



Roots

magazine

Interviews:

Adjusting to
American Culture

Follow Your Dreams;
Not the Majority

Dragon Boat Festival

A Cultural Sport

Panda Express

The Fastest Growing
Asian Restaurant in
America

KCON

The Rising Popularity
in North America

Asian Pacific American Heritage

Celebrating Asian American Cultures

IMPRESSUM

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the first edition ever and first winter issue of Roots Magazine. Cold weather is upon us in the Valley of the Sun, signaling the end of an eventful year. It is a bit ironic that the first issue of a magazine will be released during a season that symbolizes conclusion and endings. Especially with a title of Roots, coldness is not something that prompts for those roots to grow literally. However, the winter season prompts people to think about the events that have happened in the past twelve months. The closing of 2016 calls for a reflection, and the writing team of Roots decided that the topics for the articles should reflect something for which we are thankful and happy and that helps us get in touch with our heritage.

There is Rebecca Xu, an international student from Arizona State University, who talks about finding delicious food in the East Valley that reminds her the most of her home country of China. Being an international student has many challenges like communication. However, food has ties with emotion, and finding the dishes that tickles their taste buds in a way that calls them home is a feat that many do not understand.

Continuing with the theme of food, Roots explores the history of the ever so popular Chinese-American chain restaurant, Panda Express, and how it has satiated the cravings of Americans for Chinese inspired meals for decades.

Staying true to the magazine's name, an article in this issue explores the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month which takes place every May. Its importance and significance in the community stems from its encouragement for Asian Americans in this country to learn and to celebrate their ethnicities.

In the same vein, the article about the Dragon Boat Festival in Tempe, Arizona showcases a celebration of not only sport, but also of culture. As explained in the article, the tradition of Dragon Boat racing has been practiced since the last imperial dynasty of China.

In a more modern note, the growing of popularity of Korean entertainment prompted the creation of a Korean Convention. It is a way in which people from different backgrounds can bond over their love for the Korean culture. The exposure of Americans to different talents encourages appreciation of other cultures and challenges the American-centric idea of entertainment like Hollywood.

Finally, Roots interviewed an up and coming Filipina photographer, Mariah Moneda. Through her artwork, she connects with her heritage and strengthens her identification as a woman of a color in the competitive industry of photography. Her passion, she states, was uncovered from a simple gift from her uncle. She has explained to me before that she comes from a family of photographers and filmmakers. Thus, she is continuing the legacy with her talent.

We named ourselves Roots Magazine because our goal is to encourage Asian Americans to embrace their heritage. Everyone deserves to be proud of where they come from, whether your family has lived in America for generations or if you are a first generation Asian American. Continue growing.

Sincerely,
Danielle Ganon

GROUP EDITOR

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Talking Food

with Rebecca Xu

BY TAYLOR VO

Food and the difficulties for international students

America is a country that promotes freedom. Because of it, the United States has many multi-ethnic communities. Therefore, American dishes are very diverse and different in taste.

The trouble to find a restaurant

Many international students choose their homeland food instead of having American fast food in their daily meals. An international student from China, Rebecca Xu, who has trouble with language has expressed her feelings about American food styles. With her, American food is “different style”, “fat”, and “hard to eat.” When I asked if she ate any meals in the dining hall, she replied, “I have meal plan but I didn’t use it because I don’t like the food in there.” This attitude towards American food is not uncommon. Rebecca does not cook either. Instead, she goes to many different Asian restaurants to eat. Some are delicious. However, most the restaurant she went, the food is even worse in comparison to her country’s food.

According to Rebecca, who has been to many restaurants around Tempe, the menu for most Chinese

restaurants are the same but the dishes taste different

depending on the place. Rebecca answered to

my question about the menus, “Mostly, they are the same.” I ask, “Do they all cook the same?” To which she replied, “Not really.”

It is not surprising because flavors are changed to appease the taste buds of Americans. For example, some of the dishes are spicy like *mapo* tofu. However, many American Chinese restaurants reduce the spice levels and increase the sweetness so that their American customers who are not used to it can enjoy it.

When it comes to price, the cost of each meal at an Asian restaurant is more expensive compared to restaurants in China. The cost can add up, especially if one frequently eats out at restaurant like Rebecca. According to Rebecca, she goes out to eat “about more than ten times a week.” She states that each meal costs her about \$20. With her, that is not a lot of money. For students, that is expensive if they do not work or even work a minimum wage job. It takes about six hours of work to earn as much as a day’s worth of meal plan.

There are many Asian restaurants in the United States; however, to find a restaurant that serves delicious food is a difficult job. Especially if one has experienced



Pictured: Rebecca (left) and I

authentic Chinese food first hand. Rebecca has said that she has troubles communicating as an international student. However, some restaurants cater to her mother tongue. Rebecca said it depends on the restaurant if they speak her language or not. She explains, “If I go to a Japanese restaurant for sushi, they speak English, and Chinese restaurant sometimes they speak English too, but most of them speak Chinese.” Not only is finding good food hard, but also ordering food at American restaurants.

Traditional, choices and differences

Americans do not eat rice every day unlike many Asian Americans. It can make a “hard” belly which means it makes you full easily and keeps you full longer before becoming hungry again. Rebecca says she eats rice almost every day. She also eats a lot of stir-fried food but she does not eat deep fried food except for French fries. Stir-fried food is still pretty oily, though. Chinese restaurants do not have desserts usually. Rebecca expresses that it is because Chinese people do not usually have dessert after the meals like Americans. They think a glass of water or tea would be enough.

Another struggle with eating in America as an international student is the freshness of ingredients. The ingredients Chinese use to cook in China and other Asian countries are fresh. Rebecca has remembered the time she still living in China, and then she has compared the food in America. Rebecca feels like the food is not as fresh in America. In China, they could plant herbs or fruits in their backyard before they process them into dishes that have high nutritional value. Dreams will be shattered for international students who wish to come to America with thinking that they will be served “fresh” food. They have everything in the Asian markets from a coconut can to a package of spinach, but many of the produce is frozen for a whole week. Rebecca said that “vegetables are fresh but meat is not.” It makes sense especially for seafood since Arizona is far from the sea. In Vietnam and China, people

grow cow or pig or even buy from someone else, they kill it right away and cook it right after. They also do not throw anything left over like tails, legs or necks. They cook the whole thing. Every part of the animal has a different nutritional value. They think that “whatever you eat, whatever of yours will be good.” For example, if you eat chicken brain, then it will be good for your brain. In America, we do not even see a live chicken. It is also illegal to go outside and catch a live bird and kill it.

Rebecca has to adjust her food choices in America. Her solution is to go to Chinese restaurants to feel more at home. Rebecca had to walk to the Chinese restaurants at first, but she got a car a year after she moved to the United States. Some of her favorite places to eat at are “Asian markets such as Mekong market.” Lee Lee market is another one of her favorites. However, she is still disappointed with the foods in the markets because she could not even find a coconut that still has fresh green skin outside. The meats are also frozen so she has to spend a few hours to let it thaw. Ingredients are also even more expensive compared to her homeland even when it is not that fresh. Also in here, she cannot ask for the best price like the markets back home.

The Chinese cuisine has many food styles. For example, Rebecca recommended dumplings for the people who ask for her favorite Chinese food. There are a lot of different kinds of dumplings: steamed dumplings, fried dumpling, veggies dumplings, pork dumplings, juicy





dumplings, to name a few. They have different names in China but here in America they are all lumped into one “dumpling,” a word to describe Chinese flour and rice paper covered food.

Asian internationals students do not have many choices of Asian food. Japanese food besides Chinese food, may be the only choice for them because the use of rice as an ingredient. I have been to



many restaurants and have heard Chinese students ask their server if they have rice with the food they ordered. Sometimes they ask for spicier food but the chef cannot do it for them. Chinese cuisine has introduced into our country for centuries, but to be able to make the homemade dishes of Chinese cuisine is a difficult problem. Plus, Americans like Chinese-American food more because it is more recognizable than traditional Chinese food.

To study abroad is a difficult thing, but to integrate into the American life style is even more difficult for international students. Of course, when integrated into a new life, they will feel that everything will be different from what they had previously lived and experienced. That is how they feel about their food. ■

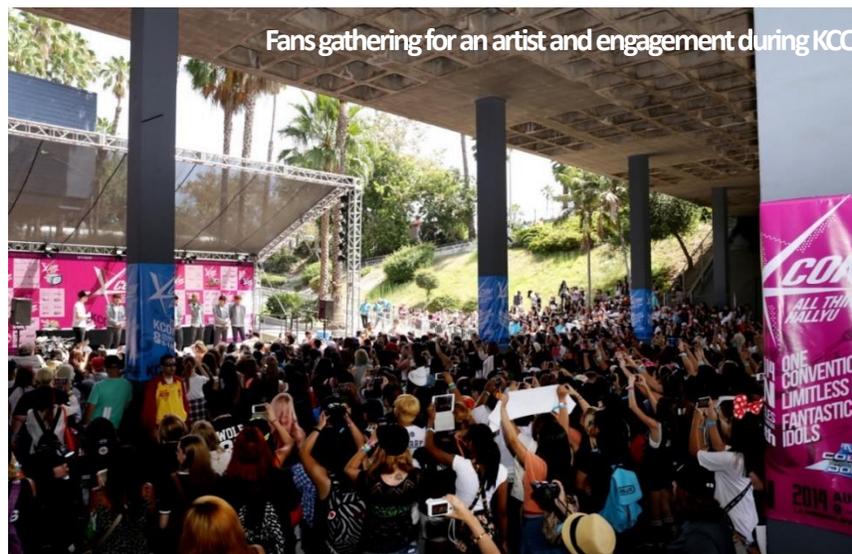
KCON.

BY ANNA NGUYEN

KCON, also known as the biggest Korean Convention in North America, is an annual event that takes place in Los Angeles, California and New York City, New York. This event works to bring together thousands of fans from all over the world into one location. KCON takes place in Los Angeles, California and has recently spread across the U.S. continent to New York City in New York. A part of why the convention and concert takes place in California and New York is because these are where clusters of Asian Americans are typically located. KCON sponsors and staffs choose these locations in an attempt to attract a wider audience. The event was first organized in 2012 and has been occurring once a year between late summer and early fall. Each year, the event gets bigger and better, and as each year approaches more people and fans attend the event. KCON takes place in attempts to spread Korean culture and entertainment and share it with the world.

The process of spreading Korean culture around the world is known as the Hallyu Wave. Anything relating to Korean culture such as its entertainment industry of music, movies and dramas, as well as Korean food is part of the Hallyu Wave. As time goes by, more young and talented Korean artists debut into the Korean pop music industry and with their music allow the Hallyu Wave to grow. In fact, Korean music and Korean movie dramas are the biggest factors that contribute to the Hallyu Wave.

The purpose of KCON is to keep the Hallyu Wave spreading around the globe. KCON allows fans to gather together to enjoy the music, food, and culture over the span of a weekend or so. At KCON, there are a variety of booths that vary by different forms of entertainment. Informative booths led by experts in the field gives fans experience, and these could include tips on learning the Korean language or playing traditional Korean games from variety shows in





A part of the convention in 2015 in Los Angeles, California

Korea. A majority of fandom booths are also displayed. Here, fans of that particular group could meet new people as well as receive gifts and merchandise.

When KCON was first introduced to the public through social media, many American KPOP fans were intrigued and excited to finally have an opportunity to meet their favorite KPOP artists. Since KCON first became an annual event in America, KPOP has become more widespread and popular within the global community. Some popular artists that attended the event included 5-member girl group 4Minute and female soloist G.NA. Boy groups consisted of 6-member group EXO-M,

B.A.P., VIXX and 5-member boy group NU'EST.

The following year KCON expanded and became bigger than ever. Now extending to a 2-day convention and 1-night concert, thousands of fans from all over the world came to the venue in Los Angeles, California. Groups that attended included male artist G-Dragon, boy groups like Teen Top, 2AM, Dynamic Duo, EXO, and soloist Yoo Seungwoo. Girl groups like Crayon Pop and F(X) also attended. Booths like the Dance-All-Day Booth in which fans who loved

to dance to KPOP music and choreography were also available. These booths had the purpose of entertaining as well as informing fans and people about KPOP, Korean culture, Asian fashion, and the Hallyu Wave.

“Korean music and Korean movie dramas are the biggest factors that contribute to the Hallyu Wave.”

Additionally, in 2014 the convention expanded to a 2-full day conventions and 2-night concert! Groups that attended included boy groups BTS, B1A4, CNBLUE, VIXX, Teen Top, and soloist G-Dragon. Girl groups that attended include Girls' Generation, SPICA, and soloist IU. Afterwards in 2015 and 2016, some

famous KPOP groups that attended the convention included Seventeen, ASTRO, GOT7, Shinhwa, Monsta X, Sistar, Block B, Zion T, Crush, Red Velvet, Day6, Ailee, Eric Nam, Mamamoo, BTOB, I.O.I, Twice, GFriend, SHINee, and Dean. With a 2-day



also reminds us of why we have a KCON in the first place. The event was initially established to bring not only KPOP fans in America together, but also the North American continent and eventually any place around the world. It is an event that reminds everyone of their

convention and 2-night concert that took place over the weekend, KCON was the biggest Hallyu convention in North America in ever recorded in history.

One of Korea's biggest sponsors and music entertainment companies MNET is part of the creation of KCON. MNET has sponsored numerous music festivals and events not just in Korea but also in Japan, Hong Kong, France, Dubai, Australia, Mexico, and many other countries. One of the

biggest events they sponsor is MAMA, or the MNET Asian Music Awards, which is held annually at the beginning of December in Hong Kong. Sponsors like

MNET give opportunities for the Hallyu Wave to spread by holding different concerts and events in many metropolis cities around the world. With the idea that music brings different cultures together around the world, MNET continues to sponsor various concert

events and conventions in many countries.

Speaking of Hallyu, Korean food and fashion is a big interest for lots of people. Famous Korean foods like kimchi, tteokbokki, which is rice cake and red chili sauce, as well as Korean BBQ and many more Korean foods are served at food venues located around the KCON convention. Additionally, many KPOP fans are intrigued by KPOP idol's sense of fashion; thus, they follow these

“It is an event that reminds everyone of their love for Korean culture.”

trends. Booths that give tips on Korean fashion, skin beauty, and health are located all at KCON. Giveaways and competitive games are played as well in the booths, and everyone just simply enjoys being part of that Hallyu Wave.

It all comes down to this question: why is KCON so important? KCON is important not only to the KPOP fans in America, since it gives them the opportunity to meet and interact with their favorite artists, but it

love for Korean culture, and because it is an annual event that has been taking place in Los Angeles and New York, the Hallyu wave of Korean culture is spreading like a wildfire in the United States. Not only Korean culture has peaked in people's interests because of KCON, but Asian culture in general as well. Asian fashion and food within the Los Angeles and New York communities have attracted more people than ever.

Since KCON takes place in the Asian American concentrated cities of Los Angeles and New York, the event has had immense impact on the spread international Asian countries within the United States. Because KCON is so festive and popular each year, many people who are not into KPOP are introduced to it through KCON. Not only does KCON give the opportunity for thousands of international fans to meet their favorite Korean idols, it continues to promote the spread of the Hallyu Wave and Asian culture all around the world. ■

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN *Heritage*

BY WILLIAM CHEN

APA WEEK

Asian Americans are currently the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month actually started as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Asian Pacific Heritage Week was first presented by Frank Horton, Norman Mineta, Senators Daniel Inouye, and Spark Matsunaga to the President of the United States which was Jimmy Carter at the time. Asian Pacific Heritage Week was proposed as a week of celebration of Asian culture in the first ten days of the month of May. This celebration was held in the first week of May because the first records of Asians arriving to United States date back to May 7, 1843 when the Japanese laborers arrived to the United States. This week was also selected

because of the completion of the Transcontinental Railway on May 10, 1869 that was created many Chinese laborers. On October 5, 1978 Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution that made Asian Pacific American Heritage Week an annual celebration. More than a decade later in 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed a law that extended it to a month. Then, it was dedicated the entire month of May two years after the bill was signed.

LEARNING ABOUT CULTURE

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month holds a huge significance in preserving and educating people about Asian and Asian American culture and history. Americans are constantly

exposed to the different cultures and ethnics groups that shape who they are today. Because of this culture exposed to a diverse ethnic group, many Asian Americans are unaware of their heritage and of what their culture actually consists. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month provides knowledge about cultural backgrounds to newer generations of Asian Americans as well as people that are not of Asian descent. During this month many events such as festivals and theaters performances take place.

DANCES AND PERFORMANCES

Festivals that takes place in Asian Heritage American Month consists of Asian food from street vendors,



Left: Women performing a Korean traditional dance called the Buchaechum Dance

Top: Tradition Chinese Lion Dance

traditional dances, martial arts, and songs played by traditional instruments or sung by individuals. Some traditional dances that are performed are the Manchurian Dance, the Bharatnatyam Dance, the Buchaechum Dance, and the Lion Dance. The Manchurian Dance, which is from Chinese culture, originated from the Qing Dynasty. This dynasty was known to be the final imperial period of China. This dance was practiced by imperial princess of the Forbidden City. Women danced in headdresses, tassels, handkerchiefs, and unique raised shoes. Next, the Bharatnatyam Dance is a dance that originated in India. It was believed that the dance was written down in a Sanskrit text called the Natya Shastra. The dance is made up of complex hand signals and body movements that symbolize emotions. The Bharatnatyam has been popularized in the Hindu culture of South India. Another dance is the Buchaechum Dance which originated from Korea. It consists of female dancers who wear bright colors and hold large fans in each of their arms. Throughout the Buchaechum, the dancers would position their fans to display images of butterflies, flowers, and waves. Finally, the Lion Dance was made up of two people being in a costume that represented a lion. This dance was thought to bring good luck and was thought to ward evil spirits away.

Other practices such as martial arts are presented in festivals and theaters. Tai Chi is a common martial art that is practiced by many elderly people of Asian communities. It is a martial art that

trains the body and mind from fluid and small movements. There has been evidence showing that a constant practice of Tai Chi can lower blood pressure and increase muscle strength.

Instruments are also played through traditional instruments such as the Chinese harp, the bamboo violin, and tradition flutes are played. These events provide a sense of familiarity to the elders as well as educate new generation of traditions of which they were unaware.

RAISING AWARENESS AND BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is vital to the Asian community because it brings Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders together to support one another. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month helps build a voice in the Asian community. In recent years, there has been a controversial case where a Chinese police officer was accused of killing a black man named Akai Gurley in November of 2014. Sometime in November of 2014, Peter Liang and another officer that was Caucasian went up a dark stairwell and shot a bullet that ricocheted into Akai Gurley. Peter Liang was initially convicted of manslaughter when it was not intentional. During Asian Pacific American Heritage month, many of people of the Chinese community and other Asian American supporters came out to protest against Peter Liang's sentence because of similar cases in the past where people of color are killed by

white officers, but the officers were not sentenced with any punishment. Asian protestors believed that Peter Liang was used as a scapegoat for the American justice system and was taken advantage of due to his ethnicity. In the end, Peter Liang was sentenced to probation and community service after the judge changed Peter's conviction.

CELEBRATION AND REFLECTION

People of Asian descent and other people from diverse backgrounds can celebrate by going out and enjoying traditional Asian meals, learn and ask about family history that is not really spoken about on a day to day basis, and attend festivals and events that host cultural programs.

Even though Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is a time for celebration, it is also a time for Asians to reflect upon themselves and their history. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month was also created to awareness of the struggles that Asian Americans had gone through legacy in America. People are reminded of the hardships of the Filipino laborers, the Chinese involvement in the Transcontinental Railroad, the Japanese that were forced into internment camps, the struggles of refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia, and many more. Also have discussion that are controversial about the Asian community by bringing up topics about how Asians are seen through American lenses and ask Asians about their experiences growing up as an Asian American. ■

Dragon Boat Festival

BY WILLIAM CHEN

IT'S THE LAST one hundred and twenty-five meters of your five-hundred-meter race and your drummer shout "FINISH IT!" as you dip your paddle in and out of the water like a metronome.

On October first and second of twenty sixteen, the Arizona Dragon Boat Association (AZDBA) held their thirteenth annual dragon boat races at Tempe Town Lake. Many teams from across the nation and around the globe come every year to participate in preserving a cultural tradition as well as to compete for the glorious gold medals.

ORIGINS OF DRAGON BOAT RACES

Dragon boat originated from southern China about twenty-five thousand years ago, from the harrowing tale of Qu Yuan. Qu Yuan was the most prestigious member of a hand selected advisors from the king Chu in the Zhou Dynasty. He tried to warn the emperor about the threats from the kingdom of Qin but due to disbelief and corruption in the state, Qu Yuan was exiled by the emperor. Qu Yuan began writing poems and scholarly works about political corruption. After a period of time, the kingdom of Chu was overtaken

by the Kingdom of Qin, and upon hearing the tragedy, Qu Yuan committed suicide in the Miluo River. Citizens in the area then began to set off on boats with paddles and drums to scare off evil spirits in searching for him. With the constant surge of people going out to the river in search for Qu Yuan's body, the sport of dragon boat racing was conceded to the world.

twenty people to race in it. The front of the boat is where the lightest people sit. They are called the strokes, and they set the pace of the boat. The middle of the boat is called the engine. It consists of the biggest and strongest people on the team. The back of the boat is called the terminators. They are the ones that have good technique and pull the hardest water on the boat.



Pictured: "Intel White" corporate team heading towards the starting line.

RACING STRATEGIES

A dragon boat is made up of ten rows of seat and need about eighteen to

During a race, there are three different parts: start, middle, and finish. The first part would be made of a start which is different between teams. The start usually consists of a combination of long hard strokes to pop the boat out of the water, powers, and sprints. The objective of the start is to surge the boat ahead of everyone else because it is harder to surge the boat when you are eating the wake of another boat. The teams want their boat to give the other boats more weight to paddle against. The second part of the race is the middle where boats keep a consistent rate most of the time. If the

boat seems to slow down or if the boat seems as if it can surge more, the steers or drummer will call out a power or sprint. At the last twenty-five percent of the race, the drummer and steers will call

out a “FINISH IT!” where the paddlers give all they have for the last surge. Finishes are usually made up of sprints or powers that are a little bit faster than the normal power pace.

TEMPE TOWN LAKE FESTIVAL DAY 1

Throughout October 1st and October 2nd, races were held as early as 8 A.M. until 6 in the afternoon. In the early morning, you can see Tempe Town Lake being cluttered with tents of teams participating in the competitions. The first day of the event consisted of many local corporate teams racing in 250 meter races. These corporate teams consisted of Mayo Clinic, Wells Fargo, SRP, Intel, AT&T, ACEL, and many more. Each team would have to complete heats to be placed in their divisions. The divisions consisted of A, B, and C. After their two heats, each team would then race for a chance of obtaining a medal in their division. Throughout the day, people participating in the races meandered across the lake.

VENDORS AND ACTIVITIES

People were in out of tents warming up in the scorching sun, going over race strategy or resting before races

in their team’s tents, marshalling under tents waiting to hop on a boat, or scouting out teams that may pose a threat to earning a medal. The event had a stage where traditional Chinese cultural practices were presented to a crowd.

The event also had a large variety of vendors that helped make this event possible. There were many food vendors that put of an enticing aroma of Asian food. Food vendors consisted of Hawaiian Barbeque, seafood, rice plates, ice shavery, and many more. There were other vendors that sold many other Asian souvenirs such as Chinese umbrellas, bracelets, coins, fans, hats, and good luck charms.

There were other vendors that supplied equipment to the paddlers such as Stohlquist and Burn Water. These vendors sold thing such as life jackets, also known as a PFD (performing floaty devices), carbon fiber paddles in various sizes, grip tape, paddle guards, butt/seat pads, and wax. Vendors at the event hosted small competitions such as crazy yoga poses, eating competitions, or something with physical endurance to give away rare paddles or souvenirs.

TEMPE TOWN LAKE FESTIVAL DAY 2

The second day was when the more competitive races were held. It was made up of 500 meter races and a 2000-meter race at the end. Another exciting aspect of the second day was the fact that U24, the under twenty-four United States team, was there to see how their sub team meshed and to scout for other paddlers as well. The races were broken up into many divisions such as women’s, men’s, mixed, masters that consisted of ages 40 and up, grandmasters, collegiate, and the 2000-meter where everyone could participate in. The second day’s weather was, however, the polar opposite of the first day. It was gloomy and rained consistently throughout the day. Many team’s tents were drenched in the rain, and some of the races were postponed due to heavy rainfall. However, because teams have traveled quite a distance to compete in the festival and the medals have not yet been handed out, teams continued to paddle through the rain. At the end of all the races, the teams gathered around the stage for the award ceremony to receive their medals as well as to congratulate the other teams. ■



Left: Mixed division 2nd heat of October 2, 2016

Right: Picture of “Monsoon” Arizona Men’s Team





Mariah Moneda

BY DANIELLE GANON

The beginning of adulthood is a tumultuous time. For many young adults on the cusp of completing their second decade as a sentient human being on this planet, the uncertainty of the future coupled with the pressure to choose a lifelong career in a short amount of time seems daunting. That is not the case for 19 year-old Mariah Moneda. A sophomore Film Major from Arizona State University and Arizonan native, she chose her major because of her passion for photography after deciding that journalism did not give her that much room for creativity. She explained, “I switched majors last minute because I wanted something with a more creative leeway instead of just talking to people.” (*Update: At a recent Christmas Party, she updated me that she officially changed her major to Photography*). Her decision to pursue the arts was not met without criticism, however. Considered unpractical, her father’s approval is one of the obstacles she had to face trying to be taken seriously. Another is the general association of any art-related studies as easy and useless. Despite the hurdles, her passion continues to push her to achieve her goals. She is a proud Filipina and Pacific Islander who often infuses her roots into her works. Mariah is constantly inspired by the people of whom she

takes pictures. We talk about how she stumbled upon her passion, seeing the beauty in everyone, and her definition of success.

What are you dabbling in as far as your arts go?

Even though I'm a film major, my focus is, personally is photography because I run a photography business on the side of my film career ... I also paint, and I also draw and any art thing that you could possibly think of I'm involved in and decently good at. My focus is photography because that's what I love to do, and that's what I enjoy doing the most.

When did you start getting into photography specifically?

Senior year of high school. I was given a camera by my uncle ... It sat collecting dust for a while, and I finally decided to pick it up because ... I was on broadcast ... I just fell in love with it because I ended up seeing that I'm really good at it ... I thought I wanted to be a writer, but then I was like, *Oh, look! Quick art!*

Quick art?

Photography is a very quick form of art in the sense of capturing a design element like composition because if you're drawing it, it'll take forever.

When did you start getting serious about it? When was it when you thought, *Wow. I could go beyond with photography as something more than a hobby?*

It was the end of my senior when I started taking senior photos for people ... I was just starting out. I charged like \$20 an hour ... It's a good starting spot, which is crazy because now I charge 200 to 250 [dollars] ... I was also able to start my website for free. That really help promote my business because then I had a portfolio that I could show people.

Beyond your website, you also have different social media accounts on different platforms.

Senior year, I ended up with a very large social media following for some reason. I don't know. Maybe it's because I got hot *[laughing]* ... I ended up making a different Instagram for my photography only which I don't have any of my personal face on it. I wanted my work to be showcased on a platform that anybody could easily access. Of course on Twitter, I post a lot of random photos.

How did you feel when you started getting an audience?

I loved it. The biggest thing for me and my philosophy when it comes to photos is not everyone

thinks they're attractive on camera ... I try my very hardest to change that mindset and show people that they are attractive ... There's beauty in everyone, which is also hard for social media because there's this standard--this gold standard. The perfect woman, or the perfect guy. You have to look like this or you're not attractive.

“It's really given me the chance to get out of my shell.”

You're Filipino. You know about the whole colonized mentality of having fair skin and being part white, making you "better" than everyone else.

I think about that a lot. Capturing the color and essence of the person is honestly more enjoyable than if I was taking pictures of your generic white person.

It sounds like you're pretty busy. How do you get everything done?

I don't know actually. *[laughing]* I make time for when it's important. I try to make sure I get all my stuff done before I have shoots.



Pictured: Mariah in action.



It's also a part time job, which is nice to have both—a passion that makes you money.

It doesn't feel like a job at all. I have a job currently which I'm quitting because it's getting in the way. I'm a telemarketer for ASU. I already have a pretty good rapport of conversing with people and getting to know them, but that's on a one-on-one scale ... If I can see the person, I can toss compliments at them. Compliment after compliment, and that slowly eases their [comfort], and then they look comfortable in the camera ... Oddly enough my Instagram is full of people of color. It's mostly tan skin.

Is it a subconscious thing to gravitate more towards people of color?

It might be because I think the variance in like the way they look is more beautiful to me.

Are you planning on continuing that in the future?

Yeah, I definitely plan on taking more pictures. The goal is to eventually run a studio when I graduate, have a place, and

establish myself in this community. I'm already established kind of with the Filipino community [in Arizona]. People know me as the photographer, but I'm not going to turn away someone who's not a person of color.

How has sharing your art and doing your art shape you?

With the camera, I'm definitely more comfortable ... Before, I used to be so stressed out about taking pictures of people, worried about not making them look good ... [With] my personality and the way I interact with people, it's really given me the chance to get out of my shell.

It's not a traditional career choice. How did you feel about telling your parents?

All my life my dad's been pushing me to be a nurse or go somewhere into the medical field knowing because of his experience that there will always be a job ... But because he pushed it so often, it's just been one of the things where it's like, no I don't want to do it. I've also been a creative person, and I've always been against normal social norms especially for an Asian social construct... A lot of Asians are very quiet and smart and do your thing but I'm also very bad at math.

Those stereotypes obviously don't apply but you know people still expect it from you even though it's not true.

I suck at math. I suck at paying attention. I suck at anything that involves me sitting down for too long and trying to focus ... [Photography] is

“I see myself... [as] someone who is able to show the world a different image.”

something that gets me moving, social, happy, and I'm creating. That's the most important to me--it's that I'm creating. I'm pushing my own creative limits and learning everything there is to learn about what I can do as an artist. Dad didn't approve of it until I started making money with the business. Even when I was a journalism major, he was still kind of iffy about it because even though journalism is not art, it's not also a very move-forward path. It's semi-dying ... It was really hard for him to actually believe in what I could do. I guess a lot of motivation came from me trying to prove him wrong. Now that I have proved him wrong, it's very satisfying to know that I could do things in fields that a lot of people say aren't good fields to get majors in or to do anything in.

How do you see yourself in the future with photography?

I did mention I want a studio, but I see myself thoroughly succeeding because I want it so, so bad ... That's what I'm working towards. I want to be one of the best photographers in AZ ... I see myself, if not one of the best photographers, one of the most innovative...someone who is able to show the world a different image.

Mariah's career in photography is fairly young, but she is set on pursuing her art and making a place for herself in the industry. Not many young adults can confidently say that what they are doing right now is what they want to do for life. With Mariah, her receiving a gift from her uncle not only unwrapped a camera but also a passion that brings her happiness and a talent to show the beauty in her clients. It was a serendipitous event that seems like you would only see in a film. ■

If you are interested in viewing more of her work, visit her website at <http://www.mariahmophoto.com>.



| *History*

PANDA, PANDA, PANDA

The history of America's beloved Panda Express.

BY JASON HU

WHEN AMERICANS TALK about Chinese food, there is a restaurant that is often mentioned in the conversation: Panda Express! It has become one of the largest Asian restaurant chains in the United States. Panda Express has achieved commercial success. It also provides more choices to people who do not have enough time to prepare dinner but still want a hearty and delicious meal. There is a variety of American Chinese dishes served in Panda Express. It also provides all kinds of food plans that satisfy customers who either want a sweet, spicy, or light taste. Panda Express has greatly shaped the daily lives of American people. Definitely, Panda Express is one of the most popular restaurants in America and represents the iconic Chinese-American fast food. Let us review the history and evolution of this legendary Asian American chain restaurant.

THE BEGINNING

The restaurant has over 1,800 locations and has more than 27,000 employees around the world. Its origin is from a table service Chinese food restaurant called "Panda Inn." The first Panda Inn was founded by Andrew Cherng, his wife Peggy Cheng, and his father, Master Chef Ming-Tsai Cherng. Andrew was born in 1948 in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, China, the place where Andrew spent his most of his childhood. After that, he moved with his family to Taiwan. In 1963, they moved again to Yokohama, Japan where his father Ming-Tsai Cherng took a job as a chef. After Immigration and Nationality Act was put into effect in 1965, Andrew immigrated to the United States in 1966 just like other Asian immigrants during this period. In same year, 18 years old Andrew Cherng started his studies in Mathematics at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas. In Baker

University, Andrew met his future best partner in business and wife, Peggy Cherng. He earned his B.S. degree in 1970 from Baker University, and Peggy received B.S. degree from Oregon State University. After that, they both went to University of Missouri where he earned his Master's degree in Applied Mathematics. and she her Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering. In 1973, Andrew and his father Ming-Tsai Cherng started a restaurant in Pasadena, California. They started Panda Inn on June 8 which brought new varieties of Chinese cuisine, such as Mandarin cuisine and Szechuan cuisine, to Sothern California. That gave them a competitive edge on traditionally favored Chinese Cantonese cuisine in the area. In the beginning of Panda Inn, it went through the common hard times that most restaurants encounter such as lack of customers. It forced them to offer special deals and freebies to attract customers. Andrew's father Ming-Tsai Cherng then passed away in 1982, so Peggy decided to join Andrew in restaurant business. Despite the sad death of Andrew's father, the same year just a short time after the death, a second Panda Inn was opened nearby in Glendale.

HERE COMES OUR FAVORITE RESTAURANT

The Cherngs were invited by the developer of Glendale Galleria, Donahue Schriber Real Estate, through a connection by one of Andrew's acquaintance. He had been urged to start the spinoff in the mall. Therefore, a fast food version of Panda Inn appeared in Galleria's food court, and the name of the fast food restaurant was changed to Panda Express to reflect its fast food intention. Panda Express was launched on October 1982. This Chinese fast food restaurant was favored by customers in the mall, unsurprisingly. The

second Panda Express was opened two years later in 1985 at the Westside Pavilion, another shopping mall located in West Los Angeles. Panda Express started to spread around United States steadily, from food court stands in shopping malls to individual storefronts to airport outlets. Panda Express started a Chinese food craving around United States.



Some of the dishes offered at Panda Express

FOR BETTER FLAVOR

Panda Express as a fast casual restaurant chain serves American Chinese cuisine. It was originally founded to bring new varieties of Chinese cuisine to traditionally favored Cantonese cuisine to compete with other Chinese restaurant in Pasadena. After, the restaurant transformed into fast food, mostly located in major shopping malls. Its customer demographic started to shift beyond the typically Asian American. Therefore, Panda Express began to transform its cuisine into something more Americanized. Compare to traditional Chinese Mandarin cuisine and Szechuan cuisine, Americanized Chinese cuisine highlighted sweetness and became less spicy. Andrew Cherng and his father Ming-Tsai Cherng were both born in Yangzhou, China, and the main cuisine in the area is sweet, which perhaps largely influenced Andrew on his later Americanized Chinese cuisine. No matter what kind of cuisine was influenced on Panda Express, it has been popular and

successfully accepted by mainstream Americans, and thus, widely spread in the country.

There were many great dishes that were innovated during the progress of Panda Express. In 1987, the legendary and signature dish of Panda Express was developed by Chef Andy Kao, Orange Chicken. This American Chinese stir fried chicken has been popular for over 30 years, and it was inspired by the flavors of Hunan Province, originally from Szechuan cuisine. Orange Chicken is one of the most popular dishes. Almost 70 million pounds are sold each year. It features crispy chicken with sweet and light spicy orange sauce. There are also many dishes that have been popular since the first Panda Express, such as Beijing Beef, the crispy strips of marinated beef with tangy-sweet sauce that has been served in every Panda Express since the first one established in Galleria. Also, recently developed dishes like Honey Walnut Shrimp has been well received. More progress was made by Panda Express, like the health-minded Wok Smart selections that were introduced to customers and menu offerings that have no MSG added. Panda Express's menu is

getting healthier, and eating well at Panda has never been easier.



GO PANDA

Panda Express had been the iconic American Chinese food for decades. It has been extremely successful and popular in American mainstream. Andrew and Peggy Cherng not only widely spread Asian American food, they also became the largest Asian segment restaurant chain in the United states. They their own charity called Panda Cares to help children's hospitals and to aid in disaster relief. Panda Cares not not only creates a favorable image for the restaurant, it also is a great image for Asian Americans.

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