



Multi-Cultural Brief

Volume 2 Issue 8

May-June 2001

In This Issue:

<i>Hospitality Around the World</i>	1
<i>What Are You Going to Do This Weekend?</i>	1
<i>Tofu</i>	2
<i>Steamed Tofu Home</i>	2
<i>Ecuadorian Bananas</i>	3
<i>Calendar News</i>	3
<i>I Want to Ask You</i>	4
<i>Nunna Daul Ysuny, The Trail of Tears</i>	5
<i>Crying Bride</i>	6
<i>The Camino Inca in Cusco, Peru</i>	8
<i>Mother Theresa, the Saint of the Poor</i>	9
<i>Finland in My Dreams</i>	10

Hospitality Around the World

Do you know what to do when someone invites you to their home? Customs are different all around the world. Here are some tips from the cultures we know.

Colombian Hospitality

By Charo Mina-Rojas

My country, Colombia, is a multicultural place. We have Indigenous, African-Colombian, and Mestiza populations who practice different customs, depending on the region where they live. So, if you are invited by a Colombian to his or her house, it is good that you have an idea about such differences. For example, do not refuse food when an Indigena offers some to you. They



will consider this contemptuous, and they will never invite you again to their home or bring you anything.

If you are in a patriarchal house, like many in the coffee region, you probably will be invited to sit at the head of the table beside the patriarch. They will bring you a special dish of beans, rice, fried bacon and fried ripe bananas, and, after all this, dessert and coffee. On the Pacific Coast, inhabited mostly by Black and Indigenous people, it does not matter if you are not wearing shoes. But do not take off your shoes if you are in a house in Bogota, especially if they

Continued on page 11

What Are You Going To Do This Weekend?

By Laura Cafagna

Last weekend we visited **Luray Caverns**. I suggest you to take time to visit them. They are located one and a half hours from Charlottesville, and to get there is an easy and panoramic drive. You just take Route 64 west, then Route 81 north. Then take Exit 264 to Route 211 and just follow the signs to Luray Caverns. Luray Caverns are the largest and most popular Caverns in eastern America. You will see a world of

monumental columns in a variety of styles, with amazing colors. The entrance price is \$14 for adults. You will get a guided tour of the caverns plus entrance to the museum of antique cars that it is next to it. This can really be a very enjoyable trip for a Sunday afternoon with the kids. They will enjoy it, and you will, too. If you want to know more about this, please visit www.luraycaverns.com.

Tofu

By Miao Liu

Have you ever savored Tofu? It's one of my favorite Chinese traditional foods. Here is an old tale about it.

Around 500 AD, there was a king in China called King Huaian. He was trying to transform fundamental elements, like air, water, and soil into gold. He also was concerned with the hunt for an elixir that would bestow the blessing of eternal life. It seemed he was successful, and he became an immortal at long last. Even his pets became immortals after eating the leftover elixir. It is said that Tofu is just the byproduct of that elixir.

This is only a tale. However, I think the ancient people who invented tofu must had a certain practical flair. As we all know, tofu's source is only soybean. Everyone, especially vegetarians, can enjoy it because it is high in calcium and protein, and it is low fat and cholesterol free. What's more, tofu is very delicious and easy to cook. In my hometown, chefs can cook more than 100 different dishes with only one raw material--tofu. These dishes have different appearance and flavor.

Tofu was introduced to Japan and Korea in the Tang Dynasty (about 600-900 AD.) Today you can buy it everywhere in the world. Here, in Charlottesville the best place to buy tofu is at the **Charlottesville Oriental Food Market**, which is at 206 Carlton Road.

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Steamed Tofu Home Style

By Miao Liu

Here is a recipe with tofu: Steamed Tofu Home Style

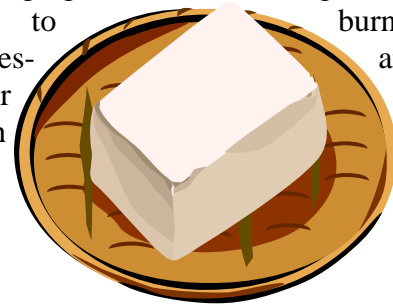
1-pound block firm tofu
1 green onion (with top)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon finely chopped gingerroot
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil
½ teaspoon sugar

Cut tofu into 2 x 2 x ½-inch pieces. Cut green onion diagonally into ½-inch pieces.

Place tofu on shallow heatproof platter. Place platter on rack in steamer; cover and steam over boiling water 10 minutes. Add boiling water if necessary. Pour off excess water from platter.

Heat 8-inch skillet until hot. Add vegetable oil; tilt skillet to coat side. Add gingerroot.

Cook and stir gingerroot until light brown (be careful not to burn). Stir in soy sauce, sesame oil and sugar. Pour over tofu; garnish with green onion. Enjoy it!



Contributors

Mariko Ajiro (Japan)
Laura Cafagna (Italy)
Renzo Jimenez (Peru)
Xihui Lai (China)
Miao Liu (China)
Sheila Vallejo (Ecuador)



Editor: Leslie Furlong

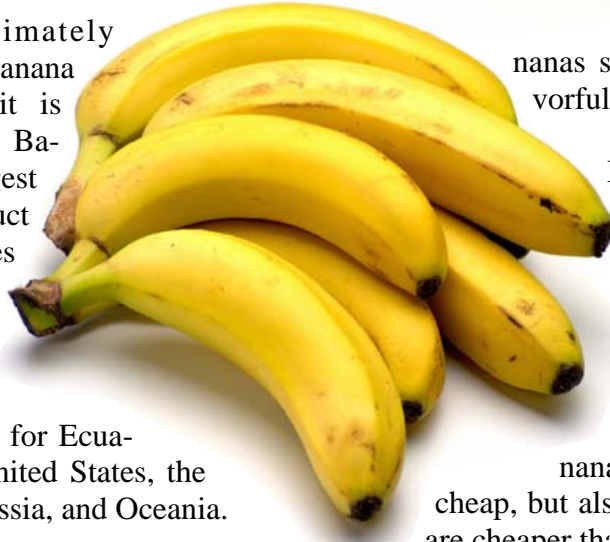
Ecuadorian Bananas

By Sheila Vallejo

Ecuador enjoys exceptional weather conditions that, added to the richness of its soil, have allowed the country to become a producer of top-quality agricultural products. One of these products is bananas.

Ecuador has approximately 131,801 hectares of banana plantations, and the fruit is available all year long. Bananas are the second largest income-generating product after oil. Ecuador supplies the international market with the following varieties: Cavendish, Baby Bananas, and Red bananas. The main markets for Ecuadorian bananas are the United States, the European Union, Asia, Russia, and Oceania.

Banana production in Ecuador enjoys several comparative advantages: a favorable climate, adequate light, and temperatures ranging between 25 degrees Centigrade and 30 degrees Centigrade, an essential



factor to ensure the balance and constant growth of the plants and the adequate development of their fruits. Ecuador also offers deep and highly fertile soils, which means that chemicals or pesticides, which harm the fruits' quality, are seldom used, unlike in other producer countries. This is what makes Ecuadorian bananas such a special, high-quality and flavorful delight.

Bananas are a remarkable food. Their high potassium content and soft texture make them ideal for children and the elderly. My daughter loves bananas. She has eaten them every day for breakfast since she was eight months old. In Ecuador, you can eat bananas because they are delicious and cheap, but also here in the United States, bananas are cheaper than other fruits.

So, next time you buy bananas, check to see if they are from Ecuador!



Calendar News



- June 8: **Last day of Spring classes** at Jefferson School
- June 8: **Next ESL Assessment** at Jefferson School, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Call for appointment at 245-2817.
- June 17: **Father's Day**
- June 19: **Summer classes** at Jefferson School begin
- June 25-29: **Summer Camp:** Blue Ridge English as a Second Language Council Day Camp at Sugar Hollow. Open to all ESL school children, 9:00-4:00 p.m. Cost: \$15 for each child, \$10 for each additional child from the same family. Call 977-7988.
- Every Tuesday: **Book Group.** Intermediate Reading and Discussion of American Literature. International Center. 10-11:30 am. Call 924-7983.
- Every Wednesday: **Latin Nightclub Dancing,** New Dance Space on Downtown Mall, 105 N. 1st St., 8:45 to 10:00 p.m., \$10/person. Contact: Edwin O. Roa (804)295-7103, edwinart@yahoo.com.

I Want to Ask You

By Xihui Lai

I want to ask you something but I do not know what to say since I feel so sad.



I still remember that day when we were in Montana. It was a terrible day for me, for my family.

ily.

We went skiing. On the first slide, we hurt my son's leg bone, but we didn't realize it immediately. We just thought he was scared. Later, at home, I noticed something was wrong. It was near dusk. Immediately, my nerves almost crumbled. I did not know where the hospital was or where we could find a doctor. We didn't have a car. My English was too poor to explain, to talk with people. We could only ask our new friend, Huijun, for help. When Huijun heard about this, she called the hospital and drove us to the emergency room. After a nurse did routine treatment and took X-Rays of my son's leg, she led us to another room to wait for the doctor.

That doctor was you. In my tears, you came at last. You came and asked us some routine questions; then you were gone. You said you would be back soon. We waited for you for a long time. We could only hear you talking and laughing with a woman outside of our waiting room. At that time, my son was only eight months old. It was so hard to keep him quiet — not to cry or kick his leg. I could not keep my tears in my eyes. Every time my son moved his leg, my heart hurt more. Every minute, I wished you would appear in the door. I knew your coming would bring me hope and comfort.

But I was disappointed. I could only hear your happy voice outside of that room. Huijun could not wait any longer. She went out of the room. Soon, she came back. She said angrily, "The doctor is only chatting with a nurse!" I had no words to say. More sorrow was around me. I hated that my English was so poor. I could not stop blaming myself deeply for not having taken good care of my son.

After a pause, Huijun went to ask you to come. Then, at last, you came. You put a cast on my son's leg. You said you were not an orthopedist. Since the orthopedist had already left work, you told us to come back the next day. When I heard this, my feelings were really complicated. You recommended an orthopedist to us. You said he was a really great orthopedist, but we did not believe you any more. Through Huijun's friend, who had been working in the hospital for many years, we found the best orthopedist in Montana.

I am not a Christian, but I will not forget that night. It was Christmas time. Many Christians stood in the long corridor outside our apartment praying and singing for my son. During those days, so many friends gave us help and encouragement.

More than one year has passed, and many things have passed, too. Now my son is two years old. His leg is pretty good. He can run very fast, and he loves jumping. He is so cute.

Do you still work in that hospital? I know I will never go back to that hospital again. But I want to ask you: how are you?



Nunna Daul Tsuny, The Trail of Tears

By Laura Cafagna



I always have had a special attraction for Native American culture, and I have always wanted to learn more about them, but only just recently I had the opportunity to do so. I heard people mention "The Trail of Tears" hundred of times, so I decided to learn more about this. What is the Trail of Tears, or *Nunna Daul Tsuny* in the Cherokee language? Let me tell you what I have learned.

During the early 1800s, the Cherokee, or Tsalagi as they call themselves, had a very complex culture. They had adopted their own government and their own constitution. They had established their own schools. They had their own written language, utilizing an ingenious alphabet of 86 characters. Almost the entire Cherokee Nation became literate within a few years. They even had their own newspaper, the *Phoenix*, which was published for the first time in their native language, in February 1828. They were also industrious farmers, merchants, and excellent businessmen.

At that time the Cherokee were a big tribe of 25,000 people. They were living in the southern part of the Appalachian Mountains, at least until the "Indian Removal Act." This bill, created by the United States Congress, ordered the Indians living east of the Mississippi River to move to Oklahoma and Arkansas. The "Indian Removal Act" was the beginning of one of the darkest moments of United States history. At the point of guns, entire tribes were forced to walk across the United States without shoes and barely clothed.

Samuel Cloud, who turned 9 years old on the Trail of Tears, tells in his own narration the story of many kids like him, forced to leave their homes to reach the "new home" they never wished for. (See *Forgiveness in the Age of Forgetfulness*, by Michael Rutledge, Arizona State University, 2000). He was playing peacefully, enjoying a spring day like many others, when the soldiers came. Samuel, his family, and his people were forced, at the point of guns, to follow them. It was cold. They did not have blankets. The soldiers had not allowed them to take anything personal with them.

They had to follow the soldiers on foot and walk. Most of the old people died during the forced march, killed by the cold weather, the bad food, and the exhausting walk. Fall arrived, and they had been walking for several months. Even the young and strong warriors started to die, and Samuel's father was one of them. They buried the dead in shallow graves because the ground was frozen. More than 4,000 people died during the unspoken war called "Indian Removal Act."

Native Americans have a rich and spiritual culture, and I can not comprehend why they have been victims of such hate and discrimination. We have a lot to learn from Native Americans, their culture, their medicine, their tradition, and their philosophy of life. Native American cultures need to be reevaluated. There is nothing that we can do to undo the past mistakes, but I wish we could at least do something to preserve these beautiful cultures and their wonderful traditions.

If you want to learn more, go to the library. There are many books about Native Americans. You can learn about their medicine, as I am doing, their history, and their fantastic love and respect for the land and the animals. For example, Do you know that Salicin, which is the major ingredient in aspirin, is found in most species of willow shrubs. It was used by the Pimas for fever, by the Catawbias for back pain and by the Chickasawas for headache and nose bleeding. No? Neither did I before reading about the fantastic tradition of Native Americans.

Massage @ Home

J.W. Gordon

823-6152

Swaleview@worldnet.att.net



Swedish and Deep Tissue Massage in your home or in mine. Call for details or ask Jim at the Jefferson School.

Crying Bride

By Xihui Lai

That was an amazing land, rural China. It was so peaceful, so quiet, and so mystical. Peasants lived there year by year, one generation after another. But in that land there raised so many things.

It was summer. Almost every day the sun was shining. Cicadas were shouting in the trees. It was fun for the kids. They climbed the trees, or used a long bamboo with a web at the top to catch cicadas. At noon, the cows lay down in the shadow of the trees. It was too hot to walk on the ground with bare feet, but most of the peasants had to work hard in the field with bare feet.

Summer was always a busy season, but that day was a special day. Only my family was busy. My uncle would marry off his elder daughter, my cousin, soon! In the early morning, several cooks began to prepare the big meal. Lots of villagers and relatives were invited to come for luncheon.

The guests were coming one or two hours earlier. When guests came in twos and threes, the bride was sitting on the bed dressed in the new red clothing. From then on it was a hard time for the bride. She should sing while crying until the bridegroom came to take her to his home.

At that time, I was a little girl. I was so curious. I hid quietly outside the door. I stretched my head to see the bride now and then.

To my aunt, the bride's mother, today was a difficult day, happiness and sadness woven together in her heart. She went to the bride's room slowly, holding the bride's hands as they sat together on the bed. Her daughter would leave soon. How many words she wanted to say! Thousands and thousands of words turned into tears and songs. "My daughter, today you will leave me to have your new home. I will miss you very much. Without you by my side, my life will lack a piece of the rainbow. I really do not have the heart

to be apart from you. I hope that you can take care of yourself and live in harmony with your new family."

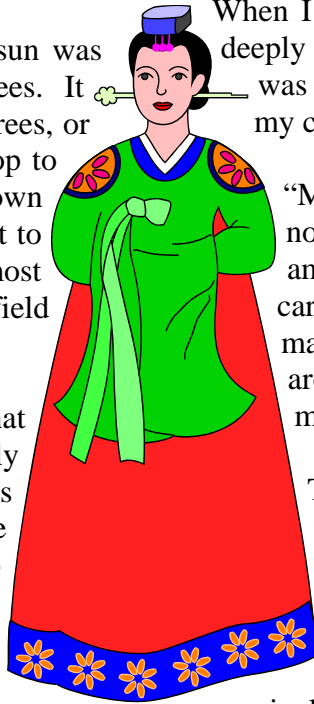
When I heard that, I almost cried. My heart sank deeply into this voice, this song, unconsciously. I was too shy to cry. I ran away with tears. But my curiosity brought me back soon.

"Mama, I am going to leave you soon. From now on, I can not help you every day. When I am not beside you, I only hope you will take care of yourself. You brought me up for so many years. My missing you will be like air around you forever. Mama, thank you so much," the bride sang sadly.

They hugged each other, crying and singing until other people drew them away. I did not know how long my tears ran down my face.

People began to go to the bride's room successively. All of those people didn't need to cry or sing. They could just give wishes to the bride or say nothing. However, the bride still sang, while crying, to give people wishes and be grateful. Everyone who went to the bride's room should give some money to the bride. If you did not intend to give money to the bride, it was better never to walk close to the room where the bride was sitting. If she saw you, she might call to you while crying and singing. It was in this situation that I was caught. My mom let me give some money to the bride. When I came near the door, my heart palpitated so fast. I stood there hesitantly for a while. The bride called to me. So I had only one choice, to go ahead. The bride held my hands. I was so nervous and so shy. I could not hear what the bride sang to me. I could not help crying silently. The tears flew out from my eyes. I wiped away my tears, then escaped quickly.

Near noon, suddenly I heard the sweet-sounding music of sonas and cymbals spreading from far away. I ran out of the house cheerfully. The bridegroom



Crying Bride

Continued from page 6

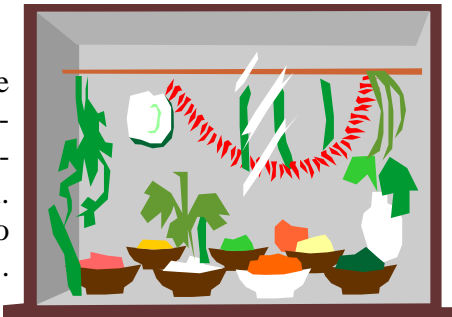
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with a procession of his people and a bridal sedan were coming. "Oh, the bridegroom is coming! The bridegroom is coming!" all kids like me shouted loudly while jumping. People were joyous. All the villagers went out to see the bridegroom. When the procession came near the house, fireworks vied with each other like lightening.

The door was shut now. My aunt went to say bye-bye to her daughter again. Being apart was sad. The bridegroom would go inside soon to take his bride home. But first, the bridegroom should throw some Hong Bao (red packages with money inside) to the people who were standing in front of the door until the matchmaker opened the door.

At last, the bride was sitting in the bridal sedan chair with a red flowery scarf covering her head. Four people carried the bridal sedan chair. Sounds of sounas, cymbals, and fireworks started again. Joy was full on everyone's faces. Some of the people who played the sounas and cymbals were in front of the procession. Others were at the end of the procession. The bridegroom walked ahead of the bridal sedan chair with a big red bow on his chest. Eight people carrying the dowries followed the bride. A fantastic procession went on and on. Before noon, the bride was leaving. There were so many wishes, laughter, and music all the way. That lovely bride, what were you thinking under that beautiful red scarf? Her new life was starting along this sinuous road.

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burned yet.

When I recall these things, I always wonder how the



bride could cry and sing like that. How amazing it was! When I had my wedding, I was in a city. I was so happy, only laughter was around me.

So many years have passed. I went to the city from that village. I went to another country from that village. That amazing land is always deeply in my heart. Someday I will go back there. Are there still crying brides? No matter what, I know that in summer, cicadas will wait for me in the trees.



Want to Contribute to the Multicultural Brief?

Do you have a story, an opinion, a skill you want to tell people about, a recipe, a good idea, a complaint, response to what you learned here?

Share it with others!

All submissions are considered. You don't have to be part of the Newspaper Class to contribute! Next deadline is July 18, 2001.

There are still openings in the Newspaper Class! Classes meet every Wednesday from 9:30 to 12:00 and Friday from 11:00 to 1:00.

If interested, call 245-2817, or e-mail: erno@esinet.net.

To receive the *Multicultural Brief*, visit Jefferson School, Room 215A or call (804) 245-2817. If you have Acrobat Reader, you can view the current newsletter online. Subscribe to esl_newsletter-subscribe@yahoo.com.

The Camino Inca in Cusco, Peru

By Renzo Jemenez



Adventure tourism is very popular in Peru. Every year when I was a child, my mother took my brother and me to the highlands of the Cordillera de los Andes where she was born.

To arrive at this place, we had to travel by road, reaching 4,800 meters (18,000 feet) above sea level. Despite this fact, the trips were short and very exciting because of the variety of the landscape that you could see in only a few hours. This was the beginning of my passion for adventure tourism. I didn't know then that it would become so popular.

Many years later, when I was studying Economics at the university, I traveled with my peers to an Economics Conference of Students in Cusco City. This city competes with Mexico City for the honor of being the oldest city inhabited continually in America since the eighth century, when it received the name of The Very Noble, Very Loyal Head of Kingdoms of Peru, Santiago of Cusco. At this conference, students from different Peruvian universities went to meet each other to share experiences. For us, it was very exciting to fly to Cusco, also, because this city is pretty close to the Machu Picchu ruins, and we wanted so much to know this wonderful place. Despite our busy schedule at the conference, we took some time for tourism.

It is important to remember that a flight between Lima and Cusco takes one hour, and the ticket prices fluctuate from \$50 to \$90 one way. This is very expensive for average Peruvian people and particularly for a student. However, because the university financed the trip and hosted this conference, we were able to take advantage of this opportunity.

My friends contacted people to arrange for a *canotaje* (a rafting trip) that you can make in canoes, rafts, and kayaks over the waters of the Urubamba River. It is near the Colca River in Arequipa, which has one of the deepest canyons in the world, and it also is near the Manu Reserve, which is one of the

biggest natural biological parks in the world.

Even though everyone had to pay \$20, I have to admit that making *canotaje* on this river was so amazing that I will never forget it. During this experience, my adrenaline rose suddenly. Then we went to visit other magnificent places, like Sacsayhuaman (titanic building with enormous stones), Pisac (small Inca town), and fabulous ruins and places in and out of Cusco City. It would take too long to mention each one.

On our trip, there was only one important thing that we missed doing. This was the *Camino Inca*, the most famous trekking route in South America, because of the different elements supplied to the visitors. It begins at 88 kilometers on the train line to the Concepcion Valley, in a place named Qooriwayrachina, and it ends in Machu Picchu.

Although the weather is warm and nice almost all year, the best time to visit is from April to October because from November to March it rains. Some nights between June and August the temperature is 0 degrees Centigrade (32 degrees Fahrenheit).

The natural scenery of Machu Picchu is impressive. There is notable innate balance between nature and the Incan architectural work.

The presence of the snowy mountain chain of Vilcambamba with altitudes over 6,000 meters above sea level (20,000 feet) with peaks such as the Salkantay and the Humantay, among others, and the conformation of forests and valleys, makes images of fantasy where the dawns and evenings constitute shows of greatness and mystery.

I couldn't talk about fauna and flora because everything I could say wouldn't be enough to describe such a beautiful variety. You just need to remember that Peru, with its medium size, contains more than 80% of all the classified weather climates in the world, and, consequently, it also has an extreme variety of flora and fauna. If you want to appreciate

Continued on page 9

Mother Theresa, Saint of the Poor

By Laura Cafagna

Mother Theresa died as she had lived, arguing with the media.

Mother Teresa died in September 1997, in silence. The media were too busy "covering" Princess Diana's death to give her the good-bye that she deserved. After almost four years, I am still mad. How can they have been so thoughtless?

I am sure that Mother Theresa would have joked about this. She liked to joke. She had a very special sense of humor. Two months before her death a journalist asked her, "What is going to happen to your Sisters after your death?" She answered, "At least wait until I die." And then, "The Sisters of Charity are subject to God's will, not mine."

She died when she was 87. There was not much left of her smile, and her body was in pain, but her mind was still clear.

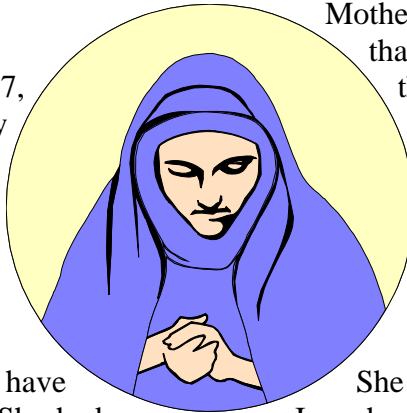
What an amazing woman! Mother Theresa received a call from God when she was 36. She was a sister in Calcutta working as a teacher in a prestigious female college. The reality outside the college was very different. As she described it, the bad smell of Calcutta was covered by the smell of the flowers in the college gardens, and the big walls covered the view of the poverty.

Mother Theresa's life changed completely after her decision. She devoted her life to the cure of the poor, the sick, and the lonely, and she did that for the next fifty years of her life. In 1948, she founded the "Sisters of Charity" in Calcutta. Its mission was to take care of the poor. After that, she opened several congregations all over the world because, as she used to say, "Calcutta is everywhere, just open you eyes."

The "Little Sister," as the Pope called her, was a force of nature until the last minute. She had been accused of taking money from dictators, of forcing herself to live in unnecessary poverty, and of curing

the plagues of the world without fighting them. Mother Theresa never answered. I am sure that she would have done everything for the good of the poor.

In 1997, when she won the Nobel Peace Prize, she said, "This is for the hungry, the poor, and the sick." It was a wonderful moment. I can not imagine anyone who deserved it more than she.



She has died, but when I read her thoughts, I can hear her voice. She is with me all the time. I wish I had had the opportunity to meet her. The "Little Sister" has a very special place in my heart and it was an honor for me to write this good-bye for my hero, *Madre Teresa di Calcutta*.

The Camino Inca in Peru

Continued from page 8

this, there is nothing better than to make the *Camino Inca* trip. It takes close to four days walking among valleys, forests, rivers, and hills completely in touch with nature between 2,400 and 4,200 meters above sea level.

After all these experiences, many people who visit Cusco only for a few days decide to stay there forever. That is what makes Cusco a magical and cosmopolitan city of the world. For these reasons, I feel that I have to go back there soon.

Mission Statement

The *Multicultural Brief* is an ESL newsletter created by students who want to improve their English and is produced as part of a newspaper class offered through the Charlottesville Adult Education program. Its purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to

- share their experiences of being from another country
- offer multicultural perspectives on life in Charlottesville
- help inform people who are new to Charlottesville of issues and opportunities around town
- build a bridge of communication between the ESL population and Americans living in the Charlottesville community.

Finland In My Dreams

By Xihui Lai

Sometimes I think I am a woman who always holds dreams walking on the road. Some dreams glitter in front of my eyes. Some dreams hide deeply in my heart. Some dreams cannot be awoken; otherwise, they will create terrifying waves. My mind will follow those waves to their peaks and lows.

Recently, I got a letter from a Finnish friend, Hilka. She lives in Joensuu, a small city in the north of Finland. In the letter, she said she went skiing every day. In no time at all, it opened the door of my dreams. A silvery-white world opened to me. Oh, I was in Joensuu again. I was standing on the Pielisjoki River. Frigid air blew over me. I knew that, under the thick ice, the water was running lively in the river. That was spring. I could feel the spring beating under my feet. I stretched both my arms out wide. I turned my body round. I was flying. I flew over the lakes. I flew over the forests. I saw that I was skiing there.

Almost half the year is winter in Finland, so it is not difficult to understand why the sauna comes from there. Snow makes this world very special and wonderful. In front of the houses or behind them or in the forests or on the lakes, every day there are people who drive the special cars to make ski trails so every person can ski freely at any time. At this time you can always see some people skiing. Especially, you can see many elderly people skiing very fast. Youthful vigor still ripples in their bodies, in their eyes.

In winter each tree is sparkling and crystal clear and beautiful. When I was there, I thought there might be angels standing on the trees. If not, why did I feel so sweet, so warm in so cold and dark a winter? Every day the sun came out for just a few hours. Some people asked me how I felt about the long winter. I faithfully told them I liked it very much. But they always looked very strangely at me. They did not know I had angels with me. After those experiences, when people asked me this question again, I just gave them my best smile and said, "Oh, it is dif-

ferent from my home town." I knew the feeling of mine could not be shared with others.



Winter went by little by little. Suddenly, spring spread to me, to everyone. More and more people started to gather in the downtown square. Immediately, it was full of life. It seemed like in only one night, spring woke up and walked around everywhere. She woke up the grasses, the flowers, and the trees. She called back the birds, the butterflies, and the bees. After

waiting the whole winter, I could wear my beautiful dresses again.

Near my home, there was a beautiful church on the hill. It seemed like a fairy tale. In spring, there was a picture always in my mind: a cute little girl holds a flower in one hand and a basket in her other hand; she is dressed beautifully, running down that hill cheerfully. To hear the sound of the bell of this church was my favorite thing. The sound always gave me serenity and tranquility.

In summer, you can say they never have a setting sun. The sun sets very late. Sometimes you can not know whether it is daytime or night. There are concerts and temporary vendors for selling every kind of thing from the grasslands. The most interesting thing to me was the big bonfire. On the midsummer night, people sat around the big bonfire. They drank beer, talked with each other, or sat quietly enjoying the joyousness of the never-setting sun. All of these things are the best gifts that nature bestowed on us. You could not stop yourself from loving this wonderful life.

Autumn in Finland is colorful. Autumn is magnificent. That kind of splendor can fill your heart in no time at all. A part of my heart already belongs there and has been left there. Sometimes when I was there, I thought if I died at that moment, I would
Continued on page 12

Hospitality Around the World

Continued from page 1

represent the traditional *cachacos* (how the Bogotanos are called by people from the Coast). While the former will bring you fish, plantains and rice or a delicious soup, the latter will bring you potato soup, called *ajiaco*, served with avocado, capers, and chicken to your taste.



The people in Colombia are very friendly and always want to make you feel like you are in your own home. On the coasts, the people are brighter and more joyful than people from the interior of the country, who can be very cheerful but a little serious and ceremonial, too.

The women in my home taught me that I never should go to visit someone with my hands empty. It is not a big deal if you don't bring anything, but it is kind and polite.

In some families today, like among intellectuals and young people in general, many of the traditions and good manners followed by our elders have changed. In these houses, you are invited to take off your shoes if that makes you comfortable. They will ask you for your preferences in food in consideration for the different tastes and beliefs of the people today. They do not mind if you help to clean the kitchen, something difficult to imagine in the coast cultures, for example.

One thing you can be sure of. You always can find delicious food and beverages (especially natural fruit juices), nice music, kind people, and a warm environment when you visit Colombians.

Now, if you come to my home, do not worry about anything. It is my only rule. I'm an uncomplicated person, so you can be and do whatever makes you comfortable and happy. I won't be concerned if you don't want the food I offer to you. I have made it thinking of you, so I'm very sure you will love it. If not, I will bring you something else, or just let you be hungry. Welcome to my Colombian home!

Tips About Hospitality in Ecuador

By Sheila Vallejo

In Ecuador, people are very friendly. We usually have many parties. Most of them are at home, except when it is a big party, like a wedding.

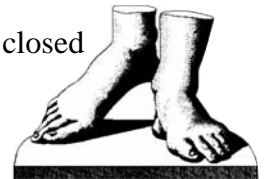
If you are invited to an Ecuadorian house for dinner or a little celebration, you don't need to bring anything. But if you are invited for a birthday party or a graduation party, and so on, you should bring a little gift for the person to whom homage is paid. If the meeting is among family members or close friends, you should ask what you should bring. The food is usually planned beforehand, and everyone is in charge of preparing something.

Also, it is important that you know the way we greet each other. We hug and kiss each other on the cheek once. However, if you don't feel comfortable, it is okay if you shake hands with each other.

What Would You Expect When a Guest Comes Over in Japan?

By Mariko Ajiro

- Take off your shoes
- Leave the bathroom door closed when it is not occupied.



Hospitality in Italy

By Laura Cafagna

Do not take off your shoes; you are in an Italian house now! Italians, not me, of course, consider it impolite to take off your shoes when you visit them.

Another thing that you should never do when you visit Italians is to bring your own food. The hostess will appreciate it if you bring flowers (you are never wrong with that), or wine, or a little gift.

Italians, generally speaking, love to have company, and they will make you feel at home. It is part of our culture. Enjoy.

Finland in My Dreams

Continued from page 10

have no regrets about my whole life.

Finland is beautiful. There is almost no pollution. The sky is very blue. That is real azure. Finland has over 60 thousand lakes. Each lake is very beautiful. The water in the lakes is very clear. The water in the tap is sweet, refreshing, cool, and natural. You can drink it directly without ice. That coolness and refreshment stayed with me for a long time. I miss it so much.

The forests are really worthy of Finnish pride. Sixty percent of the lands are covered by forests. When I was in Joensuu, my home was only ten minutes away from downtown by foot. But I also believed that I was living in the forest. Only five minutes by foot, there was the forest. Finns love their forests. To protect them, they have imported wood from Russia.

I really admire this country. There are only 5 million people. It is a small country. But they have a world-

famous company, Nokia. Lock Company is also very superior. This country gave me such a good impression: if they have something, then that thing is really excellent.

One fourth of Finland is inside the Arctic Circle. If you are lucky, you can also see the arctic lights in Joensuu. They are really gorgeous. Finland is an amazing country. If you had been there, you would not doubt why Santa Claus comes from there. The Santa Claus village is there. But very regretfully, I have neither been to the Arctic, nor the Santa Claus village. I long to go there some day. Having this dream, someday I know I will go back there to finish my dream, to let one part of my heart go back home.



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