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English 101

I've really learned much through writing the whole project and conducting interviews.

First off, almost all the Chinese students I know, studying either here at Emory or at other American colleges, indicate that they really do miss Chinese food. They are getting tired of and need a break from all this American food, including pizza, salad and a lot more.

And yes, I do too.

For example, I usually have jianbing, youtiao, both of whose pictures are in the slideshow on my homepage, or porridge for breakfast, which I mentioned during my interview with Jessica. Therefore, though I do have bread and milk for breakfast at home, I still find it boring eating bread and potatoes for breakfast every day. Besides, I prefer cooked vegetables to salad.

So honestly speaking, this is the main reason why I chose the topic " Chinese food" for my first autoethnography project.

However, I also had some challenges during this project.

For instance, China is so large that you can find totally different

food in different parts and areas. Sometimes I'm quite unfamiliar with food in areas that are far away from my hometown. I can tell neither their names nor the ingredients. What's more, the topic "Chinese food" is broad, making it hard for me to decide what areas and subtopics to focus on. And it's also hard to precisely translate the names of the Chinese dishes and cuisines.

Fortunately enough though, I'm done with the project. I particularly like the picture captions, the Confucius quote on the upper right corner, and the title "EPICUREAN". I'm very proud of myself for all my work on the website.

Before taking this class, I thought an English writing class would be boring and demanding. But, on the contrary, I really enjoy my class and project so far, especially when it comes to the interviews.

Though it's been a long time since I read Carolyn Ellis's book, I still remember the three distinctive ways to do interviews, which were truly inspiring, thought provoking and interesting. Similarly, my interviews were very interactive, too. It was actually these three interviews that helped me get to know these Chinese students better and built our close friendships.

As for the interviews,

I interviewed Jessica, Shawn and Jack respectively.

My interview with Jessica was done after we had dinner at DUC. Jessica missed Chinese food a lot and since she was such

an eloquent person, she talked a lot about her thoughts and led the interview. The talk lasted about fifteen minutes and I really did enjoy it. In the beginning, she talked about how she got hungry and missed Chinese food when she was on Chinese Facebook Renren and saw pictures of different Chinese food at night. Besides, she mentioned American food, which she considered either too salty or too sweet, and therefore she believed that food is one of the major reasons why the obesity problem is so serious in the United States. By the time I finished the interview write-ups, she'd been to only one Chinese restaurant – the Doc Chey's Noodle House, in Emory Village, Atlanta after she came to America. And, she thought it was, to some extent, Americanized. For example, she preferred cooked vegetables to salad. Overall, however, I could tell from the interview that Jessica enjoyed the DUC meals and her life at Emory.

When it comes to the interview with Shawn, however, it was completely different. Shawn, unlike Jessica, didn't seem to enjoy American food at all and wasn't satisfied with the DUC meal plans because he thought they were expensive and not worth it. He thought the Cox and Emory Village were both way better than the DUC. Hence, he went to many Chinese restaurants and, as far as I know, he cooked himself a lot. He also said he would buy a car next year because he wanted to try more Chinese food in Georgia. Like Jessica and I, Shawn also felt like the fruits was the best part of the DUC.

Finally, I interviewed Jack, who was studying in the library and therefore his answers were basically short and concise. And though Jack really did miss Chinese food a lot, he wouldn't fly back to China for winter break. His mom would be visiting so he asked her to bring some Chinese food. Jack hadn't been to any Chinese restaurants but had ordered take-outs. Like the other two persons I interviewed, he thought the so-called "Chinese food" was Americanized.

To wrap up, as you can see from all my three interviews, all of us, including all my three interviewees and me myself, really miss Chinese food and believe that Chinese food here in the United States, at least in the restaurants we've tried, is somewhat Americanized. Jack, the only person I interviewed that has been to Chinatown before, told me that only Chinese food there, the snacks in particular, was truly authentic and we could only get Chinese cabbages, that we all miss so much, there.

Different people love different food and dishes here, but we all appreciate the fruits supplied by the DUC.

What I've found interesting is the way we Chinese eat: we use chopsticks rather than spoons or forks (we use spoons a lot too but seldom use forks). Also, we drink wine and alcohol when we reunite with friends and it's even considered rude and

impolite if you don't finish the drink in your cup according to the etiquette. These are never expected to exist in American culture.

During the project, I also wrote an artifact analysis on moon cakes, which is an indispensable delicacy for Mid- autumn Festival, or Moon Festival, one of the most important festivals for Chinese.

I brought these two moon cakes from China. One of them was made from red bean paste, my favorite flavor, while the other one was made of lotus seed paste and egg yolk. The moon cakes look just like the full moon. They are round and full, with Chinese characters meaning family gathering, which is essential in Chinese culture, on it. After packing all my stuff into the luggage before I came here, my mom gave me the moon cakes and told me not to forget to take them even though I wouldn't spend this year's Mid-autumn Festival with my family. Eating moon cakes on Mid-autumn Festival is a Chinese tradition.

See how much Mid-autumn Festival and moon cakes mean to Chinese? My mom didn't forget the festival when it was only mid August. (According to Chinese lunar calendar, Mid-autumn Festival this year was on Sept. 19th, 2013.) Though I didn't spend Mid-autumn Festival and eat the moon cakes with my family and parents this year, I felt like we were just watching the moon together when I was eating the moon cakes at night. In other words, the moon cakes didn't only remind me of my parents but also evoked my life and memories in China.

The moon cake is a great example of the many vital dishes for traditional Chinese festivals. So then, after finishing writing the artifact analysis, I suddenly had an idea about what else to include in the project and hence introduced food for different festivals such as nian gao for Spring Festival, yuanxiao for Lantern Festival and zongzi for Duanwu Festival, all of which are very representative festival foods.

For me, what impresses me the most is the difference in zongzi between the southern and northern parts of China. As I mentioned and emphasized earlier in this linear essay, China is so large that food can be very different in their tastes, looks and many other aspects among different parts and areas. Some of my friends from the northern part say they can't imagine salty zongzi, which are indeed very popular in the South, because they've been eating sweet ones all their lives. I, from Nanjing, a city near Shanghai, have eaten both kinds since I was little.

At last, I added a photo gallery, Chinese cuisine recipes and dim sum to the website because I hope that those who are very unfamiliar with Chinese food will not only find my autoethnography interesting and "delicious", but also get more acquainted with the ingredients of the food as well as the Chinese culture.