



Traditions and Culture

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The Verdadera staff encourages you to discuss and explore the issues and stories, as the publication aims not only to offer an outlet for expression, but to improve our lives. Keep in mind that the emotions that flow through the text and the feelings behind the words could be those of your child, your classmate, or your best friend.

Things to consider while reading:

--What is culture? What defines tradition?

-- How have traditions and cultures changed over time?

--How do culture and traditions shape an individual's identity?

-- How do differences in the culture and traditions of immigrant parents sometimes cause confusion, sometimes identity crisis, and sometimes curiosity and interest among their teenage children growing up in the USA?

The Verdadera staff thanks you for your interest and support.

Student Submissions

I've always been sad that my family doesn't really have any traditions. On Easter, I learned to make my own Easter eggs with the help of my friends from church and a do-it-yourself kit. On Halloween, our house remains as plain and as bare as the other 364 days of the year. On thanksgiving, we make hot pot instead of turkeys and mashed potatoes (which I love), only because the rest of my family likes it better. It seems that all the traditions I hold in my life, most of them I've had to create and uphold on my own. My parents aren't bad or anything though, it's just that when they moved here from Taiwan, the old Chinese customs such as making moon cakes and zong zis couldn't survive in American society without

the rest of our family, and to my despair, they never adopted any foreign traditions from this world.

When I have kids, I'm definitely going to fill their holidays and birthdays with a number of special traditions that will define my family. On Christmas, I want us all to go together and I'll let my children pick out the Christmas tree, and after we decorate it I want them to put a star on the top. On Easter, I'll decorate a dozen eggs for them each and spend the day with them filling up their baskets. On holidays, I won't work, because I'll realize that my family is a thousand times more of a blessing than my job, and I'll never put anything above them. I want my kids to have the kind of parents that will read them a bed time story if they want to, and not tell them to

stop being a baby when they're afraid of the monster under the bed. Those are the simple and most beautiful traditions. If they'd like, I'll help them make their Halloween costume every year instead of just buying the next cheap Disney princess knock off at the local store, and together we'll make our house so haunted and fierce that the candy bowl will stay filled because no kids will be brave enough to go near it.

I want something to define my family. I believe that family is defined by the people in it and their traditions. Well, my Dad is a smoker that has anger issues, and my Mom has been depressed ever since she got fired from her job. My brother and I, we don't talk. I loved the holidays because I felt it brought us together, but I could never remember them after it passed. We never had any traditions, we never had something special that tied us together. I'll be in control of my life and my own family one day, and I won't make that mistake.

"A love for tradition has never weakened a nation, indeed it has strengthened nations in their hour of peril." ~Winston Churchill

Ever since I could remember, my family has been really close with 6 other families. These families were close friends of my parents before, and their children have also grown to be my best friends as well. Every month for about 17 years, our families come together to hang out to have a great time; these 6 families are close enough to be considered family to me. Whenever we go out it's just natural for all of our families to call each other and go out and spend some time together. Our families have gotten so close that one time we even wanted to buy a complex that complied of 7 houses so we could all live together; but ultimately that didn't happen. The bond that we share is so comparable to an actual family that we even have dubbed ourselves the title of "The Big Family". People don't usually see this type of bond in most friends; yes, friends may come and have a birthday party once in a while, but in this close circle of friends it is my tradition to get together with them at least 3 times a month.

"The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life." ~Richard Bach

Every Christmas eve my family is at grandmas house for a huge celebration. Family members from all over

come to Palo Alto for a huge family gathering with food, games, and just a fun family experience. Every family member cooks, so every year the job of preparing the meal is always given to one person. That one person is in charge of preparing all the food for brunch and dinner. This person's duty is praised after the meal with a bundle of gifts and the whole families respect for the whole year. Last year I was lucky enough to be this person and everything went perfectly. My turkey was plump juicy and all the sides turned out perfectly. I still get compliments every time I see a relative.

"When you look at your life, the greatest happinesses are family happinesses."
~Joyce Brothers

Tradition has always been big part of my family. Well, the fact that we have none. On holidays we usually go to whatever family member who has invited us to their home, for vacations we either stay at home or go somewhere. It's never the same place twice. I don't know whether our variety is good or bad. Sometimes I feel like I'm missing out. I have friends who go to Disneyland or Hawaii every single year! I always wonder what it's like, to have some sort of set event in your life that will never change. Something you can always depend on. You can never depend on anything with my family. I mean, at least we do things but I still am always left wondering what having a tradition is really like. Even a little thing. Like eating the same chocolate cake from the same store for your birthday each year. Stupid tiny details that are always the same. Maybe the repetition can get boring, but I think that I would like it.

I actually got to experience a tradition last year during thanksgiving. It wasn't one of my own, but that of my friends. She had invited me to have thanksgiving with her family, knowing that my own family was just going to "take a break" this year from the festivities and stay at home. The fact that my sister had decided to become a vegetarian also added to this decision. It was cool to go to my friends thanksgiving where the same people were year after year and they ate the same pudding as last year and the year before. I loved it, and I wish my family would do the same.

"Every heart that has beat strongly and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind." ~Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was in grammar school, I attended a boarding school in London. Yes, the kind where it's categorized into different "Houses" and had a story to tell. When you enter the building it had a world of its own -- minus the wands, the sorcery hat, talking pictures, and moving stairs. I know what you're thinking and you're wrong. Actually you're kind of right, more or less. Just subtract everything that's surreal and Harry Potter related and you have my boarding school. The one I attended was a private boarding school, the kind where rich kids go to. I was accepted on scholarship and by connection. My typical day looked like this: I woke up at 6. Took a shower and ate breakfast at 7. Breakfast usually ran for 1-1.5 hours. No we had food, not just scones and tea. 8 is when my latin class began. Here's the list: Latin, Math, Science, Monarchy History lesson, etiquette lesson, literature, fine arts, and modern history. In between we'd have lunch. After school, which would probably be around 4, I would do my extra-curriculum activities, which would range from swimming to figure skating to orchestra to gymnastics. Attending a boarding school was like attending a college. You have to plan your classes and get around them. The plus side is that each student gets his or her own room. Depending on your academic standpoint, you'll be categorized into different houses. The plus side of attending a boarding school was that you didn't have your mom nagging on your grades or the last test you semi-failed. Of course, we did have house mothers, where they took your laundry and what not. They were sincere and talked to you as a person, not based on your academic standpoint. That's what I loved about boarding school and I terribly miss it.

"As the soil, however rich it may be, cannot be productive without cultivation, so the mind without culture can never produce good fruit." ~Seneca

i dont understand culture. why is this important? i know its important in an intellectual sense: "in retrospect" so i can "find myself by finding my roots" and what-not, but when i ask myself if my culture has become a part of who i am or has shaped me at all, I always come to the conclusion that my asian culture stuff has not impacted me at all. of course i american culture has infulenced me. I am pretty much completely american. i will always be asian even though the way i act and behave is vastly different than my cousins in asia. traditions on the other hand seem irrelevant. although some traditions may have a cultural link, many traditions are as simple as going swimming on the last day of school. that said,

traditions to me have just been memories. actions that remain constant, as people change. being agnostic, which i think means having no religion, (and im including this religion part because im aware that religious people have so many traditions which are quite valued to them, every holiday is a tradition.) tradition has really just been, to me, fourth of july parties, xmas presents on christmas morning. they were just actions, they did mean a lot to me though, because they were fun with the family and i enjoyed those moments. traditions were all fun though: visiting my great aunt who lived three hours away in a manure smelling farming town was really a hassle. so to me traditions are just actions

"Tradition lives because young people come along who catch its romance and add new glories to it." ~Michael Novak

Traditions are the building blocks of the culture that they adhere to. I have had many different experiences with different traditions and cultures throughout my life. They vary greatly from my families Judaic traditions to the pre-game traditions of the football team. A very important Jewish tradition is called a bar mitzvah. It is the celebration of a boy's 13th birthday. It recognizes that the boy is now old enough to be a man and take on more responsibility for himself. Another tradition I have participated was of an athletic nature. Every Friday after wrestling practice we would take a few minutes to mentally prepare ourselves for the next day's tournament. Whether it's wrestling or Judaism, the traditions that arise from them help build up the practice for posterity.

"Culture is the sum of all the forms of art, of love, and of thought, which, in the course of centuries, have enabled man to be less enslaved." ~Andre Malraux

Our culture these days implies technology. The best and bestest part of technology is the television.

In second period Lit we are discussing persuasive speech topics. My literature teacher, obviously not letting us make our own opinion, says that the television "kills the brain." She says it causes people to become unattached from reality and oblivious to the rest of the world. She brought up a story about some druggies who thought they were in Dragonland and killed a young couple so they could pay for a trip to Mexico. But I believe that television

is the pure definition of amazing.

It takes me to a whole new place, time, setting, story, life. It gives me suspense and laughter and relaxation.

Sure it takes me away from reality. It takes me to a cool reality. One where brain surgeons take tumors out and where workers sell paper and where high school girls gossip about the latest scandal and where a low-life singer is threatened by Simon Cowell and where a nerd becomes a CIA spy agent. I love looking into those realities.

My lit teacher urges us to read books instead of sitting like a vegetable in front of a screen with the only exercise of a finger pressing the channel button. But books and television shows are not that much different. They both have characters and vocabulary and plots and setting. (I admit, my spelling has gone downhill.)

But don't bash on my TiVo. I love my TiVo. I love following shows like a religion and screaming at season finales. (Season Finales and I have a love-hate relationship.) I love having a schedule of the days each show comes on. I love watching old episodes of Friends, Gilmore Girls, and I Love Lucy.

And I know it sounds weird, but I love having the cast of Grey's Anatomy as my best friend.

"Culture relates to objects and is a phenomenon of the world; entertainment relates to people and is a phenomenon of life." ~Hannah Arendt

Traditions, in my opinion, started many many years ago, not long after the dinosaurs choked and left this Earth. In an old village located in a very old country, in a rusty old hut near an ancient tree, lived an old man with his small, yet happy family. Days before he died the old laid in bed and realized that he will soon be leaving this small little world. Nothing would be left of him except a couple of crumbling bones and maybe one or two memories of him singing during a holiday dinner, or drinking his discolored tea. Something must be done in order for me to never be lost, never forgotten. I know! He exclaimed in a creaky old voice. I will leave some of my strangest habits behind, and that way, years and years from now, little boys and girls will be sitting on their parents knees and asking: "Mommy, why do we have to dress this way?", and the faithful mother will say, "Why, your great-great-great-great-great great grandfather once used to do this too, and so we must follow in his footsteps". And so he called the little family in the room, and started telling them his final wishes: what they must pass on from one poor generation to the

next and the next and so on. And the faithful family nodded and smiled, because what sort of person wouldn't respect and follow a beloved old man's wishes?

And that's how, hundreds and perhaps thousands of years later, I got stuck doing things no one in their right mind would even think of doing, or not doing, in this case. Like never ever whistling inside the house. Why? No one really knows, although when people ask me I make up the brilliant excuse that it's some sort of foreign superstition that my mom acquired when she was my age. Truth is who knows? My have come down from an ancient grandma I've never heard of, or may have resulted of my ancient grandpa's inability to whistle, and so in his shame, he decided no one would mock him in his own house, and so no one was ever allowed to whistle inside again. Another tradition popular inside the household-slippers. You'll never see my grandparents walk anywhere without their pair of white, clean slippers to "slip on" right as they enter the door of their house. When the question comes up- tradition. Might have descended from the distant parts of Russia where my family goes back to, or maybe just the fact that the floor is cold. Point is, traditions passed down from generations onto the next thousand don't really do their job well- preserve the memory of the one who came up with them in the first place. So why follow them? Why waste our valuable time and effort doing something we see no point in, only to satisfy someone who has been dead for quite a while? Because... it's fun. And an excuse to do almost any stupid thing on the planet. It's not a bad thing or a good thing- simply a part of each and every one of our life that I believe while stupid at times is fun, and so necessary. Traditions let one explore different ways to live, view the world, and enjoy themselves. Traditions help make a person. Which is why traditions are such a big part of our- my, life.

"Tradition does not mean that the living are dead, but that the dead are living." ~Gilbert K. Chesterton

"Does America even have a culture?" "America's lack of culture or what it has of it is loosely based upon the culture of other countries" and etc. etc. "Teenagers and children these days are troubled over identity crisis because of lack of culture in America." Blah. Blah. Blah. Does anyone else hear this everywhere? Even though, America might not have traditional dances, or musical instruments, or a very long history... I still think there is some culture in there. I'm Chinese, but I'm American too. There

was this one time, a fob came and stayed over at our house for a couple of days. He told me one of the reasons he wanted to come to America was because the girls were more open to giving hugs than they were in Taiwan. I thought that was funny, but I didn't think that was a really accurate view of what American culture is... Actually, I don't know what American culture is. But I think it might be like asking, I don't know what an American accent is because we live it. We probably don't know what American culture is, even though we may be doing it right now.

"Culture is something that evolves out of the simple, enduring elements of everyday life; elements most truthfully expressed in the folk arts and crafts of a nation." ~Thor Hansen

My brothers and I are the first generations of both my mother and father's side to live in America. Because of this my ideals as well as my brothers are much different as compared to my parents' and relatives. My grandmother and grandfather (on my mother's side) currently live with my family in America, they come back every so often to help around the house, as my mother is a single mother now. Their real home is in Taiwan which is where all my other relatives live as well. When my grandparents come back, they bring with them words of wisdom and Asian sayings that they try to bestow upon our American minds, but little do they know, I do not understand three quarters of what they say. And obviously if they're trying to teach me, they've probably already taught my mother the same guidelines. So that is another person that tries to shove the Asian culture down my throat. This is a major issue that has come up time and time again.

On one occasion I took a white string and made it into a bracelet (don't ask me why), but the moment my mother saw it she went ballistic! Apparently wearing a white string on your wrist is suppose to show that someone in your family has passed away. This large rift between my mother's Asian culture and the new modernized young American culture has created many problems for me in the past and even present. Another large issue that has come up in my mother and I's quarrels is about the issue of my hair. Yes, as ridiculous as that sounds, getting a buzz cut is apparently too much for my mother to handle. She says I look like a "liou mang" or savage in Chinese and that I look too mean. She wants me to grow out my hair to be like my older brother's, long and wavy and if anyone has ever seen

me, I would look simply atrocious with long hair. Many have told me that for me, shorter hair is the way to go, but my mother just doesn't see eye to eye with them. I have tried to stress this point to my mother on many occasions, that the times are different, and she cannot expect me to be or act like the people of her time, but I have had little or no effect on her mindset in this matter.

*"Culture is not a biologically transmitted complex."
~Ruth Benedict*

I have stereotypical asian parents. They push me and make sure that every single action and decision I make will help me become a successful lawyer or doctor in the future. I have learned that getting A's is a priority as well as a necessity. I have learned that getting B's means my phone is taken away and I will be grounded for at least 6 months. I have learned that hanging out with my friends more than once a month means I am "going out too much".

Yet even when I am doing very well, I am under constant bombardments of "Why are you so stupid" "Why can't you do better" and "You need to try harder". But even with these exclamations, I do not argue because the most important thing I've learned is not to talk back to my parents. Of course, I am not inhuman. I have broken down numerous times, but every time I've done so, I will always pick myself up again.

Some people may argue that such treatment is unhealthy or will lead to even worse problems in the future. However, this is a culture and I am part of it. While some aspects may seem ridiculous, I recognize that this method of parenting is only done so to help me become a better person. It may seem harsh at times but it is even worse to see how much of it is lost in the current generation. It is a culture that may be a bit more unbearable than others but I am part of it nonetheless. Therefore, I do not argue.

*"No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive."
~Mahatma Gandhi*

I remember seeing in a news article that there were some celebrities fighting to keep children in orphanages in Asia from being adopted overseas. To fight against the children's loss of identity by going to America, and keep the country's culture in them. I'll quote my mom on this one, "Even though culture is important. Having a loving home is more

important. You can always recover your culture, but you can't make up a loving home." Culture is important, but it's not everything right? Sometimes I feel like I could be more into traditional dance, or instruments. More in embracing the culture of my parents instead of my peers. But I don't understand why if I'm not fluent in my parents' tongue I'm suddenly a whitewashed Asian. I can still speak the language, understand and read it. But I just live in America, so I'm better at English. Tradition. Culture. And everything is cool and everything. But who made it the top priority over being a good human being?

"You can lead a person to culture, but you can't make them think." ~Thomas Wolfe

Recently, my great uncle died. At his funeral I came upon many Chinese bits and pieces of culture.

At the beginning, everyone was given two small envelopes. One was red and the other white. The white envelope contained a piece of candy and a quarter. I was told to eat the piece of candy; apparently, it sweetens the memory of my great uncle. The quarter was a symbolic gift from my great uncle. Thanks I guess.

The red envelope contained another quarter. Coming from a red envelope, this is supposed to bring good luck to counter the bad luck of the funeral. These two traditions surprised me a bit, but I do think they are good ideas.

The money was to be spent immediately after the funeral and I ended up buying a fish with the money. Even though I never really got to know my great uncle, it's nice to think he's still with us, swimming happily.

"Preserving tradition has become a nice hobby, like stamp collecting." ~Mason Cooley

Being one of the few black people in this school, many would say my life is "different" from the other people in our school. But I don't think it's that different. I wake up every morning with a big smile on my face, and enjoy the new sunshine and the start to a new day. I brush my teeth and then grab some watermelon for breakfast.

I walk to school and meet up with some of my friends. Sound different yet? Not really. I go to all my classes and write down things in my planner. Then I come back home and have a snack and sip some

refreshing grape Kool-aid, and then some fried chicken for dinner while I work on my homework. Sometimes I have more watermelon for dessert. A typical day of any student around here. School, study, and eat with some social time mixed in now and then.

And what exactly is "black culture"? People seem to have a really bad interpretation of what it really is. It's a variety of things, it's who we are. It's a part of American culture, yet it's different. Music, god, dancing are so important in our lives... just like any other culture or any other race that has it's own unique music, own unique dance form, and own unique god. Sure, there are days that are celebrated like Emancipation Day, Music Month and so on, and these do capture the culture but also are just days that certain other "higher officials" can create to feel better about themselves for helping out another "group of people."

Really, it's just no different than any other culture. A typical day, a typical set of events, and yet people seem to think that we are so different from everyone else, yet we actually share so much in common in the big picture. We are who we are.

"I do not want my house to be rounded by walls and my windows to be closed to other cultures. I wish to become familiar with the culture of lands as much as possible but I will not permit them to affect me or shake me from my own status."~ Mahatma Gandhi

As much as I hate to say it, tradition is something that I've procrastinated on for many years. Now it may sound odd, but just like putting off studying for a test, I've put off understanding my own culture.

Ever since I was young my parents never truly pushed for me to learn about my own Indian heritage. I remember celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Holi with so many other happy little kids. The joy and excitement emanating from everyone was enough to let me appreciate these celebrations, but in the back of my mind I always asked 'what are we celebrating?' It was later when I grew up that I learned up the meanings and purposes of these festivals.

Now there have been many times in my life when I have been curious to learn about my culture. These brief bursts of curiosity usually result in question-answer sessions with my parents and family, but I usually end up confused and argumentative. As my intellect has grown over the span of my life, the more I have found myself arguing with the principles and practices of my culture and religion. I do not find

solace in performing rituals and ceremonies for blessings. I do not appreciate the social atmosphere I encounter when I visit my home country. I do not feel at home when I go to these festivals and celebrations. Instead, I prefer logic and reality over rituals and blessings. I prefer the casual and modern social atmosphere of American over the traditional and conservative atmosphere of India. I prefer Independence Day and Christmas over Diwali and Holi.

There was a time this past year where I got really into my Indian tradition. I researched it, I learned about it, and I was finally starting to finally feel good about it. As I learned new things, I relayed them to my friends until one of my friends said something to me that shocked me. He told me, "You know, although you're getting really excited about all this stuff, you realize that the rest of us already know about this so it's nothing new." That statement shocked and angered me. In a second, I had gone from finally feeling good about my culture, to becoming a complete outsider again. As much as I should've ignored it, what my friend said to me caused me to abandon my research and go back to ignoring my culture.

Sometimes I feel apathetic about ignoring my tradition so blatantly, but most of the time I feel regret. I guess I never really took the time to appreciate and believe in my culture. I like to think of myself as having two cultures, one being my modern and typical American one that I love, and the other being the traditional Indian one that I ignore. I know that the only way for me to ever understand my heritage is to abandon my biases and to stop putting it off. I know there are valuable things I can learn from my own culture, and hopefully one day I'll be able to understand it and learn what I can.

"Culture is a little like dropping an Alka-Seltzer into a glass-you don't see it, but somehow it does something." ~Hans Magnus Enzensberger

For some time now, I've been very divided with myself over the traditions and customs of my religion and what my parents expect me to do and follow. Being raised in a foreign country, I don't exactly feel the same connection I probably would had I been raised in an environment where my traditions + customs are all around me, serving as a constant reminder of what I'm sorta expected to do and follow.

I think living outside of my home country kinda gives me a sort of option to pick and choose,

like in a buffet. You're given a widespread array of things to choose from and follow, or to walk past and ignore. Sometimes, however, my relatives back in my home country don't exactly agree with how I approach stuff like holidays, customs, and the likes. They see my attitude towards such stuff as being "lackluster" and not "following the way it should be done" Luckily though, my parents do realize and understand that I'm growing up in a very diverse and different place so they don't exactly expect me to dot all my 'T's' and cross all my 'T's'.

There are many things which I feel aren't practical or required, just because of the times we're living in. This also goes for most of the customs + traditions in other religions I see out there. Even though I respect the people who follow everything while living outside of the atmosphere and homeland, I still feel that there are somethings you can do away with and still follow the basic principles of faith or religion. So I don't pray everyday or I'm not as 'religious' as I could be. I don't believe in some of the old wives' tales that explain the reasons for certain traditions and customs that are followed. But I feel that so long as I keep in mind the basic principles to follow and consider, I'm just as in touch with religion as anybody else who follows all the traditions and customs to the last dot.

In a practical sense, the Man up there isn't gonna love or hate you more because you followed more or less of the traditions and customs in your faith or religion. If you keep the basic principles and ideals by which He wants you to live by and try to lead a good life to the best of your ability, then I'm pretty damn sure He's not gonna damn you to hell or smite you with His almighty power. He'll respect the fact that you took some things to heart and stuck with them in spite of the distractions and obstructions in your path.

Now where do I fall? I try to stay true to some of the principles which I see as practical or ideal, to put it that way. I disagree with my parents on many things, like the idea of comparing horoscopes to determine a compatible marriage between two people. Honestly, it isn't a foolproof method but we only do it because our forefathers did it and because it is "advised," not a "compulsory" thing. And sure we argue over many other ideas/beliefs, but that's just the way it is. The older generation trying to get the younger generation to follow in the same ideas + principles, but the younger leaning towards a more "practical" and "modern" approach to the same principles. It's gone down like this forever since way back when and it's one sort-of tradition/custom that hasn't gone out.

Don't be afraid to have opinions on what you think is practical and impractical. Traditions and

customs are simply ideas and beliefs which are made to change with each generation + group's views and opinions, based on what they see and experience around them. Meanwhile, I'll keep on running through the list, keeping what I agree with and altering what I don't like as much. Try it some time, it can do wonders.

"Culture is like wealth; it makes us more ourselves, it enables us to express ourselves." ~Philip Gilbert Hamerton

My family does not have the most traditional of Thanksgivings. Annually, our family goes to our cousin's house (all Asian, which isn't really a surprise) for Thanksgiving. For some reason every year I think we'll have a turkey and the normal American food like cranberry sauce (you do eat that at Thanksgiving right?) and mashed potatoes. However, every single time we always end up having our own version of Asian Thanksgiving. Instead of turkey, we have this giantass duck that no one finishes. Eventually the family "insists" we take it home and it proceeds to be the next month's leftovers. Ew. BUT ANYWAYS, our food pretty much consists of fried rice, chow mein, dumplings, eggrolls, twice-cooked pork etc. And like every other Asian gathering, we all have to have the entire family/friends/random people there all squish together for about twenty photos. After the dinner, the Asian parents all commerce loudly in one section of the house about grades or colleges or the fantastic jobs their son has been getting as a lawyer. As for the "children" (although honestly it's me and a bunch of 25-35 year olds), we all have a rather intense Dance Dance Revolution competition which for some unknown genetic reason, just about Asian beasts at. Then we usually have a big ****fest gather for Chinese karaoke. None of us are really that great at singing. After eating red bean soup, we all gather for the classic Chinese version of Kung Fu Hustle. Because what Thanksgiving doesn't have Kung Fu Hustle??

"Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast." ~William Shakespeare

I never realized how culturally lost I was until my church tried to recruit my family into a Filipino-American group. They went on this long spiel in Tagalog about their organization, and as my parents were attentive and nodding, the group noticed my

blank stare. My mom had to explain for about the 24097540913th time that I don't speak the language, or understand it, or try to understand it. I guess I gave up trying to learn it about 10 years ago when I kept getting teased about how bad my Filipino accent was. So along with not speaking the language, I can't bear watching any of the Filipino TV shows/movies, I don't have the guts to Karaoke at parties, and I never eat any of the food because it's mostly meat and I'm vegetarian. For the past few years I've questioned why I'm not in touch with my culture... Maybe it's because there's nothing like Chinese School or Japanese Camp to educate me. I'm stuck reading articles on Wikipedia about the history of the Philippines (wow, thank you Spell Check, I totally just spelled the country wrong, how pathetic). I was about to end my story here, but I just had a revelation. FRUITS! I'm currently sipping a jackfruit smoothie and I do intend to eat mangoes later on today. Yes fruits, possibly the only thing I can connect with about the Philippines. But I can turn this into more. Maybe later I'll watch those boxing match things with my dad and read more on Wikipedia on how exactly our noses vary from the rest of the world. Cool. Thank you, jackfruit smoothie.

"Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit." ~Jawaharlal Nehru

Recently I went to the Asian museum of art to check out the exhibition they have on Samurais, because i am Japanese. Although I did enjoy the exhibition, I did not feel like this was my culture. I felt i belonged in some old run down gas station where they still have people pump the gas for you, somewhere in the middle of nowhere. I imagine Route 66 to fit the scene.

I have been living here, in America, all my life, and as far as I can remember, it's the only place that I've enjoyed. The culture here is so much more open and free and careless than compared to that of Japan's where order and loyalty cause teenagers to backlash in rebellion. I dont think i could handle it in Japan. My cousins don't speak a word when I visit and everyone is so quiet I just want to scream whenever i'm in that bamboo matted house. There are traditional holidays in Japan: Boy's day, Day of Remembrance for the Dead, Girls day, (Festivals and Events I am quite oblivious to.) I dont know if I feel like a part of me is missing or if i can live without it because i seem to be doing just fine.

I think its too late for me to fit into Japanese culture I just dont have the patience and reserved

attitude needed. I guess my American ways will be stuck with my forever. Oh well.

"Culture is everything. Culture is the way we dress, the way we carry our heads, the way we walk, the way we tie our ties — it is not only the fact of writing books or building houses." ~Aime Cesaire

I started to go to church at a young age, cuz of my parents. And at that time I was like whatever, you know, but once I got to know the faith, I've gotten closer to him and like my life has been good, so I can't complain. And through church I have made loads of friends and memories, so I guess my parents raised me up for a reason, like it's meant to be.

"Cultures grow on the vine of tradition." ~Jonah Goldberg

I guess I'm in touch with my culture. Part of Ethiopian culture that I find interesting is that we are never in a rush. Actually that's black people in general. It's funny cuz whenever we are invited to a friend's gathering or with family or something we casually show up 2 hours late, and that's on time. Many people come to this country from Ethiopia and find it odd how Americans are so stressed and in a hurry... like driving and stuff. It's normal for Ethiopians to sit down to eat or drink coffee at a restaurant or something and stay even an hour after they finish. The funny thing is I don't really find myself "in touch" with this part of my culture. In fact, sometimes I behave almost the opposite and go everywhere hours early. To sum this up, the traditions of my culture intrigue me yet I don't encourage them.

"Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterizes a society or a group. It includes creative expressions, community practices and material or built forms." ~The UN World Commission

When I was younger, my parents tried to set me up to learn a language. So, they enrolled me in Chinese School.

The thing is, that all the other kids in my class lived in Chinese-speaking households (except for one girl, but she was adopted from China and spent the first bit of her life hearing the language.) The point is

that these kids received help, support, knowledge, and so on from their parents. I, on the other hand, did not. After all, my parents came to the United States when they were both little kids. My dad barely speaks Chinese because he's forgotten the language, and my mom is Korean.

Anyway, I went through five years of Chinese School (looking back, I'm pretty sure I faked my way through a lot of it – but I can't be sure), before dropping the language – right before the start of middle school.

But, all those years of lessons, flash cards, and fat packets of homework have culminated to... almost nothing. Now, I can barely recall the most basic phrases, but I sure can't read, write, or pronounce the words correctly!

I guess my failed Chinese School stint is slightly representative of my connection to my culture as a whole – that is to say, not a very close one.

"Culture, the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit." ~Matthew Arnold

Tradition and Culture means a lot to me. I grew up in India, and my parents always took the time to teach me about Indian culture, foods, and customs, and I love learning about them. But in modern times, a few thousand miles away from home sweet home, it is sometimes almost impossible to uphold these traditions and values I feel. For example, everybody knows that Hindus are not supposed to eat beef because we see the cow as a sacred animal. But since I have come to America, I have been forced to eat beef several times, because there was no other food available at the time, and if I didn't eat, I'd probably have keeled over and died in that very spot. I'm thrilled that my parents understand this and let me eat beef if I choose to, but they still refuse to actually buy beef and bring it into our house. Some of my Indian friends who eat beef say that this is ridiculous because if I've already consumed beef, then I should just go the whole hog (no pun intended) and eat it at home too. Although I do see their reasoning, I still think that my parents made the right choice because I think if we started eating beef, some part of our culture, and us, would slip away. I think that finding a balance between tradition and modern necessities. Another impact that modern life has had on us, is that we never go to the local temple to pray anymore. Now I am not really religious. I go and pray and I know about the history and stories behind all the gods, but I'm more of a "make your own dreams come true" type of person.

But that does not mean that I do not enjoy going to the temple. Its so serene there, but with my school and my parent's jobs, we haven't gone for at least a year, if not more. Everyday it feels like I am slipping farther and farther away from my culture and traditions, and while my friends say they'd all much rather be "American" and that I should be happy I'm here, I disagree strongly. I am not American. I never will be. I am Indian, and I love being Indian. I am thrilled to be here and to have the opportunity to get educated in this country, but I do not see why the price of this education and life has to be my old life, culture, and traditions.

*"Culture of the mind must be subservient to the heart."
~Mahatma Gandhi*

I'm Korean-American, and proud of it. I was born in the U.S. but I am happy to say that some korean culture still resides with me. I'm not saying that I know how to cook traditional korean dishes to the T or that i will get a perfect score on the korean SAT, but that i know the basics of it. There was a time that i resented being korean, or asian at all, because I thought it'd be embarrassing to be called a FOB.. Sometimes I'd pretend I didnt know what a korean something was if my friends or anyone asked, just so I could show that I was just like them, and that I had no knowledge of anything korean. Of course, now I realize how dumb ignoring my culture is and that I should embrace it with wide open arms.

"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people." ~Mahatma Gandhi

MV has a culture and tradition of academic excellence. This leads to cut-throat competition to fit into this "culture of excellence." Students are expected to strive and push themselves beyond their limits, and even cut corners if necessary. This extreme pressure leads to outlets like drug use and drinking. The culture creates artificial expectations, which lead to peer pressure among students.

The tradition (or precedent set by other students) of getting straight A's and going to Berkeley or an Ivy League school puts immense pressure on MV students, and this is to the detriment of students. When there is a wrong type of tradition, it sets very difficult precedents to follow, and people feel the need to fall in line with everyone else.

It is understandable that culture affects

people's decisions. I am very conscious of my background and culture in making decisions. Being Indian changes how I view life, in areas like dating and relationships. My culture also has its values, which are instilled in me.

I try to combine American and Indian culture within myself and find a balance. But I think it's hard for first generation Americans like me to strike that balance between our parents and what's around us. Sometimes I feel that I am in between two worlds and need to straddle the middle line. I need to maintain the Indian culture while fitting into American culture. I don't want to be the generation that loses the Indian heritage and becomes "whitewashed." It is almost like an identity crisis within myself. I am an Indian American, and I am very aware of that.

"Two half-truths do not make a truth, and two half-cultures do not make a culture." ~Arthur Koestler

Being an asian in America, I felt that it was important to fit in which meant denying my asian heritage all together. When people would ask how asian I was, I would always say I was completely white washed, didn't speak any of my language, and hardly ever ate any asian food. I refused to go to language school and learn. I hated when my mom would cook traditional food because I made myself believe I hated it. But as I grew older, I realized that when the future came and I raised my own children they wouldn't have any culture at all whatsoever. I've been trying to embrace my culture and learn my language. I wish I would have learned this earlier so that maybe it wouldn't be so hard to learn the language.

"People can only live fully by helping others to live. When you give life to friends you truly live. Cultures can only realize their further richness by honoring other traditions. And only by respecting natural life can humanity continue to exist."~ Daisaku Ikeda

"Remember that one of the main focuses of our trip is to deliver the cultural exchange between the American and Chinese youth," said Christine. Christine was one of 2 administrators of the 2009 American Youth Hope Envoy to Sichuan Delegation that I participated in this summer, a delegation of which I believed had one and one purpose only, to bring hope and restore prosperity to the province of Sichuan to the best of our ability. Being one of the leaders on this trip, I often argued during meetings

that with our limited time in China, we should spend more time doing actual work or more performances for the citizens. However I was quickly slashed down by the two administrators who emphasized the importance of our cultural exchange. I was baffled. Do not misunderstand, I believe that the exchange of culture is a brilliant idea if it was a delegation of trading culture, but the purpose of our delegation was to be envoys of hope! The citizens needed help and support in all means possible, not to learn of the traditions and culture of American youth! In our short time it was my mission, and the mission of my fellow delegates to do what we could! "No," they simply replied, the cultural exchange will stay in our program. And with my cultural knowledge of American administrative adults, I recognized my defeat. And so we labored on, not only spending countless hours every day perfecting our dance routines and singing performances, but also strived to find a perfect way to bring the culture and traditions of American to China. And we did. Our final cultural exchanged program contained various forms of delivery, such as multiple short videos, power points, interactive games, stories, speeches, gifts and many more. We also took the liberty of bringing many different food and snacks that could be only found in America. My time spent working on the cultural program was with full attention but not without slight bitterness, as I thought about other more important touch ups to our program that we could have been doing. However, the both the extreme work hours and workload kept out minds busy. As time finally came to leave on our delegation the excitement was palpable. Upon arrival the delegates took a few days to settle in at Beijing, and then we took our leave to the Sichuan province. The first stop in Sichuan brought us to the Bolin High School, a school completely toppled by the earthquake. An enormous crowd of not only high school students, but many local residents gathered to watch what the delegates of America have brought for them. So we performed. Our long hours of tedious practice seemed to be nothing when we looked to the smiling faces of these hundreds of citizens, each giving their loudest roar of cheers and applause after each performance. The crowd moral was at an all time high as we reached the end of our performance. "Now we would like to make time for the cultural exchange from American Youths," said the announcer. My heart fell. The cheering crowd that we've worked so hard to inspire will be lost in no time. I waited for the drop in moral as we put on the first video. I waited for people to leave or fall asleep of boredom. I closed my eyes and waited. It didn't happen. The crowd was fully attentive, they laughed at our jokes, and they ohh'd and aww'd at the media presentation before them. When we brought forth our power point presentations

they asked questions. When we brought forth our interactive games and international food they rejoiced with smiles and laughter. When we gave them our presents and souvenirs their eyes filled with tears, and so did ours. At the end of the cultural exchange we all felt more familiar with each other than long time friends. The cultural exchange had brought them more hope and more happiness than any manual labor or performance we could have given them. It had filled their hearts with hope and their eyes with insight into an outside world. It worked wonders. I don't think I fully understood the why our cultural exchange had such an effect until two weeks after the trip ended, when we received a phone call from the mayor of Bolin. He told us that the citizens all remember us far greater than any celebrity that had previously visited the city. He told us that they still proudly wear and bring around our souvenirs like treasure, or in his words, a beacon of hope. When I asked him, why the exchange of culture had such an enormous impact on them, he replied. "Kid, for citizens such as the one you met here to be able to experience the culture of a country thousands of miles away, it is not just an exchange of culture, for them it is an exchange of life, you saved their life."

"The acquiring of culture is the development of an avid hunger for knowledge and beauty." ~Jesse Lee Bennett

Tradition and culture are big issues to talk about, especially here at MV. These things are the foundation of who we are. It's strange, because our school is diverse in the sense that there are few schools like us, but not in the sense that there are an overwhelming percentage of certain cultures. Because of this, we're more aware of every culture. I feel that the fact that we live in the U.S. exposes us to that culture and their traditions. The fact that we see and live through other cultures everyday doesn't make us blind to other cultures, but balances out our total experience. Branching off from that, I think we already have made our own culture. We all know we have different views and beliefs than our parents, and I believe more so than any other generation. There has never been an MV quite like this until about the time we were born, making us the beginning of our own culture and our own traditions.

"Every man's ability may be strengthened or increased by culture." ~John Abbott

Every year my family gets together for Christmas, like most other families. The difference is that most families do this not only to get together as a family but for religious reasons as well. My family, on the other hand, uses Christmas as a time to be together as a whole family only. Even though my ancestors probably got together for both reasons, my family has changed the tradition. We skip things like prayer and go straight to present opening. We bond just like any other family would; we just have changed the tradition to adapt to us. I look at this as the evolution of a tradition, and see this not only happening in my children's celebration of Christmas, but in everyone's family traditions. The evolution of traditions is an example of humans evolving mentally rather than physically.

Traditions and Culture

By Darshana Nadkarni, Ph.D.

Sitting and listening to the stories submitted by MV students was a heart-warming experience for me. While one may look up abstract definitions of culture in text-books, listening to personal stories of how culture and traditions shapes the identity of teens is much more interesting. I have two teenagers and can relate to the challenges and opportunities that MV teens and their parents may experience as they define and celebrate cultural norms and traditions. I also have personal experiences with diversity of cultures and traditions. I grew up in Ethiopia and Kenya, with my Indian parents, and subsequently lived with them in UK and then in India and now call the US my home.

While no one would argue about the deep and often everlasting impact of culture and traditions, few would agree on a precise definition of culture, or what would constitute the most important elements of culture. Culture represents so much and shapes and defines people in so many ways. From the wide ranging and enlightening stories submitted by a diverse range of MV students, a vibrant picture of culture and traditions emerges, including food, hair, clothing, importance of grades and education, religion, holiday celebrations, and more. While the culture and traditions of one generation often differ from the next, and can lead to tensions between the two generations, it is clear from their stories that MV teens face additional challenges. Growing up in the US, they are impacted by their immigrant parents' cultures, US culture, and the diversity of cultures among their peers. Sometimes these differences cause confusion and sometimes they cause conflicts with parents. A seemingly simple issue like length of hair may be a cause for conflict if parents view the length desired by the teen as culturally unsuitable.

And yet for many MV teens, culture and traditions also seem to provide stability and substance. One teen describes how she eats outside the home food traditionally forbidden in the culture of the parents but does not want to change the tradition at home because it is an integral part of the culture of the parents' homeland. Family's cultural traditions anchor their perspectives, and with this grounding, they can grow and branch out and accept and integrate other cultures and traditions when appropriate. For many teens, while differences in cultural beliefs with their parents caused conflicts, these conflicts also led to the growth and maturity needed to understand their parents better. While some of them talked of how they would observe different traditions with their own children, many also described how they enjoyed observing traditions and cultural norms that were simply passed down by their parents. One story even describes how the diversity of perspectives provides a richness that may be lacking for others who may not have access to such diversity. During a cultural exchange with another country, the richness of cultural diversity among MV students gave the host country a lot of hope for the future.

The stories submitted here are imaginative, creative, diverse, personal, enlightening, and often humorous. They accurately reflect how a broad experience with diverse cultures and traditions shapes the authors' identity, values and beliefs, and lays the foundation for a life rich with meaning. Such diversity of cultures and traditions among peers, at home, and with extended families give these teens the tools to assimilate other emerging differences and provides the context for meaningful connections with peers. Personally, I feel my life is richer because of my experience with diverse cultures and traditions and I would not want it to be any other way. Judging from their stories, the teens growing up in Silicon Valley amidst so many cultures would not want their reality to be any different either.

Darshana Nadkarni is the Executive Recruiter for Medical Device Companies and corporate trainer in Effective Business Practices in working with India, and in Workplace Inclusion. Darshana can be reached at wd_darshana@hotmail.com.

Traditions and Culture

By Piper McNulty

I was delighted to be asked to contribute some reflections for the Verdadera issue on Culture and Tradition. What struck me about the submissions was the frequent mention of both the challenges and opportunities that are part and parcel of growing up bicultural. Some of the writers described pressures to maintain their home culture while also accepting and incorporating aspects of the “target” (dominant US) culture. For some this was an enjoyable challenge, but others found it hard to reconcile one set of expectations with the other, and felt pressure to choose. I teach an Intercultural Communication course at De Anza College, so I work with a somewhat older student population, and one that, on average, has more work experience than the typical MV student (my daughters graduated from MV 5 and 7 years ago). In the course we address the topic of bicultural identity in several ways. I’ve focused here on one sub-topic which may be of particular interest to both high school students and their parents: How to leverage bicultural skills. Below I’ll explore briefly what is meant by “demonstrating bicultural skills” and how the ability to operate effectively in two (or more) cultures makes the person value-added in an increasingly multicultural workforce and global work environment.

Today’s teens are often quite aware that in music, humor, clothing, hair styles and slang they draw on a much wider range of ethnic cultures than their parents did, no matter where those parents were raised. What my own students also find, and what I suspect local high school students will also find, is that many are far more adept in communicating effectively in at least two cultures than they realize. They may take for granted that they speak to their Chinese friends’ parents in one way, their European American teachers in another, and their S. Asian Indian friends’ parents in yet a third, but what they may not realize is that the vast majority of Americans cannot claim such multicultural fluency. Kids who grow up in a home culture that’s different from the dominant culture of their community tend to adjust and adapt to both, often unconsciously, and they often do so despite strong pressure to “choose sides.” Some of this pressure comes from parents who try to exert their influence to encourage or chastise their children to maintain their first culture values, behaviors and traditions. Such parents may feel their influence will protect and prepare their children for the life ahead of them. If the parents’ own lived experience is that their home country values and behavioral norms are the road to success, who can blame them for wanting what’s best for their children? And when teens begin to pull away, as all do to some degree, the gap that can begin to form can seem, to immigrant parents, to be so wide it will separate their children from their parents forever and doom them to a life that seems both incomprehensible and fraught with danger.

Students may also find that pressure to interact only with one narrow American peer group can be very, very strong. As one of my Filipino students told me:

My father was on various overseas assignments much of my childhood, and I went to international schools with kids from all over the world. When we moved to East San Jose I was 14. It was the first time I’d been around other Filipinos. These Filipino American guys accepted me, but on one condition. I had to hang with them, and only with them. If I tried to talk to international students, or to anyone who wasn’t Filipino American, my Filipino American friends gave me a bad time. They would tell me not to associate with those people, that they didn’t understand us; that they didn’t like us. I felt as though I was giving up a part of myself to be accepted by my Filipino friends. Here at De Anza, I’m beginning to get back a sense of who I am. There are other people here who understand my experience, who also relate to lots of different kinds of people. Here I can be myself and use my multicultural skills. (*Filipino De Anza College student, paraphrased from conversation, 1998*).

However, despite these conflicting pressures, what seems to happen is that teens find their own way, just as my Filipino student did. Bicultural and multicultural students (note that the field does include African Americans in the category of bicultural students, as many do shift back and forth between different sets of behavior expectations), come to recognize that they are, as Nancy Adler puts it, 150 percent people, or perhaps even 200 or 300 percent people. That is, they are comfortable, and effective, in two or more cultures. They have learned a range of strategies which they can call on, and they tend to converge to the communication style of whomever is in the conversation. If the other person is arguing with great passion, using strong words and broad gestures, they

can too, often quite successfully. However if the other person clearly prefers to handle conflict nonverbally or indirectly, the bicultural person can accommodate that style as well. If they know that to be hired they have to describe their own strengths with confidence, even if they were taught at home to be self-effacing, they've seen enough models, and had enough practice in the US classroom, to be able to take on a more "high profile" style and get the job. And then that evening, when friends of the family drop by and praise the student's academic achievements, they can respond humbly, demurring rather than accepting the compliment. When explaining a procedure to someone who tends to interrupt with a lot of questions, which may be the norm at home, the bicultural person can handle that learning style appropriately, and they can also accommodate the listener who waits till the end of a 10 minute explanation and then just looks vaguely confused. These are examples of bicultural fluency.

A rich source of insight into the world of the bicultural American, and the multicultural strategies they have internalized can be found in the many works of semi-autobiographical fiction published in the last few decades. I've listed a few at the end of this article, but one piece which I particularly like actually comes from a short magazine article:

Sileena Karmali, a South Asian Indian Muslim raised in Africa, has lived in Canada most of her adult life. In seeking to understand her own bicultural self, she rejects the simplistic tendency to define Eastern and Western cultures as opposite:

When did this splitting apart take place? If we accept a divided world, then we must also consider a divided self. It is here that I find difficulty, that I find myself rejecting the division of East and West... I know that I am whole, integrated. The outer world is ...prescribed...but my inner world is free for me to invent as I wish. Perhaps each world lives inside of us, and we draw it out according to our nature, our affinity, our constitution. I have tried the East on for size, but it did not fit. It left me confined. I returned to the West, and tried to become Western again, but that too did not wholly fit. Choosing for myself a little East here and a little West there, integrating them into a union, that is my being. There can be no East without West and no West without East. They are soul mates, seeking each other out. (*Karmali, S. Unraveling the East-West myth. Ascent Magazine, Fall, 2002*).

Like Karmali, teens influenced by two or more cultures may also find themselves seeking the soul mates within their multicultural selves. Students whose home culture matches the community culture, but who connect with students whose cultural background is different, also can develop varying degrees of fluency in one or more other cultures (so we should not assume that only students of color can be bicultural. Nor, of course, should we assume that all people of color are "fluent" in two cultures; some are not). Often, however, teens and young adults, or even older individuals who multiple cultural influences have come later in life, are not aware that they have a repertoire of strategies which qualifies them to navigate, to manage, to empower others, in our increasingly global workforce. However once they do realize that they have at least some degree of facility with multiple cultural styles, they can use this knowledge to present themselves as uniquely qualified in a variety of contexts. So, while continuing to embrace ones home culture might seem like looking backwards, both bicultural students and their parents can use home culture skills, combined with target culture strategies, to look forward, and embrace with confidence their own ability to navigate our increasingly multicultural communities and workplaces.

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Piper McNulty is a professor at De Anza College who teaches the Intercultural Communication course. She creates and guides programs focusing on the matter of cultural diversity in the world. She has also worked with many clients from many different countries. For more information or how to contact Piper, please visit her website: <http://pipermcnulty.net/>

Resources from the Verdadera Staff and Professionals:

Finding Your Religion: When the Faith You Grew Up With Has Lost Its Meaning by Scotty McLennan

This book is written in the format of 6 steps that guides the reader through a spiritual journey. It is especially written for those who do not have a religion or have lost faith in their former religion.

Geneology: The Ties that Bind http://www.genealogy.com/9_famtrd.html

This website contains a take on the definition and importance of traditions, as classified by Dr. Susan Coady, of Ohio State University.

BBC Guides to World Religions <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>

Many people view religion as an important part of culture; this website contains information about several leading world religions and beliefs.

Colby Guide to Religions <http://www.colby.edu/rel/guide/>

This website is an index of different religions; it contains basic descriptions and lists of resources for those interested in learning about the world's diverse religious background.

Kwintessential Country Profiles <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html>

This website is a useful guide to the "culture, etiquette, customs, and protocol" of countries around the world.

Religion Online <http://www.religion-online.org/>

This website supports an extensive collection of significant texts from various religions.

The Happiness Project

http://www.happiness-project.com/happiness_project/2006/10/this_wednesday_2.html

This website, maintained by writer Gretchen Rubin, contains the basic how-to for starting family traditions.

Creating Meaningful Family Traditions

http://www.foreverfamilies.net/xml/articles/family_traditions.aspx

This website contains information on the value of family traditions, as well as ideas and examples of diverse traditions commonly celebrated in the U.S.

Suggested reading by immigrant or first generation American authors, many of whom draw on their experiences as teens or young adults.

Danticat, Edwidge, Breath, Eyes, Memory. (Haitian immigrant)

Divarakuni, Chitra Banerjee, Arranged Marriage. (S. Asian Indian immigrant)

Hoffman, Eva, Lost in Translation. (Jewish Polish immigrant)

Lee, Marie G., Finding My Voice. (Korean American)

Sasaki, Ruth, The Loom. (Japanese American– short stories)

Soto, Gary, Pacific Crossing. (Mexican American)

Upcoming Issues and Submission Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Dating, Hook-ups, Flings, etc.	6pm, Saturday, September 5 th
TBA (check Schoolloop or www.verdadera.org)	6pm, Saturday, October 4 th
TBA (check Schoolloop or www.verdadera.org)	6pm, Saturday, November 1 st

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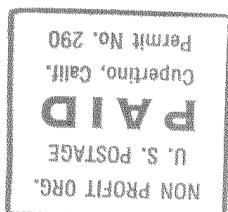
Traditions and Culture **September 2009**

Verdadera is a publication created by and for Monta Vista students for the purpose of instigating communication concerning the reality of high school within the community. Each month, an issue on a topic relevant to the lives of our students is sent home for reading by both parents and students. While we do not edit submissions, we aim to publish personal experiences, not opinion articles. Please utilize all the resources present and feel free to email comments and feedback.

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