

# THE CELAC STUDENT VOICE

## Reverie in the Moonlight

by Dingshu Chen



All the ancient civilizations had strong relationships with worship. Cattle are regarded as "sacred animals" by Hindus. Ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun as the guardian of the ground. As for Chinese, the moon is a symbol of love and reunion. People stay together with family or their lover to celebrate on a special day when the moon is roundest and biggest of the year, and this day is called the Moon Festival.

The Moon Festival is also known as the Middle-Autumn Festival. As the name suggests, it is the middle day of autumn. As one of the four major festivals in China, there is always a feast in the center of the city where citizens share delicious dishes with others. One special food named moon cake in the feast is the main dish. The stuffing of moon cakes is mostly made of plant seeds, so it tastes very sweet. The sweet taste also symbolizes the sweet love between lovers.

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The lantern is another important element. During Moon Festival, trees are decorated with red lanterns. Unlike the Christmas trees, there's no presents under them; instead, you can find some interesting riddles on the paper hanging from the branch. The first one who can figure out the answer can gain rewards and glory. Moon Festival has a long history of more than 1000 years in China, and it can be said that it has been rooted in the heart of every Chinese. When the moon is round, no matter where Chinese are and what they are doing, they will think of this land that brought them up.

## A Fertile Superstition

by Ying Nian Chen (Tina)

Different countries or regions cultivate unique cultures as well as superstitions. We all know that mothers having babies for ten months is draining but valuable. Do you know any superstition about pregnancy? Here are some things might be interesting and novel for you about pregnancy in Taiwanese.

Our elders believe that there is a god who manages pregnancy. They think the pregnancy god protects babies, so it is important not to alarm it while a woman is pregnant. The most widespread superstition is that pregnant ladies should not tell other people including family about the pregnancy within three months, or the pregnancy god would get angry then hurt the baby. Moreover, family is not supposed to remodel their house and to move because it is regarded to frighten the pregnancy god. It is not acceptable to nail objects with a hammer in pregnant women's bedrooms, as well, for it is considered would hurt the pregnancy god.

Pregnant ladies are not supposed to attend weddings and funerals. It is said that if brides see a pregnant woman, the rest of her life would not go well, or she would not have a baby within three years. For funerals, it is thought unfavorable for a fetus to be in the inauspicious occasion. Another taboo is that a mother-to-be cannot hold other people's babies during the pregnancy. It is rumored that holding other babies would lead to her own babies being stingy or change the gender of babies.

In my view, there are plenty of superstitions in every country, they might not be true but interesting to know. Sometimes, listening to my grandma and other elders telling the ancient stories was quite an amusing thing while I was a kid.



# The Water-Sprinkling Festival

by Xiangzhou Yang (Harvey)

In Yunnan, China, there is a special group of people who have unique customs and have their own festivals. They are the Dai people. They take the peacock as their cultural symbol and possess romantic cultural stories. The Water-Sprinkling Festival is one of the most important and joyful festivals of the Dai nationality.

Water-sprinkling festival is also known as "Bath Buddha Festival". In the language of the Dai people, it is referred to as "Sang Kang Bi Mai" (meaning New Year). The Xishuangbanna Dai autonomous region and The Dai nationality Dehong Dai Jingpo autonomous region call the festival the "Shang Hang" and "Shang Jian;" both names come from the Sanskrit, meaning turnover, change and transfer. This refers to the time when the sun moves once a week in the signs of the Zodiac and begins the transition into the New Year.

Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and among countries also celebrate the Water-Splashing Festival. The Water-splashing Festival is generally held in the middle of June of the Dai calendar (namely about ten days before and after the Qingming Festival of the Lunar calendar). It is one of the grand traditional festivals in Xishuangbanna. Its contents include folk activities, artistic performances, economic and trade exchanges. Specific festival activities include splashing water, swinging, dragon boat racing, bathing Buddha, chanting, Zhang Ha singing, the peacock dance and the white elephant dance performances.

When the festival comes, Dai men, women and children will put on their festival clothes, while the women will each carry clean water to wash the dust for the Buddha and pray for the blessing of the Buddha. After the "Bath Buddha", people began to splash water on each other to express blessings, hoping to wash away diseases and disasters with holy water, in exchange for a better and happy life.

After that, they begin to the communal splashing activity. People hold all kinds of containers filled with water, going out of the streets, chasing, and playing, they splashing everyone. The gentle ones dip a branch in water and splash it. People play in the splash and splash wet body symbol of good luck, happiness, health of a blossoming spray in the sky, people enjoy the splashing, laughing, wetting, and high enthusiasm. At night, in the village drums and Musical Instruments circled the whole village, people indulge in singing and dancing. Throughout the festival, in addition to the traditional entertainment activities such as dragon boat racing, hoisting, Kongming lanterns, splashing water and dropping bag. There are also new activities such as cockfighting, ballooning, garden party and material exchange.

The Water splashing Festival is not only a kind of festival, it is a kind of cultural display, showing the Dai water culture, music and dance culture, food culture, clothing culture, and folk worship. It shows the Dai feeling of being in harmony with nature, and a love of their beliefs and ethnic characteristics. The festival has strengthened the Xishuangbanna groups' spirit of unity, with southeast Asia playing a positive role for friendly cooperation and exchange.

The influence of culture and economy are mutual, and positive culture promotes the development of economy. The Water-Sprinkling Festival plays an important role on the development of economy and culture.



## Dingshu

Hello! This is Dingshu, a Mechanical Engineering student from China. I'm a fan of robots and am interested in mechanical separation and assembly. My dream is to build the most intelligent robot in the world.



## Harvey

My name is Xiangzhou Yang; you can call me Harvey. I come from the hometown of Pu 'er tea located north in China. I was an international trading company manager before I came to UNM. I am going to apply to the MIS and Finance at UNM. I like to play basketball and take pictures in my leisure time.



## Tina

I'm from Taiwan. My major was Food Nutrition when I was in the university in my hometown. I like to watch videos, especially Korean dramas.