Coming to America

Written by Garry Lee Wright
Tuesday, 01 August 2000 18:00

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a very proud day. To see all of you recent immigrants who have come from all over the world to be tossed like ripe ingredients into America's melting pot. After passing the tests you have so diligently prepared for here, you will finally become naturalized U. S. residents. It is very moving indeed. In fact, this is the largest graduating class in the entire history of the Eddie Ackerman School of American Citizenship and Cosmetology."

"We are thanking you much, Mr. Eddie. Unworthy are we of this great honor which overflows our hearts like a million hummingbird wings."

"That's OK, Chang. And I'm particularly glad to see how well we've trained you in the first requirement for citizenship, which is the English language."

"I blush waterfalls at your praise, and pour lotus blossoms on the altar of your dragon's sister."

"You're welcome. Now, the second requirement of citizenship is good moral character."

"Excusing me please."

"Yes, Carmelita."

"Is that not why El Jefe Clinton has been thrown from power by his American people? Soon there will be firing of cannons in the capital and much rejoicing!"

"Um, not exactly. You see, every four years we replace the head of state, and— "

"Viva Zapata! We will fill the streets to pull down the statues of the evil dictators!"

"I'd hold on just a second with that. First, let's go over this election thing again. Now—"

"I am having a question, Mr. Ackerman."

"What is it, Wzcklzys?"

"The news broadcasters report a search for the vice president. Has he been lost? Perhaps he was detained by the secret police."

"There is no secret police in America. Maybe we just better start with our system of government."

"Mon capitan, I know this one!"

"All right, Henri-Jacques."

"It is that system in which a title is passed from generation to generation, no? Called in English a 'monarchy.'"

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"No, no, no! Incorrect."

"But is not this George Double-You the son of the former king?"

"Yes. I mean, no. Not king. Former president. But, you see—"

"A thousand pardons, sahib. I, too, am confused. Does his son not succeed him now?"

"No. I mean, yes. I mean, not yet. You see, first they have this convention and—"

"Ah, to see who will be anointed! The suspense of waiting must be as heavy as the camel's buttock!"

"As a matter of fact, they already know who will be anointed. I mean, nominated."

"The people will not be watching their American television receivers with the baited breath?"

"No. They'll actuallly be watching that Survivor show. You see, the convention is more or less—"

"Mr. Acronym!"

"Yes, Mohammed."

"I have studied the American tradition of going to conventions and know that there are many late-night parties with alcohol and dancing and other things my religion does not allow me to imagine."

"Well, maybe at some conventions, but not at this—"

"Mr. A! What is meant by 'water balloons and noisemakers'? These are devices used by the secret police to interrogate people at the convention?"

"There is no secret police!"

"But who will deal with the 'floor demonstrations' I have heard about?"

"Wait. Those 'demonstrations' are like parades that go up and down the aisles when the delegates get... ."

"But the news broadcasts say there will be demonstrations outside the convention. Who will deal with them?"

"The secret police. I mean— listen, you all need to study our system of government harder. Except for Nguyen, who scored 100%. You will make a wonderful American citizen."

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"Thank you, Mr. Eddie. But I have already received offers from two other countries." "I beg your pardon?"

"America is still on the short list, but we're also talking to Luxembourg and Canada."