



ASIAN AMERICAN VOICES

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LaGuardia Community College

Asian American Voices

Magazine of the Students

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Vol. 1

Acknowledgements

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS
Asian American Voices
No.1, 2019

The Asian American Heritage Celebration planning committee is delighted to launch the first issue of the journal Asian American Voices to highlight the talent and experiences of LaGuardia's Asian and Asian American students, staff, and faculty.

LaGuardia Community College is home to 20% Asian and Asian American students. By publishing work dedicated to their recognition and development, this journal is breaking new ground. Points of origins for these students and their families range widely from China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Iran, Bhutan, Asians from Middle Eastern countries and from the diaspora including communities such as East Indians from the Caribbean.

The pages of our first issue are filled with photography, drawings, recipes, personal reflections, poems, and expository essays – documenting the talent of our Asian and Asian American students and faculty. We are eager to present this work because it illuminates diversity, challenging representations of Asians and Asian Americans as a monolithic homogeneous entity. Interwoven into our mission of highlighting differences is a commitment to documenting Asian and Asian American experiences through historical, sociological, linguistic, literary, and visual contexts.

Borne out of thriving traditions of acknowledging the talent, histories, and narratives of LaGuardia's communities of color, Asian American Voices builds on these aspirations to showcase cultural, creative, and critical achievements of Asians and Asian Americans at LaGuardia. The inauguration of Asian American Voices will dovetail with the Asian Heritage Celebration mini conference on May 9, 2019.

This journal would have not have been possible without the support of students, staff, and faculty across disciplines who foster inclusivity by legitimizing and giving visibility to our Asian and Asian American community. We are grateful to the Asian Heritage planning committee for creating a forum in which to propose this journal, and Dr. Gordon Tapper, Chair of English Department, for his support. We are especially thankful to our student committee, Melissa Aguilar, Angrej Singh, and Popy Chowdhury, for their work on design and layout.

Most importantly, Asian American Voices would not have been possible without the students and faculty who submitted their work. It is our pleasure to present their visual and written accomplishments. We hope they inspire future engagements with work by and about Asians and Asian Americans.

The Editors

Long Island City, New York
May, 2019

Tribute to Dr. Ruhma Choudhury (1968-2018)

Reflections from Faculty

Dr. Ruhma Choudhury of the Education and Language Acquisition Department joined the LaGuardia community in 2010, after receiving an Ed.D. degree in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University. At LaGuardia, she taught linguistics, bilingualism, ESL, and engaged in and published research regarding multilingual learners.

Her role as a faculty mentor of the Bangladeshi Students Association generated multiple cultural events showcasing students' proud heritage. She co-chaired the Faculty Research Colloquium, encouraging colleagues to come together and share their research and scholarship.

Ruhma's research and scholarship was informed by and rooted in teaching practices. She integrated critical approaches to language learning and bilingual education through multilingual academic literacy. Ruhma understood that teachers hold beliefs – often unconscious – about their practices, their students, the content, and their roles and responsibilities. She understood that these beliefs have enormous impact upon student learning.

In her field study in Bangladesh, she highlighted rural teachers' perspectives towards a state imposed curricular change in English teaching, and documented how these perspectives manifested in teaching practices. This helped her explore English teaching approaches from both a global and local perspective, but also a cognitive and social perspective. She examined the means by which teachers consciously and unconsciously respond to power.

Once she came to LaGuardia, Ruhma recognized the unique opportunities that LaGuardia offered to further her research agenda through her study of multilingual students' transition into college. She contributed an in-depth investigation of the realities of raising bilingual and bicultural Bangladeshi-American children in New York City in a Bengali community program, published in a *Multilingual Matters'* 2013 volume, *Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism*. She hypothesized – correctly – that providing students with instruction in their heritage language, alongside of English, would promote academic literacy skills in both languages. Her follow-up study, co-authored with Leigh Garrison-Fletcher, "Bengali-Speaking Multilingual Writers in Transition into Community College" (2017), became a chapter in an edited collection published by Routledge.

First and foremost a master teacher, Ruhma's research propelled her to reflect on her own multilingual experience in acquiring academic writing. This resulted in another peer-reviewed publication entitled "What My Schoolteachers Failed to Appreciate about Translanguaging" that appeared in *Language and Globalization: An Autoethnographic Approach* (2017). Using her own language learning experiences as artifacts, Ruhma demonstrated that, contrary to traditional classroom practices, language is not compartmentalized in the brain. Rather, language learners use all available linguistic resources to acquire a new language and to make sense of their own multilingual worlds. She shared this line of thinking in LaGuardia's Spring 2015 Provost's Learning Space seminar, focusing on the connection between neuroscience and learning.

Her contributions made a profound impact, not only on her own approach to language teaching and learning at the College, but on her colleagues in the Education and Language Acquisition Department, the College, and the international multilingual literacy community.



Publications

Choudhury, Ruhma. "Raising Bilingual and Bicultural Bangladeshi-American Children in New York City: Perspectives from Educators and Parents in a Bengali Community Program." *Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism*, edited by Garcia, O., Zakharia, Z., & Otcu, B. Multilingual Matters, 2013, pp. 60-73.

Choudhury, Ruhma, and Garrison-Fletcher, Leigh. "Bengali-Speaking Multilingual Writers in Transition into Community College." *Linguistically Diverse Immigrant and Resident Writers: Transitions from High School to College*, edited by C. Ortmeier-Hooper and T. Ruecker. Routledge, 2017, pp. 143-156.

Choudhury, Ruhma. "What my Schoolteachers Failed to Appreciate about Translanguaging." *Language and Globalization: An Autoethnographic Approach*, edited by M. Borjian. Routledge, 2017, pp. 103-114.

Biography written by

Monika Ekiert, Associate Professor, Education & Language Acquisition

Leigh Garrison-Fletcher, Associate Professor, Education & Language Acquisition

Maria Jersky, Professor, Education & Language Acquisition

Faculty Reflections

I was privileged to work with Ruhma for 8 years while we co-chaired the Faculty Research Colloquium at LaGuardia. Our time working together remains a highlight of my career at LaGuardia because being in Ruhma's presence meant being enveloped in the light that emanated from her beautiful spirit. She was generous with her time, deeply thoughtful, and she cared about students and faculty. When I think about our times spent together, I can still see her broad smile and hear her laugh, reminding me of her empathetic nature. She was so emotionally attuned to others, she picked up on their challenges or discomfort and also rejoiced in their successes. As I reflect on Ruhma though, I mostly think of her bravery. She was carrying a load that many of us will never know the magnitude of, yet whenever I called her or we met, she had a buoyancy that was truly remarkable. Ruhma, you were a daughter, a sister, aunty, friend, teacher, mentor, scholar, but above all else, you were the embodiment of what it means to have a life well-lived. I carry you in my heart, and your spirit lives on in all the lives you touched.

-Andrea Francis, Professor, Business & Technology Department

Back in Spring 2016, for the first time I was introduced to Dr. Ruhma Chowdhury, who helped me with the translation of my biography published in *InTransit*. I did not get a chance to thank her personally, and here again she reached out to me and invited me to become a mentor of the Bangladesh Student Association (BSA) club. I was reluctant to take the mentoring position, but her sincere approach inspired me to facilitate the student club in bringing awareness of the campus connectedness.

Though I didn't get a chance to meet her in person, she has helped me in various capacities. I wanted to meet her in person and made several attempts by calling her. She seemed very humble and informed me that she was unwell. Wish I inquired further to know about the cause of her illness. While mentoring the BSA club, I remained occupied but I must admit that I can't replace her. Members not only praised her, but also wanted her back as a mentor. I felt that I may not have deserved the mentoring position as I couldn't gain the popularity she had with students. One of the member leaders came to me and shared her holistic experience working with Ruhma. Now I understand the reasons behind her popularity. She had been a role model and she sincerely cared about the existence of the BSA club. Her

administration helped the college to embrace the mission of the BSA club, while helping the student members to gain knowledge in civic engagement, leadership development, and social engagement. I was very much touched by her spiritual connection to the college, which still makes me think that she is only physically absent.

A scholar like Dr. Chowdhury who has given me and LaGuardia students so much, we are blessed to get acknowledged. We deeply value her contribution and respect her intended purpose of helping LaGuardia students to envision their future. We pray for her departed soul. Dr. Ruhma Chowdhury, we miss you.

-Sada Hye Jaman, Instructor, Business and Technology Department



Photo 1. Dr. Ruhma Choudhury with Dr. Gail Mellow, President of LaGuardia Community College, and students of the Bangladesh Student Association

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Creative Writing & Poems

1.

Surprise / বিশ্বয়

Popy Chowdhury / পপি চৌধুরী

In a tiny apartment building in New York City. Lora, a 30-year-old pretty, skinny woman is busy in her kitchen. Today is her 5th marriage anniversary. It seems to Lora that, her husband forgot about their marriage anniversary. He goes to his office like the other days. There were no changes in his behavior.

Lora wants to surprise him. Once, her husband was very eager to have a baby but now he is silent and doesn't talk anymore about it. Today, she will give him the good news.

Lora cooks delicious foods, nicely decorates the rooms, and she dresses up beautifully. Then she brings out a new jacket from the wardrobe, a gift she bought for him. Lora waits for her husband to return.

At 8 pm, the doorbell rings. Lora opens the door with a romantic look. Her husband comes inside, doesn't look at Lora, and goes straight to the bedroom. Lora closes the door. She looks at her reflection on the living room's mirror. Then she enters the bedroom with a smiling face. She wants to give him the good news.

Lori hugs her husband from the back and tries to kiss him with passion. Suddenly she noticed, the pink lipstick stain of another woman on his neck!

নিউ ইয়র্ক শহরের একটি ছোট অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট ভবন। লোরা নামের ৩০ বছর বয়সী একজন সুন্দরী, ছিমছাম চেহারার নারী রান্নাঘরে ব্যস্ত। আজ তার ৫ম বিবাহ বার্ষিকী। লোরার মনে হচ্ছে তার স্বামী আজ ভুলে গেছে সেকথা। অন্য দিনের মতই আজ অফিসে গিয়েছে সে। তার আচরণে কোন পরিবর্তন ছিল না।

স্বামীকে আজ সারপ্রাইজ দেবে লোরা। এক সময় একটি শিশুর জন্য খুব আগ্রহী হয়ে উঠেছিল তার স্বামী, তবে এখন নির্লিপ্ত। আজ তাকে সুসংবাদটি দেবে সে।

লোরা বিভিন্ন পদের সুস্বাদু খাবার রান্না করে, চমককারভাবে ঘর সাজায় এবং নিজে সুন্দরভাবে সাজগোজ করে। তারপর সে আলমারি থেকে বের করে আনে একটি নতুন জ্যাকেট এবং স্বামীর ফিরে আসার জন্য অপেক্ষা করতে থাকে।

রাত ৮ টায় দরজার কলিং বেল বেজে ওঠে। লোরা রোমান্টিক অভিব্যক্তি নিয়ে দরজা খোলে। তার স্বামী ভিতরে প্রবেশ করে, তবে একটি বারের জন্যও তাকায় না লোরার দিকে। সরাসরি চলে যায় শোবার ঘরে। লোরা দরজা বন্ধ করে দেয়। লিভিং রুমের আয়নায় একঝলক দেখে নেয় নিজেকে। স্বামীকে সুসংবাদটি দিতে চায় সে।

হাস্যোচ্ছল মুখে শয়নকক্ষে প্রবেশ করে লোরা। পিছনে থেকে স্বামীকে জড়িয়ে ধরে কিস্ করতে চেষ্টা করে গভীর আবেগে। হঠাৎ দেখে, তার গলায় অন্য নারীর গোলাপী লিপস্টিকের দাগ!



Photo 2. Photo Contribution: Zonghua Zhang

2.

Staying in a Good Relationship

Popy Chowdhury

Single?

Why not let us help you find special someone?
Matchmaker gives you the best opportunity
to find out a meaningful relationship
Signing up and creating a profile, is FREE
Give yourself more chances and get started.
Your next date could be just a few clicks away!

You're in a relationship!

No Intimacy?

It's okay that you had a fighting in front of us
Doesn't matter, Amazon is for you
Learn about Relationships at Amazon,
Shop Books with relationship management software and updated Reviews
Best inspirational quotes about Relationships and fighting too
Free Shipping, no hidden cost.

Do you know the Cowboy Code?

How a Lady Should Be Treated,
and How to Get Your Man to Treat You the Cowboy Way
Native Bubba Thompson lives by a code of
honesty, respect, and faith with his family, his ranches and his animals.
Now, this modern day cowboy brings his codes for us
Without any charge.

Signs of Emotional Abuse

Doesn't matter, Welcome to "Kensaq"
Top dating sites for you; guaranteed, that actually works
It's Free to Look, sign up now
No prices, no hidden cost,
Everything is free.

3.

Eloise / এলোইজের আকাশ

Jesmin Ara / জেসমিন আরা

“Good morning, Ms. White. How are you?” The nurse greets. There is a faint smile on Eloise’s toothless face. Her nonagenarian body is crumpled and curled like a newborn. But she still has active imaginations. She still has dreams where she pictures herself as a little girl watching the sky, especially in the morning when it changes its colors. She asked the nurse:

“Could you please pull the curtains? I want to see the sky.” The nurse pulls the curtains with her hands and starts preparing for her bed bath. Eloise is lost in the beauty of the sky forgetting her present. For her, present is nothing but the endless waiting for the ultimate departure.

এলোইজের আকাশ জেসমিন আরা

নার্স পর্দা সরিয়ে সম্ভাষণ জানায়,

-সুপ্রভাত, মিস হোয়াইট। কেমন আছ আজ? বার্ষিক্যে কুকড়ে-বেঁকে গেছে এলোইজের সমস্ত শরীর। বেঁকে গেছে হাত-পা-আঙ্গুল, সব। তবে তার মনটা তো আগের মতই সতেজ আর রঙ্গীন রয়ে গেছে। সে মন স্বপ্ন দেখে, কল্পনায় ছবি আঁকে। এই নাসিংহোমে তার বিছানাটি দরজার কাছে, আগের নাসিংহোমের মতো জানালার ধারে নয়। এলোইজের ভীষণ ইচ্ছে করে আকাশ দেখতে, বিশেষ

করে সকালের আকাশ যা ক্ষণেক্ষণে রূপ বদলায়। সে নার্সকে বলে,

-জানালার পর্দাটা একটু সরিয়ে দেবে, প্লিজ। আমার বন্ড ইচ্ছে করে আকাশ দেখতে। নার্স যান্ত্রিকহাতে জানালার পর্দা সরিয়ে এলোইজের বেডবাথের আয়োজনে ব্যাস্ত হয়ে যায়। আর এলোইজ হারিয়ে যায় সকালের মোলায়েম-মোহনীয় আকাশের শোভায়, ভুলে যায় তার বর্তমান। বর্তমান, যেখানে সময় স্তর-স্তর-বিবর, শুধুই প্রতীক্ষা মৃত্যুর।

4.

Searching

Olive Casareno

I'm no bird, but I'm acquainted with the sky.
The first time I flew, I was four.
I have the sunny skin of an islander, but
They wouldn't let me keep my language.
ESL turned my accent into
Standard Long Island English,
And my daddy told me it was better
Not to use the words I already knew.

He said it would be easier then,
To be "one ob dem":
American,
Not by blood,
(not that american blood belongs to anyone
Apart from the indigenous)
But by papers
And speech.

Now I can't remember
How to count past five;

Isa

Dalawa

Tatlo

Apat

Lima

What comes after lima?

II

I don't think in tagalog.
When my lola talks to me,
She always follows by asking
If I understand.
Of course.
I remember how to hear.



Photo 3. Photo Contribution: Swekchha Luitel

I understand everything.

(I just can't reply)

I'm illiterate in my original dialect,
And articulate in the colonizer's.

Injustice.

III

I found myself immersed in different cultures,
so where is my own?
what am I?
The only asian face at my best friend's quinceanera;
The only yellow face
In the chocolate gospel choir.
It's peculiar when people label me
"The Asian"
When I am the only one,
since
I don't even know what it means to be "asian" anymore.
When I get straight A's,
It's attributed to the
lack of folds
on my eyelids
And not on my personal ambition.

When people ask where I'm from,
I say Long Island.
"No" they reply
"Your nationality."
Why?
Does it matter?

My character was shaped in
Many immigrants' messy homes.
I am an intersectional woman.
I was left somewhere on an international flight.
I am from somewhere between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.
I am from borrowed land.

IV

In America,
I am exotic.

Searching (Olive Casareno)

In the Philippines,
I am foreign.

I travelled back to the place I was born,
And the people who fed me from the bottle
said I'm too American;
Too strong to fit into
The idealized role of what a
Filipino woman
should look like.
It's not just my rocky mountain shoulders,
It's my crude New York speech,
It's my train-adapted posture,
It's my left-wing mind.

They say I've lost my culture,
But what is my culture?
Whose Spanish blood
Infiltrated my ancestry
And left us all with
Last names that roll off the tongue
In red?

Red like the blood that my people shed;
Red like half of our flag.

I don't know my culture;
They don't either.
I have been told many times
That I am confused, but
I am only searching
For what they don't know
They have lost

5.

A Bit of Weirdness

Swekchha Luitel

Thousands of heartbreaks
goes silent in a locked door.
Love roars in only backstage,
and kindness needs salvation.

People trust and later
collect themselves broken.

People dream and later
they forget to live for real.

People love and later
find it figurative by heart
and literal by mind.
But is not love what we do by heart?

Little bit of weirdness
that still prevails inside us
With unfounded fear of death.
But why we never crave for life
before we fear death?

And we always moored
never let ourselves adrift.
But how will we see other side
if we never let go of an anchor?

So what has more bit of weirdness?
to be afraid of dying
or never being alive
before actually dying?

+++++



Photo 4. Photo Contribution: Alice Shiqui Li

6.

The Red Train

Xinchen (Viola) You

It is a long long journey, in a long long train.
When the green train approaches, all of the people have nothing to carry.
People, a lot of people, are boarding.
It stops, it runs, it passes a lot of stations.
More and more people start boarding, luggage, suitcases, bags, bundles, boxes...
A lot of things, clothes, shoes, books, pots, electronics...
All of those things all over the place, occupied space.
A lot of people have too many things.

A few people have too few things.
People who have too few things
cherish everything.
People who have too many things
waste everything.
It keeps running, people keep
boarding.
In time, it gets heavier and
heavier.
In time, it runs slower and slower.
It starts to make noises and
smells.
Its color starts turning into red
It begins to have less space, and
sometimes, no space.



Photo 5. Photo Contribution: Meiyu Zhou

There are, still some people, who notice, who are considerate, generous and
wise.
Some people, decided to take care of things, and to get rid of unnecessary
things.

7.

City Life: from Asia Straight to America

Angrej Singh

Far away from home
Different culture, different time zone,
Language barrier, that stranger feeling
Asian American living in a dream
This reality seems like a joke
In New York City, land of opportunities?

Willing to explore this City
Trying hard to blend into a new horizon;
City life,
So complex, so diversified but I'm strong
Different races with smiling faces
Waving and greeting in cacophonous tones
City life, the challenges which I
Embrace with open arms

Yes! I'm ready with a clear mind
I must make it, a determination within myself
To make a difference. All I ever wanted
From struggle I rise to grace. The sky's my limit
Impacting positively everyone around me;
Becoming a Source of motivation to my
I am the change I want to see

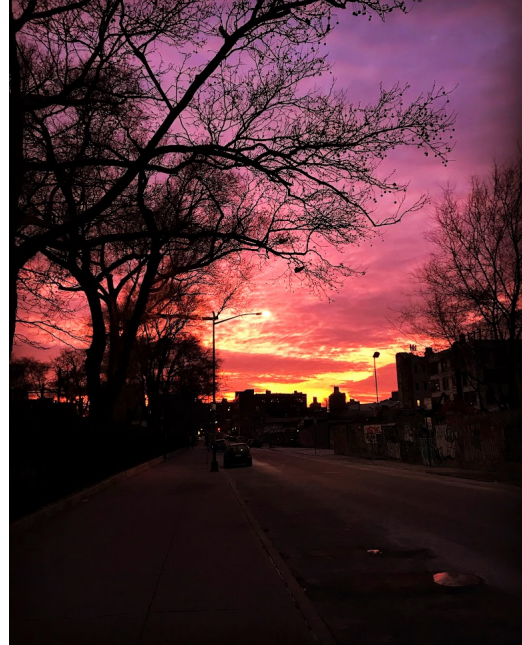


Photo 6. Photo Contribution: Sweekchha Luitel

Critical Essays

8.

Making the United States of America through Immigration Acts

Clarence Baguyo

My understanding of immigration is based on my family's experience of leaving the Philippines, our home country, to migrate to the United States. Although to set foot on this place most people refer to as the promised land is a privilege, it also changed my life dramatically. I felt fear of living in a foreign land, like a pathogen inside a healthy body ready to be attacked by its immune system. Despite my fears, the entitlement we received was the United States' reward for my father's rendered service for its diplomatic mission. Imagine if this country still had the same biased immigration laws that it had before 1965, none of this would be possible. Such legislation was presented as essential to protect the country from "undesirable immigrants." As the United States acknowledged people's civil rights, it gave rise to the implementation of lenient legislations such as the preference system and admittance of refugees that created the nation's global image of equality and compassion.

The basis of passing immigration policies before was mainly characterized by hasty judgments and restraining access of certain groups of people based on nationality. Around the 1920's, a surge in the population growth of immigrants rooting for better lives in the United States took place according to Carl L. Bankston III, author of the article "History of Immigration after 1891." This account gave rise to a more limiting legislation regarding immigration due to the government's apprehension to defend the country from unwanted aliens, resulting in the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1891. Officers regulated entry of ill, unethical and financially dependent people by rejecting their admittance. Government soon added more categories of people by banning uneducated people and beggars with the ratification of the Immigration Act of 1917 by the Congress. One of the policies that distinctly discriminates based on a specific ethnic group, as Bankston III states, was the Immigration Act of 1907 that limited immigrants from Japan (481). As the number of different groups of people from all over Europe, Africa and certain parts of Asia expanded in the United States, the government became more concerned in reducing the incoming people. To sum up, the enactment of such acts by the government was a response to what they thought were threats brought about by immigrants without regards to fundamental human rights, as well as to protect the country's internal affairs.

As a reaction to the escalating quantity of foreign settlers, the United States government enacted laws that would decrease admittance based on the percentage of a particular population currently residing in the country which is known as the national origins quota system. In 1924, an act was put into effect to lessen newcomers from 3% down to 2% of the current population living in the United States. Related to this act, the implementation of the McCarran-Walter Act reduced immigrants to 1% of the residents of any birthplace prior to 2%, Bankston III points out (481). Since a huge chunk of the residents of the country originated from Northern and Western Europe, the quota method only favored them in opposition to other nations. Apparently, these unfair policies succeeded in regulating incoming foreigners as evidenced by Bankston III's assertion that the applications of legal permanent resident status decreased to 699,375 from 8,202,388 in between 1909 to 1919. Even more, the authorities were concerned that the foreign settlers would cause economic burden because majority of them migrated from poverty-stricken countries, that relates to low level of education and



Photo 7. Photo Contribution: Mike Yuda Chen

poor health condition. In addition, the quota system was implemented as it deemed necessary to regulate new arrivals.

Despite these previous laws that were prejudiced and restrictive, a giant leap in the history of immigration took place. As a response to equality among immigrants, government abolished the quota structure and was replaced by the preference system. The Hart-Celler Act of 1965 favored skilled immigrants that would benefit the country. It gave rise to the system of enabling family members of a lawful resident to immigrate in the United States. It allowed most people from different countries especially from Latin America and Asia to make the United States their new home (482). Indeed, this change caused a massive influx of newcomers and diverse demographics. Bankston III states that in the 1970's, 75.1 percent of the total immigrant population came from these nations (483). Also, the government created laws that would protect people experiencing crisis from another country. In 1948, the Displaced Persons Act aided victims of World War II to find sanctuary in America. Five years later at 1953, the enactment of the Refugee Relief Act allowed affected people to escape from communism. A similar law was passed under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 but specifically favored Cubans to protect them from their ruler, Fidel Castro and his communism. Lastly, the Refugee Act of 1980 made way to most of Southeast Asian nations to reside in United States after Vietnam War in 1975 (484). Consequently, the permissive interpretation of the preference system emanated from the elimination of the quota structure and admittance of refugees. The new system gave people equal chance not only to enter the United States but also to feel accepted by the society. It symbolizes equality and compassion; the same image the country portrays as of today.

In U.S. history, policymakers have had pessimistic anticipations about people of another race or nationality, hence reflected on the system of passage of laws. Such acts were seen as fair in the eyes of the authorities who were trying to regulate population and secure the country from objectionable people that might cause disruption in the society. In the subsequent years, the United States acted to end discrimination and promote equality through the preference system that values uniting family members and skills of immigrants, while the acceptance of refugees acted in the light of humanity.

Making the United States of America through Immigration Acts (Clarence Baguyo)

The fairness and empathy empowers this country and contributes to this image the United States is well-known worldwide.

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9.

Untold Stories: Chinese Women's Exclusion in Teow Lim Goh's Poetry

Jessica Ortiz

The untold stories of the Chinese women who suffered as a result of America's racism should no longer be silenced. These women whose names are unknown, whose stories are untold suffered for many years and it is time for us to listen. Teow Lim Goh tells us the stories about these Chinese immigrant women that were detained and processed at Angel Island Immigration Station beginning in 1910. According to Goh in 1924 an Immigration Act was passed that banned immigrants from Asia to enter America. The act specifically banned any wives of Chinese merchants and U.S. citizens that were not U.S. born citizen. During the time the act was passed many wives tried to enter America through Angel Island located in California. In Goh's poem "Between the Sea and the Sky" she is telling a story about two different women that had a very similar dream. Their dream was to be able to enter America for freedom and to reunite with their sweethearts. But soon their dreams turn into nightmares: "To join her husband in California / but their case was denied" (lines 6-7). This is the story of the first woman in Goh's poem whose name is unknown. In these lines we are being told the reason why "They found her in a pool of blood / a sharpened chopstick in her ear" (lines 1-2). She was so devastated that she could not reunite with her sweetheart nor could she enter the land of the free, she did the unthinkable: "She died" (line 8). She killed herself in order to relieve herself from the pain. There is no doubt that she desperately wanted to be free and if America could not give her the freedom she wished for, she found a way to free her soul from the pain of living.

Similarly Goh writes about another woman: "A matron found her hanging and cut the rope. She was alive" (lines 10-11). This woman too suffered the similar pain of being denied. She tried to commit suicide but her attempt was unsuccessful: "She went back to China with / her infant son" (lines 13-14). This woman is being sent back to China, a place where she wanted to escape from. But on her journey back her nightmare never ends, "The boy got sick and died" (line 16). Her son dies on her long journey back to China, which only adds to the pain she was already suffering from. Because of this pain she is silent the rest of the way and her story is told by somebody else, "In the bathroom we now watch / for each other" (lines 22-23). The person who is telling the story has been the one who has witnessed the tragedy both these women suffered. This person cannot do much to help, only watch and tell the world what these women had faced: "There's too much that isn't said / there's too much that cannot be said" (lines 26-27). The person telling the story could be one of the guards. They witness what happens on the Island and what happens on the ships. But they cannot have personal relationships with these women. They are there to just watch over them. That is why so much cannot be said: "I avert my eyes from her" (line 25). The guard knows what happened to these women was unfair, so they are too ashamed to look these women in the eyes and face the pain these women have suffered from. I believe these stories are showing us how painful it was for these women. The pain was so intense that they both did not want to live. They both would have rather be gone forever than suffer in the hands of their own country. The person who is telling their stories wants us to feel what these women were feeling. Being denied happiness can drive a person to insanity. These are the stories of the untold and the unknown that we shouldn't overlook.

Untold Stories: Chinese Women's Exclusion in Teow Lim Goh's Poetry (Jessica Ortiz)

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Photo 8. Photo Contribution: Mike Yuda Chen

10.

Silence and Watchful Eyes in Maxine Hong Kingston's "No Name Woman"

Michaela Cassandra Bautista

Maxine Hong Kingston's "No Name Woman" tells the story of the narrator's aunt and how the narrator's family has kept away the aunt's existence in secret due to her being seen as a disgrace to the family. After finding out about her aunt's story, the narrator creates different versions of said aunt's tragic life. With these different versions of the tragic story, the narrator reflects on her own identity, understanding what makes her a woman who happens to be both Chinese and American.

The narrator's aunt was shunned by her family and her entire village after falling pregnant despite her husband being away. The narrator learns the events of her aunt's life from her mother, "She could not have been pregnant, you see, because her husband had been gone for years. No one said anything. We did not discuss it ... The village had also been counting. On the night the baby was to be born the villagers raided our house" (228). According to the narrator's mother, women in rural and old China were treated as complete disgrace should they commit acts that were not seen as proper. They were being treated as outcasts by their own families and attacked by their society. Due to this event, the narrator's mother warns her by saying, "Do not humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never been born. The villagers are watchful" (229), so that the narrator will not make the same mistake her aunt had. This has led to the narrator being extremely careful with interacting with men. She states: "I used to add 'brother' silently to boys' names. It hexed the boys, who would or would not ask me to dance, and made them less scary and as familiar and deserving of benevolence as girls" (235). The narrator understands that as a woman, despite living in a different country in a different time period, her every move and behavior will be watched and judged, leading her to be submissive to societal expectations. However, as the narrator grows older, she begins to break free of this submission. By retelling her aunt's story, she breaks the act of silencing that was enforced on her aunt. The narrator tells how she used to be one of the people who helped silence her aunt even in death:

But there is more to this silence: they want me to participate in her punishment. And I have... The real punishment was not the raid swiftly inflicted by the villagers, but the family's deliberately forgetting her...My aunt haunts me- her ghost drawn to me because now, after fifty years of neglect, I alone devote pages of paper to her, though not origamied into houses and clothes. (318-319)

As she grows up, the narrator realizes that her aunt was punished too harshly and decides that she is going to go against what her family has told her to do, despite the constant warnings of the "villagers" being watchful. By retelling her aunt's story, she finally gives voice to her aunt who was silenced by both her family and society. The narrator goes against the idea that women are supposed to be silent. She now has the power to give voice to those who have been silenced by virtue of being a woman, including her aunt and herself.

The story "No Name Woman" employs an unreliable narrator. Since the narrator was not present when the events of the aunt's tragedy transpired and having to rely on her mother's words,

Silence and Watchful Eyes in Maxine Hong Kingston's "No Name Woman" (Michaela Cassandra Bautista)

she begins to imagine different scenarios of her aunt's life to fully comprehend what has happened. The narrator states,

Perhaps she had encountered him in the fields or on the mountain where the daughters-in-law collected fuel... Perhaps he worked an adjoining field, or he sold her the cloth for the dress she sewed and wore. His demand must have surprised, then terrified her. She obeyed him; she always did as she was told... It could very well have been, however, that my aunt did not take subtle enjoyment of her friend, but, a wild woman, kept rollicking company. Imagining her free with sex doesn't fit, though. I don't know any women like that, or men either. (230-232)



Photo 9. Photo Contribution: Zonghua Zhang (featured artist)

Since the aunt's story was considered taboo and the aunt herself kept secret the identity of the father of her child a secret, the narrator starts thinking of different ways her aunt met the man. She also begins to question whether her aunt was forced to sleep with this unknown man and obey his whims or if she willingly slept with him because she of her desire. This reflects the fact that people who are silenced will never be able to tell their own truth, and often those who silence them are the ones who tell the altered version of the story.

Having been brought up in both American and Chinese cultures, the narrator notes that this often causes conflicts to her identity. She says, "Those of us in the first American generations have had to figure out how the invisible world the emigrants built around our childhoods fit in solid America" (229), meaning that because of how different the two cultures are, she along with her fellow first-generation Chinese-Americans struggle to find a balance in both these identities. Going back to her aunt's story, the narrator says,

"Women in the old China did not choose" (230), talking about how Chinese traditions may have prohibited women from making their own choices. As mentioned above, the narrator herself was subjected to oppression by her family. Unlike her aunt, the narrator lives in a different country whose ideals center around giving people the freedom to choose their own paths.

Much like how she tells her aunt's story, the narrator calls attention to women who have been subjected to abuse. Retelling her aunt's story also gives voice to Chinese-Americans who are grappling with biculturalism. The narrator states, "Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?" (229). Here the narrator encourages Chinese-Americans to realize that what makes them Chinese should not be boxed in certain stereotypes. For the narrator, part of being Chinese is knowing through her aunt's story that the villagers are watchful, and that women going against the norm can face dire consequences, but other Chinese-Americans have their own experiences that they heavily associate with being Chinese.

Kingston's view on Chinese culture compared to Western values has been a rather controversial topic. Some believe that she has unfairly portrayed Chinese culture, depicting it as extremely conservative and oppressive, which is harmful and can lead to generalization of an entire culture. Others might agree with her views. It's important to remember that Kingston's portrayal is a representation of her views of the culture and does not reflect the Chinese culture at large. What is valuable in this story is that by using an unreliable narrator, Kingston validates different people, such as women and immigrants, who are struggling with different forms of oppression; people who are being silenced by the society that they live in and those who struggle in trying to mix two different cultures together. "No Name Woman" despite it simply being a story revolving around a woman who has been silenced for so long, has hopefully brought light to the cycle of oppression and silencing of certain groups.

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11.

The Lessons from the Contact Zone

Jooi Choi Albano

In what language do you think? Unless you are multilingual and have the luxury of choosing which language you want to think in, your brain would usually process language in your mother tongue. Since this essay is written in English, I am going to presume that you are thinking in English. Would you believe me if I said that there are limits to your thoughts and understandings, simply because you are thinking in English? This interesting idea is called linguistic determinism: language you speak determines your knowledge or thought, as well as processes that attribute to it such as categorization, memory and perception (Hickmann). It is a very intriguing notion, but it seems a bit outlandish; after all, there are plenty of common concepts shared by people speaking different languages. Let us tweak this theory a bit, and let's say that the people from different cultures think within the context of their culture, and perceive and process reality in a unique way. When cultures encounter each other in the contact zone, whether it is more destructive nature or harmonious co-existence, they are able to provide a fresh cognitive pattern that allows people to see things in a new light, and create something original and unique.

When one surrounds oneself with unfamiliar things, it might trigger them to open a new door of perception. Our surroundings, especially our culture has a huge impact on what we think and how we think. This manifests clearly in translating. Anyone who has tried to transcribe knows that there are certain words and phrases that simply just doesn't 'translate well.' It is because the concept of which the word or phrase is describing is unique to that culture, and even though one can translate it well enough, it still feels 'foreign.' The only way for two different cultures to understand each other truly is through communication and contact, much like how two people from different cultures understand each other. For instance, growing up in South Korea in 90s where everyone is Korean, I had limited exposure to outside culture. When I came to U.S.A, New York, where a full spectrum of culture on the earth could be seen, I was bombarded with influx of new ideas and concepts. Each and every time I interacted with people from a different part of the world, I gained a new perspective. I was able to share their view, and reevaluate my values based on my experiences, then either discard my biases or reinforce my ideas.

With a new thinking pattern achieved through contact with different cultures, new possibilities and opportunities that were unachievable before become available.

In the article, "Arts of the Contact Zone," Mary Louis Pratt discusses types of literature that emerge from contact zones: "Autoethnography, transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression – these are some of the literate arts of the contact zone" (Pratt 4). Some of these are products of two different cultures clashing; others are enhanced and transformed due to the influence of other cultures. Literature is not the only product of contact zone; sometimes a metaphysical concept that has been stale for a while gets a new perspective. In Korea, students' scores dictate their area of study. For example, if a student has a low math score, he/she is forced out of science/tech fields regardless of their interests. If I never

left Korea, I would have stayed in my liberal arts course, and still consider math ‘a genius’ academia’ and never even attempted to dip my toe into the field that intrigued me, because I was not qualified. On top of this, changing my area of study or taking a break from school to figure out what I wanted to do, was considered taboo. Nonetheless, by contacting other cultures and constantly questioning my values, I deeply reflected about myself, and took a leap into studying engineering, something that I always had a desire to pursue. However, contact zone is not always a happy place where two cultures join and share their ideas and customs in peaceful, harmonic way.

When two cultures meet, there is a chance that one culture might engulf the other resulting in permanently distorting it over time. Pratt states: “Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of meaning – these are some of the perils of writing in the contact zone” (4). There can be many consequences when two cultures meet. For instance, when one culture tries to prove itself dominant over the others, tragic things follow such as a loss of a culture which can lead to loss of identity. For instance, I have an aunt back at Korea who has a Japanese name and knows how to read and write in Japanese fluently yet has trouble with Korean. When she was young, Korea was under the rule of the Japanese Empire. At school, she was taught Hiragana and Katakana (Japanese alphabet), not Hangul (Korean alphabet) and she had to change her name into a Japanese name (Caprio 155). Even my mother, who was mostly raised by my aunt because she was a late-round, used many Japanese words in everyday life. Even after decades, the scars of imperialism haunts many people, including my aunt.

Through slavery, colonialism, wars and complete annihilation of others, humanity has inflicted irreversible self-harm to itself. Human kind is still suffering from its own faults that are a result of colonialism. We hear news of war, terror, and horror every day on TV, Newspaper, and Internet. However, the first step of getting better and fixing mistakes is to recognize that we have a problem and know the source of problem.

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12.

The Unheard Voices of Angel Island

Souvik Saha

In her poem "The Waves," from the volume of poems called *Islanders*, prolific writer Teow Lim Goh, attempts to unearth the lost voice of a female Chinese immigrant, and uses the woman's hardships to portray the terrible treatment of Asian women in the name of restricting the flood of immigrants between 1910 and 1940 at Angel Island. To me, the poem points out the extra burden of mistreatment women must face over men as immigrants, and I believe the message is very relevant today. In the poem, the writer exclaims

They let him land
from the ship but I had to board
a ferry. They didn't even
let us say goodbye.

There's nothing
we can do. Foreign wife
of a Chinese merchant, your case
is automatically
denied. (32-40)

In these lines, the woman describes her experience right after she reached San Francisco. Quite contrary to her fantasies, she was separated from her husband, and was made to embark a ferry to what can only be imagined is a boat back to China. Goh describes the conversation the woman had with an immigration officer, where she was informed that as the foreign-born wife of a Chinese trader, she was not allowed to enter the US. This experience falls in line with the status quo created by the Immigration Act of 1924, which, before being amended in 1925, banned the wives of Chinese merchants in the US from immigrating from China, as Goh reports. Beyond the horrific description of her mistreatments, Goh also uses the imagery of two distinct destinations, the ferry and the land for the woman and her husband respectively to point out the discrepancy in treatment. She uses the phrase "Foreign wife of a Chinese merchant" to underline how nothing but her identity as a woman was used in denying entry to the woman in the poem. Goh further uses words like "automatically" to emphasize how the woman never stood a chance of being treated the same way as her husband as she attempted to enter the country. Historically, this seems to remain the case too, as long before the 1920s, according to Goh, the Immigration Act of 1882 had already deemed Chinese women as incapable of supporting themselves, thus excluding them from entering without a male guardian from the fear that they might resort to trading sex for money.

This trend of treating women as secondary, or targeting female immigrants over men has sadly continued all the way into the present. Immediately following the victory of President Donald Trump in the 2016 elections, there was a marked increase in cases of violence against women, including

Muslim immigrant women. Therefore, the message in this poem is very relevant today, and we would be mindful in applying the teachings of this poem in our civic lives.

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Photo 10. Photo Contribution: Swekchha Luitel

13.

Identity and Tradition in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

Somi Ahmed

In *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri shows the hardships that face many Bengali immigrant families when they come to the United States. These hardships are very difficult to overcome. In this novel the main protagonist is Ashima. She is born and raised in a Bengali family in Calcutta. After marriage, she moves to the United States with her husband, Ashoke. In order to maintain a balance between Bengali and American culture, she tries to adapt to American traditions, but often thinks about her culture. Ashima is far away from home but for her, culture is everything. This characteristic suggests that Ashima a traditional Indian woman who loves her home country and values their traditions, however she has much trouble reproducing these in the U.S.

Ashima begins her new life in a foreign country after marriage, but she brings her traditions as well. For example, she does not call her husband's first name. The husband has a superior place in the family. In Indian culture, a wife never calls her husband's name. As the narrator observes, "She has adopted his surname but refuses, for propriety's sake, to utter his first " (2). Usually, in Bengali culture, wives do not call their husband's first names because it shows disrespect. Among traditional Hindus, the names are often the names of god's names and calling one's name is seen as holy as singing. Wives give husbands the same position as gods in the Hindu religions. There are specific protocols for how names should be used in India and the majority still follow these protocols to keep the tradition. Ashima is a perfect example of a traditional wife, suggesting that Ashima is a traditional woman.

When Ashima discovers she is pregnant, she has mixed feelings because she wants her first baby to be born close to the baby's grandparents. This makes her feel alone in the foreign environment; no adult relative except her husband is around her. Now, she has to do everything by herself. As the narrator observes, "in India women go home to their parents to give birth" (4). Normally, in India, pregnant women are supposed to live in their parent's house especially when the first baby is born. Pregnancy in Bengali culture is a festive event and women play an important role in that culture as mothers, masis (maternal aunts) or grandmothers. But in Ashima's case, she neither gets care from her in-laws nor gets care from her parents even though her husband is with her. This makes Ashima feels that she and her baby are missing that unconditional love, which makes her assume that she was not following her tradition.

Ashima would rather raise her child according to her traditions. When she is raising her first child in the foreign land she worries that her child will not get the love that first children are supposed to receive. While she is pregnant, she has anxiety about how she will raise her child in the new land. As the narrator emphasizes, " she is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one" (6). This is because the teaching of traditions is not only the responsibility of parents but of the entire family. Growing up in Indian culture, kids get lots of love from their relatives, especially from their grandparents. In Ashima's case she has no relatives; therefore, she is afraid to stay in the United States to raise her first child because she wants to give her son the same happiness which he deserves. This makes Ashima feel that the way her child is being raised is not the way a traditional

Bengali family's child would be raised. Therefore, in order to teach her son the Indian Bengali culture she wants to return to India where he will be surrounded by relatives and raised according to their values.

The Namesake is an excellent example of the importance tradition and culture plays in an immigrant's life. In this novel, Ashima shows how much she is connected to her roots. Through the protagonist, the author shows that when someone moves to a new country, she/he moves with her/his own country from inside: they take customs such as behavior, food, books, festivities and clothing. A tradition makes an identity, and it makes a person very unique and powerful. It is hard to adapt to a new culture, but it is harder to practice traditions and carry roots to a new generation in a foreign land. Through Ashima's character in the novel, it is clear that traditional identity is important, and Ashima proves that although very difficult, we can teach and pass on tradition when raising children in a foreign land.

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Reflective Essays

14.

Crossing Borders

Jiafeng Li

Hi, everybody, my name is Jiafeng, Li. I am from China. I was born in a countryside known for a heavy concentration of Chinese emigrants. In general, there is at least 1 person living overseas in each family in our valley. I had been listening to many stories about people living overseas. I've heard about people making a lot of money that we cannot imagine in our small village. And I've also heard people living overseas travel a lot. These stories eventually made me dream about my life outside of my village. Finally, when I was 17, I decided to come to America. When I got off from airplane in JFK, the first time I stood on this land, New York, America, I felt so exciting and curious. After my Chinese relative who already lived in the U.S. picked me up, she drove me to the apartment she lived in Flushing. I was shocked . There were 6 people in this one bedroom apartment. She divided the living room into 3 tiny rooms in order to rent to others. I had to share the bedroom with her husband, son and her. She just used two pieces of curtain to separate her family and me. I felt so weird. I used to have my own room in China. And there was always a person to rush me when I was using the bathroom in that apartment. After a few days, I moved out. So I started to find a job to support myself. I forgot how many times I was rejected, but I will never forget the first job that I got in the U.S. It was a cashier in a bakery and I worked from 5:30 am to 12:30 am for 5.50 dollars per hour. When I first got my paycheck, I was so confused. Why was I here? This place is filled with Chinese people all over. I couldn't see any difference between here and China. I heard Chinese all the time. And I did not have to speak English to communicate. And I had no friend, no family here. Moreover the living conditions were worse than when I was in China.

The things I'd heard and seen before arriving here were so different from what I was experiencing. How could other people have such a beautiful life? Were they just trying to comfort their families and didn't want to tell their families that it was actually so hard to live here? I cried many times when I was alone. I missed my families, my friends and my hometown. And I never told my parents about that. I didn't want to make them worried about me. This was my decision to come to America, so no matter how tough it would be, I had to go through it. Sometimes I do think I was lucky. After having worked at the bakery for almost a year, my Chinese high school classmate, a second generation immigrant, told me that I could go to high school for free. After I graduated from high school, I changed jobs several times, such as waitress, nail specialist and masseuse. All of these did not require a college diploma and I didn't have to talk to customers much. But I needed to work about 11 hours each day and, despite that, I didn't get a lot of money. There was one moment I will never forget in my entire life. When I was a nail specialist a few years ago, there was once when I was doing a white customer's nails, she suddenly asked me if I could speak English. I just took a peek at her and didn't answer her because I didn't feel comfortable with her question. Then she turned to the customer sitting next to her and unhesitatingly offered her own opinion about Asian nail specialists' lack of knowledge of the English language. I was so mad at her but as a employee, I could not say anything to a customer. On the other hand, I did think I could not speak English well and this made me feel inferior. Therefore, I didn't have the courage to fight her back. I was just trying to get her nails done as fast as I could, so I didn't have to see her face or hear anything about Asian people from her anymore. After a few minutes, she asked me, "Can I get some designs on my nails?" I said

yes. She laughed out loud and talked to that customer again, “She does speak English,” with a satiric tone. I felt so wrong about myself and couldn’t do anything to defend myself. Unfortunately, there was nobody standing up to say something to stop her for me. I was so confused. Was being a Chinese burdening other people in America? But my nationality is a part of my identity and I can never get rid of it. Also, I never feel ashamed of myself, as a Chinese or Asian.

I did not have a consciousness of race when I was in China because I never saw the different skin colors of people from my society. After I came to America, I saw people with many kinds of skin color. I was finally getting to know about race which can be different skin colors or different nationalities. And all of the races make America a diverse country. It is not easy to keep harmony among all of the race here. Every country has its own culture. We can’t erase any one of those cultures or reconcile all of them so that cultural clash happens. I used to make a “V” gesture when my friend took pictures for me. In my opinion, that meant I was happy. But in some other countries, such as England, New Zealand, Australia, that stands for “F” word. I was shocked after I learned this. How could this small gesture be such so offensive? There is no answer. People in those countries have different cultures from me even though I didn’t mean it in that way. After that, I never use any gestures in public areas because I am not sure whether it will offend anyone.

Although I have been here for about 8 years, I still cannot fit into this society very well. I still cannot speak fluent English. I still do not have many friends. The Chinese foods here do not taste the same as the foods in China. And people here have too many stereotypes about Chinese even they don’t know anything about us. So today, here, I hope you guys can start to know Chinese around you as an individual first. You will find out there are some Chinese people with good personalities in your society. I am proud of being a Chinese.

15.

ADDA

Jahidul Priyo

Have you ever seen a group of brown people on the street or in a restaurant having an intense conversation, so intense that at times it feels like they are having a fight over something or about to start a fight?

If you have, then what you have seen is called “ADDA.” Before explaining what ADDA is, let me clarify one thing first. They were not fighting or talking loudly out of anger nor are they aggressive by nature. ADDA can be defined as a form of talking and sharing ideas, thoughts, and emotions that just tend to get exciting at times.

Explained in a nutshell, ADDA is an intellectual exchange of words between two people or a group of people about literally anything important or about anything pointless. ADDA is a big part in the life of Bengalis from the Indian Subcontinent, i.e, those originating from West Bengal and Bangladesh.

People come together usually over a cup of cha/chai/tea and snacks, and they share their ideas, thoughts, and views on a topic(s). During an ADDA people talk about social issues, political issues, cultural issues, and community issues. They talk about their daily life and how they view their life and how they can contribute to making everyone’s life better. Yes, it may seem like what I am trying to explain is any other group of people coming together and talking but it is something bigger than that. ADDA is a way of life, where everyone is welcomed to share their ideas, thoughts, emotions while offering solutions to problems. They also welcome challenges, question other’s views, and offer strategies to improve difficulties in daily lives. ADDA for Bengalis is a very interpersonal form of communication that often veers around intellectual conversations.

I was born and raised in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and like any other capital, you can find people from all over the country here. From very early childhood I was exposed to different cultural and social aspects of every part of Bangladesh as well as from Dhaka too. Life back in Bangladesh is pretty much laid back and simple. I attended school and visited places to maintain my small business that I used to have in Dhaka. Though I ran errands throughout the day, the one thing that me and everyone looked forward to was the time when the sun would set and we could meet friends, family, and coworkers in a tea stall, restaurant, park, or simply just by the sidewalks, and have ADDA. As everyone gathered, we used to inquire about their day, home, family, and near and dear ones. Everyone used to share about the things that are happening with them at the moment. In fact ADDA was a way into everyone’s life. As the ADDA continued we used to talk about all the current issues and problems that were going around the country, the world, and the community with each trying to find a solution or to have a better understanding about it: what could have been done or what could be done to make things better. It was an absolute joy to exchange ideas, thoughts, views, and perspectives. Our conversations weren’t only about life’s problems or issues; we used to talk about the good things aside from updating each other with our businesses, business ideas,

art, and about every culture, tradition, and ways of life. We knew that most of our ideas or thoughts might not be applicable or implemented but see this is what ADDA is: even though we knew most of it won't be implemented or applied or our collective thoughts or ideas might not amaze anyone but we continued to talk about it unfazed whether it would eventually lead to something or anything! Some of the greatest movements, changes, revolutions, and innovations in Bengal came from people coming together and sharing their thoughts and ideas. I personally learned about a lot of things, gained knowledge, and shared ideas through ADDA. We also received solutions to a lot of problems too. ADDA is therapeutic, it helps us to connect with ourselves and with others.

Since I have moved to the United States, life has become busy and I usually have a certain routine and so does everyone else. But my Bengali friends still manage to find time and give ADDA. We still share the same thoughts and ideas that we used to back home, but yes, the subject might have changed as now we have seen more and learned more after travelling across the Atlantic. However, now in our ADDAs we tend to get nostalgic. Even then, the ideology of adda is still the same: coming together and sharing our thoughts and emotions to have a greater and better understanding of the world and acquire the ability to appreciate each other and everything around us.

As I mentioned earlier ADDA is a way of life. I hope after reading this you have a better understanding of why we Bengalis get together and give ADDA. ADDA gives us a sense of our community, in ADDA we become a family and through ADDA, we make ourselves better. Wherever you will find Bengalis, you will find ADDA: it is the one thing that will forever remain constant.

16.

Back To School

Nazmun Ety

I am from a small beautiful country called Bangladesh. Bangladesh is located near India, Pakistan and Nepal. It is the eighth most populous country and Cox's Bajer is the largest sea beach in the world. My mother's language is Bengali. When I was in my country, Bangladesh, I used to live with my parents. My childhood was amazing because I have two brothers; I am the youngest one in my family. My father is a businessman, and because of my father's business, we live in different cities in different periods of time. We also had to change so many schools. It was hard but we adjusted. My early learning experience began at my home. I started learning everything from my mother before I started my Pre-K. My mother could not finish her high school because she got married as a teenager of fifteen. In my culture, people believe after marriage women should stay at home and take care of their family. My mother gave up her dreams so she could be a full-time mother and took care of us. My parents are not well educated but they inspire us to dream of our careers. My father wanted me to be a doctor; unfortunately, I was not interested in that profession. They never treated me like a "girly girl". They supported me all the time and never treated me different when it came to choosing a career. I am lucky enough to have parents like them.

When I received my immigrant visa for United States of America, I was so happy that I felt like, "I was flying over the moon". I could not stop myself from traveling so I decided to book a ticket for the next month. Before I came here I was doing research about New York. I was so excited to visit all its beautiful sites. I moved to New York three years ago and my real life struggles started from that day. After I came here for my first six months I was at home. I kept myself busy doing housework such as cooking and cleaning. I used to go outside on the weekends so that I could spend time with my husband. I was really afraid to go outside alone because at that time I could understand only a little bit of English but I couldn't speak it. For that reason, I had to depend on my husband to do anything outside.

Six months later, I was bored at home so my husband found a job for me near my house at the Laundromat. I started my first job in my life so I was happy and excited. When I started, the first thing I found myself lacking is communication skills. Sometimes, if I had to share something with my boss, I had to talk to one of my coworkers from my country, so she could translate for me. My first job experience was very bad as my boss wasn't fair to me. She treated me like a servant because of my communication skills and I lost respect for her. She never gave me a fixed schedule and whenever she wanted she would call me. Sometimes, she would call even if it wasn't for an hour. Still, I am really thankful to her. Because of her bad behavior I started to realize what I needed and I realized that education would help me accomplish my life goal. Otherwise, I would have kept myself busy earning money, instead of starting my school again.

I became serious about school and I talked to my husband about it. One of my husband's friends suggested that I take the admission exam at LaGuardia Community College. He helped me to fill out the form for admission. No one told me that I had to prepare myself for the placement test.

When I knew about it I had seven days left for the test. So, I went through the website and prepared myself as much as I could. For the placement test, I came with my husband. I couldn't finish my exam that day so I came by myself the next day to complete it. When I got my reading and writing test results, I was so frustrated. I went to one of the advisors. He told me that your score is very low so you have to start with remedial classes. I felt like he saved my life. At least I can start my school again and will get a chance to improve myself.

Finally, I was allowed to register for my classes. When I reached the B building, a security guard asked me to show my ID. I was so nervous that it took me five minutes to find my ID inside of my bag. When the security guard allowed me to enter the building, I couldn't find the registration room. When I got there, a lady with brown skin tone, short and black curly hair asked me with a deep voice, "How can I help you?". I showed her the papers I had and she told me to grab a seat. In front of the computer, I was so confused because I didn't know how to use the system to register. I was so shy to ask for help. I ended up putting all of my classes into the shopping cart even though the times conflicted. One of the guys who sat near me understood and asked me if I need help. I showed him my schedule and he explained to me how to register. I was enrolled in three remedial classes and one credit class, BTA 101. I was lucky enough to register for the class in the 1st semester. My Business seminar class gave me the opportunity to think about my career and question what I want to do with my Accounting major. I learned a lot from this class.

I started my first-semester in spring 2015. After one month of starting my class, I got pregnant. I wasn't ready but I accepted it. The beginning of my pregnancy I felt like I couldn't continue my studies. One day I saw a pregnant woman come to college and thought, If she can do it, why can't I? I started my journey and I quit my first job. I saw there were lots of students working at LaGuardia. I talked to one of my friends who told me about work study. I applied for it and got a job in the IT department as a lab assistant.

During my pregnancy, I was a full-time student and I was a part-time worker at LaGuardia. Everyone was friendly in my workplace and they helped me a lot. First I was afraid to pick up the phone calls, but my supervisor told me not to worry. He said "you are learning, don't feel bad about your accent. When I came here I was like you and I changed myself and you will do the same." Sometimes I feel bad that I had to hear everyone but I couldn't share my feelings. That's the reason I didn't have any friends at that time. I finished two-semesters during my pregnancy. I can remember at the end of my pregnancy I couldn't walk as I had some complications. Everyone was too busy and no one had time to help. Because of the complications, I had to go to the doctor twice a week for a checkup. I used to go by myself to the doctor because at that time I started to speak and understand everyone. I didn't have to search for a doctor who understands Bengali like before. I had to go to explain my problems in English and I started to recognize my growth and started to depend on myself.

All of my professors were so supportive, especially my math professor. I will never forget her favors. She always supported me and told me before the exam "if you have to go for delivery just email me, I will make time for you to attend the final when you are ready". My final exam was on December 15, and I came with one of my friends because I wasn't able to walk myself. After I finished my final on December 19 I had to go for delivery. Everything is possible when you believe in yourself. I believed in myself and tried my best to get results from it.

I started school again in spring 2017 when my baby was 3 months old. It was a very challenging period for me to maintain everything. Whole nights I couldn't sleep and during the day I came to college. So I decided to drop one class and that time I got another helpful professor whom I could

Back To School (Nazmun Ety)

share my struggles with. When I came for classes my husband would take care of my baby, and it was hard but we handled it. At the end of the semester, I learned that my father had been struggling with cancer since 2016. That time I broke down, everyone in my family knew it but they hadn't told me, because I was pregnant at that time. I started to feel depressed, so after my semester I decided to go back to my country to meet my family. When I came back from my country, I fell into a deep depression. My behavior was changing and my husband forced me to start school as soon as possible. I almost gave up on life but then i thought "When my baby grows up what story am I going tell, that because of you I gave up! What about my father's dream? He wanted me to be a successful woman. I thought deeply and made myself strong. Again, with full preparation, I started my spring 2018 semester when my baby was thirteen months. I also started working again. Now I can bring my baby with me to LaGuardia Early Learning Center. I am doing my classes without any tension.

It isn't easy but whenever you are strongly committed to your dream, nothing is impossible. Now I realize that coming back to school was my best decision ever. If I hadn't made this decision to come back to school, I wouldn't have been able to depend on myself. Education gave me a chance to improve my English. Now I have the ability to communicate with others. For example, in my first semester, I couldn't understand my professor's lecture properly and sometimes if I didn't understand I was afraid to ask because of my accent. Now, I don't feel afraid to talk, even if I am wrong. I feel more confident in myself.



Photo 11. Photo Contribution: Jingjing He

17.

It's Time to Pick Up Our History

Wang Wei



Photo 12. Hanfu

China is a country with a long history and cultural and architectural heritages from 5,000 years ago. At the same time, many cultures and traditions were lost across generations. My community, Hanfu, is a group of people dedicated to reviving lost traditional culture, which has become a symbol of the cultural resurgence of China. It is considered as a prototype of the Chinese Culture and how Chinese show Chinese culture to the whole world. While the original meaning of Hanfu is the traditional costume of China, each Hanfu has a different meaning. At the beginning of Chinese history, it spread to different Eastern Asian nations such as South Korea and Japan, which still kept some remnescent of Hanfu (known as a kimono in Japan), but after that, Hanfu has disappeared in China.

Unfortunately, in modern times, fewer and fewer people in China know Hanfu. We are not understood by people, whether they are foreigners or Chinese. In New York, we wear Hanfu as a daily outfit, but people think we are Japanese or Korean. This reminds us even more that it is imperative to spread Chinese culture. In my opinion, being a successor is a very proud thing. But again, wearing Hanfu is not easy for us.

Wearing a Hanfu and going out means you have to accept people's sights and criticisms - especially the Chinese. And this can make people feel afraid. Therefore, it takes great courage to go out wearing Hanfu. The reason why I wear Hanfu in the first day was we went to World Trade Center and took a lot of nice pictures.

It's Time to Pick Up Our History (Wang Wei)



Photo 13. Hanfu

18.

My Community

Rajan Chaudhary

I define community as group of people sharing a common place or space and having similar interests. A community can share a physical place or a mental one (Internet, feelings). I was born and raised in a small village of Rathwara in Nepal. In my village agriculture is the main occupation many people pursue. We celebrate common festivals like Chhat, Chaurchan, Deepawali and many more. The children mostly play the games like cricket, tal danta, Goli goli etc. We have a common religion and myths. As agriculture is not enough for living, most unskilled workers go to foreign countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Malaysia and Dubai to earn their livelihood. The language of most of the population is Maithili. My place lies in Mithila, which was once the kingdom of Great King Janaka (father of Sita). We revere Sita as a holy mother. “Mithi” (first Janaka) was the founder of Mithila. Seeradhwaaja - Father of Sita, was the 21st Janaka and the most famous king of the region. “Kriti” was the last king of Janaka Dynasty. He was an atrocious and cruel king. He was deposed around 6th century B.C by the revolt led by Acharyas (learned Teachers). It is claimed that World’s First Republic (ruled by democracy) was established in Mithila after the revolt.



Photo 14. Photo Contribution: Rajan Chaudhary

We celebrate a festival of travel named as “Mithila parikrama”, which is 150 miles long walk through 15 days. The most important festival of Mithila is “Chatt”, which is prayer to the Sun God. As Sun is the ultimate source of energy and major factor in skincare, we offer fruits as offerings to rising and setting sun (not noon sun). Rising and setting sun are most mild and great for human skin. Every year a wedding ceremony (Vivahpanchmi) of Ram and Sita is celebrated in Janakpur. Marriage

My Community (Rajan Chaudhary)

procession comes from historical palace of Ayodhya. My community celebrates legends of Buddha (founder of Buddhism) and Salhesh as the major heroes of the region. Salhesh was the powerful Sudra (low caste) king, who rose to power around 5th century B.C, and defended Mithila several times against mountain tribes called Tibetans. He is the prime example of rising to power through will power and merit despite being from low birth.

I love to be a part of this community. Its culture and history is great and vast. The community might not be technologically advanced, but it was once the place of greatest Videha kingdom (Vedic Civilization). It was also once the learning center of Eastern civilization. The great poet Vidyapati was born here. Although there is plenty of competition among the people for opportunities, I still got enough support and consideration from my community to build myself formidable career. I was raised here and carry some of the characteristics of my community that cannot be changed. Just like Great King Salhesh, I believe that people can reach unprecedented height and glory despite being born in a small village. Though my village is small and there are lack of opportunities, I am still not guided by an urge to abandon or escape. I am however interested in moving forward in exploring the world further beyond my community. I want the world to acknowledge my community through my sheer willpower and courage.

19.

Hear the Voice: Japanese vs. English

Megumi Fitzpatrick

Japanese is my first language, which I grew up with, and love using. I also love other languages and enjoy reading stories that can relate languages together. Recently I read an interesting essay entitled “Mother tongue” by Amy Tan. In her essay, she introduced herself as a Chinese American writer raised by a mother who speaks “broken English”. Her mother’s broken English has affected Tan’s life negatively in many ways and many years. However, Tan realizes that all the negative aspects were necessary to shape her identity as herself. Tan is also determined to use in her writing the English she shared with her mother because she wants to communicate to her audience in a way as if her mother is the reader of her work. When I read Tan’s essay, I was really impressed because of how language shaped Tan and Tan’s mother as how they are. I also totally agree that broken English can have negative effects. Both of the languages I use, Japanese and English, have affected each other negatively because of opposing sentence structure and the language’s way of thinking. However, I believe that I will be able to communicate better if I look at these negative aspects caused by Japanese language and English each other.

I was shaped by Japan: the way of communicating, speaking, and expressing myself. I used Japanese every day and everywhere. All the communication skills I gained in Japanese have affected my English communication negatively. Japanese is a very simple language compared to English. Japanese does not have as many verbs and adjectives as English does, therefore it causes my English expression to be very plain and boring. Japanese word order and structure order are also opposite in English. As Tan described in her essay concerning English grammar tests, languages have rules grammatically and due to that language rules can limit communicating. I feel the same way as Tan about such tests because Japanese language rules would also interrupt my English. For example, Japanese will never mention the main point(s) until the end of speaking or writing because Japanese care more about the processes of communicating itself. Furthermore, with Japanese I need to detail reasons and background information as much as possible then state a very short main point at the end. When I started to use English, I made Japanese sentences and translated them into English. The audience would ask what my point was. Many American listeners gave up on trying to understand what I wanted to say. Japanese language rules have limited the way I communicate in English.

English has also affected my Japanese negatively as well. Since I have faced difficulties communicating with English speakers as I mentioned above, I decided to start the habit of not making sentences in Japanese at first in my mind. I allowed myself to mention my opinion at the beginning then give reasons. What happened to me was people started to understand me even though I still used broken English. However, the more my English improved, the more my original language was weakened. Since I started to use English every day, I often came to prefer the English way of communicating. For example, I began communicating to reach results and main points quicker than to focus on other details and processes in my language. My second language shapes me as a more logical thinking person. My way of communicating is always “a matter of opinion” as Tan writes, whereas Japanese language is a bit more abstract, soft or indirect. In a way, English has been changing some of my Japanese sensibilities.” For example, I remember when I went back Japan and had a conversation

with my friends and I felt so annoyed about how they spoke. I would stop their conversation and ask the main point, not enjoying the conversation's flow. I was labeled as an insensitive person who really did not care for their story. Thus, Japanese is somehow influenced from my use of English in a slightly negative way.

However, using different languages does not always affect the speaker's language ability negatively. Positive aspects are that I learned how to think and speak logically from English. I also know how to detail my opinion creatively and orderly from Japanese. Furthermore, I learned how to communicate with people who speak broken language by understanding their difficulties. In practice I hope to combine the two aspects of these languages together better so people hear what I want to communicate, and I hear people what they want to communicate.

Language is the tool to communicate and explain who you are. The ways of communicating in English and Japanese often do not work well together because languages are used in different ways in different cultures. However, having faced those difficulties, I realize those negative effects can also be positive effects. I wish that broken English speakers would view these negative aspects as positive ones and also that native English speakers could understand that broken English speakers' voices use aspects from their mother language when communicating which may cause some misunderstandings and could also bring new insights to native English speakers.

Recipes

20.

Spiced Bake Chicken (for a family of 4)

Fnu Ugyen Norzin

Ingredients:

- 8 pieces of chicken wings
- 4 pieces of chicken legs
- One tablespoon of ginger and garlic paste
- One egg
- 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon of coriander powder
- 1 ½ tablespoon of garam masala
- ½ tablespoon of red chilli powder
- ¼ tablespoon of food color
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- Oven
- Oven mitt
- Egg blender
- One bowl
- 1 feet of aluminum foil
- Olive oil

Procedure:

1. Wash chicken
2. Put chicken in the strainer for 10 minutes
3. Put one egg in a bowl and blend it well
4. Put chicken in bowl and mix well with egg
5. Add 1 tablespoon of ginger and garlic paste, 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder, 1 tablespoon of coriander powder, 1 ½ tablespoon of garam masala, ½ tablespoon of red chili powder, ¼ table spoon of food color, and 1 tablespoon of salt over chicken and mix it well.
6. Leave it for 10 minutes
7. Switch on the oven and keep warm for 30 minutes and 300 temperature
8. Cover the oven tray with aluminum foil and put one tablespoon on aluminum foil
9. Take chicken from the bowl and leave it over aluminum foil
10. Put oven tray in oven and bake it for 60 minutes and 375 temperature
11. After 60 minutes take out chicken

Precaution:

While taking out spiced bake chicken, use oven mitt and be careful with hands.

21.

Rui Macher (Fish) Jhol (Bengali Fish Curry)

Mohame Khan

Ingredients:

- 4 pieces of Rui fish
- 2 medium Potatoes -cut into wedges
- 1 eggplant - cut into long pieces (optional)
- 1 small onion, paste
- 1 teaspoon ginger paste
- 1/2 cup tomato puree or 1 medium tomato
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1/2 teaspoon red chili powder
- 4 green chillies - to garnish
- 1 teaspoon panch foron
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 tablespoon mustard oil
- 1 1/2 cup water
- 1/3 teaspoon garam masala powder
- coriander leaves to garnish

Procedure:

1. Clean the fish pieces and marinate with 1/2 of turmeric and salt. Then heat the oil in a kadai and fry fish pieces till golden brown.
2. Fry the eggplant & potato in the same oil.
3. In the remaining oil add panch foron and onion and fry till soften. Now add ginger paste, tomato paste or tomato puree into the fried onion and again fry.
4. Add the potatoes and eggplant and fry. Then add cumin powder, red chilli and turmeric powder and little water to it and stir.
5. When oil separates add salt and fry for few minutes. Then add the fried fish and again fry it for 1 minute and after that add water and reduce the heat to let the gravy boil for some time.
6. When the potatoes are cooked, remove the kadai from heat and garnish the gravy with garam masala powder, chopped coriander leaves and green chillies and serve with steamed rice.

Enjoy!

22.

Brewing Tea

Sidika Jivraj

Tea can be made in various ways but to make the perfect Indian Tea, it is necessary to make it the right way with the right ingredients using good quality tea leaves and giving enough time to brew it.

Ingredients:

- Good Quality Tea Leaves
- 1 Cup Water
- 1 1/2 Cup Milk
- 2 Bay leaves
- 2 small pieces of sliced ginger
- 3 Cardamoms, crushed in mortar and pestle
- 1 Cinnamon stick
- 1 Clove
- Mortar and pestle
- Cooking Pot
- Strainer
- Measuring cup
- A cup
- A pinch of custard powder
- 1 tablespoon Condensed milk
- Burner/ hot plate/ stove
- Spoon

Procedure:

1. Using a measuring cup, measure 1 cup of water and 1 ½ cup of milk
2. Transfer this to a cooking pot
3. Turn on the heat of the burner/ hot plate/ stove to medium
4. Add ginger pieces, crushed cardamom, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, clove
5. Let this come to boil
6. Now add tea leaves and let it boil for another 5 min
7. Reduce the temperature to low and let it simmer
8. After 5 to 7 minutes, add 1 tablespoonful of condensed milk
9. Next add a pinch of custard powder
10. Using a spoon keep mixing the tea
11. Turn off the burner
12. Using a strainer, transfer the tea to a cup (the strainer will filter out the spices)
13. Your tea is ready. Drink with some tasty snacks.

23.

Chinese Hot Pot

Xue Wei

Hot Pot, the Chinese fondue, has been popular for a long time around China. In different regions, there are different kinds of hot pot. One of the most famous versions among them is Sichuan hot pot, which has a numb and spicy flavor. This unique flavor comes from the blending of the Sichuan flower pepper and a variety of hot peppers together. Sichuan people are known for their obsession with hot pot. They eat hot pot very often, either in restaurants or at home, with family, friends, or just by themselves. Either way, the charm of hot pot is unabated. Here, I am going to show you how to make hot pot at home.

Ingredients: To make hot pot at home, you will need

- a pot
- heater
- soup bases

Sichuan people consider soup bases as the soul of hot pot. They believe it determines the whole quality of a hot pot. You can get these soup bases either at Chinese supermarkets, or in some famous hot pot restaurant, where they may also sell their home-made soup bases. The most exciting part for eating hot pot is that you can cook almost any meat and vegetables that you like in it. Pork, lamb, beef, fish, variety of meatballs, variety of vegetables, anything.

Let's get started.

Equipment:

- A butane gas stove
- A cooking pot (You can choose either a wider, deeper cooking pot or a pot which has two compartments. That way you can enjoy two types
- Chopsticks
- Soup spoons and strainer spoons
- Small serving bowls
- of soup bases, one for mild broth, and another for spicy broth, simultaneously.)

Directions:

1. Clean and prepare the food that you want to have in the hot pot later.
2. Add water in the pot, then heat it up until it boils.
3. Add soup bases into the pot.
4. Wait until it is boiling again. Then pick the food you like and put it into the pot and cook.

Enjoy! Yes, it's just as simple as that.

Photos

24.

Shiqui Li (Alice)



Photo 15. Photo by Shiqui Li (Alice)

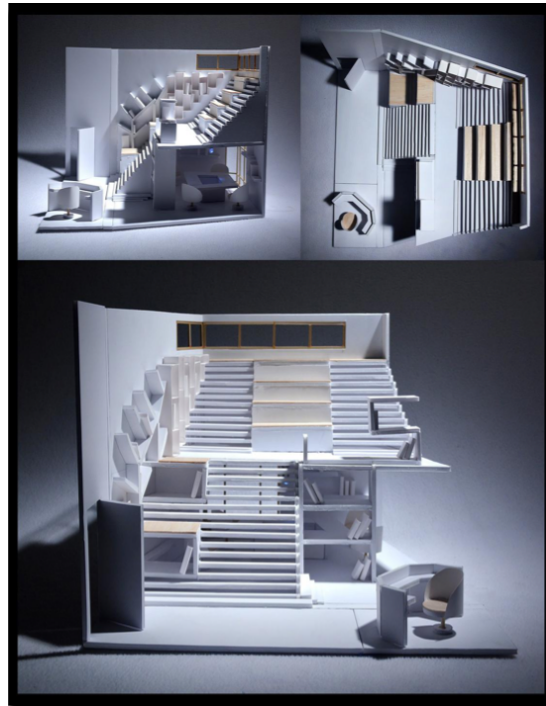


Photo 16. Photo by Shiqui Li (Alice)

25.

Bagan City, Myanmar

Aye Soe Sander



Photo 17. Bagan City, Myanmar

This picture of Ananda temple is taken when I went back to my country, Myanmar. Ananda temple is located on the Nyaung-U division, Bagan city of Myanmar. I was wearing the traditional Burmese (people in Myanmar) dress outfit specially made for Bagon ethnics. This shirt is the latest and trendiest design that aims for foreigners to wear and buy as a souvenir. Moreover, I was wearing a Thanaka similar to the foundation of makeup products. However, thanaka is also more effective for acne, redness and bruises and hydrating. It comes from the stems of the trees and therefore one does not need to use makeup remover to take it off. Bagan is a beautiful place with a lot of temples and pagodas for foreigners. The local people often rent e-bikes (electronic motorcycles) to make extra money.

26.

After 12 in MongKok

Nicholas Caracciolo



Photo 18. After 12 in MongKok

This photograph was taken in the streets of Mong Kok, a lively part of old Hong Kong that's home to markets and shopping districts. I was focused on the colors of the umbrellas that go against these compact white apartments. I wanted to catch the feel of the market after the morning rush, where people are looking at products but have already purchased their necessities earlier in the day.

27.

Legion, a moment in Fortress Hills

Nicholas Caracciolo

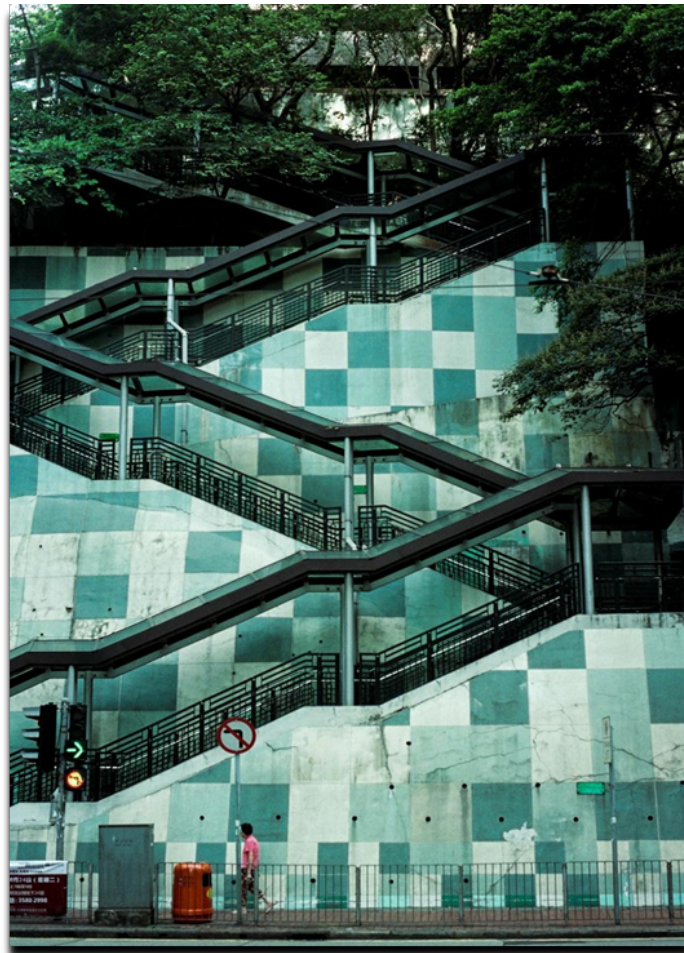


Photo 19. Legion, a moment in Fortress Hills

As I ventured through the Island of Hong Kong I made my way to Fortress Hill a rather underestimated area of Hong Kong where you can fully grasp the architecture. Their buildings were integrated into the elevated landscape of the Island. On my way to grabbing hot noodles and fish balls at a much-hidden spot, I came across this massive stair set that is built into the walls of the cliff. This photograph focuses on the geometrical shapes and lines created by the stair set crossing and the walls that are perfect squares. This is all overlooked by the trees.

28.

Requiem of Complexion

Nicholas Caracciolo



Photo 20. Requiem of Complexion

Taken in old MongKok where the streets are flooded with apartment buildings colored in the vibrant arrangement of colors such as those seen in this picture. Although this picture focuses on the colors and mass of the buildings, it is also juxtaposing the buildings on the left and the right and the middle one which is completely white.

29.

Pangong Lake, Ladakh, India

Sertso Mertsii



Photo 21. Pangong Lake, Ladakh, India

Pangong Tso, also referred to as Pangong Lake, is an endorheic lake in the Himalayas. Pangong Tso is in the disputed territory. The line of actual control passes through the lake. A section of the lake is controlled by China but claimed by India. The eastern end of the lake is in Tibet. Many Tibetans consider this lake as a “holy lake” because the water passes through Tibet. This is the only lake in India, which is connected to Tibet.

30.

Chaka Salt Lake

Ying Yang



Photo 22. Chaka Salt Lake

Chaka Salt Lake is a natural crystal salt lake located in Qinghai Province of China. There is about 3000 years productive history in this salt lake. “Chaka” in Tibetan refers to “salt lake coast.” Nowadays with the rapid development of economy in China, more and more people get tired of “concrete jungle.” People frequently team up to take photos or meditate by visiting Chaka. The lake reflects the blue sky and serves as a mirror of the sun. Surrounded by mountains, Chaka Salt Lake allows people to take a pilgrimage towards nature.

31.

Dali

Zhongming Qiu

I went to Dali in 2017 during my summer vacation. Dali is a city full of historic sites and traditional culture. When I walked on the patchwork stone road, I saw both the prosperity and decline of this city which is one of the three ancient cities in China. The first thing that attracted me there was the Wuhua Building. The Wuhua building is one of the landmark buildings in the ancient city of Dali at Yunnan Province. Wuhua building is the state guesthouse of the ancient imperial edict, the official meeting place, and banquets for the honored guests.

The modern Wuhua building was rebuilt in 1998. It is five stories high with a height of more than twenty meters and can accommodate ten thousand people to stand. Wuhua building has been burned down and rebuilt since it was originally built about 1200 years ago. Historically, the destruction of Wuhua building was mainly caused by earthquake and fire. Once the cultural revolution was the cause of its demolition.



Photo 23. Dali, China

32.

Sari in Bangladesh

Farzana Viavao



Photo 24. Sari in Bangladesh

Bangladesh, formally known as the People's Republic of Bangladesh, is a small island nation in South-east Asia surrounded by India and the Bay of Bengal. Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh. It is the eighth largest populous country in the world and the seventh official language of the United Nations. Bangladesh has lots of natural beauty. Sari is one of the most commonly worn clothing among women for more than 4,000 years. It was first woven from cotton and originated in the Indian subcontinent. It has been worn for multiple generations. Muslin is used to make some sarees in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Sarees are used everywhere, every day for any occasion by almost every woman. Muslin sarees are the best kind and since they originated in Dhaka, they are most common around there to this day. Other popular forms of clothing are lehengas and salwar kameez. But the Sari has been my favorite. It has been an integral part of Bengali culture. Sarees are of different types, from colorful silks to basic white fabric. It symbolizes Southeastern culture and I enjoy wearing a sari.

33.

Xiamen University in China

Quinglan Chen



I took this picture when I was in China in 2012. The scene was shot at Xiamen University. Xiamen University is the first university in China founded by a member of the overseas Chinese diaspora. It was ranked 22nd among Chinese universities in 2019 and it is known as one of the "China's most beautiful university"



Photo 25. Xiamen University in China

34.

New York City

Mike Yuda Chen



Photo 26. A Street in New York



Photo 27. A beautiful view of the city across the sea



Photo 28. Unity in diversity



Photo 29. Tall buildings in the city

35.

Photos

Stella Sitao Xing



Photo 30. Self-portrait of Stella Sitao Xing

This is my self-portrait that I think is the best one in describing my inner voice. I took this picture in Florida. When the night fell, the lights came out; people smiled at each other. The only thing I was thinking about is my grandparents and father. The old happy memories could be the most harmful sword to sting my heart deeply. Even though we separated but I still miss them. Sometimes, the closest relationship isn't the best relationship, but the longest companion.



Photo 31. Stella Sitao Xing and her aunt

I took this picture of my aunt's last picture. She passed away last summer. She was a violinist and professor at the orchestra of Boston and conservatory of Boston since '90s. I had met her only four times in my life since she moved to America after I was born. I met her boyfriend when she was in the hospice during her final days. He told me about her life which was entirely focused on teaching music and helping people. I was moved by her passion and inspired by her professional performance. I recently received an email from an organization of music in Boston. They told me my aunt YM Xing established a scholarship before leaving. This scholarship gives help to string instrument's students. This took me by surprise. She wasn't a rich person, and she even had a hard life. However, she still did this. I hope I can be like her in the future.

36.

Drawings

Zexin Liu



Photo 32. Untitled



Photo 33. Ink Sketch Watercolor

List of Contributors

Contributors

Melissa Aguilar is a Creative Writing Student with a passion for writing films. Since her two breakthroughs on Broadway, she's been inspired to create a platform where people of color will be able to express themselves on the big screen. Currently on her way to transferring to Queens College, Melissa's very excited to see where the future will lead her and hopefully it's to an Oscar.

Somi Ahmed is a recent immigrant in the U.S. and is from a small country named Bangladesh. She is a Liberal Arts Social Science and Humanities major and is finishing LaGuardia this year. Somi is a part of an e-Portfolio scholar program, Phi Theta Kappa, CUNY Service Corps, CUNY Service Corps Puerto Rico, Tech 2.0 scholar, and America Needs You Fellowship Program. She loves to listen music and love to watch movies.

Jooi Choi Albano moved to United States from South Korea. Currently majoring in Mechanical Engineering, Jooi enjoys playing with Arduino or trying to fix broken electronics.

Jesmin Ara completed her Masters in English Literature from Bangladesh where she taught in a Government College before moving to New York City in 2005. She graduated from LaGuardia Community College with an Associate in Therapeutic Recreation in Spring, 2018, and joined Lehman College to pursue BS in Therapeutic Recreation. She is a published author in Bengali literature and her hobbies include travelling, cooking, and reading.

Clarence Baguyo moved to United States from Philippines. She is currently pursuing a major in nursing and aspires to become a nurse educator/preceptor to practice compassion, respect, and empathy in patient care.

Michaela Cassandra Bautista is an international student from Philippines currently majoring in Therapeutic Recreation with a passion for writing.

Nicholas Caracciolo is a student at LaGuardia Community College currently pursuing Liberal Arts Major. His interests lies in photography and sharing pictures of his travels to prominent Asian cities.

Olive Casareno is a Writing and Literature major at LaGuardia Community College. Her motivation to study literature comes from a place of wanting to better understand and bring awareness to the identities of marginalized groups.

Popy Chowdhury was born and brought up in Bangladesh before she moved to the United States in 2015. Currently, she is a student at LaGuardia Community College, pursuing her major in New Media Technology and planning to graduate in June 2020. She is the founder of the non-profit organization "South Asian Creative Women" and the Editor of the magazine "Nari" (women). Popy loves literature, traveling, and music.

Qinglan Chen is an Accounting major at LaGuardia Community College. She plans to pursue a career in accounting. Her hobbies include photography.

Rajan Chaudhary was born and brought up in Nepal before he moved to United States in 2016. Currently he is majoring in Theater Studies.

Mike Yuda Chen is a student at LaGuardia Community College majoring in Fine Arts. He is an illustrator, photographer, and a game art designer involved in art work for about 12 years.

Megumi Fitzpatrick is a student at LaGuardia Community College majoring in Computer Science. She loves listening to music and reading books. One of her favorite books is "The Little Prince."

Nazmun Ety moved to United States from Bangladesh. She is a student at LaGuardia Community College currently majoring in Accounting.

Jingjing He is a part time student at LaGuardia Community College who loves New York. Jingjing likes to blog and share views about New York City.

Sidika Jivraj is a Nursing major. She is originally from Tanzania but has lived and studied in the UK and in Bangalore, India. She speaks and understands 8 different languages. Her hobbies include swimming and cooking.

Mohame Khan is a student at LaGuardia Community College currently pursuing her major in Business Administration. Mohame enjoys cooking Bengali dishes.

Jiafeng Li moved to United States from China to attain higher education. Currently an Accounting major, Jiafeng is also a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Secretary of the Economics Club at LaGuardia. Her goal is to become a Certified Public Accountant.

Shiqi Li (Alice) is majoring in Communication Design program and is eager to learn the newest art concepts and design skills. These include but are not limited to advanced typography, digital design, and the design process.

Zexin Liu is a student at LaGuardia Community College, currently majoring in Fine arts-design. He comes from a traditional Chinese family of hard working parents. A self-taught artist, Zexin wants to pursue a career in art. His dream job is to become an illustrator or animator and later to work in an art studio.

Swekchha Luitel is a Business Administration major at LaGuardia Community College. She is also an Academic Peer Advisor for the Business and Technology Department. Originally from Nepal, Swekchha moved to New York around two years back. Her hobbies include writing poetry, taking pictures, playing sports like basketball, and ping pong. Currently she is learning to write Haiku. She also enjoys painting and writing poems.

Sertso Merts is pursuing her major in Business Administration and Aviation Management. Her hobbies include travelling and photography.

Fnu Ugyen Norzin is Tibetan but she was born and grew up in India, which she considers her second hometown. Her major is Nursing. Ugyen likes to watch Hindi movies and dance to Bollywood songs with her mom.

Jessica Ortiz is Ecuadorian American majoring in criminal justice. She enjoys traveling and studying different cultures.

Zahidul Islam Priyo likes to go by his last name, Priyo. He moved to United States from Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 2016. He is currently majoring in Business Administration and plans for a career in International Business. Priyo's hobbies include visual photography.

Zhongming Qiu moved to United States from China three years back. Zhongming currently lives with his parents in Flushing, Queens. He is majoring in Accounting at LaGuardia Community College and plans to transfer to Baruch College to pursue his Bachelor's. He appreciates the time he spends in China.

Souvik Saha came to United States from Bangladesh. He is currently majoring in Computer Science and wants to help improve the political discourse in the United States.

Aye Soe Sander is a student at LaGuardia Community College and is currently pursuing major in Business Administration. She is originally from Myanmar and her passions are travel and tourism.

Angrej Singh is a native of India. Currently a student in LaGuardia, majoring in Film and Television, he is on his way to Hunter College. He enjoys doing critical evaluations and analysis on a range of topics that include but are not limited to: styles of film, social and political issues, and social psychology. Singh plans to make documentary films highlighting the experiences of marginalized communities in NYC.

Farzana Vaivao is originally from Bangladesh. Deeply influenced by her mother's home cooked food and Bengali cuisine and culture, she strongly identifies herself as a South Asian and feels that doing so makes her feel close to home at all times.

Wei Wang was born and brought up in China before he moved to the United States in 2015 to pursue his studies. Currently Wei is a student at LaGuardia Community College majoring in Computer Sciences and working on spreading traditional Chinese culture.

Xue Wei moved to United States from Sichuan, China. Currently she is pursuing her major in Accounting major at LaGuardia. Her special interests include cooking and travel.

Xinchen (Viola) You came to New York from China a few years ago with no previous knowledge of English or a background on Fine Arts. At the end of 2017, she finally achieved one of her goals of becoming an art student at LaGuardia Community College. Her passions include art and literature. She plans to graduate with a Fine Arts Associate Degree and transfer to a four-year art school.

Stella Sitao Xing is a major in Design Studies Option. She moved to United States from Sichuan, China. Raised in a family of professional musicians and professors, Stella started to study classical music thereby inheriting her grandfather's great music career. After graduating from high school at Sichuan Conservatory of music, she studied clarinet and piano. She also taught music to elementary, high school, and adult students for four years. In her spare time, she studies Korean and Japanese. Stella joined LaGuardia's Design Studies Option of Fine Arts in Spring 2018. Her plan is to become an architect while continuing with her passion for photography. Stella loves everything related to arts.

Ying Yang is an Accounting major at LaGuardia. Ying moved to United States from China 8 years back. Ying loves to travel and explore different cultures. Ying believes that all cultures in the world deserve to be accepted, respected, and appreciated.

Zonghua Zhang is a major in Fine Arts and plans to pursue a career in art.

Meiyu Zhou moved to United States from China three years ago. Currently, a student at LaGuardia Community College, Meiyu is majoring in Business Administration and plans to graduate in Spring 2019. Deeply attached to the culture, language, and Asian food, Meiyu is eager to share her knowledge of Asian culture around the world.



