

A Historical Moment and Movement-Presidential Election 2008

By Mei Xuan

History has been made by thousands of people, generation after generation. On November 4th of 2008, the history of democracy was rewritten by American people. People around the world witnessed this historical moment—Barack Obama became the 44th U.S President and the first African American President of the United States. Not only people in America but also the world was cheering in astonishment and joy. It is both a historical moment and movement.



I feel honored even to be a part of the history by being a witness. I was born and raised in China until I came to the United States by the end of 2007. As Mr. Obama announced his candidacy, the 2008 presidential campaign began when I was still in China. As a youngster who always dreamed big and far, I often satisfied my curiosity by watching global news on TV. Needless to say, news regarding the presidential election in America was very attractive to me and my family. Every time after we watched TV, conducting a little debate on the future trend of the election was absolutely our favorite. As the election went on to the extent where only Hillary Clinton, John McCain and Barack Obama were campaigning, every one was clear that this time, American history would be rewritten no matter which candidate was eventually elected. After all, so many “firsts” would be attached with this election. The 44th American president could be the first woman president, the first African American president, or the oldest president when elected. This election was already an unprecedented one without a doubt.

Besides, this election can be also viewed as a historical movement. After I immigrated here, I registered at City College of San Francisco as soon as I could. Not only do I appreciate the opportunity to enjoy such accessible college education, but also I want to know how Americans perceived the presidential election. By 2008, both American economy and political reputation have fallen significantly due to the four-year involvement in Iraq War. The media distinguished this election from the former ones by people’s hope for change, which spelled out the longing of people for the situation to ameliorate for the better. The history made on the election night did give Americans the hope for change in return. By people’s vote, the highest office of

the United States accomplished the power shift from Republic to Democratic Party; meanwhile, the first U.S. president of African descent was ready to serve the country where African Americans were historically suppressed racial minorities. At the election night, when I saw people all over America congratulating a biracial individual on his impressive capability and respected triumph, I was truly inspired to believe a brighter future for myself and new immigrants like me. The election of an equally qualified biracial candidate through the democratic polling system indicates that America now enters an era that is more tolerant to racial diversity than ever before. As a Chinese immigrant, I gained not only inspiration from Obama's individual success but also confidence for this country, in which I will arm myself with knowledge and continue seeking for opportunities in the future. This election symbols the public recognition of people of minorities. The election itself is a profound movement for America to shorten the distance to become a society named after racial equality.

2008 U.S. Presidential Election is a significant historical moment and movement. Living in a still race-conscious society, however, now I believe there is justice somewhere to guarantee that real golden talents, regardless of race, will not be submerged. Obviously, Obama's election manifests that America has the potential to fulfill its promises to promote racial equality for a better world. Only a country with diversity protected by tolerance and recognition can perform a sustainable leadership in the world.