

Mid-Autumn Festival— A Taiwan Traditional Festival

By staff our Taiwan writers Rachel Tsao, XinYi Liu



The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival, is one of the most important traditional festivals in Taiwan. This festival originated in China, and is held on August 15th of the Chinese lunar calendar. On this day, people reunite with their families, eat mooncakes and pomelos, and enjoy the beautiful full moon.

According to a Chinese legend, there were once ten suns in the sky. They baked the earth, and dried the sea. One day, a hunter named Hou Yi (后羿) shot down nine suns, and saved the people. The Queen Mother Wang mei niang niang (王母娘娘) rewarded Hou Yi with a pack of undead medicine. Hou Yi gave the medicine to Chang'E (嫦娥), his wife, to hide. Unexpectedly, one person threatened Chang'E and demanded she hand over the medicine, but she would not do it. She swallowed the medicine and flew to the moon. This day was August 15th of the lunar calendar. After discovering Chang'E had flown to the moon, Hou Yi was very sad and sorrowful, and everyone missed kind-hearted Chang'E very much. After this, they would put the food that Chang'E liked to eat in the yard and bless her every year.



In Taiwan, people return to their hometowns and reunite with families and friends during Mid-Autumn Festival. People in some Taiwan regions set off fireworks and firecrackers, eat mooncakes and pomelos, barbecue, and share stories with each other. One reason why barbecue is a unique activity in Taiwan is because in the 1980s, a brand called WAN JA SHAN (万家香) released a commercial about their product. There was a famous slogan in this commercial, which said "when one family grills, 10,000 families smell the aroma." This slogan is still well-known. After that time, more and more brands launched barbecue stencils and ingredients, and Taiwanese people have adopted the custom of barbecuing during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

There was many versions about the origin of mooncakes. The most well-known is a story from the 14th century. After many attempts to invade China, the Mongols succeeded, with Kublai Khan (忽必烈汗) establishing the Yuan dynasty (元朝). It was an oppressive regime that saw the Chinese people ruled with Mongolian guards outside their homes. Families were expected to give the guards food and wine. A rebel leader's confidante, Liu Bowen (刘伯温) suggested a rebellion coincide with the Mid-Autumn Festival, and he secured permission for mooncakes to be distributed to all

Chinese residents as a blessing for the longevity of the Mongol emperor. Within each cake, however, was a piece of paper saying "Kill the Mongols on the 15th day of the eighth month." As Mongols didn't eat mooncakes, their plan succeeded, and the Mongols were overthrown. Chu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) established the Ming dynasty (明朝) thereafter. In order to commemorate this feat, Chu commanded people to eat mooncakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival.



Another food eaten during the festival is pomelos. Pomelos are abundant in autumn, and all families eat and worship with them. In addition, the pronunciation in Chinese of pomelo is "yuzu" (柚子), which is the same as "yuzu" (佑子), which means "blessing." Children will put the pomelo's peel on their heads for fun, and they can also pray for safety for the family.

The Mid-Autumn festival is celebrated in other Asian countries. In Japan, the festival is called "Jigyōya." Japanese also have the custom of family reunions, enjoying the moon which is called "Tsukimi" in Japanese, and giving thanks for the harvest. Temples and shrines hold moon-viewing parties. In Korea, the Mid-Autumn Festival is called "Chuseok," or Korean Thanksgiving Day. Girls wear traditional clothes, enjoy the moon, and dance. The representative food in Korea during the Mid-Autumn Festival is "Songpyeon" a pastry filled with bean paste or jujube paste, with the shape of a moon. People give each other Songpyeon to express their blessings during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

The Mid-Autumn Festival is an important traditional festival in Asia, and in modern society, it allows people who work away from home to reunite with their families. There is a proverb in Chinese that reads, "Every flow must have its eb." The world is impermanent, we should cherish the time of gathering with friends and families.

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Shopping Madness: NET's Special Discount

By Staff Writers Max Zhong, James Hou

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People are rushing into all branches of NET, a Taiwanese clothing brand, for a mad discount sale. Some customers have been seen sitting on the floor and picking up clothes with their baskets already full. "Are they buying all these? Isn't this a bit outrageous?" one customer commented on Facebook.

On Sep 15th, NET announced the great discount sale. Their red-tagged merchandise are sold at very low price. Customers can get two red-tagged items for 50% off and five for 70% off. The sale

has attracted many customers. Some people paid less than one thousand NT dollars for a dozen items. The sale went viral on the InterNET.

James, who has worked at NET for half a year, told the NTUBulletin "This discount sale is totally a mess. It almost drives me crazy. I can't even finish my job when the store is closed." NET was founded in 1991 by a Taiwanese entrepreneur, Huang Wen-Zhen (黄文贞). Good quality, affordable prices, and considerate services were the goals he hoped to achieve. As a leading seller in the Taiwan's clothing industry, NET proclaimed itself a "big furnace of fashion."

Why is NET so popular in Taiwan? We can find the answer in its business philosophy, which states, "Let all customers enjoy the pleasure of shopping in the most comfortable space at the most affordable price." NET has positioned itself as a seller with medium prices, high quality, and basic western styles. It provides a great variety of outfitting choices for customers of all ages.

To date, NET has one hundred and forty-eight branches open in different locations in Taiwan. Faced with rapidly developing fashion trends and the threat of foreign competitors such as UNIQLO, ZARA, and H&M, NET remains firm in its approach and endures. NET prides itself on its core values of selling decent clothes of good quality at low prices, and endeavor to help society. Such values deserve people's attention and support.



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FLOATING MARKETS IN VIETNAM

By staff feature writer Kayla Chen

When tourists come to visit Vietnam, in addition to exploring the bustling cities and beaches, there are also many locales worth experiencing, such as the peaceful and idyllic river region. Notably, the floating markets of the Mekong Delta are a tourist hot spot, and one of the central areas in which Vietnamese people meet and shop together. They are one of the truly attractive and exciting experiences in the Mekong Delta. Floating markets have existed for thousands of years in the region, and they are a fundamental way in which people can come to a market to buy and sell things “above water.”

Originating in times and places where water transport played an important role in the daily lives of the Vietnamese citizenry, the floating market has been a unique and beautiful part of the cultural lives of people in the Southwest region for many generations.

The Southwest region has many rivers, and the locals have adopted ways to adapt to the environment. The floating markets (“chợ nổi” in Vietnamese) have long been important sites for people to exchange goods, and also for cultural activities which strengthen the character and the very nationality of Mekong people in particular and Vietnam in general. The Mekong Delta is known as the home to some of the oldest and largest floating markets.



Ca Be Floating Market was honored by the US National Geographic Traveler magazine as one of the top winter destinations to visit in 2017

Floating markets usually start in the early morning before dawn. All types of boats come to the market to buy and sell many different products around the delta. One unique feature is that on each boat there are some tall wooden poles (“cây bèo” in Vietnamese) hanging products that are sold. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the dominant goods at these floating markets. As well, you can have Vietnamese breakfast rice noodles “Bun” or “Hu Tieu” on boats.

Caí Rang Floating Market has created a very special cultural value for Can Tho City and the Mekong Delta region. It was honored as one of the National intangible cultural heritages in 2016, and voted “as one of the 10 impressive markets in the world” by British travel publication Rough Guide as one of the “top six most beautiful floating markets in Asia.”



Caí Rang Floating Market – One of the biggest floating markets in Vietnam

Most floating markets operating these days mainly serve as tourist attractions. Visitors who come to the floating markets will experience a special type of trade that can only be found in the river region. The best time to visit is at dawn when you can observe most closely how the vendors start their day at the market. Beautiful sunrises can be viewed in the markets when the atmosphere is much fresher and more peaceful.

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Bogus Jobs in Cambodia – Never Turn Your Life around!

By Staff Writers: Doris Wu, Gina Wang, Allen Zeng Zhou

These days, there has been a dramatic increase in human trafficking rings in Taiwan. It is known that greater numbers of appealing job opportunities have circulated on the Internet in July 2022. There are, however, conditions attached to those jobs. Many people believe that they can easily work and earn high wages in Cambodia, which attracts young Taiwanese men and women. People who fall into this trap are mistreated and intimidated in Cambodia, and their lives are often on the edge of death. Although many victims are rescued from such a hell, these widespread sufferings have left many people traumatized. Through social media, this issue has come to light.

Cambodian scam syndicates provide food, housing and high-paying jobs overseas to attract young people. They capitalize on young people's desire to get rich and achieve their goals. When these deceived people arrive in Cambodia, they become the laborers in a human smuggling syndicate. According to one survey, Taiwanese aboriginal youth were particularly targeted. Since the tribal environments they have grown up in is relatively simple, aboriginal people are friendly and kind to people, and such qualities make them easily exploited.

After luring people into local rural areas, these criminals have treated laborers in harsh and inhumane ways. If workers want to return to their countries, syndicates will demand a ransom toward their families, but there is a slim chance to that will be able to return. Before those victims leave, they are coerced into defrauding more people to go there. Some are not willing to do as what they are asked. Aside from this, women and girls have been raped and imprisoned by the members of the fraud rings.



A policeman holds a sign warning about the employment scams in Cambodia at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport.



Gangs behind human trafficking of Taiwan are arrested, and victims are escorted by the police in Cambodia.

It has been seen that more and more brutal and sexist videos have been posted on platforms. Being unfamiliar with the locales, and being penniless, has made escaping hopeless. This problem has no doubt struck Taiwan. “Hundreds of Taiwanese are among unknown numbers of victims being held captive and forced to work in telecom scam networks by human trafficking operations in south-east Asia,” wrote Helen Davidson and Chi Hui Lin in *The Guardian* on 23 August 2022. “The traffickers, many connected to well-known triads, are targeting mostly young Asian people via social media, offering well paid work and accommodation in countries including Cambodia,” they continued, indicating exactly what we have revealed in this article. The Taiwan Criminal Investigation Bureau said in September it had aided “279 victims of human trafficking and fraud rings return home from Cambodia,” according to the *Taiwan News* (September 24, 2022).

In conclusion, there should not be any vain or ineffective hopes and concerns about these victims. Trust, conviction and hope and will be needed to rescue them. People should raise awareness and take human trafficking seriously at all times. We must make a commitment and contribution to our society, and the despairing victims that are being exploited. Similarly, for the Taiwanese government, it's necessary that officials exert their authority to address this issue and take people home safe and sound.

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