
PALS NEWS

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My Older Sister

Kun Yu Tseng, Taiwan

I have an older sister. Her name is Mico. She is a helpful person but sometimes lazy and impatient. When I was a student, if I wanted to buy something she often helped me. And when I did my homework she would help me. But she usually doesn't help with the chores. She always sleeps very late on the weekends. She is an impatient person because she speaks very quickly and doesn't listen. And she sometimes argues with my parents. Although she's sometimes lazy and impatient, I still miss and love her.

My Energetic Classmate

Wan Li Chen, China

My classmate is a funny, friendly and energetic man. I think he has a lot of energy, because he studies in the daytime and goes to the gym at night. He works on the weekend, but sometimes he plays soccer with his team after his work. It's crazy. He always has a big smile. He is honest with his classmates and friends. I think he is like a super man because he is funny, friendly, and has much energy. The superman also is an enthusiastic soccer fan.

My Interesting Boyfriend

Maria Isabel Marulanda, Colombia

My boyfriend is an interesting person. He is very hardworking, honest and creative. He works all weekend in the basement and he likes to play with my dog too. He is responsible in his job and when he arrives at his house, he continues working. He always likes to do everything well. He loves to eat pistachios and I do too. I love him because he's a good man and a special person.

My Creative Friend

Carlos Angeles, Peru

My friend is a creative person. Once he repaired my car with a nail. He's also very helpful, because he always helps me when I need it. He has a lot of friends because he is talkative and funny. He is a friendly person.

My Social Brother

Caner Yalbasi, Turkey

My brother is a sensitive person in social events. He is a member of “North Caucasian Culture and Solidarity Association”. He is involved with friends. They do activities. They play Caucasian dance and do activities. But he is a messy person sometimes. He is a friendly person. His friends like him.

My Good Friend

Houda Zerkti, Morocco

My friend is a good person. Her name is Hind. She is a helpful person in everything. If anybody wants something or needs some help, they always ask Hind. She is an honest person with herself and with everybody, she never lies. In my wedding, she was the only friend who helped me with everything. I didn't see a person like her in my life. She is very responsible and patient in her work. She is a director of a bank and she is very young for this job. She worked very hard to get this job and she is 27 years old. Also she is a very social and popular person in my city. Everybody loves and likes Hind. As you can see, I love her very much and I'm proud I have a friend like her.

Colombia Is a Beautiful Country

Juan Alexander Ortega Ortiz, Colombia

Colombia is a beautiful country and has many important things like flora, fauna and vegetation. It exports many things to other countries like flowers, banana, coffee and clothes. Colombia isn't only war, problems and conflict. This country is more than this, Colombia is passion, for this reason we have the best beautiful places and natural reservations.

Bogotá is the capital of Colombia and there are many places where you can go. Monserrate is a place on the top a mountain, where you have the option walk if you like or, use the Telesferico (a machine that brings you to the top) if you prefer. On the top there is a chapel where people can see a religious image about Jesus Christ when he fell down with the cross. There are many Catholics who like to pray there because they believe in him and in his miracles. Also, around this religious place you have time to see the city with its splendor. Besides, you have the opportunity to relax and spend all the day over there.

People sometimes prefer to do something with feeling, such as going to the bullring, where they have a very good bullfights two times a month with an important bullfighter from the country or outside. They have activities like exposition with cattle or livestock for a weekend. At the end of the month they present a big concert with musical groups in the moment.

Furthermore, there is a place that is called Maloka or interactive park. It's about technology and science and, in this park you can find everything connected with technology. Students, youth and adults receive an orientation about this advance and how these help us in our society. The Cinedomo is nearby. It's a theater where people, kids, youth and adults have an opportunity to watch a movie or documentary, but the most important thing is that is in 3D. And, people like it because they feel that they are in the movie.

Moreover, we have a department called Boyaca. It is historical because in 1819 Simón Bolívar won a major battle here in our war against colonization, and ensured our freedom from Spain. Also, there is a small town called Chiquinquirá but it has a strong faith and belief. It has a

monumental Cathedral named Our Lady of the Rosary and inside is a big picture of her. What's more, many people from Colombia have devotion to her and every year on July 20, they have a big celebration for a weekend. Many people think that it's a good time to visit her and pray for the peace of our Colombia and be grateful for some special intention that they received before or want. Also, there is a flower park in the middle of this town and you can see many kinds of flowers in their entire splendor.

If you like this town you can continue to visit others like Zipaquirá. It's nice a place because it has best monument in the world, a Cathedral on the ground. They have a many images made in salt like the Nativity, station of the cross and in the middle of this there is a big cross made in salt. Zipaquirá is a town, where people are friendly and they preserve all their traditions for many generations like and historical places, colonial houses and monument.

There is another place called Santander, in the Northeast of Colombia and it has good places to visit because they have a good natural reservation like Sangil. It's a beautiful town where you can practice many sports with adrenaline like rafting, rappel and parachutes. There is also a beautiful deep pool, waterfall and long walks. Around all this nature people have the opportunity to sleep in hotel or go camping.

In addition, they have a place called Gallineral Park. It's a reservation of trees and some birds that are near extinction. It's nice to visit Sangil in vacation time or holidays because you can meet people from many places of Colombia. They have a nice church with a religious image and also the altar has parts that were made in gold many generations before us.

Another exotic natural place is Pescaderito, where you can swim, practice bicycling and walk around in nature. It's in the mountains. When people are there they discover a big lake, and people like to cook during the day and at night there is a party where you can dance until the next day. But, most people like to make bonfire and contemplate the stars and talk about their lives.

Barichara is also other town near to Sangil, and if people visit there they have beautiful experience because who have the opportunity to see people that live there and they conserve all their culture and traditions like colonial houses made of mud. An important thing there is that they work with the rock and make different figures, letter and names. Something special in this town is that all the roads were made of rock.

They have two churches, one in the middle of the town and another on the top mountain; this is a historical and monumental place. Finally Barichara has two nicer places to visit, one is an exposition that many people made of rock and the second is a balcony where people can contemplate the Chicamocha River, mounts and Guane town.

The Chicamocha canyon is an important place for Santander because there is road to help the people to communicate with others towns. It's in the mountains and this tour takes around thirty minutes. Where people can see restaurants, paraderos (It's a place where you can stop your car or the bus and take a little break, and take some pictures) and you can eat typical food for Santander. From the top on this mountain can see a small town called Cepita and the Chicamocha River that past behind this place and people like see the sunset.

Some of the most important characteristics of Colombia

Hector Galvis, Colombia

Colombia is officially known as the Republic of Colombia. This country is in South America, bordered on the north by Panama and the Caribbean Sea, on the east by Venezuela and Brazil, on the south by Peru and Ecuador and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Colombia is the

only South American country with coasts on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The climate is tropical along the coast and eastern plains, and cooler in the highlands. Its terrain is of flat coastal lowlands, central highlands, Andes Mountains and eastern lowland plains. Natural resources include petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, nickel, gold, copper, emeralds and hydropower.

The province of Antioquia is recognized province by the variety of products that it has. Because of its geography we can find a variety of climates too. Antioquia is the richest area in natural production such as agriculture, cattle raising, actual stowage, which has the opportunity to generate a lot of energy for many other departments. People are nice, they are friendly, they work hard, they have fun, rich or poor, it does not make the differences, all of them enjoy their lives, they are good workers. All of the people from Antioquia work in different ways, some are farmers, executives, business men, and others professions, but all of them are contributing to maintain the good relation between each other. Agriculture is the most important factor in this area, as I said before, because the geography makes the agriculture possible for potatoes, corn, many varieties of beans, and all kinds of vegetables. Coffee is one of the most important products in Antioquia, many kinds of bananas, and chocolate.

The economic situation in Antioquia I will say is good, we have a poor population, but also they always have something to eat. Colombia, and in Antioquia especially, has a lot of production to be exported to other countries, such as Coffee. Antioquia is one of the departments of Colombia that has more contribution in production of coffee, and Colombian coffee is famous for its delicious taste. Also, Antioquia is famous for flower's production. We have the first of the flowers, it is an annual feast from August 5 to August 12 which is a famous internationally. Bananas are another export product. Because all those products, Antioquia has a good economic level.

Medellin is considered the City of the Eternal Primavera, because of its excellent climate, between 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit during the whole year. Also it is the only city with a train that services more that 90% of the working people. It runs from 4 AM to 11 PM, and people love it because it passes the total city, north to south. Because the climate is almost perfect, between 55-65F, it is nice to visit that city any time of the year. Special feasts we have the flowers carnival, at that feast you can see all variety of flowers, all the colors, all the magnificent decoration around, with beautiful variety of colors and stiles. In Medellin we can find a delicious typical food named Bandeja Paisa, (typical food from Antioquia), which is beans, rice, avocado, egg, meat, bacon and salad.

Antioquia has a good motivation to work, it has a lot of people who are thinking to have the best future, but the government group is not the best. They do not support the population very well. The governors are interested in money, not in the people. The education's plans is other factor in which the young population is affected, 90% of the population do not have the opportunity to get the major studies. Some of them just the high school because the university studies are very expensive, so, just the high class who has the opportunity to get it. The same is happening with healthcare program, not everyone has the opportunity to pay for this program which is totally necessary for every single person. Even if some people have this coverage of healthcare, also they have problems, because the service is not really good. If you have to attend an appointment you must call them about a month before. If you need some medicine you have to pay very much for it, because health insurance does not cover it. The work's plan is good, the real problem is that the salaries are very low. It is not enough to cover all the expenses of the house, such as electricity, water, phone service, and many bills that all people have in their homes. It is some general characteristics about this point, but the people are really good, they

have the capacity to ignore the bad situation and enjoy their lives.

Cundinamarca is other province with very good growth, its capital is Bogota. It is the central part of Colombia, where we find the international airport. Most of the international airplanes have to arrive on Aeropuerto Internacional el Dorado,(it is a name, International airport the Dorado). The location of this department is on very high mountains, it is why the temperature is about 45- 55F. For this reason the agriculture is different from Antioquia. This department is famous for the production of all kinds of vegetables, and also potatoes, corn, and variety of beans. The Cundinamarca people have beautiful music. It is their own music, typical from that area. It is instrumental music and the sounds are very romantic, the music is traditional of the olds. As a typical food, the cundinamarca people have the Chagua, it is a name of the typical food, the Chagua is very famous on this area, it is very simple recipe, just water, salt, oil, eggs, potatoes and seasonings, it is lake soup.

Tourism in Cundinamarca is very good, the most popular places in that area are el Cerro the Moncerrate, High Moncerrate Mountain. It is a beautiful place, from there you can see the beautiful City of Bogota. Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, it is a name of our Lady the Virgin Mary. Many people go there to pray, asking for special intention, as a peregrination. Thermal water is another important factor in Cundinamarca. It is exiting to perceive the hot water in our body. Coming from the mountain, it is hot naturally, and many people say it is medicinal for the body's bones.

In Bogota, the Colombia's Capital, we can find very famous museums such the Gold Museum. As its name says, all things that you can see in that museum are in gold. Also the diamond museum is found there a house where you can see all variety of diamonds, how is its process to become it as a jewel. The Nariño house is the house of the president, it is a wonderful area to visit, the parks and the construction around are great.

The Atlantic Coast is the place most visited in Colombia because of its coast. Barranquilla is the third biggest city in Colombia, its economy comes from the tourism and sea food, people from many countries arrive all the time during the whole year because the temperature is always the same, 70-80F. The music from that area is the Ballenato. That music is very popular because the sensation, is especially romantic music. Its words are full of feelings and this music is listened to by the people in love. Usually the people from that area are happy, they have celebrations for all opportunity, they are very good in dancing. Other characteristic that they have is that they speak very fast, even for Spanish speakers their pronunciation is difficult to understand. They receive the name of Costeños because they lived around the Coast. (Coast in Spanish is Costa).

Santa Martha is smaller that Barranquilla, but is more popular because its coast is cleaner and quieter. The geography is a little different, Santa Martha has mountains and is located around the ocean, its temperature is the same that Barranquilla, or maybe a little less. The people are almost the same that Barranquilla, they receive the same name of Costeños because the coast. The Economy is the tourism and sea food.

Cartagena, is the smaller city in that area, but it is the most popular city, nationally and internationally. Nationally because when the young people are in the last year of high school almost all of them go to Cartagena to celebrate it, because they are finishing their studies. The people who get married, go there to celebrate the honeymoon, and many important occasions are celebrated in this wonderful city. And internationally because that city is visited by people from multiple counties. Cartagena is known as the Old City, or the Walled City, many people go to visit it because it is historical, because its climate, and because the people are very nice, and because the beautiful coast that Cartagena has. The typical food is sea food, but particularly the

fish. The clothing in all the Atlantic coast is very comfortable, because the high temperature, the people dressing something fast and slim clothes. The Atlantic Coast has almost all the same customs; the culture in those areas has many similarities. It is usually that the people who visit this area want to visit the three important cities, they are not far away one from other.

Colombia is rich in tourism, natural resources, agriculture, and rivers. The geography is perfect to choose the temperature that you want to enjoy. The people who visit Colombia say that Colombia is the most wonderful country to live in, because of all the characteristics that I am mentioning in this essay. I am sure that many countries have wonderful characteristics to mention as Colombia but the only country that I know very well is Colombia.

Ghosts

Josette Meave C., Bolivia

Do ghosts exist or, are they just a myth? Ghosts are specimens that appear in certain situations like in places or to people. We have several theories about this subject. Some people believe that the ghosts exist and show pictures and explain their own experiences with the ghost. But, other people, like religious people, don't believe that because their beliefs are different.

A concept found is that a ghost is a physical, visual, auditory or tangible manifestation of a deceased person that clings to this physical world and does not wish to (or cannot) extend. Ghosts can exist between relatives or friends, in physical or supernatural manifestations. The phantasmagoric manifestation is measurable, that is to say, can be measured by different methods that absolutely have not been accepted by science and which still require ample explanation.

At the present time, several beliefs exist on this subject. Religious people who disagree with this theory because they think that when a person dies his or her soul goes to the heaven next to God, or to another place called hell, depending the life that the person has taken. These people base their beliefs on the Holy Bible that says that we are dust and dust we will become, and that our soul happened to the happiness of God. Other people think that ghosts are souls in pain that cannot find rest after death and are caught between this world and the beyond.

In continuation, we can demonstrate these paranormal phenomena with stories of people and descriptions of pictures. In one picture that was made, a young person who was shot and died, was seen with a blue figure leaving his body. The next picture shows one boy that was between the curtains in a scene of an American film called "3 Men and a Baby," which had to be reviewed. Investigating it, it was discovered that the boy had died in that same department. In one story a woman told that her daughter, who is 11 years old, told her that she was talking with her grandmother, who had died one week ago. An American boy said that he took a picture of himself in front of the mirror, and in the picture there was a girl next to him – the girl wasn't supposed to be there.

In conclusion we don't know if ghosts exist for sure because we have many speculations on this subject. For this reason Universities of the United States and Europe created a major in parapsychology, which analyzes phenomena paranormal from beyond. This subject always will be a mystery.

Traditions in Ecuador

David Guerrero, Ecuador

In Ecuador we have different traditions, holidays and activities. We have our own holidays and others that we adopted from others countries. Also we have a different kind of typical food for each region of the country: The Coast, The Orient and The South. Sports are very important as well. The most important is soccer and the traditional sport is ecuaboly, and some others. And, the nightlife is most important for teenagers with different activities like parties, concerts and car racings.

The holidays are very important. We have our own holidays like Independence Day, a national holiday on November 18th. The typical activities that we do in this day are parades for all the country. Also, in my city we have the foundation of the city on May 24th. We also have common holidays like New Year on January First, Christmas on December 24th, Father's day on Jun 18th and mother's day on May 14th.

And we have the New Holidays that we adopted for others countries; we have the carnival from Brazil we celebrate it in the second week of February but we don't celebrate it in the same way than in Brazil, and we celebrate Halloween and Thanksgiving adopted from U.S. but celebrated in a different way.

About the food, it is very important and in Ecuador we have different kinds of food depending on the region. In Ecuador we have three different regions: The Coast, The orient and the South, each one has a special or typical food it depends of the weather. For example in The Coast we have hot weather so the typical food is made it with sea food. In The Orient we have humid weather because it is in the part of the jungle so we have exotic food and alcohol is traditional. In The South we have cold weather so soups and hot drinks are typical.

In Ecuador the sports are very important too, but the most important sport is soccer. It is played by everybody it doesn't matter the age or the sex. Another sport is basketball but is not very popular. It is played more in the high schools and in the college and it is played mostly by women than by men. And the typical sport in Ecuador is ecuaboly it is similar than volleyball just each team is only for three players and it is possible to kick the ball not only with the hands. This sport is more for adult men.

And about the Nightlife in Ecuador, we have a lot of freedom and the most important thing it is that it doesn't matter the age. We have different parties all the week but the big ones are in the weekends. The parties are at the disco, bars or in a home. Sometimes we have concerts on the weekends some musical groups came for the concerts and also the national groups have the opportunity to participate. However other activity and the best one is the car racing that are able for everybody that has a car; it doesn't matter if don't have license, the car racing is legal but only on special days like holidays or sometimes on the weekends but the others nights are illegal.

My Cultural Learnings When Coming to America

Tam Thanh Duong, Vietnam

January 2007 was the first time I went to another country, the United States, where I have been learning English. When I came to the U.S., I was surprised, and I discovered many things that were very new to me. I recognized that American and Vietnamese life styles are different, especially in their holidays, culture, and fashion.

Every country celebrates many holidays, and America and Vietnam are the same. New

Year holiday is an important day for both American and Vietnamese people. But America and Vietnam are different because America uses the Gregorian calendar and Vietnam uses the lunar calendar. In America, New Year day occurs in January. I had the opportunity to experience New Year, but it only occurs one day. Personally, I am not used to American New Year, because in Vietnam New Year occurs in February. Another holiday that is celebrated in the U.S., that is not in Vietnam, is Mother's Day. I think that this holiday is a good idea, but I think that Vietnamese people always love their mothers, so everyday is Mother Day. The last holiday that I want to talk about is Christmas. In both the United States and Vietnam, Christmas is celebrated on the same day. In the U.S., Christmas day is a national holiday but not in Vietnam because American and Vietnamese cultures are different.

Another difference in culture is communication, because the U.S. is a Western culture and Vietnam is an Eastern culture. In the U.S., information is public. You can talk about anything that you want to talk about. In contrast, in Vietnam, you can not talk about everything. Especially, you cannot talk about politics and government, which are forbidden to discuss in Vietnam. Moreover, the U.S. is more individualistic and independent where American families have only one or two generations. In Vietnam, there are many generations in a family, which live as a nuclear family. Second, the way of doing businesses is also different. Asian culture always respects experienced people, who are usually rewarded with good jobs. People with little experience in Vietnam can't find a good job because experience is most important. Third, is the culture of food. When I came to the U.S., I could not eat American food because it was very different. Vietnamese people like to eat a lot of pepper and chilly but the Americans do not. In Vietnam, elder people eat first when we have meal. In contrast, in the U.S. everyone eats at the same time.

The different cultures in the two countries affect fashion in the lifestyles of each country. The fashion in the U.S. is modern fashion because they have a lot of money from their work and high standard of living. In addition, the Americans usually work in offices, so they must wear proper clothes. In contrast, Vietnam has traditional fashion. Vietnamese people usually have low income and so, they do not have money to buy clothes. In addition, Vietnamese people are influenced by older people who do not like to wear modern fashion. Also, the weather causes different fashions between the U.S. and Vietnam. The U.S. has four seasons a year. In winter, it is cold, they must wear winter fashion but in Vietnam, it is always hot and they cannot wear the same clothes as in the U.S.

In conclusion, there are many differences in culture between the two countries because each country has its own history. It is interesting for us to discover this. It will help us to know many things about other countries.

Making Foreign Friends

Hae Rhee Lee, Korea

I've been here almost 4 months. Time flies. I came here to pursue my dreams to become more professional and to do more on this bigger stage. When I arrived in New York, everything I saw and felt many exciting and fantastic things. It's a city where all kinds of different colors, backgrounds, and styles can be together in harmony. During this time I have seen and felt many things. Among them, I want to talk about making foreign friends.

When I met a foreigner for the first time in Seoul, I wanted to be kind. But I was afraid of talking to them. Even though they just asked directions to find somewhere, I had to speak in English. Only this fact threatened me.

However I have changed little by little since the first day that I had class with foreign friends at Rutgers University. My classmates and teachers were so kind to me that I became used to new circumstance easily. Also, I don't feel strange as much as I felt before. Day by day I began to feel comfortable as well. I can talk to my friends without concerns about English. And then we can laugh together. It means we have sympathy.

When I start to show my mind and being friendly there are some positive things we could learn about other cultures. Actually books or magazines let us know about cultures. But knowing through that kind of paper is just linguistic knowledge. Knowing foreign friends is one of the most fascinating experiences that I've ever had. Every time when I listen to stories from them, I try to keep my ears open. I don't want to skip any story. Also we became closer and closer.

Everything has two sides. So, being friends with foreigners has several problems without exception. One of the serious problems is about 'English' as expected. I have many topics which I want to share with friends. However, I couldn't express my thoughts accurately. I was dumbfounded and sometimes I had no idea at all how to continue a talk. It causes another problem. Occasionally, I couldn't figure out when they have a funny story. I think this problem relates with different cultures. Then differences are always confusing me. But, I enjoy it to tell the truth.

Furthermore, I realized some facts. The most important thing is all human beings are same, even if we have different features such as hair color. And, I feel the same in conversation as well. For example, when I do naughty things and they smile, it seems that they are real friends in my country. That's why I feel happy in the US.

It's not difficult to make foreign friends. We need basic attitude only. The first one is to respect them. Nobody has a right to ignore other people. We have to think simply about foreign friends not to special. It's enough to get to know each other better. I'm sure if you open your heart, they will too!

Parties in America and Korea

Hee Jeong Lim, Korea

I have helped my uncle and aunt in their photo shop since I came here. In their photo shop, many pictures are developed and printed. Among them, there are some pictures that catch my attention. These are about Prom. At first, I did not know anything about Prom. In the pictures, some women wore expensive dresses and make-up, men wore tuxedos, and they were in limousines. These pictures made me curious. Likewise, many other pictures are interesting for me, who did not know much about American culture. In my country, the Republic of Korea, many people also like to gather together but they do not have many parties. So, I am more interested about American party culture and differences between American party and Korean party.

In America, there are some unique parties that Korea does not have. The first one is Prom. Prom is a kind of dance party which is held at high school. It is for high school senior students. They celebrate being adults with each other and themselves. They wear beautiful dresses and tuxedos, dance, and stay out all night. The second one is a Baby Shower. This is an event for pregnant women. When a woman is 9 months pregnant, her friends gather to celebrate, wish to birth a healthy baby, and give presents for the baby and her. The third one is Sweet 16. This is a birthday party for 16 years old girl. As Prom, people dress up and hold big party.

On the other hand, there are some parties that America and Korea have but they are different. First, it is a wedding party. While Korean wedding ceremonies are serious, American

wedding ceremonies are more cheerful. So, American wedding parties make people enjoy the parties easily. Also, Birthday party is a little different in America and Korea. In Korea, close friends gather and celebrate someone's birthday, eat together, and share presents. But in America people make invitation cards and they rejoice the party.

The biggest difference is about invitation custom. When Korean people invite someone, they seldom use invitation card. They call someone or talk directly. But American people usually use invitation card and RSVP (Repondez s'il vous plait, it means 'reply, if you please'). So, people who are invited someone's party should reply. Also unlike Korean, American guests at parties are supposed to bring foods. When Korean people invite some guests, the host prepares every food and guests bring some presents, not food. These are because American and Korean has different notion about invitation. For American invitation means share and enjoy the party together. For Korean invitation means service for guests. So, Korean people invite someone to home when they want to express thankfulness. Inviting someone to my home means that I really want to treat you best.

These differences between American and Korean party are caused by different cultures. American party culture tends to enjoy and takes pleasure whereas Korean party culture tends to give someone hospitality. The two different kinds of parties have different attractions. However, the clear thing is American people like parties more than Korean people do.

Cultural Diversity in Latin America

Paula Hernández, Colombia

When you hear about America you think of a continent full of history, which has become a tourist center for people from other continents because of its great natural and cultural variety, architecture and lots of activities to enjoy. Even though the term "America" is commonly used in reference to North America, this also comprises two other beautiful and exciting subcontinents: Central and South America.

In Central America, you can visit archeological places like the pyramids dedicated to the sun and moon in Teotihuacán Mexico, which was the largest civilization created by the Mayans culture. In South America you can explore The Archeological Park of San Agustín, located in Colombia, which is cultural heritage of humanity and sacred temple for native Indians. Likewise, you can delight in the ruins of Machu Pichu. Located in Peru this wonderful construction was the product of the talent of the Inca culture and, where many excursionist and natives can appreciate achievement of these ancestors.

In addition to an august history, the countries of South America count a great natural diversity among their assets. Landscapes, for instance, the big Mountain of the Andes, cross the continent from South to North. You can also appreciate the Amazon jungle, the biggest forest in the whole globe that covered 8 countries, where most of the world's animals and plants species are located at. Moreover, the view of the Titicaca Lake, located in Bolivia, is amazing.

Although the official language for many countries is Spanish, the natives have used their own dialects, many of which have died. But, there are still a few, like Qechua spoken in Bolivia and Guaraní spoken in Paraguay. From them, we also inherited musical traditions, stunning constructions, costumes, foods and physical traits. From the colonial descendants, we inherited the language, religion and considerable colonial architecture. This is the reason why Latin American people have such mixed culture.

All of the places named above are for people that enjoy geography, history and nature but Latin America furthermore offers artistic events for anyone who is interested, such as Cinematic

Festival, celebrated with the purpose of recognizing the effort made by the producers to realize their films. Or the Book Festival that takes place in Bogotá and promotes reading by the citizens each time more. This city has been designated like world book capital city 2007 by UNESCO and, finally The International Music Festival organized annually in Chile, where many composers, singers compete for the prize that is given by the public.

In conclusion, all of this fascinating places and interesting events make Latin America a great place to visit and enjoy.

Muay Thai (Thai Boxing)

Naruedom Horvejkul, Thailand

Muay Thai, or Thai Boxing, is the name of a Thai martial art. The art of Muay Thai has been the country's most popular. Fighters are able to use their elbows, knees, feet and fists more effectively than in other martial arts. In Thailand's history, the Thai people have always struggled with the warfare. Therefore, they must train to be experts in combat. Nowadays in Thai, we have many schools for teach Thai Boxing.

The quality of the Thai-style boxing is the highest of all types of boxing in the world. Thai-style boxing uses 6 limbs to fight with the opponent: fists, elbows, and arms, feet, shins, and the knees, are all used to reach the opponent. In the artistic manner of competition, Thai-style boxing also uses sword play or other weapons, which come from ancient times. Before the competition Thai boxer must greet the teacher with a Muay Thai dance special to Thai-style boxing. That is the tradition, which continues nowadays.

Muay Thai requires lots of training from the beginning. We must practice integrating all the limbs for invading and attacking. But, the art of avoidance depends on the Muay Thai teacher, who can think to modify the tactic to trick opponents.

In Thailand we have a famous actor named Tony Jaa. He is experienced in the martial art of Thai boxing. "Ong-Bak" is the name of movie about Muay Thai. This movie tells the true life story of a man who masters Muay Thai. In another movie we have Tom Yum Goong. This movie tells about a help elephant and shows many styles for fighting, especially the movie has real shows of fighting.

Thai-style boxing is a fighting art that was created long ago in Thailand, and only Thai people practiced it. However, nowadays, we still have a lot of Thai people but many foreigners have become interested in learning to fight with Thai-style boxing. It is an art that one can use to protect oneself effectively and can help for exercise to make the body strong. Muay Thai is a really good style of fighting and a beautiful style. Everybody can learn and used it.

Using Animals for Scientific Experimentation

Jose Bocanegra, Colombia

One of the most significant developments for scientific contributions to medical progress and investigations worldwide is scientific experimentation in animals. The use of animals for scientific experimentation is estimated to be 50 to 100 million animals worldwide. However, despite the ethical questions of this practice, all the benefits that people gain is more than enough compensation.

The extinction of many species is a serious environmental problem, especially as species of life disappear in big quantity of deaths. Small species, for example monkeys, which are in danger of extinction, are absolutely vital to the sustenance of human life. While using monkeys

may seem unethical because monkeys are near extinction, their value to science will make sure that people do not allow monkeys to become extinct.

There are many species for animal testing considered necessary for many investigations. The mouse is considered to be the best species to test inherited human disease because mice share 99% of their genes with humans. They are used to test vaccines and medicines for ailments of the very sick. Dogs are used in many cases of transplant of organs and, are also used because they are very friendly and gentle. Other uses for these animals are toxicity tests, surgery, and dental experiments. Furthermore, chimpanzees and gorillas are used in research laboratories because they are most closely related to humans. There are articles that explain the uses of chimpanzees and gorillas to neurology, behavior, cognition, reproduction, malaria, respiratory viruses, drugs abuse, vaccines and, most importantly, recently they are used in HIV research. Many varieties of insects are used in cases of transition of sickness, cells of organisms for genetic studies. These insects offer scientists many advantages in many cases of investigation.

While many people complain that monkeys and dogs are used for experimentation, it seems many people don't complain when scientists use bugs for experimentation. Nevertheless, the cycle between animals and humans is necessary because from this we have contribution to all sickness, tests, and researches in universities, hospitals, private laboratories and many organizations.

Pure Japanese

Yoshimi Hirayama, Japan,

A book, *Mistaken Japanese*, was published in Japan some years ago. From around that time, people's interest in the "purity" of Japanese has increased. The media has often taken up the issue, and many other books that are related to it have been published and have sold well. However, the purity of Japanese is an old idea. People from the end of the 1800's emphasized that Kanji was the pure Japanese, and they neglected other forms, such as Hiragana and Katakana. They also thought that older was better, and new words should not be accepted or should be used less. In addition to this argument, which is still supported today, there is another dispute over the use of common Japanese or dialects.

Kanji is the oldest form of Japanese. The oldest Japanese book, *Kojiki*, finished in 712, is written in Kanji. However, the form is an imported language. We didn't have a written language before it was introduced from China through Korea, so Kanji is not pure Japanese. Those who favor Kanji tend to make little of the other forms because they think of those forms as inferior imitations that were made later from the legitimate Kanji. Nevertheless, Hiragana and katakana were created around 794, and have been used as Japanese for more than 1200 years. Woman novelists especially, for example Murasakishikibu or Seishounagon, who are viewed as representative Japanese writers, have used hiragana.

Recently, many English words have been commonly used with Japanese words, and on the Internet or in E-mails young people incorporate new types of words, with unusual signs such as math symbols or words from other languages, into Japanese. In addition they give yearly awards for fashionable words and new words that have been created and spread by youth. Older people might not approve of these uses. However, creating words is not a new thing in Japan. When we imported Kanji, while we matched Japanese sounds to Kanji for use as Japanese letters, we also kept Chinese sounds and changed them into Japanese. That is exactly what people nowadays do with Japanese English. Moreover, though many people don't recognize it, but making new words is traditional. From 645 we have changed the Japanese calendar when the emperor changes. The name of an era is made from two Kanji taken from Chinese books. For instance, the current era name Heisei means "peace everywhere." We didn't have such a word before.

Japanese children are taught a common language as the Japanese national language at school, and they have no doubt that that Japanese language is the only one, even though they use other Japanese when they speak. The common Japanese is a language that the government forced on people for civilization and enlightenment. The policy started in 1940, and it was called "A Campaign for Eliminating Dialects." The language was introduced into school textbooks and the media. At school if children used their own dialect, they had to bring a piece of paper stating, "I used forbidden dialect" and attach it to their nameplate as punishment. People who are eager to support the purity of Japanese claim that it is the correct Japanese. However, the truth is that the common Japanese was made from a dialect that is spoken in the area of Tokyo. There are many other dialects in Japan. The number of them is said to be countless, but at least as many as forty-seven are commonly spoken. Each dialect is so different, with different intonation and vocabulary, that I have difficulties speaking to my own grandparents.

In conclusion, it is impossible to identify pure Japanese. Every Japanese person speaks a dialect, and one cannot claim superiority over another, not even the Tokyo dialect. It is common in Japan for new words to be born every year. The Japanese language cannot be same forever; it is developing. Furthermore, the view that older is better does not match with the Japanese character. When you face up to the reality of the origin of the language, it is meaningless to try to preserve the purity of Japanese.

The Sifter

Ana Naddaf, Brazil

"Who can read so much news?" asked the Brazilian singer Caetano Veloso in his song "Alegria, Alegria" ("Happiness, Happiness"). It was the 70's and the Internet was something unimaginable. But the question was difficult to answer. The same question is harder to answer nowadays. An avalanche of ideas, news and messages seem to arrive at the same time each and every day.

When I was a child, I used to make notes in a small notebook. I was curious about the world. I usually wrote something about the reports that I had watched in the news. And also I put down some ideas about new music that I had been listening to.

It was easy. We had no more than ten channels on the television. My father subscribed to just weekend newspapers, and I remember that the radio dial found only a few stations. No Internet, No I-Pod. I felt that I could put the world around me in a small black notebook.

Today this sounds almost impossible. The world has changed. The world hasn't become bigger, but how we report it has grown up. I have hundreds of channels on my cable television,

two subscriptions to magazines and I can read all the newspapers in the world I want by Internet. And my I-Pod has so many songs that the dial needs to turn many times to find one that I desire to listen to.

But I try to do the same as I used to do when I was a child. I don't have my black notebook anymore, but I have a strategy. I program the remote control to find just a few channels. I make marks in the most important articles in the magazines that I want to read carefully later. I also scroll down to just two newspapers on the Internet, one American and another one from Brazil in order to compare the news. Usually I copy interesting reports into a folder that I can also read again later.

I know it seems as if I am sifting the world and its ideas, news and messages. Sometimes I feel that I put all this information through a sifter in my mind in order to contain the avalanche. But since I became a sifter, I can at least understand my world a little more.

Disadvantages of the New Technology in My Country

Mariam Sereme, Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, my country, is an underdeveloped nation in West Africa. Nowadays, with the expansion of technology, the people there have access to more and more information on a daily basis. However, the new technology has had negative effects.

First, with the propagation of the Internet, everybody is able to find what he is looking for. Children go into cyber-coffee shops and watch pornography. In addition, many young girls go there in order to find a boyfriend. Through "chatting," they meet some perverse people who ask them to send naked pictures of themselves. They do it for money, and this leads to depravation. I also notice that the Internet has negatively affected the people of my country in their behavior. People have started to lie and do the wrong things. They write false emergency letters asking for money and have it sent through the Net.

Secondly, with the development of the media, everybody can watch or listen to what they want. Traditional customs have changed. People have started to dress like Europeans. They have rejected their traditional cotton clothes, so the companies that were producing these clothes have closed. Moreover, the new way young people dress has created a conflict between them and their parents.

In conclusion, as Burkina Faso is a poor country, people have used knowledge about scientific or industrial methods to get a lot of money. It does not matter to them whether what they do is good or not. Also, many citizens are illiterate and don't know how to use the new technology, but in their daily comportment, it clearly appears that somehow technology has affected them for the worse.

Two Cultures, One Person

Meridangela Gutierrez Jhong, Peru

Moving to another country is not easy stuff. We are supposed to change our culture, learn another language and wear different clothes. The changes that occur in this journey may modify our point of view about life and transform our living completely.

Changing our culture is the first step. From our first view of the new country at the airport, everything looks bizarre and scary. The road signs, the cars, the stores and the markets are not the same. Our new neighbors are strangers and may not care about us at all. And the work time becomes longer than ever before. The new language is complicated. We already had enough

problems expressing ourselves in our native language, but with this new one, our brains become a labyrinth.

Interestingly enough, however, when we begin to think in the new language, we also begin to change our point of view. Wearing different clothes is a literal and figurative change. We learn new styles and how to combine them with colors and textures common in the new country. Figuratively, the new shirts and shoes we put on are the attitudes of the new country.

There is no reason, however, to lose our native identity. First of all, we grow up learning about our culture and how it represents our deepest thoughts; moreover, our childhood is the most important stage of life and what our lives are based on. We don't want to lose what the years in our countries have taught us. On the other hand, when you go to a different place, you want to become part of it.

Equilibrium is a complex topic. I like the idea of preserving our culture without being selfish toward the new culture that is opening its doors to visitors and immigrants. We have to be introduced into this new culture, develop new relationships and have an effect on the new country. In short, we need to value our native culture while learning about and becoming part of a new one.

The Modern Wheel

Ana Naddaf, Brazil

The high cost of raising children, increasing female literacy, and the improvement of contraceptive technology has resulted in changes in the population of the world, especially in the idea among different cultures about the ideal number of children a family can successfully take care of. However, in countries like Brazil, this ideal is not a reality for part of the population.

The abandonment of babies has increased in Brazil, more often in big cities. Babies are found in garbage cans, in boxes in the street or floating in rivers. How can a parent abandon a baby? There are many reasons, but the most common in developing countries like Brazil are poverty and lack of education. Many studies indicate that the usual person who abandons a child is poor. Some of the people have come from rural areas and face a new reality in the city, such as the high cost of living or lack of support from family or community.

On the other hand, there are people accustomed to urban life who do not know about birth control, primarily because of the low level of education. Also, there are not enough campaigns to teach how to use or obtain contraceptives, not even simple condoms. Moreover, Brazil does not have an efficient program to correct the abandonment problem. There are public institutions to care for children, but no one can bring an unwanted baby and leave her/him without identification or a legal procedure.

The situation reminds me of the idea of the "medieval wheel." In the past, it was common for churches to receive unwanted babies. The parent put the child inside the wheel and turned it. A bell was rung and someone inside was notified of the arrival. This way seems cruel, but there is a kind of humanity in that act. It is certainly better than finding abandoned babies in rivers or in the garbage.

Recently, the Italian and Japanese governments adopted the old idea and institutionalized a kind of "modern wheel". There is no longer a small door in the church, but a fair and more technological system: a place, run by the public authorities, that receives and takes care of those babies, and also starts the process of adoption in order to give those children a future with at least some dignity.

Preservation of One's National Identity: Language

Mariam Sereme, Burkina Faso

In Africa, many countries are still traditional. It is important to them to preserve the national identity and culture. So in my country, Burkina Faso, people have a positive attitude toward preserving the “purity” of the language in different ways. They are conservatives and still speak Moore or Jula, which are the “pure” languages, despite the fact that French is the official language.

Burkina Faso is a French colony, but most people speak Moore or Jula at home. They tend to preserve the language because to them it is culturally important. For that reason, parents don't speak in French with their children at home. Even our Prime Minister, who was my neighbor, speaks only in Moore at home. He wants his children to learn the language, like it, and be able to transmit it to the next generation. Also, in the street and in the markets people speak Moore.

The government contributes to the preservation of the language by establishing some bilingual schools. In these schools, people who are illiterate learn how to read and write in Moore or Jula. This teaching allows them to understand many things in their native language. People who are poor or too old to go back to high school learn in these schools how to count and how to take care of their families. They also learn about the history of their country.

The media also help people to preserve the purity of the language by reporting the news in Moore. There are some T.V programs in Moore, and one of them teaches people how to speak the language. Parents give children story books in Jula, as my parents did with me, and they quickly learn the language. As these two languages are considered the original languages, people struggle to preserve them as important parts of the culture.

The PALS News is devoted to presenting the writings of our intensive English language students.

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