

Respect

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FISH HEAD SOUP

What would be your response to your friend's offer to treat you to a bowl of fish head soup? Personally, I would love to have a bowl of fish soup! However, anyone who does not have my background in island living and seafood eating might feel squeamish. In Sabah, Malaysia, where I come from, seafood is very popular, as well as very expensive. In my home town, we love fish head soup, which we serve to our guests to show our hospitality to them.

I did just that when my American husband first visited me in Malaysia. I took him to a famous seafood restaurant in my home town and ordered a whole steamed fish (another popular local dish served to our guests). My husband was very funny! While eating the fish with his right hand, he kept his left hand over the fish head so that he couldn't see its eyes staring back at him. He told the fish head, "Don't look at me!" and then turned to me and said, "It tastes really good." At that point I realized that Americans don't eat fish heads and don't lick fish bones. Nonetheless, my husband showed his respect for my ethnic culinary specialty.

The second time my husband came to marry me was another interesting culinary experience for him. He had trouble with his jaw, so we went to see a doctor in my home town. As a result of the visits to this doctor, my husband-to-be and I became good friends with this doctor. We invited him to our wedding, but he couldn't attend. He felt sorry about having missed our wedding, so he invited us for lunch at a restaurant for the best fish head soup in town. When my husband heard that the doctor wanted to treat us to fish head soup, his eyes opened up very wide. He said to himself, "Oh, no!" We respectfully accepted the doctor's invitation. When we sat down to eat at the restaurant, my husband said

to the doctor, "If I get sick, I have a doctor with me." We all looked at each other and laughed.

~Doreen Taylor

(UNTITLED)

I am a piece of ground.
I used to have twins,
but I do not now.
I used to be covered in material that towered in the sky,
but now I'm a grave where thousands died.

~Jesse Altman

HELPING THE HOMELESS

It is a bitter cold day

And you wonder—
what are those bundles of coats and blankets

That are laying on the sidewalks?

Black and blue blends with the weather and view.

People, walking the beat,
staring at what these bundles of coats are.

Then suddenly, they move—a head, then an arm,

A head, then an arm, a hand,

Helping us to realize there is someone in each.

As we walk, we see their eyes worried and hurt.

When I kneel to add more coats and hot soup,
I hope to change their day.

But it never changes.

It happens everyday.

~Carl Jennings

THEORIES OF IMMIGRATION

My name is Soichi Oya, and I am a visiting physician from Japan at the Cleveland Clinic in the Neurosurgery Department. I have worked as a neurosurgeon in Japan for 11 years. Most of my work involves the surgical treatment for cerebral vascular diseases. I am working with a well-known surgeon here in Cleveland.

In addition to my work, I am also interested in improving my English. I have never lived abroad before and there are not many English-speaking foreign people in Japan. Therefore, we seldom have opportunities to communicate in English. So as soon as I arrived, I enrolled in the ESL class at Case hoping to develop my English language skills.

The class had completed a unit on diversity in American society. I was faced with taking a test on this unit even though I had not been in the class for discussions on this topic. I decided to do it as practice. One of the questions that was presented was to write my opinion on whether I agreed with the term used in the early twentieth century describing the immigrant experience as a "melting pot" or whether I saw it more like the term that is used today, "a salad bowl" or "patchwork quilt."

The theory of immigrants as a "melting pot" may sound reasonable when used to refer to the desire for unity among the American people but the word also implies that immigrants in America should become identical. In other words, a person who did not fit in to mainstream America and tried to keep his or her unique identity would be considered a threat or at least an undesirable. I admit that people living in a country should conform to societal norms, but does this mean that foreign people must totally conform to the existing culture? I think not.

The newly termed words to describe the immigrant experience such as “salad bowl” or “patchwork quilt” create the impression that immigrants are encouraged to keep their cultures but also adapt to American culture. Under this circumstance, people from other countries are able to learn about America but remain individuals. Foreigners would be required to be sensitive to American people and their culture but so would Americans respect their identities and cultures. In this way, Americans could embrace foreign cultures instead of excluding them. I believe that this mutual respect encourages true communication. Ingredients in a salad bowl never lose their special taste and each patch of a quilt never mixes into another patch. They create a harmonious result as would the American society.

In the two months I have been here, many people in America have helped to make my life as comfortable as possible. I hope to see more of what’s going on here. I will remember always to have respect for American culture while taking pride in my own.

~Soichi Oya

THE LOVED ONE

It's true what they say about it. We hurt the ones we love the most. We get too comfortable with the fact that they like or love us too much to leave us. When we start to believe this, we start to forget the value that they have in our lives, and therefore, don't realize that they can leave us until it's too late to fix it.

So if you're reading this please
Don't let your loved one be the forgotten one!

~Diane Chuck

THE NAN KING HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

A few months ago, we went back to China. My sister was getting married, so we had to go to her wedding. Before the wedding, we decided to go to the Nan King Holocaust Museum. This is the city where I was born. This museum is about what happened in 1937 in Nan King.

Here is what I learned. In seven weeks the Japanese killed between 300,000-400,000 people. They didn't just kill them; they tortured them to death. They raped people, burned them, buried them alive. They held races to see how fast they could kill the Chinese.

After I went to the museum, I bought a book named The Rape of Nan King, which was written by a Chinese American named Iris Chang. This book taught me a lot!

On the museum walls there were a lot of words. The one that I can remember the most is the last saying: "Forgivable, but Unforgettable." We can't change history, but we should learn from it!

~Layla Martin

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

My name is Xinxin Tang. I am from China and study ESL at Case Western Reserve University. This class not only helps me to improve my English, but it also teaches me about American history and culture. For example, we studied about the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the American Constitution. I think all the amendments are important. As a newcomer to the United States, I feel I must understand how they work and how they affect our daily lives. They are the protectors of our civil liberties in many different ways, and each affects the other.

However, of all of them, I think the third amendment is the most important. Originally, this was to prevent the government from sending soldiers into a person's home and taking their property. The colonists felt it was not fair when King George III had his British soldiers take over private homes. Now, this law applies more to illegal searches of people's homes by the police.

There is a saying that a man's home is his castle. In a democracy such as America, people feel that their home is a safe place. Therefore it is unlawful for the police to enter a person's home and violate his personal property. In some ways this is comparable to soldiers entering because whether it is soldiers or the police, the effect on the homeowner is that he feels his home has been invaded.

Furthermore, when police come to search a house, it throws suspicion on those who live there. Without a search warrant that shows reasonable suspicion of guilt, a search could ruin a person's reputation and make him an unwanted neighbor. This is emotionally damaging. Of course, if there is reason to believe that the people are involved in criminal behavior, I agree that the police have a right to

search. The problem involved is that if the search proves the people innocent, how could their reputation in the neighborhood be repaired? This is a very difficult situation either way.

In many countries, innocent people have no way to protect themselves against the abuse of power. Their homes are invaded, their property is confiscated, and even their very lives are threatened. In such countries, the authorities are looked upon as the enemy. In America, the third amendment helps to maintain a good relationship between citizens and law enforcement agents. We respect the police, and they respect us. Everyone stays within the framework of the law.

~Xinxin Tang