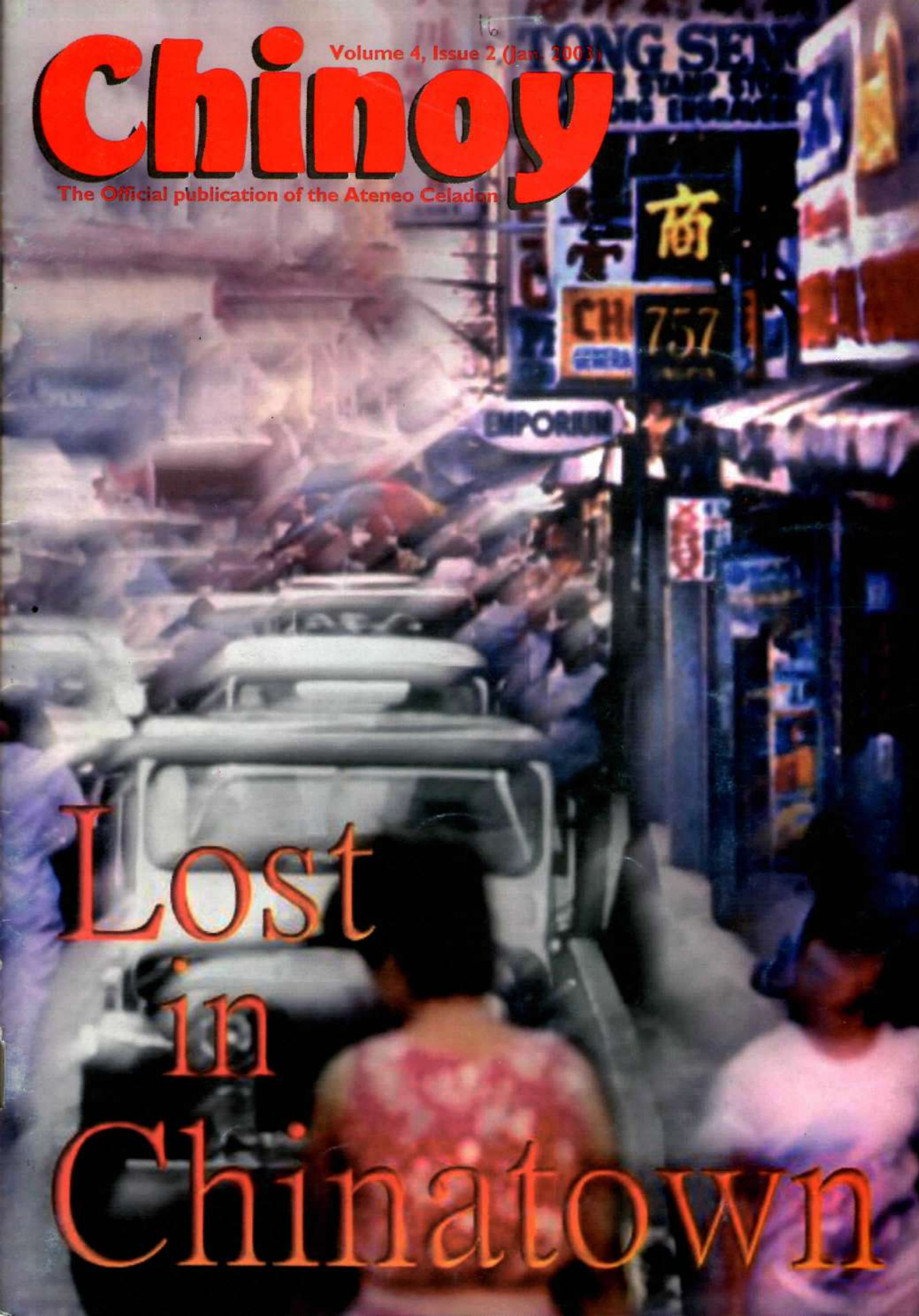


Chinoy

Volume 4, Issue 2 (Jan. 2003)

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Lost in Chinatown

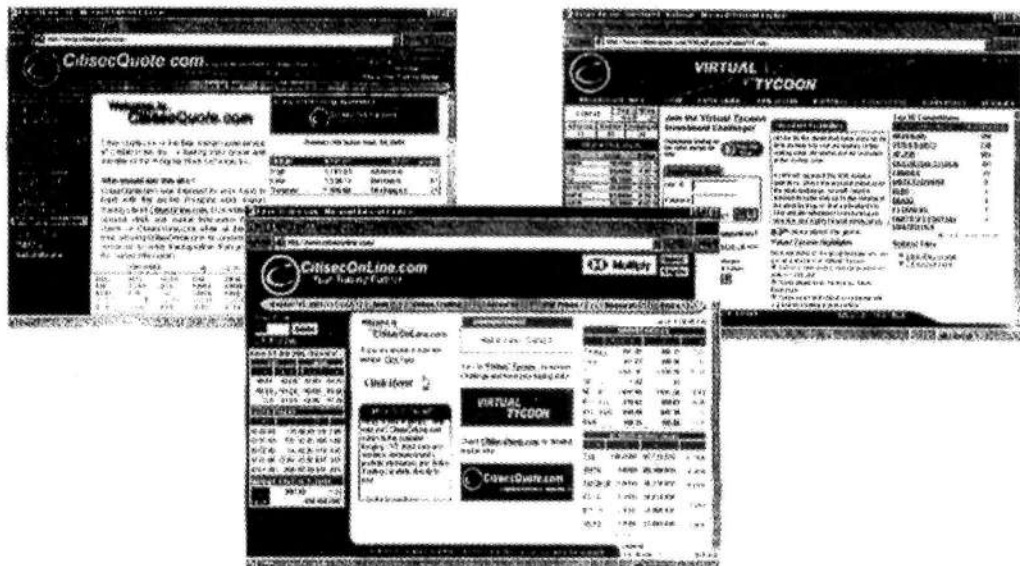




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Chinoy

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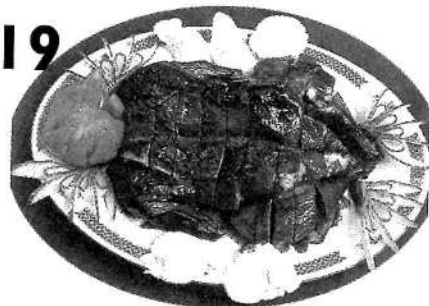


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Nowhere else is the mix of Filipino and Chinese culture more prevalent

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Roast duck at President Restaurant



Oodles of prizes at stake at the Celadon Mid-Autumn Festival

Letter from the Editor

I love Yang Chow Fried Rice.

Absurd as it may seem to most people, I pushed for a special on Yang Chow Fried Rice for the simple reason that it deserves a lion's share of publicity concerning food. Of course, Jennifer Lo, our editor, would have none of that, so we settled for a compromise: Chinese food in general--- a "food trip", so to speak.

Now, honestly, I'm not really much of a Chinoy. Sure, I look it, and I can sing a song or two, but I have a Portuguese surname and just enough knowledge to know that most Chinoy families are generally strict and in peril of terrorist kidnapping; this is an extreme generalization, of course, but you get my point. I knew nothing, not even where to find REAL Chinese food.

And so, fearless Leader, Jen, took a handful of us staffers to a place I've never been to, though I probably should have visited earlier: Chinatown. We were supposed to go on a lovely little "food trip" with Yang Chow Fried Rice in great abundance, but we got sidetracked, and we visited much more than that. I had my first experience of Chinese medicine, Frog's Legs, and a purple firetruck too, among other things.

We returned to our editing room, and added an interview (with the first Miss Chinatown), and a lot of other things. All in all, it was a great experience for me, and I hope you can, however vicariously, enjoy the experience as well.

Yes, and all this from a love of Yang Chow Fried Rice. ☺



Chinoy staff take a memorable trip around Chinatown, Victor at right



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E-mail us at
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Article contributions are welcome.
See page 24 for details.

A Kalesa Ride th

By Kristine Tang

Since coming to the Philippines, overseas Chinese have made their own mark in the country. One of the niches carved by these early Chinese settlers was a small community in old Manila—Chinatown. Chinatown has also evolved over the years, but historical sites still remain. Join me as we venture forth into these historical sites of Chinatown and together let us get a glimpse into the rich culture of the Chinese Filipino. So what are you waiting for? Hop in Celadon's kalesa!

THE ARCH OF GOODWILL

Our first stop is one of the most prominent landmarks of Sta. Cruz—the Arch of Goodwill. This arch, a distinct Chinese structure with traditional carvings of dragons, marks our entrance into Chinatown. Its purpose is not only to welcome us in but more importantly, to remind us of the mutually beneficial age-old kinship between two diverse cultures—the Chinese and the Filipino.

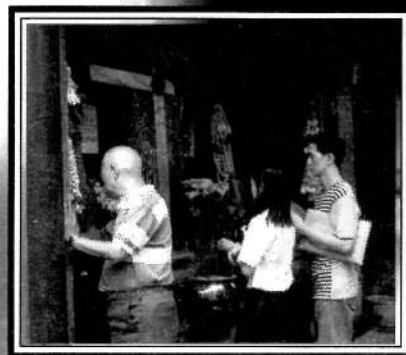
BAHAY TSINOY

Our next stop is the Bahay Tsinoy. Bahay Tsinoy, from the name itself, is already a manifestation of the close bond that tightly links the Filipinos and Chinese. It is a museum that houses the milestones carved out by the Filipino-Chinese from the pre-Spanish times to the colonial period. The museum showcases a collection of photographs, old Chinese wares, artifacts, and porcelains. Most impressive though is their library with row upon row of books on the early Chinese settlers in the Philippines. If you are interested in traveling back to the past, then this is a great place to visit.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Chinatown would not be Chinatown without its places of worship that mark the cultural and religious diversity of its inhabitants. We have first the Binondo Church, which is also known, as the Minor Basilica. Binondo Church which

The Arch of Goodwill before entering Chinatown (right) worshippers burn incense in front of a crucifix (inset)



is of Hispanic structural design, was built four centuries ago to accommodate the growing number of Christian converted Chinese. Binondo Church is the same church where first Filipino saint San Lorenzo Ruiz served as an altar boy in his youth. Today, his statue is one of the most visited attractions in the area.

With the growing number of Christian baptized Chinese, another church was built to serve them. This is the Sta Cruz Church, constructed in the early 17th century, destroyed by the bombings of the Second World War, and rebuilt again from the ashes.

If there is a growing populace of Chinese converted into Christianity, there are also many Chinese who tenaciously clung to their old religion—Buddhism. To show their faith, they constructed the Philippine-Chinese Buddhist Temple whose structure is resplendently contoured in red and gold, the Chinese colors for luck and success. Worshippers come here with the belief that they will be blessed by the gods in their family life and business endeavors since the temple is in honor of Kuan Yin, the goddess of mercy and Kuan Te Ya, the god of businessmen.

Art by Katrina Sy

Through Chinatown



While today, some of its fame had lost its sparkle, there are still a few restaurants offering the same system of good and affordable food.

This has been our most enjoyable trip to Chinatown. Hope you had as much fun as I did looking back at the colorful heritage of our culture elucidated by the beauty and history of the place. Hope that next time you come by Chinatown, you'll be able to visit these historic areas which are just as much a part of our Filipino heritage as Intramuros or Luneta Park. ☺

CARVAJAL

Chinatown is without a doubt a place of commerce. Its streets are crowded with commerce, with vendors selling all varieties of goods from jewelry to food to secrets herbs. Among these sidewalk vending is Carvajal, a side street off Ongpin, which has been at the heart of commerce since the Chinese came here. The walls in this lane are vivid reminders of early Chinese life as they house descriptive murals of chinky-eyed men and women, wearing *chong sams* and pajamas, laboring and vending under the heat of the sun. Coming here allows one to see and hear echoes of the past.

ONE FAMOUS PLACE

Finally, our last stop is one if not the most famous place in all of Chinatown. It is not a site renowned for its historical value but it has become historically significant to the people who have been to Chinatown. It is simply known as the Estero but its name is a household name to the people of Chinatown. This popular site is none other than the rows of eateries lined up right by the creek. In the old days, this was the busiest area, celebrated for its inexpensive exotic Chinese food such as frog's legs and snake blood.

"...BINONDO
CHURCH IS
FASIONED WITH
SPANISH
ARCHITECTURE."



Photos by Erik Posadas

Chinky-Eyed Beauties

By: Clarissa Cheng Tobias
I- AB Englit



The Miss Chinatown Court of 1974.

We've all heard about the Ms. Universe beauty Pageants but a Ms. Chinatown? Read on...

The Philippines has always been known for birthing some of the most beautiful women that have ever graced the hearts and imaginations of people worldwide. From the glamour of Miss Gloria Diaz to the exquisiteness of Miss Miriam Quiambao, we cannot deny that great pride lies in the radiance of our Filipina. The roots of their elegance lay in the fact that our country has long been a melting pot of cultures, our women reflecting the richness and diversity of our lineage.

One such influence is that of our Chinese ancestors, whose delicate features have always been one of their most prized qualities. The fusion of these two bloods has not only created stunning beauties, but also has integrated the Chinese culture into the mainstream of Filipino life. In light of this union, the Miss Chinatown Beauty Pageant was born, giving recognition and homage to the Filipino-Chinese woman, as well as furthering the fostering of goodwill and interaction between these two great cultures.

Prestigious Competition

The very first of its kind in Asia, Miss Chinatown-Philippines was pioneered in the tiger year of 1974. Its general goal was to promote the integration of Filipino and Chinese and to boost the tourism industry, particularly of Manila's Chinatown, through the beauty and pageantry of the contest.

The response was overwhelming. The mere choosing of contestants was incredibly tedious, as so many young Filipino-Chinese women vied for a place in this prestigious competition. There were a total of fifty-one contenders, quite a lot considering it was its inaugurating run. Amongst this bevy of witty, charming and elegant ladies, the very first Miss Chinatown-Philippines was chosen to represent the crème de la crème of the Filipino-Chinese community.

The First winner

Having to interview the first Miss Chinatown-Philippines was pretty much

necessary, for what better way than to hear about the fascination of the competition other than straight from the pioneering winner herself? Lucky for me she's my mom, Mrs. Arlene Cheng Tobias! It was really amusing to listen to her reminisce of how the celebrations that followed the event were of incredible magnitude. It was as if she had be-

come a star overnight! She received shoes, bags, clothes, make-up, airline tickets, cash, a TV, and trophies. She had a welcoming

parade when she returned to her hometown of Naga after the pageant, people lining the streets with banners and pictures of her. She received tons of telegrams, cards, phone calls, and bouquets flowers, congratulating her for winning the title. She was invited to model for numerous events, as well as to participate in social events, such as the Santa Cruzan, where she was Reyna Elena. She, together with her court (1st, 2nd, and 3rd runner-ups), had an audience with then First Lady Mrs. Imelda Marcos. She also took part of social gatherings with government and military officials, traveling to different parts of the country in behalf of the Filipino-Chinese. She became an Ambassador of Goodwill, having gone to San Francisco and Los Angeles to strengthen ties between the Chinatowns. But what really topped off everything is how she was even offered a leading role in a movie opposite the King of Philippine Cinema, Fernando Poe, Jr! I was in gleeful shock as I read the invitation, amazed at the possibility she could've been a movie star! But, she politely refused the offer as she had to fulfill her duties as the reigning queen, which was to establish a stronger bond between the Chinese and Filipinos.

The fusion of these two bloods has not only created stunning beauties, but also has integrated the Chinese culture into the mainstream of Filipino life.

reasons. But in 1998, Rotarian Mrs. Rosie Go, Governor of District 3810, revived the pageant and its kudos, supported by the Manila Chinatown Development Authority. This rekindled and increased the interest of the Fil-Chi community in this momentous event, as it involved the cooperation of more organizations, and also that the winner would be sent to com-

pete in the Miss Chinese International Pageant, a first ever for a Ms. Chinatown-Philippines.

Set with the same goal to integrate the Chinese into Filipino society as well as to promote tourism in Chinatown, the pageant has once again found reason to exist in our ever-changing country. We commemorate past triumphs of our ancestors while looking to future dreams for our descendants. Filled with the marvel of our heritage and the spirit of our youth, the Ms. Chinatown Pageant has not only become a celebration of beauty and grace, but of the sublime wonder that is life. ☺

(Trivia: Amazingly, Ms. Chinatown 1978, Mrs. Marilyn Cheng Torres, the last queen of the first run, is the younger sister of the first queen.)



The Court of 1974 at an audience at the Malacanang Palace with Mrs. Imelda Marcos (above); Ms. Chinatown '74, Mrs. Arlene Cheng Tobias (left).

The Reign Continues

This tradition continued till the year 1978, when it was sadly discontinued due to various

Graphic Design by Sarah Lee
By Eleanore Lee



Situated in the midst of Ongpin, The President restaurant at a glance is nothing short of traditional Cantonese flavor. It boasts bright red architecture and flashing yellow lights that no doubt blend beautifully with the rest of the streets in Chinatown, famous for representing an oriental Las Vegas at nighttime.

Before long, the table my family is escorted to is laden with the very cuisine the President is recommended for. The roasted duck arrives almost four minutes after our first order and right before the spicy squid rings, sweet and sour pork, honeyed chicken and hot prawn salad to name a few.

DELECTABLE DELIGHTS

It is difficult not to forget the tangy aroma of every dish served and to describe each of the President's bestsellers is the only way to do justice. Take a moment to imagine perfectly ringed prawns, breaded delicately to form a crispy shell stuffed with soft meat and oozing with zesty flavor added just before frying. After being tossed lightly in special mayonnaise and added to your favorite fruits also heated to perfection, the hot prawn salad is ready to be devoured in only ten minutes.

Imagine perfectly ringed prawns, breaded delicately to form a crispy shell stuffed with soft meat and oozing with zesty flavor.

Of course, the President Restaurant does not just serve one dish at a time. Half your order arrives all at once along with the steamed rice that you had forgotten to order, but is already considered a requirement despite your promise to begin that non-carbohydrate diet.

Sweet and sour pork is traditional in almost all oriental menus and the President does not veer from tradition. The soft pork is embellished with green bell peppers and the sweet flavor of pineapple before the smooth paste that smells of Cantonese spice is gently poured atop like icing. If that still does not awaken your taste buds, perhaps the roasted duck sliced thinly and served with a delicious

honey sauce will. Aside from adding slightly too much oil to moisten the meat and to avoid dryness, the roasted duck is considered one of the specialties of the President. You might ask how we came to that conclusion by simply walking to the establishment?



Earning the title as "Chinatown's Best Restaurant", the President has been graced with special historic events.....

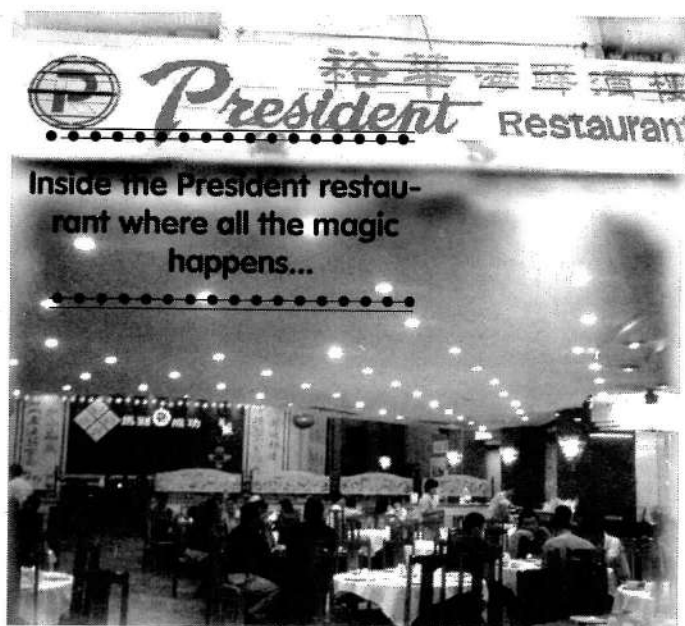
Upon entering the restaurant, it is not difficult to see that the outer dining area walls were built with glass to provide guests the pleasure of watching roasted whole ducks hanging limply upon wires and sadly connected to heated metal poles. Unfortunately, while this sight can damper the ambience, closing your eyes and focusing instead on the taste of the cuisine can boost your shrinking appetite. Ongpin was never very famous for structural flair at any case.

Finally, after finishing the last order consisting of braised *ang-shiyo* tofu marinated in oyster-flavored sweet paste and garnished with sliced mushrooms, the house specialty of boneless eel in *tausi* chili sauce arrived last. The preparation for this delicacy takes at least forty-five minutes as the

President serves it sliced into small square pieces and steamed into curls. Being quite picky eaters, we were still able to find bones in the eel, but regardless of the meticulous task of chewing rather slowly, the dish indeed achieved the standard of being considered a Cantonese specialty.

CHINATOWN'S BEST

With a menu very simple and quite easy to understand, ordering was not complicated with



questions such as “What is a herbaceous?” or “Is a coquilles a type of fish?” What perhaps enhanced the interest in ordering were the reasonable prices that had expensive indulgences such as abalone served for only 900-1000 pesos. This dish was the most lavish cost listed in the menu categorized into main food groups. Even the shark’s fin soup was at a low 400 pesos while the price range for everything else was from 100-200 pesos. Perhaps the only aspect lacking in the variety of oriental dishes was dessert, which only served almond jelly in ice, *butchi* and fresh fruits in season. Adding perhaps sweetened mango pudding besides the traditional sesame seed *butchi* would have been a new innovation, yet the President prides itself on its custom of serving only the best of deep-rooted China.

A HISTORICAL SITE

Earning the title as “Chinatown’s Best Restaurant”, the President has been graced with special historic events including wedding receptions that made use of its high staged old King’s Theater and the speech of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on June 7, 2002 during the First Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day celebration. With its whimsical and intricately carved oriental theme, the seafood restaurant has quite a past, being housed on what used to be the Tan Clan Association building before becoming a venue for Chinese operas and Kung-fu movies. When chef Shu Wai Sing and Chinese-Filipino wife Josephine were given free reign of the restaurant in 1997, they converted the theater into a wider space

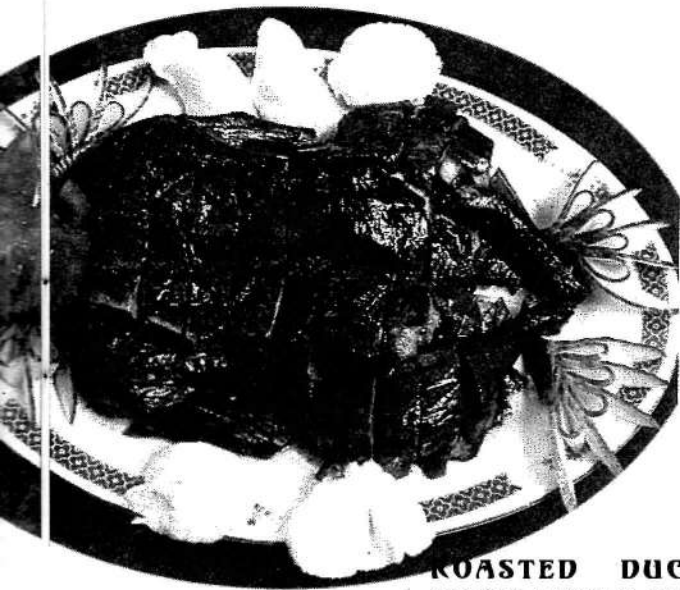
in order to accommodate the now 600 seat capacity for their guests.

Josephine’s family altered the President’s 1978 vegetarian menu after a year into a wider array of seafood to attract more customers and succeeded in doing so. Aquariums are situated near the entrance for customers to choose what fish, lobster or shrimp they wish to be served and at any style they crave. Live eel is flown thrice a week from Cotabato, while ducks and lobsters are sourced directly from China.

Today, the President restaurant is a busy dining sensation with waitresses in bright green *cheongsams* moving quickly to take your order and personalized service by the management who speak Fookien and Mandarin for customers who are more comfortable ordering in their native Chinese language. The President has missed no step in emphasizing the cultural background of their delicacies of orient and has established a reputation that blends well with the rest of picturesque Ongpin. The President seafood restaurant has remained strict in its taboo of modernizing their seasoned cuisine and quite frankly, we wouldn’t have it any other way. ☺

SOFT PORK IS EMBELLISHED WITH GREEN BELL PEPPERS AND THE SWEET FLAVOR OF PINEAPPLE BEFORE THE SMOOTH PASTE THAT SMELLS OF CANTONESE SPICE IS GENTLY POURED ATOP LIKE ICING....





**ROASTED DUCK
SLICED THINLY AND
SERVED WITH A DE-
LICIOUS HONEY
SAUCE...**

The President Restaurant can be found at 746-750 Ongpin St., Binondo, Sta. Cruz, Manila, and can be contacted at telephone numbers 244-7235 to 40.

The Price of White Gold

If you have couple of thousand pesos to spare, you may want to order a serving of perhaps the most expensive soup in the world: bird's nest soup. Dubbed as a culinary "White Gold" because of its price, bird's nest soup remains one of the most expensive Chinese delicacies in the world, with its main ingredient fetching for about P100,000 a kilo.

[T]he main ingredient for the soup is the nest of a tiny sparrow-like bird called swiftlet, found in Southeast Asia. What's unusual about these birds is that, instead of living in trees and creating nests out of twigs and straw, swiftlets live in dark caves and make their nests from strands of their own gelatinous saliva, which hardens when exposed to air. Even though these bird's nests are rare, many do not hesitate to burn their pockets for a sampling of the ancient Chinese delicacy.

The popularity of the bird's nest soup goes way back to 1,500 years ago in ancient China. The Chinese began demanded for the taste of the subtle semi-sweet bird's nest soup, believing that the dish would cure many ailments. Some believed that the soup is an aphrodisiac while others swore that it was an elixir of youth. Those beliefs continue until today, resulting to a multi-billion dollar industry on swiftlet nests.

For those planning to try bird's nest soup, beware of imitation. Because of the high prices the swiftlet nests would fetch, many imitations flood the market including those made from pig's skin and, even worse, plastic. For the most part though, there is also the hidden price for this great delicacy. The nests are difficult to collect because of its hazardous location and many lives have been lost in failed attempts to acquire them. This treacherous nature of the "White Gold" raises the price of its soup far beyond what most actually pay for it, and many are yet unaware. ☹

by Melissa Telan

**THE MAIN INGREDIENT
FOR THE SOUP IS THE
NEST OF A TINY SPAR-
ROW-LIKE BIRD CALLED
SWIFTLET.**



Art by Katrina Sy

MY FAMILY AND FOOD:

The Perks of Being Tsinoy

by John Ong



A Chinese Filipino shares his mouth-watering experience dining Filipino and Chinese style. Is there a difference? Read on to find out.

Being a Tsinoy has its perks, especially for someone who loves to eat. My mother is Filipino and my father is Chinese. Despite the many differences in customs and culture, all my relatives have one thing in common: they love food, so rest assured each holiday is spent gathered around the dining table, sharing stories, laughter, and enjoying the delectable dishes each culture has to offer.

On birthdays and holidays, my family often has two celebrations. One for my mother's side and another for my father's. I get the best of both worlds and the best of both cuisines.

Some of my most vivid memories from childhood are of the whole family, relatives, friends and all, gathered around three to four tables across a restaurant room, the hosts, like bees in a field, jumping from one table to another, talking and entertaining guests. Drove of us children would circle the tables kissing ninangs or making "mano" to grandpa's. The whole room would be alive with conversation and laughter. Even when the food is gone and the waiters are packing up, my relatives would still be chattering away, oblivious to the rolling eyes of the kitchen staff raring to go home.

Chinese Style

Special occasions with my dad's relatives would usually be held in a Chinese restaurant, characterized by tables that are perfectly round and draped with red tablecloth. A Lazy Susan at the center of the table provides easy access to dishes shared family style.

A formal Chinese dinner for 10 to 12 people begins with the appetizers, which are usually four kinds of cold dishes. These are followed by four quick sautéed dishes, and four to six main dishes. Soup is then served, and the meal ends with dessert. Noodles or fried rice often accompany this typical meal.

A Chinese meal simply isn't complete without the Peking duck — a dish roasted to perfection, the Peking duck's skin is the most delectable part. It is dark and crispy, with fat dripping to the sides of the plate, giving the dish a silver sheen.

With the first cut of the knife, the sweet aroma spreads through the air, causing everyone's mouth to water. The inside is exposed revealing pinkish-brown meat, tender and dripping with juices. The server then takes the carved

SERVING PEKING DUCK

piece of meat placing it on a round flour patty, adding scallions and topping it all with hoisin sauce. The patty is then folded up and served. When you bite through the patty, you are met with the crispy skin and the juicy meat ending with the crunch of the scallion and the sweet black sauce.

Filipino Style

We often celebrate occasions on my mother's side at a Filipino restaurant or in the house of a relative. In Filipino restaurants, the tables are long and rectangular rather than round. The head of the family and the celebrant usually sit on the ends of the table. A number of dishes are then placed in the center of the table for easy access of guests on both sides.

Filipino dishes are usually served with sauces that one can drown one's rice in. Dinuguan with its rich dark sauce, Pork chop with vinegar and pepper, *sisig* with Maggi and a touch of *calamansi*, the list of all-time favorites goes on and on.

Family Style

At first glance, the two cuisines might look completely different. However, there is one thing that both Filipino and Chinese meals share — the family style of eating. This does not only mean that everyone partakes from a big dish set in the center of the table for all to sample, but it also connotes the importance both cultures put to eating together as a family.

They say the family that prays together, stays together. I believe the same can be said about eating.

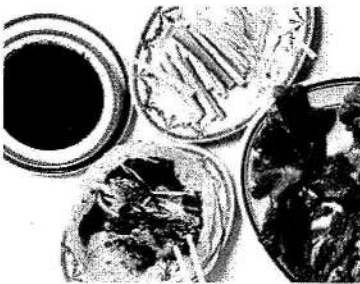
A meal, for Filipinos and Chinese alike, is not simply a way of nourishing the body or simply for enjoying the food, it is a time to gather and enjoy the company of loved ones. So regardless of whether the food is steamed or fried, Filipino or Chinese, there is one thing in common: the love of celebrating each other's company. ☺



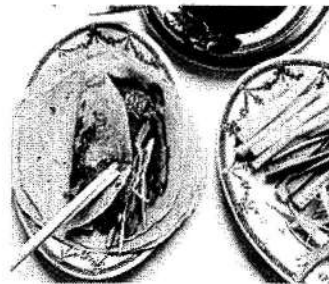
First: The Hoi Sin sauce is spread on the Lotus-leaf pancake



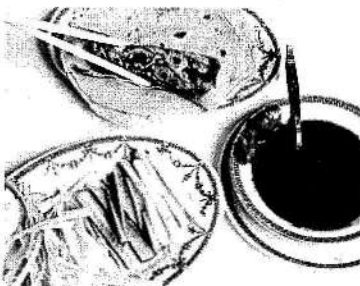
Second: Shredded onions and cucumber are added



Third: The pieces of duck skin and meat are placed on top



Fourth: The pancake is folded up either by hand or using chopsticks



Fifth: The completed package is now ready to be served and eaten



Celadon Week



Stuff in store for you:

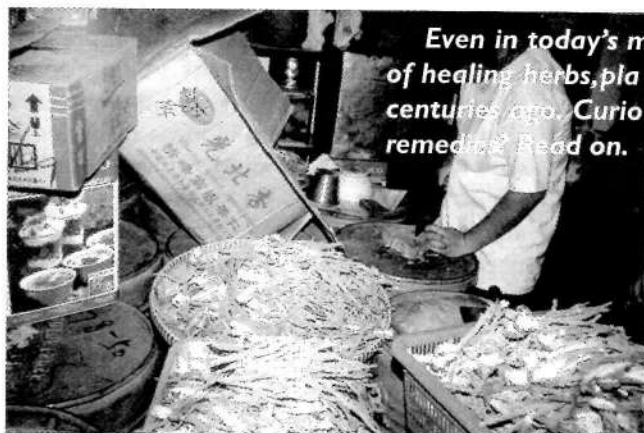
Chinese Checkers, Chinese Chess, Chinese Food,
Chinese Garter, Dragon Dance, Exhibits, Fortune
Telling, Henna Tattoo, Kite Flying, Lantern making, Lion
Dance, Mahjong, **Mano Po** Film Showing,
Martial Arts, Mi Pao, Tikoy, Wushu Exhibition,

AND LOTS LOTS MORE!

Xin Nian Kuai Le! Kong Hei Fat Choi!



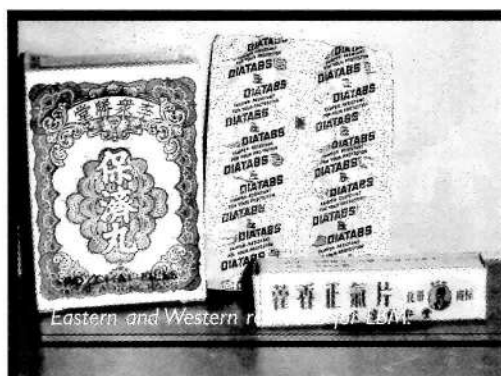
Chinatown would never ever be Chinatown without that ancient and exotic smell that emanates from the gazillion and one Chinese drug stores that dot the town's landscape like mushrooms in a forest. We checked out one of these houses of Oriental oddities to find out how the millennia-old way of natural healing has been carefully preserved and passed on by the Chinese people from generation to generation.



Even in today's much Western world, the Chinese secrets of healing herbs, plants and whatnots still survive from centuries ago. Curious about these sometimes peculiar remedies? Read on.



The first thing you'll see when you step inside a Chinese drug store is, well, the drug store proper. People who want over-the-counter medicine, such as balms and ointments, just walk in, get what they need, and pay for it. Others who have more serious ailments, like digestive disorders and high fevers, get a number and proceed upstairs to queue outside the doctor's clinic. On a typical day, the whole place never runs out of customers; the waiting area right outside the doctor's clinic is always chock-full of people. The situation is literally horrible on Sundays, though – some drug stores are forced to extend their closing time from 12:00nn to 3:00pm because of the crowd.



Filipino Ingenuity

An interesting thing to note is that the people behind the counter, deciphering the doctor's prescription, mixing and weighing odd and smelly herbs, are not Chinese, but Filipinas! This bit of information might be difficult to process, and unthinkable even, but it's true. Imelda, an employee of Fook Heng Drug Store, has been working there for over two years now. According to her, when she and her co-employees first started their jobs, they were taught the names of the different herbs and the Chinese characters associated with them.

If you thought Western prescriptions were impossible to read, wait 'til you see Chinese prescriptions - you'll have to practically pick your jaw up from the ground in awe of these women's diligence in learning their doctor-employer's handwriting. The duration of the learning process depends on the employee's learning ability, and being Filipinas, most of them learn quite fast and quickly become adept at distinguishing the herbs. However, Imelda also admits that up to today, they are all still learning, because there



Imelda is just one of the many Filipinas who run the counter of Chinese pharmacies.

are literally thousands of herbs and whatnots stacked away in the equally numerous drawers, jars, and shelves in the drug store. Her co-employees say that preparing the prescriptions isn't too difficult because they are typically repetitive in that they require the same herbs, differing only

in amounts. After getting all the required herbs and weighing the prescribed amounts, the medicine is wrapped in packages.

An average prescription calls for a minimum of two to three packages, with each package costing anywhere from P25 to P200. Expensive? You bet. The package is then prepared simply by boiling the contents and drinking the soup. The pharmacists say that the most common prescriptions are for colds and cough, but it actually depends on the weather. Also, contrary to the common notion that only old people take Chinese medicine, Imelda says that members of all age groups populate their drug store everyday. When asked about the smell, she and her co-employees laughed and said they're used to it. The only thing is, they end up going home everyday smelling like Chinese medicine. They jokingly say it might even affect their love life!

East vs. West

Sadly, though, most Filipino-Chinese youth today rarely turn to Chinese medicine for any medical needs. When asked about their experi-



Chinese medicine down the toilet; I myself have had years of experience with Chinese medicine, since I've always turned to it for as long as I can remember. It's true that no medicine tastes worse than Chinese; no wonder most of today's generation hate it so much. Honestly, one of the worst combinations of herbs I've ever had to take (and I had to drink eight bowls of it) nearly made me throw up, if not for those magical sugar cubes that somehow help you forget the bitter, bitter, BITTER taste.

No medicine works quite as amazingly, as quickly, and as naturally, strangely enough, as Chinese

medicine does, too. Western medicine has admittedly failed me at times, but Chinese medicine has never once failed to restore me back to full health. The guaranteed absence of side effects and total lack of hazards to human health definitely make it the best and most natural way to great health, and nowhere else in the Philippines can you get these botanical treasures than in these amazingly traditional yet modern houses of Chinese healing. ☺

ences with Chinese medicine, most of them shudder uncontrollably at the very thought of dealing with mysterious herbs and unmistakably "Chinese" odors.

Today's Chinoy generation rely heavily on Western medicine, because of its universality, its scientific background, and its undisputable advantage of freedom from horrible flavors and smells (it sometimes even tastes and smells good). Not all Chinoy youths, however, are flushing

Cures of the World

By Natalie Jane Chai (I BS MGT-H)

For every illness, there is a cure. But what if there are two? Which cure do you choose? In our melting pot society, we have the choice of the mysterious Chinese remedies versus the scientifically-proven Western medicines. The pro-East support their side by saying there are fewer side effects because the treatment is natural, and that it's comparatively less intrusive. This means hardly any pain, though the nasty taste and smell can sometimes cause us to double over. Lastly, they are generally cheaper than their Western counterparts. But on the other hand, the West does scientifically support their medicines, and in our world, hard

proof is pretty much all that is needed to convince. It's also based on how our culture works. In the Philippines, we may have Asian influences, but the system of society is based on Western foundations. Our education is according to how the our colonizers (mostly Western) taught us, and from this stems our opinions and views in life. But how will we really know till we try it? Flip the page for a comparison of eastern and western cures, and you decide after you've tried these remedies for your common illnesses. ☺

WEST SAYS...

Cough Syrup
(Robitussin, Tuseran)

Betadine, Hydrogen
Peroxide

Decolgen, Neozep,
Medicol, etc.

Biogesic, Tylenol

Advil, Tempa

Imodium, Diatabs

Illnesses

Cough

Wounds

Colds

Headache

Fever

LBM

EAST SAYS...

African Sea-Coconut, (cough syrup)
Chuan Bei Pi Pa Lu
(cough syrup made from loquats - kind of fruit)

Yun Nan Bai Yao (topical white powder applied
on wounds to stop bleeding)

Ban Lan Gen, Gan Mao Cha

White Flower oil, Bo He Ding Stick, (white
medicated stick to be rubbed gently on affected areas)
Saplingtan (Shi Ling Dan) (multi-purpose powder
to be mixed with water and taken orally)

An Nong Niu Huang Wan, Po Chai pills,
Ci Gu Cao, (high fever pills)

Huo Xiang Zheng Qi Pian (diarrhea tablets)



Toothpaste, Cold Water, and
Betadine

Maalox, Tums, Phillips
Magnesium

Ben-Gay, Alaxan

Trosyd, Tinactin

Multivitamins (Centrum,
Clusivol, etc.)

Burns

Indigestion

Muscle Pain

Skin Irritations

Supplements

Bao Fu Ling, (topical burn ointment, prevents
swelling, blisters, and scars)

Tai Tian Wei San

(minty white or brown ointment to be
Tiger Balm, applied/massaged on affected areas)
White Flower oil

Dragon Skin ointment (menthol-smelling ointment
topically applied on skin irritation)

(brown powder usually already placed in
Tian Qi, capsules and taken orally)
Ginseng capsules

By Omar Choa

You've no doubt already heard about the volunteer firefighters. Their famed passion for their work, their heroic self-sacrifice. But did it ever occur to you that some of these modern-day heroes could be teachers and students just like us? You've got it. Teachers and students who have to cope with tons of schoolwork everyday. But what is it that drives them to risk their lives for others on a daily basis?



Graphic Design by Stephanie Dionisio

Around summer last year, Mr. Harry Young, school disciplinarian of the Philippine Academy of Sakya, formed the BMA fire brigade. Most of its members are teachers and students from various schools in the Manila area.

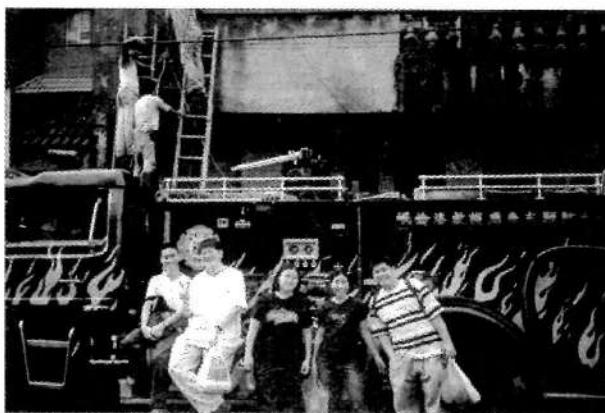
Mr. Young volunteered simply because he wanted to render public service. A hobby of sorts, firefighting for him is one of the most challenging yet productive ways to spend his free time. You're never forced to respond to fire alarms, which completely eliminates all but self-imposed pressure. Neither are demerits issued for failing to respond to fire alarms, except in some select brigades; thankfully, though, BMA isn't one of them.

Mr. Young is proud of the fact that his family is very supportive of his being a volunteer firefighter. "Although *siyempre, di maiwasan na mag-alala, hindi naman nila ako pinipigilan*. As a school authority figure, being a volunteer firefighter has helped develop his character and values like no other "hobby" can.

"I just wanted to play basketball in the brigades' league", says Mr. Chris Dayrit, another teacher from the Philippine Academy of Sakya. "*pero kailangan mag-member muna*

bago ka puwede maglaro, tuloy, nag-bumbero na rin ako." Eventually, he ended up saving more lives than he won games.

Mr. Dayrit admits that a lot of people mistake them for sadists; volunteer firefighters love



Chinoy staff in front of the famed ube firetruck in Chinatown (No, that is not a burning building behind them.)

THEY'LL COME
TO YOUR RESCUE
ANYTIME AND
ANYDAY. . .



Art and layout by Mercedes Mapua

action, and when there's no fire to rush to, there's basically nothing exciting to do, so they always wish for a fire to erupt somewhere every time they're left idle.

Unlike Mr. Young, Mr. Dayrit's family has strongly discouraged him from becoming a volunteer firefighter, because of the high risks involved. He mentions that if one really loves firefighting, one has to make a lot of sacrifices. But then again, he says that receiving a simple word of thanks from the people they help, as well as the powerful sense of brotherhood within the brigade, makes it all worth it.

Student Volunteers

Ever since joining the brigade, they rarely get to sleep more than four hours every night, but Garrick and Kelwin Chua consider this a minor setback. A freshman at De La Salle University, Garrick joined BMA during his senior year in high school. Back then it was just something he could do together with his *barkada*, much like learning a new sport or joining a club. Kelwin, a supersenior at the Ateneo, joined out of a desire to help people, but also for the undeniably intoxicating adrenaline rush of being in an intense life-and-death situation.

They confess that the fulfilment of being a volunteer firefighter and the acceptance they gained in the brigade has more than satisfied



THE BRAVE MEN OF OUR COMMUNITY...

their thirst for danger. Amazingly, Garrick has never had trouble balancing his studies and his firefighting because he knows his priorities. He even has time for gimmicks!

Similarly, Kelwin has absolutely no problems sidelining as a firefighter despite his heavy academic load. "*Yung free time mo, nagagamit mo na, sa magandang paraan pa, kasi nakakatulong ka sa ibang tao.*" What more could a guy ask for?

Both say their family has absolutely no qualms about them entering such a dangerous profession, although their habitual all-night patrols have earned them a bit of gentle scolding.

High School Blues

Being a volunteer firefighter might be tough for teachers and college students, but what more for someone with a tight schedule like a high school student? Now in his senior year at Chang Kai Shek College, Ryan Lim admits he has difficulty staying active in firefighting, especially now that he's graduating and has tons of requirements to meet. He says he got into firefighting because his dad and

cousin were also firefighters. "*Di nga ako pinayagan nung umpisa eh,*" says Ryan, "*pero nasanay na rin sila sa akin, kaya hinayaan na rin ako.*"

According to Ryan, when he joined in third year high school, the hectic schedule was still pretty manageable, "*pero pagdating nung fourth year, talagang mahirap, halos wala nang gimik!*" Firefighting became his after school "gimik". He admits that he normally sleeps around 1:00am everyday. Talk about having a great nightlife!

In the end, it all boils down to love for what you do; no amount of pressure can pull you down as long as you enjoy what you're doing. For these people, no matter what their occupation, the best part of being a volunteer firefighter is being able to put one's life on the line for others. According to them, nothing can ever compare to the gratitude they receive with much joy from the people whose lives they touch. ☺

One thing is certain when any Chinoy goes on a trip to China – you're with people who look and sound hauntingly the same as you do. This I learned – or so I thought I did — in Celadon's first-ever Trip to China last October 22-29, 2002.

by Hans Clifford Yao



Layout by Mercedes Mapua
Photos courtesy of Geoffrey Yu

Yellow-skinned, Chinky- Eyed,

Broken Mandarin

From the very moment we stepped onto the modern and luxurious Shanghai Pudong Airport, everyone seemed to look like the fourteen of us – yellow-skinned and chinky eyed. But as soon as we started to walk almost aimlessly in an airport dotted with cryptic Mandarin words that none of us could read, we knew then that we were not at all like the people who lived here. No, we were Chinoy.

What's it like climbing a

Shanghai

In our three days in Shanghai, we took a breathtaking tour of the whole city, starting off with a visit to Shanghai's most famous shopping district, Nanking Road; then to The Bund, hands-down the most picturesque symbol of Shanghai; next The Oriental Pearl TV Tower, Shanghai's tallest edifice; ending with the last

day free to spend Yuan after Yuan [China's currency] in several of Shanghai's shopping locales.

Again, it seemed to me that, for the first time in my life, I was in a place where everyone looked and sounded like me.

But when we started to pose incongruously in the most mundane of spots in Nanking Road, take pictures in different angles of the same view of The Bund, and stare in awe at the modern skyscrapers of Pudong as if we've never seen tall structures before, I realized that we weren't really like these yellow-skinned chinky-eyed individuals.

No, they wouldn't be laughing at this camera trigger-happy group as they pranced along The Bund pointing with their lips, if they thought that we were like them.

More so, though shopping was something none of us wanted to miss. Haggling and bargaining with the salesladies who would cringe and twitch their eyebrows while trying to decipher the callous and broken Mandarin accents, was an adventure in itself. Sometimes we didn't even re-



The imperial court: Hans Yao, Vida Chua, Geoffrey Yu, Tiffany Tan, Tina Roque, Bryan

Amidst the alluring walkways and lakes of the Summer Palace, the majestic and towering shadows of Temple of Heaven, the historical significance of the Forbidden City, the echoing face of Mao in Tiananmen Square, and the ancient wonder of Great Wall of China, we were impressed with the Chinese. It was cool to be descended from these yellow-skinned and chinky-eyed emperors and subjects who created such cultural wonders.

Then again, though we had the same eyes and the same complexion with these people, we couldn't seem to fathom the fact why our University-educated tour guide could not understand why we

to climb a hill...only to find out you're mountain?

alize that we were already being fooled, what with the advanced Mandarin sales talk being thrust upon us by these cunning salespeople. And though we tried as much to get the best bargains by speaking our finest Filipino-Chinese school versions of Mandarin, we oftentimes left the area disappointed, disheartened, and sometimes even harassed by the salespeople.

Beijing

When we got to Beijing, we marvelled at having such a rich cultural heritage even more.

needed more time off to wander in every square inch of the Forbidden City, why we needed to take one shot from each and every one of our cameras of the same view of the Summer Palace, why some of us were interested more in finding the souvenir shop than listening to lengthy lectures on the history behind the Temple of Heaven, and why we had to buy earmuffs and scarves in order to prepare us for the trek to the top of the Great Wall of China.

Most of the time we sought the help of a couple of us who were more fluent in Mandarin to un-

derstand the signs and posts around the Forbidden City, or converse with the waiters to order Coke in a restaurant serving only tea. We resigned to speaking in English when buying a souvenir in the Temple of Heaven – much to the amusement of the Beijing natives who, at first glance, looked just like us.

But at the end of the day, we all still marveled and were pleased at the fact that the Chinese were such ingenious and hardworking people to have come up with something as monumental as the Great Wall of China.

On the plane back to Manila after our China trip, I pondered on all of my experiences of journeying back to my ancestral home for a brief moment in October. No doubt I was filled with pride for having witnessed what the Chinese had accomplished throughout history, but I was also filled with doubt as to whether or not I could even consider myself a part of the people who came up with these wonders.



At the Bund

A camera trigger-happy group prancing along the busy streets of Nanking Road

“...the ancient wonder of great wall of China...”

Looking around me in the flight back home, I figured that though everyone in China looked like me and sounded like me, it was only the fourteen of us in the group who spoke like me, acted like me, and thought like me.

Yes I was with yellow-skinned and chinky-eyed people, but none of them laughed, shopped, shared stories, ate heartily, and took as much pictures as our group did.

One thing is certain when any Chinoy goes on a trip to China – you’re with people who look and sound hauntingly the same as you do. But only in the Philippines are we with people who are truly just like us, inside and out.



Atop the Great Wall of China, the only man-made structure that can be seen from outer space



The gut-wrenching Space Shuttle ride which only the adventurous dared (above), "and those who dared enough to go for it.(left).

An Unforgettable Day at Enchanted Kingdom

By Abby Go

During the long weekend last December 6, while most Ateneans were lounging around at home, Celadoneans brought the girls from the Laura Vicuña Center, a temporary shelter for abused children to Enchanted Kingdom. We became *achi's* and *ahia's* to them for a day as we kept the girls company the whole afternoon at the park.

The bus was bursting with energy the whole ride going there. Movement was in every corner of the bus as we shared jokes and held a mini jamming session. Some even couldn't hold back their excitement, already planning which rides to take first.

Once there, we didn't waste a single minute. While some enjoyed the more "friendly" rides such as bumper cars and the Ferris Wheel, the more adventurous ones took the heart stopping and gut wrenching attractions like the Space Shuttle and Anchors Away. However, the park had many other guests that day and more often than not, the wait in line took longer than the ride itself.

During the ride back home, most of us fell deadbeat on our seats from exhaustion and wooziness but with a smile on our faces. As we said goodbye to the girls, we hoped that the experience had been just as unforgettable for them as it had been for us. ☺



Isn't cuddling the best?!



Say cheese!" - smiles from the Celadoneans and the girls of Laura Vicuña Center.

By Melissa Telan

Ah, mooncakes. These round Chinese delicacies are sweet but not too cloying—a god-send for the sweet tooth. Made with bean paste filling and other extras such as ground lotus seeds, sesame seeds and golden egg yolk in the center, the palm-sized pastries often come in a box of four and are contained in tin boxes with traditional Chinese motif.

During September, mooncakes become a common sight all over, but especially in the Chinese communities. If one is lucky, one might even get to attend the Mooncake festival held during this month. The Mid Autumn Mooncake Festival is a major festival of the Chinese calendar celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, which is around the middle of September.

And if one is extra lucky, one may even receive not just a serving of the delectable treat, but also the story of how the lowly mooncake played an important role in saving a country long ago.

During the 14th century, the Chinese were under the tyrannical rule of the Mongols. Fed up of being treated like slaves, they planned a revolution to throw away the oppressive rulers and regain back their country. The plan involved the moon-shaped Chinese pastries that the Mongols don't like to eat: mooncakes. Chinese bakers were told to send mooncakes to all Chinese households in a certain walled city held by the Mongol enemy, with the message to execute all Mongolians and to coordinate with the uprising troops outside the city walls. Their plan proved to be a success, and China was freed from Mongol rule.

The legend has been around for quite some time already, although nobody really knows whether it is true. Nevertheless, it is certainly a sweet tidbit for the sweet delicacy. ☺



The Quad I, all set for the big event

Mid - Autumn Festival: "Once in a Blue Moon"

September 20, 2002



Dicing the night away

Everybody got oodles of chances to take home prizes, through the famous Chinese dice game during the Celadon Mid Autumn Festival. While everyone nibbled with their snacks, a bowl of 6 dice was circulated among the guests. At the same time, a raffle game was ongoing, and the people got more freebies, including the traditional Mooncake. This square brown Chinese delicacy is only available and exchanged during this season, and thus named due to the fact that the Mid-Autumn Festival falls every year on a full moon.

The Celadon Mid-Autumn Festival celebration was held on September 20, 2002. A perfect date as it was just one day away from August 15 of the Lunar Calendar, guaranteeing participants a full moon to gaze upon. It was not held in the cafeteria as in previous years, instead it was located in Quad I where the night was dark but the moon bright and tables were lit by candle light. ☺

Movie Premiere **Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers**

By Jules Ang

It was quite an adventure. As early as two in the afternoon, December 21, 2002, the logistic team volunteers assembled in front of SM Megamall's Cinema 3. Giveaways for the sponsors and viewers prepared. Stubs were prepared, the queue was set up. Volunteers were contributing in every way they could. In short, everything was going as planned.

As the sun began to set, people swarmed into Cinema 3. It suddenly felt as if we were trapped in the mines of Moria surrounded by, not orcs, but excited and expectant Tolkien fans. From this point forward, everything drastically changed. People started entering from everywhere, thinking that we were about to start opening the entrances. Lines were broken (good thing we used number stubs), people were confused, some people got really irritated, it *was* a horrendous experience. After everyone was escorted inside, a feeling of relief enveloped us. Everyone's spirits were down.

As soon as the movie screen flickered to life however, viewers soon forgot the bad that happened at the lines and began to enjoy the movie – thanks to Gollum's antics, Frodo and Sam's "relationship," and the movie's great special effects. After the movie, there was a thunderous

round of applause. Every person I saw was wearing a smile of contentment. Without a doubt the Ateneo Celadon *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* movie premiere was a success.

In this movie premiere, I have learned that one must lose a battle to win a war. Sure, our execution may have its flaws but the passion, the bond, and the courage to make this project a successful accomplishment outweighs this a thousand times more. God has guided us in this journey far more than we can imagine. He is the tie that binds our fellowship together. Glory to those who bore each of their own rings during that night. You did far more than bringing it to Mount Doom. ☺



1. Celadon president, Geoffrey Yu, posing with Gandalf; 2. the movie premiere project heads, Malou Ty, Karen Lim, Melissa Ah, and Shami Chan; 3. Ticket booth at Kostka Extension

Not Your Ordinary



by Joyce Gotamco

Chinese cuisine is not just sweet and sour pork, wanton noodles, and dimsum. It is not always steamed dumplings or vegetables fried in a wok. Most of all, it should never be equated to just siomai, siopao, and lumpiang shanghai. One would probably be surprised to actually taste a bit of Chinese cuisine that comes from other provinces.

In Canton, they have a saying that a Cantonese eats everything with four legs. And they also



say that the Cantonese only eats Cantonese cuisine because they believe that their dishes are the most de-

licious. Cantonese dishes are what we see in Chinese restaurants today. Sweet and sour pork, lemon chicken, wanton noodles, prawn salad and etc. One might think that all Chinese dishes are somewhat like these. But it doesn't even come close to just how many tastes, texture and fragrance Chinese cuisine have.

Han Jao Delights

In Han Jao, they have their beggar's chicken and sweet and sour carp. Beggar's chicken was said to have been wrapped in leaves and covered with clay.

It was so delicious that when the emperor, having a picnic nearby, smelled the fragrance of this dish he was so taken with it that he appointed this beggar as his imperial cook. The sweet and sour carp, on the other hand, was a dish that a loving wife made for her husband; whenever the husband tastes it, he will always remember his wife and her love for him. But this dish does not taste anything like the sweet and sour pork that we know and love today. It is more sour than sweet and it will make you wonder if this is really Chinese cooking.

Beijing Bellies

In Beijing, they have their Peking duck and more than 20 different kinds of dumplings. The Peking Duck dated back at least 1,500 years ago. But its style of cooking varied until what is known now. This is made by a special variety of duck. After it has been drawn and cleaned, air is then pumped inside to separate the skin and the flesh. Coating it with oil, sauce and molasses the duck is then roasted and dried. Cut it up in small stripes, wrap it with a wrapper made from flour, add a piece of leek and spread a special sweet sticky sauce to paste the wrapper together you now have one of China's most renowned dishes.

Fuk Yen Feasts

And in Fuk Yen, there is the Amoy Lumpia and the Kwan Chen, or Chinese Sausage. Amoy Lumpia is called as such because it originated from Amoy, a place in Fuk Yen. It is mostly made up of bamboo shoots, tok wa, carrots, cabbage, singkamas, chicharon, garlic leaves, to gue, shrimp and ground meat. Cooking this all together, it is then wrapped inside a wrapper made from flour with the option of

putting in lettuce, garlic (grinded), ground peanuts, cilantro, letsugas, mustard and a light sweet sticky sauce that is used to close the wrapper. Now, the Kwan Chen is a sausage made from meat, kasim without fat, mixed with chestnut powder and added with soy sauce and ngo hiong powder. After cooking these ingredients together, it is then stuffed into casings.

These are only a few examples of what China has to offer. One province alone has more than 20 different dishes. Maybe there is more out there still waiting to be discovered especially in the secrets behind each dish that we consume with pleasure. ☺



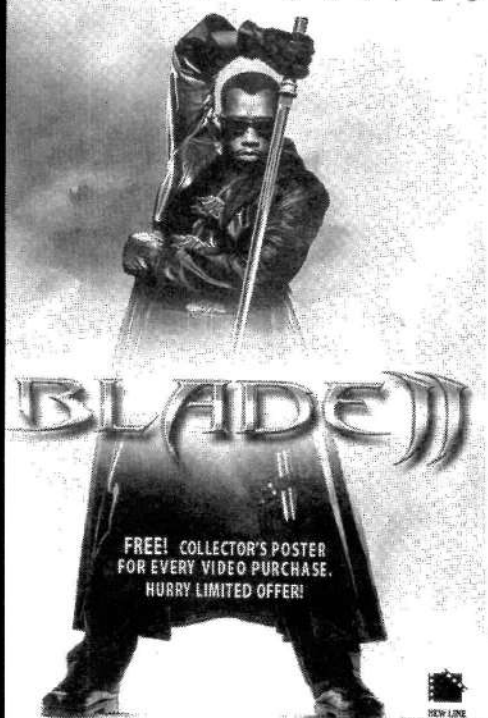
by Justin Fung

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WESLEY SNIPES



Celadon ChinoY (January 2003)



ASK M CONFL

"What's behind *tikoy*? I mean it good and everything... but why do they give it out every Chinese New Year? or the red envelope with money. (not that I'm complaining, I get really excited when I see one of those. hehe who wouldn't?)"

Mr. Confucion: The Chinese *tikoy* on the other hand is given away during Chinese New Year to friends and associates because the *tikoy*, which is a sticky rice cake, symbolizes unity ("sticking together"). Giving this out during the Chinese New Year will remind people of the importance of living in unity and harmony.

Kellda Centeno asks:

"when a husband and wife have boys, it's considered lucky... so they're supposed to keep on having babies until they get a girl. I know someone whose grandparents kept on having guys they had 13 children.."

Mr. Confucion: The main reason why Chinese families should keep on having babies until they have a girl because the Chinese word "haw", which means good, has the Chinese character for "girl" on the left side and "boy" on the right. This is interpreted to mean that the family should have a boy and a girl so that their family will be considered being "good" or lucky. ☺

Trisha Fernandez asks

"What's with wearing red?"

Mr Confucion: Red to the Chinese is a symbol of happiness and ultimate joy therefore you would often notice that Chinese wear red during special occasions such as weddings, Christmas, New Year, and birthdays. Furthermore, red has been believed as a protection against evil, and the color of wealth and prosperity.

Ang pao, a red envelope with money inside, is given away during New Years, birthdays, and weddings. It is a traditional form of gift giving. *Ang paos* are a symbol of good luck. The amount is usually an even number as odd numbers are regarded as unlucky.

"What do they put in Chinese food that makes it so addicting?"

Mr. Confucion: Chinese food tastes good because they use a variety of spices. Chinese don't just use salt and pepper to spice up their dishes. Go hiong (Chinese five spice) and si but are just a few of the common spices the Chinese use to flavor their dishes. Other ingredients include garlic (a lot of it), ginger (to make meals spicy), pepper corn, bay leaf, and sometimes MSG.

"why are there so many dialects?"

Mr. Confucion: The Chinese have 11 dialects, the most popular are Mandarin, Fookien, Cantonese, and Hakka. The reason why they have a lot of dialects is because China is a vast piece of land and cities emerged in areas quite

MR. CELADON

BY ROXANE UY

WHAT IS THE WEIRDEST CHINESE TRADITION YOU'VE EVER HEARD ABOUT?

isolated from each other. Furthermore, many neighboring countries and even invaders like the Mongols and Turks influenced the different areas of China. Though they have different dialects, Chinese were able to understand each other because the Chinese calligraphy and its meaning are still the same. Like the calligraphy on the left. In Mandarin, it is said as "haw"; in Fookien, "ho"; in Cantonese "how". Different sounds but all mean the same thing: good. ☺

Bernice Sandejas asks:

"I hear that Chinese bring food to the cemetery for their deceased loved ones. I know it's part of a symbolic gesture, like candles and flowers, and that you leave the food at the tombstone or in the mausoleum. But thing is, er, not considering people who might just steal it and the like, the food really just rots when you leave. I mean, candles melt and flowers wither, but they don't leave a mess the way decaying food does. Just thought it was kind of a waste..."

Mr Confucion: The reason behind the offering is because they want to have meals together with their deceased loved ones. It is like remembering the good old days when they would have meals together. It is also a sign of respect — a proper decorum. You don't go and sit on a table eating by yourself and leaving the rest to look at you with no food, right?

You should also share what you have with the people you dine with. Actually, families offer food to their ancestors during All Saints Day, but they take it home afterwards. When food is taken home, they distribute the food (especially fruits) among members of the family. The food taken home after November 1st is no longer any ordinary food because the ancestors now blessed it.

"Why is that during New Year celebrations, the firecrackers don't end up driving away good spirits instead of the bad ones? I mean, if the logic is that noise is unpleasant, bad spirits, being troublesome and destructive, would like noise, right? And my guess is that good spirits are docile and quiet, and therefore wouldn't enjoy the noise."

Mr. Confucion: The Chinese believe that evil spirits do not like noise and light. However, at night, it is dark and quiet therefore evil spirits may easily loiter and creep around causing misfortunes for everyone. This is then the reason why the Chinese would light firecrackers because it not only causes noise, but also produces some light. After the smoke has gone and bad spirits are driven away. Noise and light are seen in a positive way because these are an expression of happiness and laughter, which evil spirits are against. When you are happy, do you just keep it to yourself and be quiet about it. Of course, you will be merry and share your joys and laughs with everyone. ☺



Ping Lun Pian is a Chinese term used to denote a written opinion or critique

...here, they established a new life, my great grandpa as a *kargador* and my great grandma as a dressmaker.

It was the year 1911. My great grandparents were hurrying to ride on a small ferry carrying them to the ports of Manila after finding out that the Nationalists have overthrown the Manchurian dynasty in Beijing. Life has become so hard that leaving the Fujian province to another location would be better. And so they came to Manila, to be exact, they came to Binondo at San Fernando St. Here, they established a new life, my great grandpa as a *kargador* and my great grandma as a dressmaker. They had four

community took advantage of this opportunity after the war, opening up new businesses, such as the Manila Textile Co., the Tutuban, Divisoria Mall and for the good bargain hunters, the tiangge! Offering clothes, school supplies, house decorations and shoes.

If we make a map of Binondo, it would look like a flower with eight petals. The Plaza San Lorenzo Ruiz makes the heart of the town. The commercial center of Ongpin, the Escolta and Quiapo, residential houses, the commercial center of Divisoria and

From Binundok, Binundo, to Binondo

by Frederick Chua

children, three sons and a daughter. My grandpa was the third in the family. My grandpa also worked as a *kargador* and it was there that he got to know my grandma, the daughter of the owner. So much for a fairy tale story!

My grandparents told me that so much has changed since they settled in San Fernando St., a walking distance from the town of Binondo. The bustling street of Ongpin has produced well-known goldsmiths, such as Ty Po Huat and Michelle's Jewelry. The four-thousand-year-old culture has never ceased to amaze other towns as architecture, language and most especially food is preserved until today. Food is the most important part of a Chinoy's life. Binondo is filled with hundreds of teahouses offering the same basic menu.

Since Binondo is well beside the Pasig River and the North Harbor of Manila, goods here are cheaper than what many people of Makati or Quezon City may consider cheap as Divisoria is its first landing site! The Chinese

Tutuban, the hardware stores, these make up the petals of this blooming town.

Sad to say, the Japanese vented their hatred on the Chinese community during the occupation years. During the restoration, massive rebuilding, recollection and reconstruction was implemented. It was like returning back to the old days of poverty. But Binondo recovered fast from the war and from the many crises this country has faced. Binondo is truly resilient, reborn from the ashes as the saying goes.

Spanning the five hundred years in Binondo's history, the Chinese community here has expanded to the nearby towns of Divisoria, Tondo, Escolta and San Nicolas, spreading its unique culture among Filipinos. With pride, I can truly say that Binondo is my home and our national treasure. ☺

Frederick Chua is a Christ-centered sophomore committed to spreading the Gospel even in cyberspace

Next issue's topic is on *Immigrant Culture*
Write a 2-page article on your views and send it to
chinoycomm@yahoo.com or submit it at the Celadon Room,
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