various cultures in Malaysia.

"It is fascinating to find so many people with different backgrounds and cultures," she said.

Today, the young student has learnt to adapt to the weather and food. "I prefer hanging out at mamak stalls and love trying out the different dishes, although I sometimes don't know what I'm having," Lesego said.

When asked what she would miss most about KL when she returned home, she said it was the lights of the city.

"The lights in the city are colourful and the night life beautiful. I've never seen anything like it before," she added.

"Hot and humid," declared Hoda Ahmadi, 22, when asked to describe Malaysia when she first arrived here to study design and multimedia.

The Iranian student said she missed almost everything about home but had since learnt to adapt well.

"It was a culture shock for me initially, but I learnt to accept everything that was new to me quickly and considered it a challenge.

"I was quite adventurous with food and tried everything new," Hoda said, adding that it was not easy to get Iranian food in KL.

Hoda said the Iranian restaurants in the city did not really serve authentic Iranian fare. "The food did not taste the same, but I could do without it."

For 17-year-old Jacob Alexander Lyon, football was the cure for his homesickness. The British lad from Manchester is pursuing a design course at LimKokWing Institute.

"When I first arrived it was a bit hard but

I played football whenever I felt lonely said.

Later on he joined an alternative band playing bass guitar.

Jacob also discovered joy in *Maggi goreng*. "I love *Maggi goreng* and enjoy having meals at mamak stalls and hanging out in Bangsar for fun," he enthused.

Malaysian food was the only thing Fatima Abu Bakar was uncomfortable with when she first arrived here in January from Nigeria.

The 25-year-old computer science student from Inti College was not used to the sour dishes that were popular here.

"But I got used to them and I find the food to be lovely," she said.

Fatima, whose father is a diplomat used to travelling and has been to Tunisia, Egypt and Scotland, but chose to study in Malaysia for the cultural experience and environment.

"I love the environment here where we are willing to help one another," Fatima, concluding that the lush greenery and *roti canai* would be the things she would miss most when she returns to Nigeria.