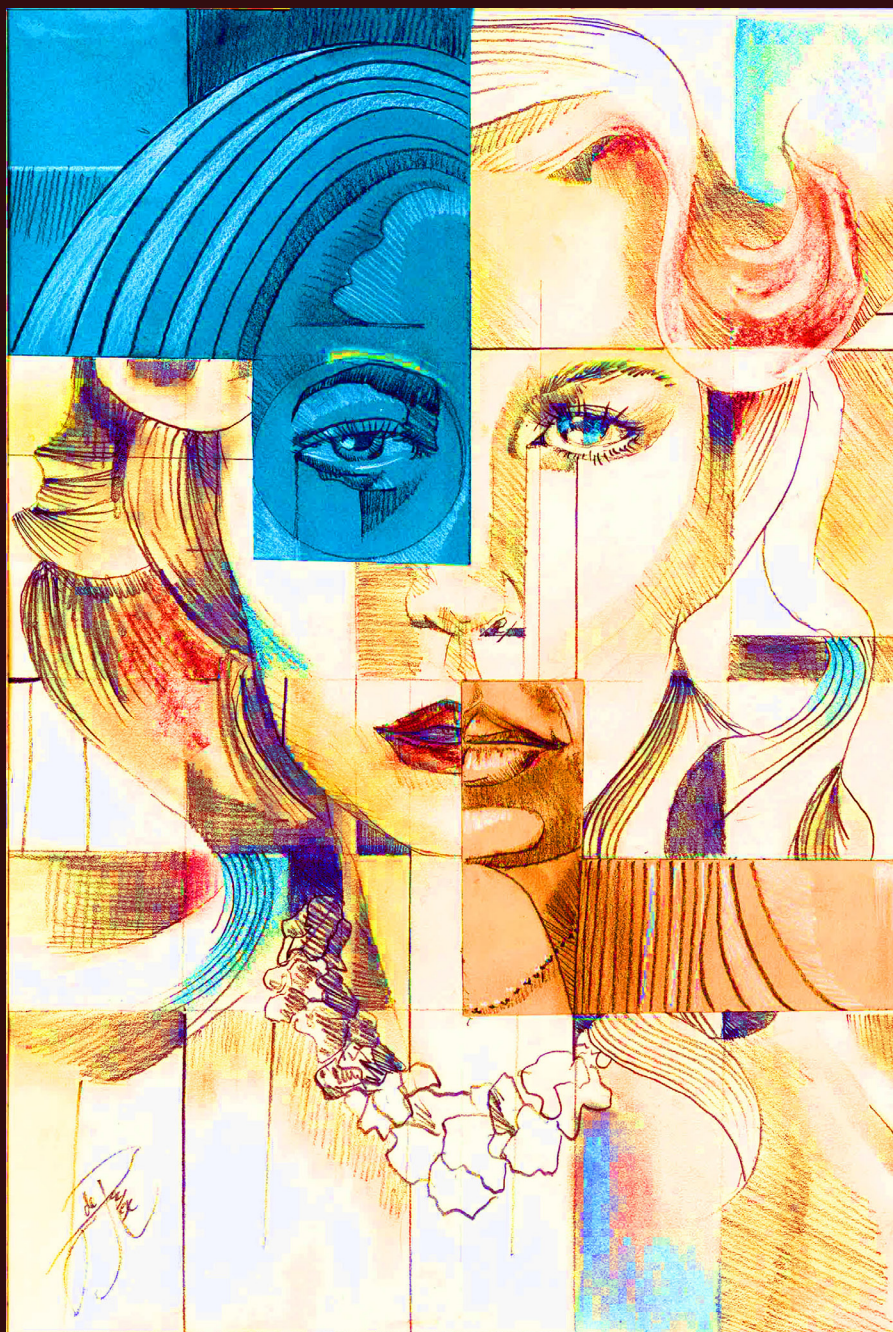


Culture Shock



Culture Shock

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Children in Bobonaro
district, Timor-Leste



Photo by *Gabriela (Gabi) Leite-Soares*

Japanese Culture Shock for a Latina

I followed the shop owner through a long, narrow bamboo corridor. Quietly and with a sense of mystic reverence, we entered a garden of cherry blossoms, of ancient garments, and old tea recipes. The scent of the blossoms, their pink hue permeated the heavens above me. Though delicate, the trees they clung to so tenaciously were hundreds of years old. My mind wandered through the history of this ancient land and the experience I was about to embark upon. Earlier that morning, as I lay upon my mat, I reflected on my recent visit to Kobe and the incredible experiences I had. Deep in thought I did not hear Yumi enter my room. In our special way of communicating, part Japanese, part English, and part hand gestures, she told me that this was going to be a special day, a day she hoped I would enjoy and always remember about Japan and the history of the Geisha.

After a week of hearing my name pronounced incorrectly with an additional “chan” placed at the end, I was not surprised when the shop owner called “Allison-chan” from across the room. He was a gentle old man, the kind I had always imagined was the epitome of the Japanese elderly. I envisioned him sitting on a bench in the park with his eyes half closed, wearing a faded kimono, always willing to provide a new proverb or pearls of wisdom to his grandchildren sitting attentively at his feet. Tucked beneath the sleeve of his garment was a photo of a girl, not many years advanced compared to Yumi or me, with a face almost as white as a ghost’s and with a smile that seemed to say, “This could be you.” My heart began to pound with excitement as I imagined the supple silk against my body. In that moment I truly felt Japanese. I opened my arms wide to embrace Yumi for her generosity and thoughtfulness. This entire week I had referred to the kimono as a symbol of Japanese culture and for Yumi to spend her Saturday driving a great distance to Kyoto to allow me the experience of being a Geisha was a gift from the heart. Yet I was not surprised by her act of giving. The week I had been in Kobe she gave the gift of her time guiding me around Kobe, providing a home for me, and patiently instructing me when my chopsticks slipped through my finger tips.

To my left was a small traditional chaniwa garden, used for tea ceremonies, and to my right a single calligraphy hung from the wall. I

was directed to a room and asked to put on a thin white garment, similar to what one wears during an exam at the doctor's office. Moments later I found myself climbing up a set of slippery wooden stairs that led to a light and open room with three mirrors. A gentle tug directed my attention toward a single large closet. A chill snaked its way up my spine, not because I felt fear but because I was in awe, as I watched the attendant glide the bamboo doors open to reveal a magnificent display of kimonos. The sight was overwhelming. The dyes of each kimono were perfectly in balance with the handcrafted woven fabric creating a garment as holy as the Pope's golden laced robes. I eagerly sorted through the racks of kimonos worn by the mikos; each personified a unique artist infused with its own identity. Suddenly, one kimono toward the end of the row caught my eye. A ruby red sash hung from its dark blue bodice. The blue reminded me of the serene waters of Kobe's port and the red of the Nissoki of Japan's flag, which represents the sun.

My thick dark hair was restrained by nets. White makeup was applied to my face and down my neck. Scarlet red lipstick was applied to my narrow lips and dark blue eye shadow was added to complement the hues and tones of the kimono. Surprisingly, the makeup artists directed me not to smile, for Geishas do not show emotion except thru their eyes and gentle movements.

Finally, I was dressed in my kimono. I was impressed by the fluidness and natural speed with which the two women were able to secure my bodice considering all the intricate pieces that compromise a kimono. The three pound headpiece was the final accessory to my ensemble. I stared at myself in front of the three mirrors. From the outside I knew I appeared drastically different in the eyes of my audience, and yet I could see my Latina face transcending through the layers of makeup. I had never seen myself appear so beautiful, and I had never once felt so embodied with a culture so drastically different from my own. This moment was the consolidation of every new sight and sound that graced this country and the zenith of my experience in Japan.

-Allison Fina

World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain



Photo by Seth Morrison

Thriller in Manila

The pizza tasted great. The steak and shrimp dinner was a delight, and like the pizza, tasted wonderfully "normal." However, while my taste buds were ready for re-entry, my stomach was not. My wife was able to get me to the Queen's Hospital in Honolulu where I spent my first night back in the US in the ER next to a drunken woman, handcuffed to her bed, hurling expletive laden insults at the arresting officer. A few hours later, sitting in a wheelchair just outside The Queen's Hospital, I promptly passed out. Not two minutes after I had been discharged, I had to be readmitted and given a second IV. Thus ended my first night back in the United States after two months of weekly disasters in Manila. Insult added to injury.

ARRIVAL

My wife and I were members of a touring 50's rock band. We had been invited to Manila for two months of concerts sponsored by local Christian ministries. After 36 hours of travel we landed in Manila and were promptly assaulted by heat and humidity that felt like a wool sweater in summer. Even at 2 AM, the roads are crowded, and traffic laws are merely traffic suggestions. Exhausted and disoriented we arrived at our hotel room and promptly needed to change rooms. Welcome to Manila.

We met as a band with our local advance rep and had our first meeting at the S'barro Pizza in a local mall, which would become our sanctuary.

"Here's the situation," he began. "Death threats have been made against American missionaries. The Catholic Church fears that Protestants will proselytize Catholics and draw them into cults. Many missionaries are heading down to Singapore and you can choose to stay, or go."

Could anything be less subtle than an American 50's band!? We were sitting ducks. We were exhausted sitting ducks, and we decided to remain seated.

WEEK 2

We had friends in Manila in the entertainment business, so we quickly got a spot on a popular local television show. This was a great opportunity for us because we were eager to promote our shows in the local schools and townships. The show went off well, but the sight of people fishing in the open sewer was a stark juxtaposition to the celebrity atmosphere in the studio.

Back at our small hotel we relaxed watching television. The rumble of a heavy truck passing by seemed more pronounced. We quickly realized that the truck was in fact an earthquake. I calmly told my wife not to worry, as the power hadn't even gone off. Then the power went off. As the shaking intensified we braced ourselves under a door jam. The shaking was so violent we nearly lost our balance. Convinced we were about to be buried in a pile of rubble I could hear my wife praying.

After about a minute of shaking, things calmed down. We quickly

grabbed our passports and were about to head out when the first aftershock hit. Once again we were braced in the door jam. After the shaking stopped, we ran down the hall and out of the building to join our band mates, the other scared guests, and the hotel employees. Running past the pool we saw waves cresting a foot above the edge, flooding the lobby.

Watching the news later that night we learned that the quake was 7.9 on the Richter scale. A city north of Manila was completely leveled due to liquefaction during the quake. Thousands were dead. Our concerts quickly became earthquake relief benefits.

The response of the Philippine people was a call to prayer and repentance. It was fascinating to see how quickly the dialogue after the quake turned to spiritual matters. I say "dialogue" but Philipinos speak a unique dialect. While tagalog is the official language, the way people speak is a mixture of tagalog, English, and Spanish, all at the same time. Imagine watching the evening news and suddenly, in mid sentence the anchor begins speaking in Spanish and some other language you don't even recognize. It was fascinating, and more than a little confusing.

WEEK 3

By now the band members kept no secrets. "Bananas or papayas?" was the question our hosts greeted us with at meals. Half of the band would raise their hand and ask for bananas and half of the band would ask for papaya. Bowel function became everyone's business. After 8 weeks of "bananas" it was no wonder I was so dehydrated in Hawaii.

Now the rains came. A week of monsoon rain kept the streets flooded. We worried about the squatters who lived in shacks erected outside our hotel along the street. Somehow they managed to survive. While we had grown weary of being accosted by the children begging for candy as we walked to and from the hotel, we were glad to be accosted after the floods abated.

WEEK 4

Mold was growing on our clothes as they hung in the closet. My jeans had holes in them from where I had sweat right through them. Being a drummer I worked up quite a sweat. As I played, sweat would run down my arms where it would drip onto my drumheads where it gathered in little puddles.

While that was unpleasant, what was worse was the cholera outbreak that resulted from the monsoon rains overflowing all the sewers. What's more, all the sewage was now in Manila Bay, which made seafood inedible. Not only could we not eat vegetables due to human waste used as fertilizer, seafood was off the menu leaving meat and "thick-skinned" fruit such as bananas and oranges as our main staples. Oh, and S'barro pizza!

WEEK 5

Manila was getting old: trash burning on the side of the road, sickness, food that tastes just "left of center," and weekly

disasters. Fortunately we had become good friends with some local musicians who were quite popular — essentially we are talking the “Michael Jackson” of the Philippines and his friends. They invited us to be their guests at their concert in a village a couple hours outside of Manila. We piled into the tour bus and headed into the beautiful jungle countryside of Manila.

As the bus pulled into the village, hundreds of fans lined the street to get a glimpse of their idol. Girls were literally screaming and pulling their hair. It was reminiscent of “Beatlemania” newsreels. These guys put on a phenomenal show, and the crowd got quite a reward for their enthusiasm. It was a night I will never forget.

I will also never forget learning after the fact that the band had an ulterior motive for us. It just so happened that one of the dancers in the band was the daughter of General Ramos, the head of the military and future president. Apparently the rebels were planning a coup that weekend in Manila. Knowing that his daughter was hanging out with some Americans, he suggested she take us out of town for our safety! So, no disaster this week, but a very close call!

In the weeks that followed things did calm down, though our stomachs did not. We were able to take part in an Earthquake Relief concert in the largest stadium in the nation, sharing the stage

with our friends and other giants in the entertainment industry. Many of our other concerts also brought in relief goods for earthquake victims. It was the hardest two months of my life, but I am proud of the work I was a part of.

Getting out of Manila would prove to be its own adventure. The Airline went on strike, so our flight was cancelled. Fortunately we were able to get another flight. Unfortunately, the route took us right over a Typhoon. When the stewardesses are hanging on looking scared, you know it's serious.

Finally, we were relaxing on the beach in Honolulu after a wonderful lunch of pizza, the adventure was almost over.

-Michael Anderson

School Children in Lozpalos, Timor-Leste



PHOTO BY *Gabriela (Gabi) Leite-Soares*

The Struggles of Studying Abroad

My name is Chastonie Chipman and I grew up in Mannheim, Germany with my three siblings. In September of 2006 I moved to Spokane, Washington to attend a Christian Discipleship school called Masters Commission.

Before I actually moved to the United States to participate in a Christian Internship, I had visited Chicago, Illinois twice. That is when I realized that this country was different from others that I had visited. Of course I knew before visiting that it would be different because I have traveled all my life and knew that every country has its own culture, but up to this point I had always been in a "comfort zone" called Europe. Less than two months after moving to Spokane, I was ready to quit school and return home to Germany. While in the beginning I was excited about my new adventure, I quickly began to experience anxiety, constant headaches, extreme homesickness, feelings of helplessness, and withdrawal from my close relationships.

I had absolutely no idea that I was experiencing culture shock; all I knew was I wanted to go home. I think a lot of what I experienced was due to the fact that the people around me, myself included, did not realize that I came from a different country and culture. For example, if I did not show patriotism, even though

I have an American passport, I was viewed as an outcast. In reality I had never learned anything about patriotism; after World War II, Germany did not dare to show any kind of national pride. Not until the 2006 FIFA World Cup was held in Germany did the country show any patriotism. During this event hundreds of German flags littered the streets at any given time. Now that I understand the concept of "Culture Shock," I know that it is an important one to take seriously because it can have serious side effects.

For example, my friend Katharina came to Spokane the year after I did. My presence in the U.S. made her transition much easier than mine was. Identifying with someone from your own country makes experiencing a new culture much easier. My experience in Spokane was more difficult than hers because not only am I German but also part African American. I felt very misplaced as I could not relate to anyone who was German at the time, but it also seemed as though people treated me differently based on my ethnicity. Having people judge me because of my physical appearance was a shocking concept for me. Now that I have been in the United States for some time I have grown accustomed to it, but at first it was difficult for me to grasp.

~Chastonie F. Chipman

KEEPING TOURISTS SAFE; BILINGUAL
STREET SIGNS



PHOTO BY EMILY GOONTING

The Power of Sucking It Up

That first dinner at 871 Larrea, Buenos Aires, my head felt like a ticking time bomb waiting to explode. My brain struggled to piece together sentences in English, much less comprehend the Spanish that was being thrown around like food in a food fight, mixed and mashed together. Questions directed at me were answered with a nod and a lot of “yes’s”. I quickly learned the phrase “I don’t understand”.

Four months later I would sit at that same table, playing Rummi Cube with my host mother and sister, bantering back and forth. My head no longer felt like a balloon ready to burst, and Spanish came to me quicker and easier than English did. Those four months taught me the power of sucking it up, and showed me that the world is at your fingertips when you do so. I spent the first week walking forty minutes to school each morning, too afraid of the nonsensical bus system to try it out. A month later I found myself giving up my seat like a good Argentinian gentleman to a young pregnant woman, while the bus driver yelled at the “Gringo” that this was the stop.

The first weeks were filled with tears and self-doubt, the final ones with gratitude and self-confidence. In between I discovered the greatest lesson of all: anything can be accomplished with a little bit of courage and fortitude. Sucking it up leads to the opening of cultural doors that were not even visible before. Sometimes the act of falling can be quite helpful for your perspective, and when you stand back up and brush yourself off, it is like looking at things for the first time again.

Culture Shock is the warning sign that something incredible is about to happen.

You just need to suck it up to get there.

By Andrew Cataldo

In many rural areas in developing countries, people still use traditional cookstoves (wood) to cook. This picture was taken when we visited a villager's kitchen in Bobonaro district in Timor-Leste.



PHOTO BY *Gabriela (Gabi) Leite-Soares*

Dirty Laundry

One thing I never expected when studying abroad in Cagliari, Italy, was traveling about town with my dirty clothes in a sack. We were told each apartment would have a washing machine or at least have access to a washing machine. I was rather surprised when my landlord explained that I could leave my dirty clothes with him so his family could wash them for me, returning them within a day or so.

I send clothes to the dry cleaner all the time when I am home in United States, so I am not exactly sure why this generous proposition made me feel so uncomfortable. After all, wouldn't it be nice to take a vacation from doing laundry, too? Maybe it was because I only send skirts and shirts to the dry cleaner, not my underwear. Maybe it was because a dry cleaner is a professional, and there is a detachment in that relationship. The landlord's family was very kind and amiable, but I just couldn't imagine my underwear hanging in a stranger's backyard and still be able to look him in the eye the next day. Or maybe, in this adventure abroad, holding onto my underwear was the last bastion of control in an otherwise fluid and uncertain environment.

I don't know. I imagine it is a little of all the above. When you are thick in the middle of obscurity, trying to find meaning and understanding, you just want to know where is your underwear.

~Dianna Stratton

Hybrid

There's no doubt the most frequent question I've been asked in my life has been "Wait, you're Filipino?" It comes to a shock to most people, mainly because there's as much melanin in my skin as my Caucasian father. The only physical proof I have is my flat nose. I'm not even "good" Filipino either. I can't speak any of the dialects, I've never visited the homeland, and I can't stomach Chocolate Meat (Google it). But there's no way I could hide the pride I have for being Filipino.

It's been difficult finding a cultural identity being of mixed ethnicities. Coming to a new place, like college for example, blending in sounded like the best way to make friends. I could get away with telling everyone I'm just like the majority. But as I've grown older, I've never been more proud of my Filipino heritage. My mom, who was born and raised in Manila, is the hardest working human being on the planet in my opinion. How could I ever turn down bragging that I'm just like her?

I'd say this campus is a welcoming one. But I've seen the way people who appear different than the majority are looked at. Although it might be only a couple hundred miles away, the culture here is way different here than back home. Someone's actually said to me "Wow, you have a lot of Asian friends." My whole life they've never been my Asian friends; they're just my friends.

People like to call us the people of tomorrow. One day, the majority will be those of a blend of races. Until then though, I answer that frequent question with a "Yes. You can't tell?" I've never been more proud of seeing someone in disbelief.

By E.J. Spangler

Bolivia

You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses." — Tom Wilson. This quote, posted outside the US embassy Rose garden in La Paz, Bolivia, reflects the vast contrasts within this small, but extraordinarily diverse country. The tremendous mineral and natural resource wealth juxtaposed against the masses living in poverty, the majority indigenous population butting heads, the fists and guns against the colonial legacy of exclusion, and the commanding world-class peaks of the Andes soaring sky-high above some of the most lush forests in the world make Bolivia an unmistakable diamond in the rough. When I first arrived at the top of the world at El Alto International Airport, all I noticed were the city's thorns: the children playing with plastic bags around their heads; the frothy, sewage-filled river; the paralyzing blockades and protests; and the streets laden with trash and packs of skinny dogs. However, poco a poco I discovered Bolivia's beauty: Bolivia's well-known hospitality, its beautiful and largely untouched ecological wonders, the vibrant indigenous culture, and its swelling national pride. So despite its thorns, Bolivia helped me grow, challenged my worldview, and inspired me to pursue my dreams. Within that context, I learned to cherish the roses within the thicket of thorns.

Chelsea Quilling

Reflections

Cable Beach in Broome, Australia



PHOTO BY Patrick Jansa

Living Within a Different Culture

Once one turns into an adult, the time of decision-making has come- this is the most significant period of one's life due to the complex results that one decision can have. Two years ago I made that decision. I am one of those students who left their own country with the goal of getting an education in the U.S. I remember the exact day I left my country because that day changed my life. It was on January 5, 2010 when I crossed the border from Tijuana, Mexico, to San Diego, California, and then I flew all the way up to Spokane, Washington.

The process of living within a different culture began as soon as I arrived in Spokane, which would later be like my home. At first I was fascinated with the entire natural environment that surrounds Spokane, as well as the tasty American food. However, there are many different things that international students have to face and overcome: mainly culture shock. Being from a different culture, everything will be different and new. Take the weather for example; I am from Mexico, where it never snows. I had never seen snow in my life until I came to Spokane. It was incredibly difficult for me to adapt to the new weather. I can honestly say that I am still trying to adapt to this weather. The English language became the next stage to overcome. When I started out as an international student here at Gonzaga, I couldn't even say "hello" in English. Allow me to elaborate on one of my early experiences with speaking the English language:

One day while I was walking on the street near Jepson, a car approached me, and the driver asked me for directions. He simply asked me where the book store was. Even though I knew where the bookstore was, I had to say that I didn't know where it was because at that time I couldn't express myself well in English. So I told him that I was sorry, but I didn't know where the bookstore was. It was frustrating because I wanted to help the man

but I couldn't. From there I got motivation to work harder and to be able to communicate in a second language.

A few months after my arrival, another difficulty of culture shock set in. I started to become homesick- missing my family and friends who had been so important to me for the past eighteen years of my life. Another thing that I missed a great deal was food, mostly the spicy taste of the Mexican food. All of these things made me want to go back to Mexico more than ever, but I refused and held to my first decision of study abroad. The support of my family and friends made it easier, and the time went so fast.

I took several months to understand more about the American culture and how to be part of it. The people of the Gonzaga community were so kind and friendly, making my time here much better than expected. Soon I started to make new friends, hang out, and speak English. Later my friends and I went to see the Gonzaga men's basketball games, which I found very interesting, even though I don't know the rules of basketball very well. From going to the games I learned that you must get there very early in order to get a seat and that you have to stand and cheer the entire game.

Experiencing a new culture came to be the most fascinating and exciting experience ever. So my best advice for those who are thinking about studying in another country is to do it. It might be difficult at first, but it is something easy to overcome. Once you get used to living within a different culture it will become an incredible experience. As a current Gonzaga student I'm glad to be part of the multicultural diversity, representing my Mexican heritage. Finally, we should all remember that it is better if you "do not leave for tomorrow the things that you can do today".

~Ricardo Ortiz Ayala

Night of the Namahage



The moon was large and low in the sky, larger than I had ever seen it. Its beautiful light danced on the snow and illuminated the forest I was walking through. Up a steep and untouched hillside, I waded through the thigh high snow seeking the shrine where the garbs of the Namahage were to be blessed. As I reached the top of a snow covered hill, tasting blood in my mouth, breathing heavily, and certainly lamenting the cost of my journey, I came to the small shrine.

Once there, the Japanese men blessed the Namahage garbs and shared sake (Japanese rice wine). We then dressed in the Namahage garb and became the Namahage. As we climbed down, I realized that I was certainly the largest Namahage on the mountain.

I had woven my own Namahage garb. Because I am by no means a small person, meant I had to make my garb much longer than the others. To make matters worse, the masters who are trained in the art of creating such garb were excited and seemed to be playing a sort of practical joke on me. As I braided the stock, they would hand me more stock. With each exchange the amount of stock given to me increased more and more until I was nearly braiding small tree trunks! Trembling and screaming for a re-

spite, my hands burned with the effort, but none came. Due to the eager masters' efforts to hand me tree sized stock and my own stubbornness not to show weakness, my garb soon became the largest in the room. Despite the increasing pain and treat of rebellion, it was also one of the best braided, as my large hands were strong and well suited for the job. When my garb was near double everyone else's, the master finally said I had done enough.

I wish I could portray the amount of laughing I endured. They laughed at how big my suit was and how the girth of the rope was near 4 inches! Looking at the efforts of others, I must admit the joke was obvious, as no garb's rope girth exceeded more than an inch.

The Namahage also wear masks typically made from cedar that are painted red or green and decorated with hair. This is their most distinguishing aspect.

The Namahage themselves are demons in Japan. A Namahage functions in two particular ways. First, it is the most evil demon in the evil demon hierarchy and when it enters a house, it scares out any other spirit: both good and bad. So if a Namahage comes to a house it cleanses the house of all evil, for no other demon can tolerate its presence. The people who live in the house need to placate the Namahage, or they will suffer its evil. It is important to note that if a person had died within the year, the Namahage are not allowed into the home, for it will scare away the spirit of the deceased. A Namahage may not know if this is the case; therefore, those with spirits to protect must be ever vigilant during the night of the Namahage. So long as one does not enter, they will not need to placate them.

The second function that the Namahage performs is a subtle and side outcome which deals exclusively with the behavior of children. This is the most visual aspect of the Namahage. When a Namahage enters into a home to seek out children, it shouts and screams, “なくごはいねが！！” (Where are the bad children?!?!). A Namahage wants to eat children; it is natural for him to seek them out,

both good and bad. Should a parent fail to pacify the Namahage, they may very well lose a child. “なくごはいねが” Therefore, the question, “Where are the bad children?!!!” brings joy to parents and dread to children for a child’s life depends on the ability of his or her parents to appease the Namahage. When the Namahage finds a child, it drills and shouts and threatens to eat and kill the child. When this happens parents seeking to save their children defend them and say that they are good children: they do chores, finish their homework, and listen to their parents. The parents also offer copious amounts of alcohol, food, or drink to satisfy the Namahage at this point. But the Namahage is not so easily deterred from its feast and will continue to interrogate the child, asking if what the parents are saying is true, threatening in case it turns out to be a lie. The Namahage intimidates by saying it can tell if the child is lying because if he or she is, the Namahage will surely eat the child no matter what. By this time, a good Namahage will have children weeping and shaking with fear. Once it has scared every child, the parents offer more food and alcohol, as they wish to keep their children. The process of offering food or drink is an essential symbol. If no food or drink is offered, the Namahage cannot be mollified and must take a child. After the Namahage is satisfied with the child’s promises to listen to his or her parents, finish homework, do chores, and pretty much be the best son or daughter possible, it moves on to the next house in the hopes of finding a child to eat.

Now, if children know that their lives rest in their parents’ ability to placate a Namahage, they may feel a great amount of anxiety, especially if they themselves feel like they have not been good children. If the Namahage is appeased, the children will remember that their parents lied about them being a good child, and this creates guilt. This guilt may cause them to behave better for the next year. And even good children are so afraid of becoming bad that they won’t dare to misbehave since they know that the next year another Namahage will be back. Thus keeping children in line is what keeps the tradition of the Namahage alive. The tradition is an old one, and no one is quite sure where it came from. There is a large commu



nity in Japan who speculate that Namahage can be translated as “foreign god” and postulate that in ancient times the demons were shipwrecked foreigners who ran into houses seeking food or drink, odds are scaring the heck out of children and those involved.

Leaving the mountain shrine behind, we, a group of about ten Namahage, came down the mountain side shouting and making our presence known to the world. Our collected din echoed off the snow and preceded our terrifying arrival. Once we reached a cluster of houses, we split up into groups of two to four depending on the size of the house. As it is not in the nature of a Namahage to knock, we barged into houses shouting, terrorizing, violating privacy, and forcing our presence upon the family of the house entered.

Our first victims were in the midst of consuming a massive feast. All generations were present and after fulfilling the duties of the Namahage, we were asked to sit and eat. To do this I had to take off my mask and to everyone’s astonishment, I turned out to be a foreigner. No sooner had I lowered my mask, when an old grandmother shoved something into my mouth. She was knuckle deep and deposited what I later found to be cow hoof. I had no choice but to eat it. Here I thought I was the one dis-

regarding boundaries of privacy, causing children to shrink in shock and terror as we kicked through the door. With my mouth violated straight out of the gate, I should have known then how foolish I was to think that this was going to be a one-sided affair.

After several houses, where we steadily made children shriek, tremble, and hide, I started to feel my mind dulling from the alcohol. As the largest Namahage, and maybe because I really was foreigner, I could not escape each person in the house wanting to fill my glass. I wanted to be polite, and in Japanese culture it is a sign of great hospitality and respect to fill a person's glass, so I could not help but continue to drink. Things continued and soon my voice began to slur and increase in volume adding more terror to my presence.

Many houses later, with my own inhibitions challenged, I found myself the only Namage in a house with a thirteen year old boy. I raged upon him in the most savage way. The "foreign god" had returned to Japan, drunk, fanatic, and insatiable. The Namahage coursed through my veins, causing the boy to wale and shutter in terror as he called out for his mother to save him. With an attempt to appease me, the mother brought out more sake and some very plain looking tuna sandwiches. She could not help but smile as her son hugged her for dear life. I drank and casually picked up a sandwich and ate it. I wish I could explain how magical the tuna sandwich tasted. It was the best food I have ever eaten in my life, and for as long as I live, I know I will never eat anything like it. I can say it changed my life for the better, and I am sorry to think that I will never eat something so delightful again. I left the whimpering boy and his thankful mother: to say the least the Namahage was pacified.

Feeling the effect of the sake and in need of relief, I walked to a nearby snow pile. In violation of presumed privacy, an elderly Japanese woman grabbed my shoulder, and urged me to go to her house as soon as possible. I washed my hands in fresh snow and ran to her home. In the house I found two young sisters around eight and ten. They were standing

on the back of a couch, pressed up against a wall, hugging each other and trembling. In my nastiest and cruelest voice, amplified by inebriation, I relentlessly shouted, threatened, and intimidated. The Namahage had returned to my blood, and it sought to break these two young girls. As I threatened to tear their flesh from their bones and eat them, their eyes watered, but not a single tear fell. Clutching each other ever more tightly, they simply nodded silently as I asked if they were good girls, if they finished their homework, and if they did their chores. The Namahage was not satisfied. Ravenous for blood and fear, I found myself savagely interrogating the girls. Their deep souls were present in their watery eyes as I pierced through them with my terrible voice. Booming with wrath the Namahage could do nothing to break the children. Their deep and beautiful souls were immensely strong, and the most evil of demons could not penetrate or corrupt them with fear.

They had broken the Namahage. In defeat, I left the girls. I did not want food or drink. There was no hunger; there was no need to pacify. Their power had caused the Namahage to leave me. I was alone, wary of the night, and shaken by the strength of two young girls who overcame the “foreign god” demon from the mountain.

The moon was large and low in the sky, larger than I had ever seen it. It stared down upon the machinations of the past hours indifferently. I turned to the mountain. It was over; the time of the Namahage was at an end, and the time to sleep until next year was at hand. Having raided the village and being appeased by the sacrifice of his victims, the Namahage left hoping in his dark heart that next year may yield a child to feast upon.

The shadow of the Namahage flickering on the white snow was really just the shadow of a man: steadily climbing the mountain.

~Matthew Gilles

Bi-Bi Birdie

I'm Biracial
 half Cuban,
but I'm real.
I know that no one in Arizona will look at my skin
 that freckles instead of tans
and ask for papers,
 'cause I'm pale
'cause my white mother's tongue
 is my mother tongue.
When I feel the missing pieces
 the island I've never seen
 the family it was so long illegal for me to
meet
I wish, sometimes, to be just one thing
To be as white as I seem
 as I sound
 as I usually act.
But then I remember the things my dad gave me
From his culture.
 from our culture
 castallano
 familia
 solideridad.
Such is the life in this globalized era
 of a bifurcated, bisected, biracial,
Bisexual?
Oh yeah, I date women
 and men.

I love women
and men.
Some people ask why I don't pick
just commit
choose a side
kiss the girls
or kiss the boys.
And sometimes, I wish I could,
but then I remember the love
in my life
from women,
from men,
from community;
the homes I've found
I'll never give up.
So when I can't bring a boyfriend
When they tell me
"This is queer space
so come Without him"
or I can't bring a girlfriend
when they tell me" it's a family thing"
and "God, Diana, do you always have to make a
point?"
I remember there's a cost
of living in two worlds.
but I used to think I wasn't home anywhere
until I learned that being me
gives me a home wherever I am.

By Diana Mallon

Children in Rural Area with Camera



PHOTO BY *Gabriela (Gabi) Leite-Soares*

In 2010, I accompanied some Japanese engineers and designers traveling to a rural area in Timor-Leste. These engineers and designers work for major manufacturing companies in Japan (e.g. SONY, TOYOTA, MITSUBISHI, etc) and they are interested in developing simple technologies to help people at the bottom of the pyramid. The purpose of the visit was for the engineers to immerse with the villagers, observe the life of the villagers, and identify challenges and possible solutions to their problems. The designers and engineers were surprised that the villagers all looked happy despite their hardships in meeting their basic needs. (above picture) One of the engineers took a photo of the children in the village and is showing them the result on his camera.

~ *Gabriela (Gabi) Leite- Soares*

Journal Entry: Intercultural Dissonance

Walking the cobblestone streets of Cagli, I find myself in Osland's "Belly of the Whale." I had just purposefully left behind my golden ghetto, the comfortable community of fellow students and helpful translators, and slipped into the street to get some photos printed.

Photos - this was a chance to launch into a linguistic adventure. How do you say "I need" in Italian again? I had forgotten my phrase book.

Photos - the means to visually preserve my cherished experiences. How would I explain that I have a thumb drive and need to print them out?

Photos - a special way of expressing gratitude to my interviewee. How would I describe the paper I would like them printed on?

My frustration mounts with self-critique. Why did I not prioritize the language cd's I purchased before the trip? Languages have always been difficult for me, even after studying German in college and living there many years ago, I have lost most of the ability to speak it. Now Italian. Insecurity covers me like a thick blanket, making it difficult to breathe. I rest outside of the shop to temper my breathing and to gather strength.

"Buon giorno!" I say slowly and clearly as I step into the store and willingly enter the belly of the whale.

~ Lynne Tarter



Home Sweet Home

It takes a special kind of person to admire the majesty of this Post-Mao era municipal masterpiece, with twenty-two floors of spacious apartments that put your average Japanese apartment to shame. One of them can be yours for the mere price of 1700 Yuan a month. It comes complete with a heated shower, excellent panoramas of the surrounding countryside, and close proximity to burning garbage.

-Zach Kubin

Intercultural Communication

There was a very ambitious and smart young girl. She graduated with a high GPA and received the opportunity to complete her education in the United States. Her language skills were high enough to place her in an upper intermediate level, but after one month she moved to the advanced level. She was very excited as she knew she could now concentrate on more academic skills. Three weeks passed and she learned new vocabulary, but nothing to put into an academic context. She had hoped to learn how to apply her skills in college, as well as how to deal with American professors. She also desired a greater knowledge of American culture. As she was ambitious, she decided to start on her own and to write a statement of her desire to attend university. The teacher's response was, "But what will you do if you get married? You cannot work after you marry." It became clear that the student and her teacher had very different ideas about studying language.

That girl was me. As an ESL student I experienced very different environments in the different schools I attended in the US. The first school was where the previous example occurred. My teacher's reaction to my wanting to attend college and her lack of understanding of women and marriage in Saudi Arabia revealed her stereotypical opinion of my culture. The teachers there admitted that it was their first time working with Saudi women and that lack of knowledge soon became obvious. I was graded down for not participating in group work or for talking with other students. In my class there were five girls from different nationalities, and the rest were Saudi men. Placed in a group with the Saudi men, I could not talk at all. Although the teacher was aware that in my culture women are

not used to talking to men, he still insisted that I must change now that I was in America. This was too great an adjustment to make quickly, as I had no experience communicating with strange men. The culture shock took a toll on my grades, and my language skills did not improve. I cried every night and told my family that I did not want to continue. The teacher's attempts to make me more culturally sensitive undermined my ability to learn English. Finally I decided to change cities.

Once I had changed schools, I realized that the teaching methods had been the problem. I moved to another school and was again placed at the highest level. The classes were different. In each class we learned both language and culture. For example, in the writing class they taught us APA style for writing essays. This was a combination of academic skills and American culture. In my speaking class, the teacher explained vocabulary in terms of cultural and academic relevance while telling us how American universities worked. The teacher asked us at the very beginning about our future plans and why we chose to study there. He developed his material according to his students' needs, and we also had the opportunity to ask particular questions about American culture.

Most importantly, even though the class was full of Saudi students, he never put a Saudi girl together with a Saudi man. The goal was to teach us language skills in a comfortable setting rather than forcing us to understand and relate to other cultures. As a result my language improved substantially.

-Maram Albalawi

The Royal Mile in Winter
Edinburgh, Scotland



PHOTO BY Seth Morrison

Loch Lomond, Scotland



PHOTO BY Seth Morrison

Atypical

Where Are You From? I get that question a lot, especially when I'm meeting new people or traveling. The answer is always the same: Colorado, near Denver, more specifically Aurora which is just southeast of Denver. The question that gets asked next is a little trickier and sometimes irritating, sometimes offensive.

Oh, but what nationality are you?

Well, I'm American. I was born in California, raised in Colorado. The confused look I get is usually followed by another question.

Where's your family from?

Oh, well, my mom was born in the Philippines, but my grandparents left when she was nine months old. They moved all around the States because my grandpa was in the Navy. My biological father's family is also from the Philippines. My stepdad is Caucasian. He has roots all over Europe.

Conversations like that annoy me sometimes. It's not that I'm not proud to be Filipino. It just doesn't define all of who I am.

I leave my shoes at the door, eat rice on a regular basis, and cook Asian food, but I make awesome spaghetti too. And if you give me a plate of hot wings, I will go to town on them. I grew up in middle-class America, surrounded by other kids of the same socioeconomic background. So what if I was the only "brown" person around? It didn't mean anything to me. But then again, I've been a little sheltered and a little too trusting of people. I like seeing the good in others.

Leaving high school for Gonzaga University was a bit of a shock for me. During high school I was a part of the International Baccalaureate program which was a curriculum

intended to better set me up for college and life afterwards. It was a program for overachievers. One of the more interesting aspects about this program was that very few of us claimed Anglo-Saxon or European descent. Looking at my class graduation photo, I can name most people and their ethnicity. On top of that, my high school started a World Awareness Week in which students, community members, and teachers would present dances, food, and the cultures of the world. I never realized what a diverse community I lived in until I left it.

Driving up to Gonzaga, my parents warned me that the area I was moving to wasn't nearly as diverse. I shrugged it off which was easy to do when the first people I met were from the Building Relationships in Diverse Gonzaga Environments (BRIDGE) program. It wasn't until later that I realized how homogenous GU is.

Throughout my GU experience I remember seeing the indifference to the call for diversity. My friends not connected with BRIDGE or the cultural clubs were sometimes uninterested as to what was going on with the cultural clubs. Even my education seemed to be focused on mainstream thought. My religion classes focused on Christianity. They included Old and New Testament, Catholicism, and Christian Marriage. Sometimes I wanted to yell, "I'm Catholic! Why do I need to learn more about Catholicism?!" I wouldn't have minded learning about Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism. However, those options weren't available to me. Western thought is prevalent in the society we live in, but what about Eastern thought? Isn't there knowledge to be gained from everywhere?

What troubled me even more were the stories of racism and discrimination. Sure, I know that it exists. I've seen and heard too much to deny that racism isn't alive and kicking. Every time

a guy tells me he prefers Asian girls, I cringe and hope he didn't start talking to me just because I'm Asian. I'd like to think I'm not the stereotypical Asian.

I like to believe that generally, people have good intentions and I'd like to believe racism is dying and but I've seen and heard too much.

While at Gonzaga, people of color were advocating for more people of color and in some ways, it seemed like we were preaching to the choir. I think in a cultural club it's hard to not revere that particular culture and aim to recruit members with that heritage, but if you want diversity to thrive, work on being diverse. New ideas come from everywhere.

During my four years, I became heavily involved in the Filipino American Student Union. It was an attempt to connect with the heritage I knew little about. I prided FASU on being one of the most diverse diversity clubs on campus. Not all of our members were Filipino and the executive board was not always filled with Filipinos. To see the incoming classes becoming more diverse and hearing that the club is thriving makes me proud, but sometimes I wish I didn't feel the need to advocate for diversity.

I left Gonzaga tired of fighting for a more diverse environment. Today I saw something that gives me hope—a large statue of a bald man with broad facial features, full lips, and a muscular build, nailed to a cross.

~Jessalyn Herreria~Gomez

Tuko Pamoja



Photo by Michelle Togami

“I am because we are, since we are, therefore I am”- John Mbiti

Kenya is as beautiful and as ever changing as the sunset. With religion as the sustaining sun and the village as the sky canvas, people dance across their shambas (gardens) mixing their warm colors with gossip and friendly conversation, painting the sky. In my life I never saw a more beautiful sunset nor met more beautiful people than I did

while in Kenya. I knew from the start that teaching in rural Kenya was going to be an experience I would never forget. However, I did not expect that I would find myself in a country where chickens and donkeys were more abundant than seated toilets and packaged meat.

I'm not going to lie, the initial culture shock was pretty terrible. To this day, I still don't know what was more fun: eating food that my stomach couldn't digest or having to deposit the poorly digested food in a pit latrine, which is fancy name for ridiculously small hellhole in the ground. Either way, rural life was not easy to adjust to. But over time, I found fetching water to be therapeutic and using latrines to be a game that I would hopefully someday master. Ultimately, Kenya taught me that peace and happiness are states of mind and that finding tranquility in chaos allows for unconditional love and growth in any situation.

While I learned so much from my time in Kenya, the most important thing I learned was the phrase "Tuko Pamoja." Tuko Pamoja directly translates to "We are together." This short and almost melodic phrase is what opened my heart to Kenya, its what allowed me to leave my Kenyan family and friends, and it's what continues to sustain me to this day.

When I first arrived at my rural home, I felt so alone. I felt this way until a small boy named Johnstone (far left in the picture) began to hold my hand and sing a song. Johnstone didn't speak a word of English, so I had no idea what was being said until an old man began to laugh and explained that Johnstone's chorus was "me and a white girl, we are

together.” Johnstone was my first and best friend in Kenya. Tuko Pamoja.

Leaving Kenya was equally as difficult as arriving. Saying goodbye to my family, friends, and students was the hardest thing I have ever had to do so far in my life. Tuko Pamoja is what enabled me to leave all of the people I came to love in Kenya. Prior to my goodbyes, my host mother pulled me aside and promised me that no matter where I am in the world, I will always be in her heart and we will always be together. Tuko Pamoja.

Today I find myself sitting on toilets and indulging myself in electrically lit decorative Christmas lights. However, what truly motivates me is no longer the promise of a hot shower or a bowl of FROYO; but rather, I find myself wanting to be better for my friends in Kenya. I found myself through them and now they are a part of me. Despite the distance and language barrier, their love and acceptance continues to grow in my heart, and I know that we are and always will be together. Tuko Pamoja.

-Michelle Togami

The Journey



We began before dawn. That much was necessary.

"You're not really going all the way to the top, are you?" Asked a voice on my left, a young German girl with sweet eyes. It seemed as though she would have preferred sleep to the long trek we were about to endure. I only smiled.

I had a water bottle and two bags of chips in my pack, and I could not help but pray that there might be one or two vendors along the way for when these provisions inevitably ran dry. For now, we were fine; that pre-dawn chill forestalled any longing we would have had for food or liquid. It would only be a few hours, though, before that infamous Gujarati sun began to rise. We had to travel as far as possible before the brutal heat of day stripped us of our will.

Taking a deep breath, I took that first step. It felt odd that such a

simple action could be the precursor to so much, one in ten thousand. I didn't know why exactly I had decided to take that step, nor why I had decided to bring along a friend. We had traveled to the little city of Junagadh on a whim, in fact, and both hoped it would be well worth the trouble—food poisoning and thieves—we had run into along the way.

The second step was easier. I was here to complete a task. I thought I would see it through to the end no matter what. Amazing how easy it was to drive one on with such encouragement at the beginning of a trial.

So we marched upwards, step after step after step, circling around the mountain and coming ever higher. Our breath grew labored and short, as though each inhalation could not bring in enough air. Upon reaching the one thousandth step we were happily out of breath, smiling to one another and commenting on how the air didn't seem so cold anymore. An hour passed and we had reached the two thousandth step of this great stairway up the mountain. Slowly, the sun began to rise in the distance. The woman and I looked to each other. We both knew how long a path we still had; this stone road would not get any easier. We had to pick up the pace.

It was then that we began to see the Pilgrims. Withered old women in sarees and strong young men in jeans and T-shirts, Jains and Hindus. Both ascended this mountain, neither sect minding the other's presence, yet always mindful of their existence. Some of the Pilgrims came up from below. Others had stayed the night on the mountain path, so as to spread their pilgrimage over as many days as possible, making it easier for their fragile bones.

Three thousand: all jests and idle talk had ceased, our energies too focused on the next step.

Four thousand: We had found more water and my companion had lost all previously ingested potato chips over the side of the mountain. I hoped that wasn't sacrilege.

Upon reaching step five thousand, I realized that I would have to continue on alone, packed between vast throngs of chattering Pilgrims, some singing, some yelling, while still others silent and contemplative. I waved goodbye to my companion as she sat on that five-thousandth step, a frown on her face. Likely it came from the pain in her stomach, though, I'd warrant from the disappointment in her heart, as well.

The next five thousand steps are something of a blur in my memory. I know I walked those steps. I cannot, however, recall the

context in which I climbed. No, I was far too concerned with the burning in my thighs, and the hateful sun assaulting my shoulders and back. We had climbed together, the sun and I, and every step I took further was yet another challenge to her dominion over the earth. I wouldn't fall prey to heat exhaustion; I wouldn't allow my legs to collapse under me.

My entire body was trembling when I entered into a tiny Hindu temple built firmly upon the highest peak in Western India. My eyes widened before the statue of Kali, that most terrible goddess of strength and battle. I circumambulated the statue, unable to withdraw my gaze, as if some sort of miasma had descended over me. Only after some moments did I come to realize the presence of a shriveled, leathery, old swami sitting beside the statue. He smiled at me, knowingly, as if he remembered that first moment when he too had finished the journey. He took my hand and gave to me Prasad, a tiny portion of food with his goddess' blessings imbued.

I left the temple and soon came upon another building, into which another small, bony priest waved me. I was seated on the ground beside a sun-tanned woman in a magnificent red saree; I bobbed my head to her, and she smiled a toothless grin in response.

They brought out my plate, a few dried leaves sewn together. I looked at dining ware with intensity, as only one who has spent all his life in the West could do. Onto that little leaf plate I was given sweet basmati rice, with just the perfect amount of saffron sprinkled over it and a paste-like, sugary substance on the side.

Sitting there, sweat-drenched and covered in dust, I ate beside that toothless old woman. She too had completed this pilgrimage, albeit, for religious reasons. I had, however, climbed the mountain out of sheer curiosity, out of a longing for something deep and meaningful and beautiful. As we sat there together, sharing the same space of floor, I realized that I had reached what I had set out to find. She and I were the same, despite the entire world of differences that would forever separate us. No. That day we were both Pilgrims who had completed a journey of grueling proportions. Both of us were eating the same Pilgrim's Meal to fill our empty stomachs, brutalized after countless hours of marching towards the same goal.

It was the finest meal I had ever eaten.

–Nicholas Basham

LITTLE INDIAN GIRL

Before I left the Colville Indian Reservation I didn't realize I was entering the world as a minority. My first weekend at college I left campus to go to Wellpinit to check out the powwow and visit my family from home. I had a feeling of confidence and strength when I left the powwow to return to my new "home" at Gonzaga. I noticed my car was the only one with an eagle feather hung in the windshield and that was a rare occurrence to me. It was after dark, and I was sure everyone in my dorm was asleep. The moment I entered the building sensor lights flashed and my attention went toward the "little Indian girl" drawing on a neighbor's door. The mockery had high cheekbones, a war bonnet with the impression of eagle feathers, long-thick braids, big kissy lips and long eyelashes with the friendliest hand written title.

I felt compelled to erase the message right away. But then I second guessed my feelings and didn't want anyone to know it made me feel insecure. I really didn't want anyone else to see the drawing either. I could only stare and wonder what the point of her art was.

The drawing stayed there, and I stayed away from my dorm. My friends from a different dorm suggested I used the drawing as a catapult to switch dorms. "Go and tell Residence Life you feel dis-respected and want to move." My friends were minorities and could sympathize with my uneasy feelings. I thought at the next Native student meeting I would share my minor experience.

"Lunch in Pandini's, on me! But with you guys, priceless!" This came from Raymond Reyes who is an authoritative, witty, spiritual, and wise elder. Dr. Reyes was the Vice President for Intercultural Relations at Gonzaga, so he was very concerned with the adjustment the Native students had to make. "So! How's everyone's first week at GU going?!" He got a few head nods here and there. We all seemed to be having a pretty good time. Then finally someone shared,

"Yeah, it's a little different from home."

Then, boldly, I stated, "Yeah, it's a little of a culture shock."

"See, I knew some people would feel this way, and that's kind of why I set up this lunch, so we can all get to know each other, remember faces, and hang out. So does anyone have any specific experiences they would like to share or talk about?"

Right away I thought that I could say something about my experience but instead I hesitated and said "Well..." but I never quite finished. I didn't think it would affect people like it did me. Raymond responded quickly and asked, "What is it Meghan? What's wrong?"

I had a knot. "The other night, I came back from the pow-wow and saw a drawing on my neighbor's whiteboard."

I didn't think this should make me feel bad, but I did feel uncomfortable and I told them about the drawing. The accusations behind this issue were broad, and I think we all understood the discrimination behind the drawing.

Raymond acted a little shocked by what I had to say; I don't think he wanted us to have these kinds of experiences so soon. Dr. Reyes wanted me to feel comforted and to resolve the issue in correspondence with the messenger.

He wanted the Unity Multicultural Education Center to hold a house meeting on cultural sensitivity and group building. I didn't want this. I did not want more girls to be drawn to the subject of Native Americans and my issues with their drawings. Something about me and my culture solidified their thoughts of some cute, fun way of portraying an Indian.

When the staff investigated the situation and interviewed the girl she only had to say "I thought it was just cute. I didn't mean for it to be racist!" The University never did have a cultural

sensitivity gathering or discussion, which, I think, goes against our values and mission for the University because our Mission Statement includes the words "a knowledge of traditions and cultures different from our own draws us closer to the human family of which we are a part and makes us more aware of both the possibilities and limitations of our own heritage."

If the artist and I communicated, I think as a value of our statement it would have been my responsibility to share with her the aspects from her drawing that seemed dehumanizing. We could have established a valuable connection and shared about my culture rather than making one of us feel victims to racial inequality. The artist did not have a background like mine; she has never dealt with images of her heritage that are pinpoints of oppression. I felt put off by her insincere actions, and I was hurt by the amount of ignorance she portrayed regarding the situation. Eventually, I came to the conclusion that she was unaware of the result of her drawing a degrading picture and placing it on her door. I can be assured that she does not know the history of the Natives and has no sensitivity to our customs. I am sure that she never thought that this was an encounter of cultural differences on a campus that values diversity, but it was for me.

-Meghan Francis

The Gift

I was born in a small city of South India but was raised in metropolitan cities of Mumbai and Delhi in India and Dhaka in Bangladesh. When I came to Gonzaga I often encountered questions like “Where are you from?” My answer to such a question was usually lengthy. I am originally Indian, but I lived in another country, Bangladesh. I called it my home before I moved to Spokane. Bangladesh, my home, was where I had spent my last five years before college, made my best friends and where I knew the streets and roads inside out. Without a doubt, the question that followed my answer would be: “How come you don’t have an Indian accent?” It is a myth that all Indians have the Indian accent; in fact India contains the second largest amount of English speakers in the world. I was born and raised there and English was definitely not my first language. People here are surprised when they realize that I am trilingual: Malayalam, Hindi and English. But the way I see it, my father is quatra-lingual and my mother is trilingual, and they both speak fluent English. Language is not the only asset that I am thankful to my parents for in terms of exposing me to different cultures. Traveling and moving every 6 years and at the same time raising me with the culture that has been passed down to them over the years, has been their greatest gift to me.

Now my parents are living in Nigeria, Africa, so that has become part of my summer home along with India. While relocating has helped me to see other cultures, moving every five to six years is not the easiest thing to do. As much as I enjoyed being able to experience a new place and starting over every couple of years, I felt like there was a part of me left behind in each of the cities I left. Although I have always carried fond memories from each place, these memories

never seem to be enough. My friendships are always what I miss the most when I leave one place and go to another.

Despite all of my travels, coming to Gonzaga has been one of my biggest culture shock experiences. Before coming here I attended an international school in Bangladesh, a country with a culture very similar to India. Spending time with friends that were all in the same boat—living in a culture other than their own made it easy for us to connect. On the other hand, here, almost everyone was from the U.S, mostly from the west coast, but also from different states around the country. They weren't on a twelve hour time zone difference from their families. Every day, I felt different than everyone in my classes, dorms, and groups. Finally, when Christmas break came, I was very relieved to go home to Bangladesh, hoping that I would never have to return to Spokane again. I begged my parents to not send me back again.

The break, as always, was too short, and the next thing I knew I was landing back in Spokane with my feet heavy. As the days of spring semester passed, I felt the need to wander more to find someone that I could relate to. That's when I ran into a senior, Kayla De Los Reyes, who stood out from the many others and didn't mind speaking up for what she believed in. She is one person that inspired me to stay at GU and make these the best years of my life. She made me realize that everyone is different and to be friends with someone you do not necessarily need be in the same shoes as another person.

Through her, I joined FASU, one of the multicultural clubs on campus and started mingling with more people. Then Sophomore year through the kuya-ate (brother-sister) program, I met my brother, Johnny, and my sister, Jess. We did everything like a typical family: spent time together, went out

to dinners, watched movies, and they would introduce me to their friends as their little sister. People would exchange weird looks since my big brother Johnny is a tall Caucasian and I am a short Indian girl, but we had fun messing with them.

As time passed, I began making more and more friends. I stopped realizing how different I was from others and though we weren't from the same cultural background, there was a deeper connection between the friends I made here. I began to realize that these people I called friends had become like a family to me. We spent our time testing and experimenting with my cooking skills on my engineering friends, playing late night Settlers of Catan (best board game ever), climbing, going out for bubble tea, and creating fond memories that I do not want to lose.

Experiencing each aspect of Spokane, small or big, has been one of the best parts of creating a sense of familiarity with the place and people here. If it weren't for the special people that introduced me to the new life here, I would have never tried it out or learned to love it. When I leave GU, I will have a college degree; however, the most valuable lesson that you can call any place your home when you find the special people that add color to your life.

~Arathi Nair

A New World: Flying over Fiji



By Patrick Jansa

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