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My unmoving morning body hadn't yet adapted to the cold, wet, breezy weather at the Arbor Day volunteer event. Shocked by the sudden chill, my senses awoke and energized my will to participate in what I normally don't, but should. Volunteering is just a difficult task for me push myself to do. My unwillingness to participate in "participations" is most likely because of this overly desirous burning flame within me that says, "You can do better". As I saw the others working together like a big happy family, that flame of desire awoke, sparking the rebelliousness that has lived inside of me ever since I can remember. I wouldn't define this cute immature little flame to be good or bad. In any regard, I proceeded to position myself among the herd. I signed in, and then walked over to the placed nearby equipment. Selecting my tool felt like choosing my weapon. Like a warrior undecided, empty handed, unsure about his opponent's strengths, I chose a simple tool similar to a pickaxe.

I approached the "herd", shy but cunning, I wanted to dominate the battlefield. The small

A Green Effort

By Joseph Brown, From U.S.A



pickaxe felt solid and controlled in my grip. Its presence was felt throughout my body. As I begun to awkwardly hack and pull on blackberry bushes, my flame flurried in embarrassment. I need a different weapon.

After some adjustment, I adapted to the strengths of the blackberry bushes. I took them from their origins by using a shovel, sweeping them with the end, using it as a lethal blade. My swings were drastic, people around me watched unspoken as I took the job of at least 6 people. My enemies' fell in bunches. My stamina isn't that of a horse, so I stood exhausted and panting. My insides spoke hypocrite. But I ignored this message. I continued swinging, and I continued to become fatigued. Slowing down, the flame flickered within me. My childish attempts were met by the constant judgment of the other participants. They were the participating party; I was the rebellious steed, demolishing everything with my hoofs, while the calm sheep stared in awe.

A cleared battlefield was my

resolve. This was my effort in being "green". Thus, perhaps my intent was not clear. Instead of immersing myself with the crowd and imitating others' efforts in order to achieve the common goal, I competed in a non-competitive scenario. I definitely overexerted myself. Nevertheless, I participated in a "participation". For me, that was an achievement. Next time, I'll acknowledge others as my equal, not my competitors. It's important to have a sincere heart in regard to these community involvements. Yes, my "enemies" fell in great numbers. But I felt there wasn't clarity in my efforts. I was participating for the wrong reasons. Perhaps I wasn't encouraging the efforts of others and was instead oppressing them with my attitude of "superiority". I don't intend for my character to appear that way in these social groupings. That cute little flame is burning strong. Next time, I'll bring my machete.



To Swallow Fox Eyes

By Anand Tumurtogoo
From Mongolia

If I were to define myself by who I am, the first response I would make is I'm a Mongolian. Sure, it is a very vague statement that does not describe any characteristics I possess, only accounting for my ethnicity, but to me my ethnicity is the essence of my character, because it shaped who I am right now--my goals, aspirations, and my view of

the world. Though I now realize the impact my ethnicity has on who I am, as I was growing up I believed my ethnic background was a drawback.

When I was kid, I had very little interest in my ethnic background. I was the first generation of kids who were raised in a democratic era in Mongolia. The fall of communism and emergence of democracy introduced TV shows like the Simpsons, Friends, and 7th Heaven to Mongolian kids like me. Whatever projected on the square black box, I enjoyed it. I learned my first English word on TV, and its arsenal of western TV shows helped improve my English vocabulary. I even developed, needless to say, more of an "American" way of thinking. I liked what I saw on TV and it was better than what I saw outside my window. I disregarded Mongolian writing and I started reading more English books.

One day my English teacher gave me a copy of "The Catcher and the Rye". I loved reading it;

I enjoyed it so much that I spent my whole Saturday afternoon until the following Sunday morning to finish reading it. As I finished reading the book whilst I was going to bed at 7 in the morning, my waking mother asked me in Mongolian, "Did you swallow fox eyes last night?" When my mother asked me this I had no idea what she was talking about. I probably mumbled something in reply, then let the strange phrase slip my mind while I began to sleep. A few years later after I came to the states, while I was chatting with my friend, I asked, "When are you going to bed? Is not it late?" He said the same phrase my mother said in a different manner, "I think I swallowed fox eyes, I will go to bed later." The second time I still did not understand what it meant. Seemingly, I thought I would get mocked by my friend if I asked him what it meant, because it seemed a very simple Mongolian idiom that I just did not know, so I stood silent, said my goodbye and went to bed.

Feeling desperate and angst-ridden to not ask people what it meant, I started to read Mongolian literature and books on folk sayings about foxes to find what it meant. As I read on, I began to feel a deep sense of pride in being a Mongolian, especially after reading about what "swallowing fox eyes" meant. I can now surely say what it means to swallow fox eyes. To swallow fox eyes is to not feel sleepy, to be alert, and to have cunning insight, all this emotion expressed in one phrase. Just imagine yourself drinking a large sum of coffee, more than your regular batch. The effect of caffeine on your body, without drinking the coffee, would be "to swallow fox eyes."

Now I feel as though I should honor my culture if I want to expand my knowledge even more, because in the end, I have to swallow fox eyes to make a better future for myself and for my country.



Heartache from my International Friends

By Dio Jean-Baptiste
From U.S.A

Since Highline has many international students from all around the world, I've been extremely blessed and fortunate enough to call some of these students my friends.

Highline's international students arrive from Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan,

Egypt, Germany, France, Spain, Kazakhstan, Peru, and many other countries to study and learn in the U.S. As these international students are learning about American culture, Americans too are learning about their cultures, traditions and what life is like in other parts of the world.

I am grateful that I'm so easily able to learn about other parts of the world and other languages. If I ever end up traveling to these countries, such as Vietnam and it's nice to know at least a little of language such as, "Can you please tell me where a restroom is located?" It is very useful to learn tradition, culture, and how to communicate in every language of the world.

Having an international friend is one of the fun aspects to learn other cultures. My friends and I have so much fun together. Last summer, a few of my international friends and

I went camping, hiking and skydiving together. We had much fun doing these activities together. Having friends from other parts of the world is one of the coolest things that a person can experience in other cultures. From my friends, I am able to see the world around me with different eyes, and to try new things all the time, but sadly it is not all smiles and laughter.

The part that saddens me about having international friends is the inevitable departure and goodbye. The final wave, bidding farewell forever, that comes at the airport when it's time for friends to go back to their families, friends, culture, country, and language--their home. This situation is the hardest thing for me to do. Sometimes I wish that they could just stay here forever, or at least until I get out of Highline and move to their country with them

so that I won't have to lose such cool friends.

After every saddening departure, there is also the excitement for the arrival of new international students that will be coming. So the cycle of making new international friends, then being sad when they go back home, continues and repeats itself again and again. I'm happy, then sad, then happy, then sad again, but I'll always cherish and remember the times I had, and will have, with my friends from around the world.

**ANY COMMENTS
AND
TOPICS
YOU WOULD LIKE
TO READ FROM
THE MOSAIC?**

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Unfolding the Nostalgic Memory

By Nami Okazaki, From Japan



As the bell rings, the children come out from classroom, carrying big backpacks and hurrying to catch a school bus to go home. Every time I see the familiar view, it unravels my childhood memory in Maryland, which is far away from my original country, Japan. It was almost ten years ago, during a time in which I had the most difficulties and also when I enjoyed learning English.

This spring, I had a chance to go back to my “little” hometown, Washington D.C., with my friends. During our stay, we spent most of the days sightseeing around the city, such as visiting White House, the Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial. Since Maryland is close to Washington DC, I spent a day visiting Maryland, and the place I had been for three years in childhood.

When I was nine years old, our family moved to the U.S as my father’s job was transferred to an office in D.C. We lived in Maryland, where it is very quiet and full of color and beautiful nature. However, moving into the new environment caused a problem and adjusting took time. The main problem I

encountered was that they didn’t have any Japanese schools. I had no choice other than to attend the American public school, Carderock Spring Elementary School. Since I had never spoken English before, I was miserable, my first year was hard, and I couldn’t communicate with other students for a long time. I often pretended to be sick, and didn’t go to school for many days, but my mother occasionally found out about my feigned illness. As my mother forced me to go to school, I started to attend classes gradually by the second year.

One day can colorize your life. One of my friends lived close to me and taught me English. He always cared about me and made sure that I wasn’t left behind in the classroom. By getting all this help, my English improved a lot, and my life became colorful like the nature of Maryland.

Since communicating in my second language became easier, the days in Maryland became precious for me. However, life is about coming and going, and I had to leave. 5th grade was my last year to stay in Maryland. I never expected that I would miss going to school when I first

came to the U.S. I met so many great teachers and friends in my elementary school. I found out that one of the teachers, Ms. Smith, known as a very scary, strict teacher in my school, also had a heart full of kindness; she helped me whenever I needed. The thing that made her happy was origami. Since our elementary school was located in a small suburb of Maryland, it was rare to have a student from another country. So many of the teachers loved to see anything from my home country. I first started making origami during our free period to start a conversation with others and make friends, but eventually my teachers loved it as well. I often made origami cranes for Ms. Smith and secretly put them on her desk.

When I went to Maryland this spring, I visited my old elementary, though it is housed in a temporary building due to construction. Even though it was a totally different building from the one I used to attend, I was still able to feel the same atmosphere when I went inside. I expected that I wouldn’t know any of the current faculty. As I entered the building, I told the people at the front desk the name of my former teachers, and the lady told me that Ms. Smith was still working there. As

soon as all the students were dismissed, I saw her at the temporary classroom with wrinkles I had never seen. When she gave me a big hug, I was about to cry. Finally, after graduating from the school, I was able to come back and meet my teacher again. Even though the classroom we met in was new, the scene, scent and feeling reminded me of my younger years in school. I was especially reminded of my school days by the pictures on the wall of her classroom; she had kept all the pictures of graduated students, and we found a picture of me from ten years ago. Although 10 years have passed, she has been the same since I left, with a heart full of kindness. She told me that she had kept the origami ball that I made for her, until it broke. I was so happy that she kept it that long.

Maryland is a place full of memory for me. I am so glad that I was able to meet my teacher, and I’m glad that I’m able to keep in touch with her. I can still remember the days I spent in that school, which makes me want to go back again, to those former days. Although I am originally from Japan, Maryland is definitely my hometown as well.





White Memory

By Tran Pham (right)
From Vietnam

In my lifetime, the best teenage memory is all about the Áo Dài – Vietnamese traditional dress. Four years ago, my mom held a small party for my girlfriends and me to celebrate the first Ao Dai in our lives.

On a humid afternoon, my best friend drove me to the tailor to get my Ao Dai. Our faces sweat under the hot sun, but the smiles blossoming on our lips were as cheery as the spring. After an hour drive, we got home with the whitest dresses ever. In my blue bedroom, four girls were trying on those dresses eagerly. We turned around, touched the silk, took pictures, laughed about our shapes, and were so shy to walk outside the room to show my mom and the boys. This memory strikes my head every time I see the

white Ao Dai. We were so embarrassed to walk a “fashion show” with our boyfriends. Their faces were surprised while their eyes were scanning our dresses. Ao Dai is the most important step for teenage girls to transition from being a kid to a fully grown young woman.

Ao dai came from the Chinese traditional dress. Many label the Ao Dai as the best way to show your body shape, as sexy but also modest. It is based on Confucianism: the 5 fasten buttons on the right side of Ao dai stand for: Kindness, Politeness, Gratefulness, Wisdom/Thoughtfulness, and Reliability/Worthiness. Vietnamese wear Ao Dai for special events, such as Tet festival, which is Vietnamese new year, and weddings. Also, Ao Dai is used as a formal dress in working environments, and as a high school uniform, which

makes Ao Dai an important symbol for teenage girls. It shows the purity of youth and wisdom during an important time of study. In Vietnamese literature, music and art, Ao Dai takes a big part with many arts revolving around this topic.

Ao Dai is not just a symbol of Vietnam, but also a romantic image of Vietnamese women. Besides school uniform, lots of different styles, colors and materials are used to star every single event. For weddings, the bride usually wears red and yellows with a sparkling dragon and phoenix which symbolizes property, happiness, strong relationship, and best wishes for her marriage. Darker colors are used for older people while brighter for young.

Ao Dai has been a beautiful symbol of the country for many years. It puts a big effort in advertising the charmi of Vietnam. As a young girl living far from home, every time I try my Ao Dai, a strong steam flows intensely through my heart which reminds with me: I am Vietnamese.

For Girls or Boys?

By Anh Nguyen, (left)
From Vietnam

Áo Dài is also the traditional clothes for men, too. If you come to Vietnam, you won't be able to see men going to school wearing Áo Dài. They

only wear it on special occasions, such as weddings. Therefore, the wedding day should be a very special day for them. In a Vietnamese wedding, both brides and grooms wear these traditional clothes. In the wedding, I never get bored of looking at the couples. With the red or pink Áo Dài for the bride, and the blue Áo Dài for the groom, they match perfectly. I even dreamt of my wedding that I would wear pink and the groom would wear blue.

If you went to the fashion show in the Tet Festival at Highline, you should've seen around 4 boys wearing Áo Dài's. They looked so calm and gentle that day. It's been a long time since I saw a boy dressed in it because I haven't been to a Vietnamese wedding for two years.

Áo Dài became traditional clothes for Vietnamese culture centuries ago, although there are other national clothes such as Áo tứ thân, Áo bà ba or Áo yếm. It stands out as it is the pride for all the Vietnamese girls, especially the international students. Most of the girl students brought their own Áo Dài from Vietnam, but the boys did not. I have the only wish that one day Vietnamese boys will also wear Áo Dài as their working or uniform clothes, just like the Vietnamese girls.



Lederhose and Diendls

By Anja Cazacu
From Germany

Many people picture Germans wearing Lederhosen (leather pants) and Dirndls (dress) on a daily basis. Although it is the “traditional dress code,” it will be hard for you to see people wearing them in Germany.

Today, it is common mostly in the state of Bavaria, located in the southeast of Germany. The Dirndl consists of a bodice, blouse, full skirt, and apron. It appears to be simple and plain, but a proper modern dirndl may be quite expensive as it is made out of silk fabrics, and is hand printed. It used to have meaning because the placement

of the knot on the apron was an indicator of a woman's marital status. When the knot was tied on the woman's left side, it indicated that she was single, whereas a knot tied on the right meant she was married, engaged, or otherwise “taken,” and a knot tied at the back meant the woman was widowed.

The men's leather pants are knee-breeches made of leather. Traditionally, lederhosen were worn for physical work, since they were more durable than textile clothing and easier to clean. They have remained regionally popular and are commonly associated with

virility and brawn. Some men enjoy wearing them when hiking, working outdoors, on a stag night, or attending folk festivals and beer gardens. They are rarely seen elsewhere, and have acquired camp connotations in the rest of Central Europe. Today, the “Tracht” (traditional Dirndl and Lederhosen) is commonly seen at Oktoberfest, where most of the people dress up traditionally. Nevertheless, the Tracht has remained a symbol of regional pride. Their role in Bavaria is thus comparable to that of the kilts in Scotland or the cowboy hats in the United States.



Putting on my culture

By Luna Cheng, From Taiwan

Culture and history are abstract, yet traditional clothing has epitomized its essence over many years. Clothing is the symbol of a nation's civilization, as well as a symbol of belonging. Taiwan is a multicultural country, and the melting pot of Asia. Most of the inhabitants of Taiwan are the descendants of immigrants from

different provinces of mainland China. Since these different ethnic groups are well integrated, the differences between them have disappeared over time. Besides the Han Chinese immigrants, the aboriginal Taiwanese have their own traditional clothing as well.

I have worn, or seen these two types of traditional clothing before. I can still recall how thrilled I was at the moment I put on my first cheongsam. It was about three years ago, at a cultural exchange activity in Los Angeles. I persuaded the Chinese and Taiwanese exchange students to wear their traditional clothes at the closing ceremony, and we came to an agreement that all of us would dress traditionally, with no exceptions. At the moment I put on my cheongsam, my heart began to pump harder. I could feel the silk rise and fall with my breathing, and the glory that made me feel like I was on cloud

9. No sooner than we stepped in the room that the other exchange students turned their heads and stared at us with mouths wide open, they were awed by our luster. Not only were they surprised by how harmonious the traditional clothes looked on the new generation, but also how we were amazed by the beauty of the "old fashion." I couldn't help but appreciate the different styles and colors of the cheongsams - ocean blues, bamboo greens- and the patterns such as dragons and tree peony that were delicately printed on them. We became the spotlight of that day; wearing traditional clothes not only gave us a sense of cultural group identity, but more importantly brought us closer together.

On the other hand, the aboriginal Taiwanese, who came to Taiwan a long time ago, have also preserved their own customs and costumes. The

clothing represents the prominent features of each tribe, which symbolize cultural ideas and beliefs with vivid colors and diverse styles. The aborigines used a horizontal loom with a strap to weave exquisite and beautiful cloth, and then sewed pieces of cloth together to make an integrated garment. Shells, buttons, and beads are added not only for decoration, but also as symbols of status and wealth. They also carried a traditional aesthetic meaning. In certain festivities or ceremonies, indigenous people express their ethnic identity by wearing the traditional clothing.

Traditional clothing makes a cultural essence come to reality. It symbolized the history of a nation that we couldn't describe in data; as if a picture represents the meanings we couldn't describe by words. It gave us a sense of belonging, and united us under the name of culture.



Kimono

By Mari Okonogi, (center)
From Japan

There are many kinds of traditional clothes in Japan and the kimono is one of the most famous. In the past kimono meant normal clothes, clothes worn in daily life, but since we now have Westernized clothes, we named traditional clothes kimono. Kimonos are divided in several different ways which are called, Yukata, Shiromuku, and Furisode, referred to as long-sleeved kimonos.

Nowadays women usually wear long sleeved kimonos in many types of ceremonies, because it is tradition that

unmarried women wear a long sleeved kimono on ceremonial occasions. I wore a kimono when I went back to Japan during winter vacation for the coming-of-age ceremony, a celebration of people's 20th birthday, which signifies a child becoming an adult in Japan. At the ceremony, I met a lot of my childhood friends, and most of them wore the kimono expressing their personalities and tastes by choosing different designs and beautiful colors. Usually, kimonos are sewn with Japanese traditional designs, such as sakura (cherry blossom), crane, camellia, and chrysanthemum (as you see on the picture).

I felt more comfortable wearing a kimono the second time than the first because it has to be very tight to look good when I wear it. It might take time to adjust to wearing a kimono because for some people it may feel really tight and uncomfortable. However, if you get a chance to come to Japan, I recommend you to try them out.



Yukata and Hakama

By Soichiro Uotani, From Japan

There are basically two types of traditional clothes for males in Japan: Yukata and Hakama. Yukatas were worn as a gown in the summertime long ago. Yukatas are made of thin fabric which makes them comfortable to wear in Japanese summers since in Japan, summer is really hot and humid. Hakamas were to be worn instead of suits, which was old formal Japanese style. Since Japan became westernized a few hundred years ago, Japanese fashion became modernized and the time for people to wear our traditional clothes passed gradually. Therefore, people don't wear these clothes in their

daily life as it used to be.

But, they are still worn on special occasions in Japan. Hakamas are still worn in the Japanese traditional style wedding or coming-of-age ceremony, and also many people wear Yukata during summer events, such as during fireworks in the summer festival. I also wore a Yukata in the summer festival when I was 16 years old. Wearing uncommon but traditional clothes made me feel really cool, experiencing something new, and I had fun with it.

I used to be a fashion model in Japan, and once I had the chance to wear a Hakama. I realized that it has a really cool design. However, it was tight around my waist, and it was difficult for me to move when I wore it.

If I have another chance to wear the Hakama, I want to try it because it is still traditional Japanese clothing even though it is too tight to wear, because wearing all of these clothing makes me realize I am Japanese.

PAST EVENTS HIGHLIGHT!!



▲ TAKING A GROUP PICTURE AT THE ICE SKATING PARTY.

▼ STUDENTS PAINTING EGGS AT THE SPRING EGGS PARTY.



▼ STUDENTS REMOVING BLACKBERRY BUSHES AT ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION.



▲ TAKING A GROUP PICTURE AT THE ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION.

▼ NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPLORING FEDERAL WAY.



▲ STUDENTS WORKING ON DECORATION AND CULTURE BOOTH FOR THE GLOBALFEST 2X10

