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Asia’s Carousel

1. I am a third generation Korean American. Born in San Francisco California, alongside a family of traditional Koreans, I have never felt the exact struggles many Chinese Americans have gone through; but as an Asian, we have all gone through a similar struggle. A stereotypical Chinese culture was described in the first chapter of *The Woman Warrior,* a chapter titled “No-name Woman” by Maxine Hong Kingston. In this essay, she engulfs the readers into her own imagination of how her “no-named” aunt had disappeared from her ancestry. It’s a story she tells that strongly emphasizes the struggle of woman’s identity fitting in the standards of a Chinese community, regardless of how close one another was to each other in the village.

2. “You must not tell anyone.” Her mother begins the essay. “In China your father had a sister who killed herself. She jumped into the family well. We say that your father has all brothers because it is as if she had never been born.”(Kingston) With nothing else said about an aunt who Kingston never knew, we are left to let her imagination do the rest of the story telling. A majority of “No-Name Woman” thrives in rich metaphors, marinated by detailed imaginative vocabulary, and toped off with Chinese folklore, allowing her to fully describe a scenario with appropriate emotions. Her vivid description her aunt’s beauty stalked by the watchful eyes of the villagers. Her freedom was limited to a standard, the community searched for every little flaw, and Kingston could only imagine her aunt’s beautiful pain.

3. Then she describes the depth of Chinese culture: each villager responsible for one another, expectations balancing peace in the community, husbands chosen wives by the parents and woman raised to be a house wives. Traditions as such don’t have a place in the modern age for obvious reasons and yet it thrives in Asia, a place many of us call home. Today we view sexism and “unrealistic” standards as a negative, one that hinders the natural human right; but I used to view it as a law of order, rules that must be followed and passed on in order for a family to thrive for generations, which I’m sure a majority of the Asian American community can agree to at some point in their lives.

4. Thus it was impossible for Kingston’s aunt to defend herself. Woman had no say in trying to save herself from public humiliation. Bombarded by judgmental glares and often a trophy for “what-not-to-be”, a woman fallen into the road of lust was shunned by the community. But “Women in the old China did not choose. Some man had commanded her to lie with him and be his secret evil.” (Kingston) It would be impossible for a woman to defend herself, when a man was so highly praised in Asia.

5. As much as these humanitarian rights matter to our well beings, I do not think standards will disappear from Asian. *Crazy Rich Asians* displays this very well. We believe that standards must be met for peace in our family and ancestors, and so every one of us will continue to match these standards. Kingston describes it as: “The round moon cakes and round doorways, the round tables of graduated sizes that fit one roundness inside another…-these talismans had lost their powers to warn this family of the law: a family must be whole, faithfully keeping the descent line by having sons to fee the old and the dead, who in turn look after the family.”(Kingston)