

300 Protesters Rallying in Support of ex-cop Peter Liang

BY LINA HUANG

A New York Police Department officer Peter Liang, age 27, was charged by a grand jury on manslaughter, assault, and other criminal charges. On November 20, 2014, he was patrolling the stairwells in the New York City housing authority's Louis H. Pink Houses. His gun misfired and the bullet ricocheted off the wall and struck Gurley, a 28-year-old African-American once on the chest and he later died at the hospital. Liang was found guilty and is facing up to 15-year in prison. On February 20, 2016, there was an organized nation-wide demonstration to protest for Liang's unjust sentencing. About 300 Indiana Chinese Americans went on the street downtown Indianapolis to demonstrate and support Liang. They are speaking out for equal justice.

Quanhao Hou, a patent attorney, who came to Indianapolis in 1997 and considers Indianapolis her second home said: "The purpose of holding this protest parade is not only to support Peter Liang; it is about equal justice for everyone and every minority group in the United States." Hou claimed. She was elected as the director of this event. Her responsibility in this event includes setting up slogans, safety and communication with media and state government. She believes the success of the protest was the result of team effort and passion of the organizers and participants.

The voice of supporting Peter Liang started from eastern United States. "In my opinion, I was so surprised that he has been charged. I thought they just went through the process to quiet down the protests from African Americans. The charges would not be considered severe. Things were beyond our expectation. I am an attorney and I have basic knowledge of the law. Based on the information of the case provided, I was shocked when he was found guilty of the crime. In general, Asians are quiet and do not speak out for themselves. They keep to themselves and accept the outcome generally. But this time, we are

going to speak out for Peter Liang and other minorities in the United States. They cannot just push one in front of the public as a scapegoating when something disastrous happened. We are looking for equal justice, not only for us but also for every group in the United States."

Jie Zhang, one of the organizers commented, "When we heard the sentencing from the news last Saturday, we started to prepare for this parade to protest. It took us a week to prepare. Xiao Chen from Chicago did a lot of research and he was willing to share them with us. He provided us with strong support and guidance. There were some difficulties during our preparation. For example, it is difficult to obtain the permit due to shortage of time, and we had to work out differences in opinions on how to handle logistics and run the demonstration safely and peacefully. But we had it all figured out in the end in a short period of time. We fight for equal justice and all lives matter."

"Since the result of charge came out last Saturday, there were already protests in other cities. We use ideas from them for reference, like slogans. We tailored the plan of activity to our situation. It is the first time we hold such event, which is related to the law. We do not have any experience, the only thing we have is passion and support from the participants. We did not only hold the protest but also help with financial support to Peter's fight. We hope Peter Liang could get the equal justice."

Jie Zhang works in the computer science industry. He was in charge of the agenda and dealt with behind the scene details. It took two to three days to prepare for the protest parade. Zhang said it was very difficult to get the permit. "We have to meet requirements for the application." He believes this activity will heighten the awareness in people regarding their civil and legal rights, and the law.



Quanhao Hou, a patent attorney, who is the director of the protest, speaks at 1 Monument Circle on Feb 20.



Jie Zhang, one of the organizers, who works in computer science industry, stands at 1 Monument Circle on Feb 20. Photo by Lina Huang

Chance Encounter



Hannah Martin is currently a senior at Butler University. Hannah was adopted from Jiangxi, China when she was a toddler and grew up in Winfield, Illinois. Hannah has a double major in Arts Administration and Chinese Language and Culture. She studied abroad twice while at Butler. Her dream job is to create and be the director of her own American Culture Center in China.

BY HANNAH MARTIN

I'm not someone who believes in fate but I do believe chance encounters happen that make us reflect on how our lives affect other people. I had one of these encounters last week when I traveled back to Indianapolis.

I was on my phone in the waiting area when I noticed a family out of the corner of my eye. The mother was burping a baby with cleft palate while her biological son ran around the rows of chairs. I eavesdropped on her conversation with another woman when I heard her say her family was returning from a two-week trip in China after adopting their daughter. When the mother paced toward me, I smiled and asked what part of China her baby was from. "I think it was pronounced Jiangxi and her city was Nanchang. Are you adopted too?" she asked. "Yes," I said, "I'm actually from the same province."

The chances of me meeting a woman with an adopted baby from Jiangxi was a one in a million. I felt time slow for a moment when I looked at this baby. I realized that we represented the beginning to current generation of Chinese adoptees. This baby was me coming to the U.S. for the first time and I was the 22-year-old version of what she could grow up to be. It was beautiful.

On a daily basis, I don't like to represent myself. When Indy Asian American Times Editor Agnes first asked me to write this column, I hesitated. For anyone

reading this column, you've probably experienced someone, who has never met an Asian person, ask an endless stream of question based on stereotypes. "Do you only use chopsticks at home?" "Do you know karate?" "Why are your eyes like that?"

For me, I experience these types of questions twofold because I am not only Asian but also adopted. These are two cultures that people in the U.S. are not familiar with and sometimes I do not feel like representing myself. But the reality is I will never escape explaining my identity, so instead of being defensive. I am open to discussions about my identity in the hope that I can change assumptions about my communities.

As I talked to the mother about her daughter's age and cleft palate surgeries, I reminded myself that one day this girl would also decide how to tackle the ignorance about her identity. Everyone is different and if she chooses to not represent the Chinese and/or adoptee part of her identity then I respect her decision. My goal was to show this family that even with those decisions ahead of her, their daughter was going to be fine.

That night I called my mom and told her about the family. "That mother probably looked at you and saw that her daughter could become a beautiful, smart and articulate woman just like you," she said. Yes, I thought, that is why I like these chance encounters.



Lantern Festival

唐寅《元宵》：有燈無月不娛人，有月無燈不算春。春到人間人似玉，燈燒月下月如銀。滿街珠翠遊村女，沸地笙歌賽社神。不展芳尊開口笑，如何消得此良辰。



BY DR. PATRICK LAU

Yuanxiao Festival, also called Shangyuan 上元節 or Lantern Festival, is celebrated on the 15th day of the first lunar month of the Chinese calendar. It culminates the end of the Chinese New Year festivities. It is the first full moon of the year, symbolizing the return of spring. It is believed that this traditional holiday commenced more than 2000 years ago in Han dynasty. An emperor learned that Buddhist monks lighted lanterns on the 15th day of the first lunar month to worship Buddha. He commanded to light a great number of lanterns in the palace, temples and monasteries to show utmost respect to Buddha on that day. Eventually, this ritual of lighting lanterns evolved into an important festival in China.

The celebrations of Yuanxiao Festival include dragon dance, lion dance, Chinese opera show, acrobatic show, walking on stilts, lighting lanterns, and guessing lantern riddles. In the evening, adults and children, particularly the latter, carry their multi-colored beautiful lanterns through the streets or to a parade under the poetic full-moon light. Showy lanterns are seen hung at homes, flower markets, and storefronts, setting the stage for processions and performances to end the celebration. Traditionally, lanterns are artistically made to symbolize the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac, flowers, and scenes of legend and historic events. The most popular lanterns are the current year's animal symbol which is the monkey for this year.

For guessing lantern riddles 猜燈謎, the lantern exhibition organizers compose various riddles on pieces of paper, and paste them on their lanterns to let people conjecture the answers. If a participant thinks he has solved a riddle, he can take the paper off the lantern to let the organizers verify his answer. And he will be awarded a prize if he acquires the correct answer.

The traditional festival food is Yuan Xiao 元宵, in the south, it is called tangyuan, which are round dumpling balls made of sweet glutinous rice flour with sweet fillings. Tangyuan 湯圓 is pronounced similarly to "tuanyuan" 團圓, which means reunion, and additionally, tangyuan is sweet and round in a shape corresponding to the full moon. Thus, eating tangyuan together symbolizes union, completeness, harmony,



Dr. Patrick Lau was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to the U.S. after high school. He retired from the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System where he served as Chief Radiologist and moved to Florida with his wife in 2011. He was an active member & contributor of IACA and ICMA while in Indiana. Dr. Lau is also a scholar of art and literature and a prolific writer, he has been a dedicated columnist for Indy Asian American Times since 2010.

and happiness for the family.

Due to feudal moral restriction towards women in ancient China, parents seldom let their young unmarried daughters go out in public. In fact, young women and men did not have free social contact. Marriages were through the process of matchmaking. Nevertheless, during the Yuanxiao Festival, maidens had the rare opportunity to be let out of their houses mostly in groups or chaperoned for the festivity. 金吾不禁夜，玉漏莫相催。 They dressed up and went to the temples with lanterns to give offerings, enjoyed viewing the beautiful, colorful lanterns on the streets, watching the entertainments, and visiting the flower markets. Most importantly, they could take advantage of the occasion to meet young men, and hopefully their future spouses. There were many matchmaking events including matchmaking games. In addition, it was a day for lovers who could go out on a date and spend special and romantic moments together. Consequently, the Yuanxiao Festival has been recognized as the Chinese Valentine's Day.

Many famed Chinese poets composed exquisite poems depicting this romantic occasion. One of the most famous, touching poems was written by Ouyang Xiu in the Northern Song Dynasty:

歐陽修《生查子》
去年元夜時，花市燈如畫。
月上柳梢頭，人約黃昏後。
今年元夜時，月與燈依舊。
不見去年人，淚濕春衫袖。

Last year at the Yuanxiao Festival night;
Myriad of lights in flower fairs shone so bright,
The moon was seemingly atop the willow tree;
In the enchanted twilight time we did meet.
This year at the Yuanxiao Festival night;
The moon and the lights are as bright.
Yesteryear lover is nowhere to be peered;
My spring gown sleeves are soaked with tears.
張祐：千門開鎖萬燈明，正月月中旬動地京。
三百內人連袖舞，一進天上著詞聲。

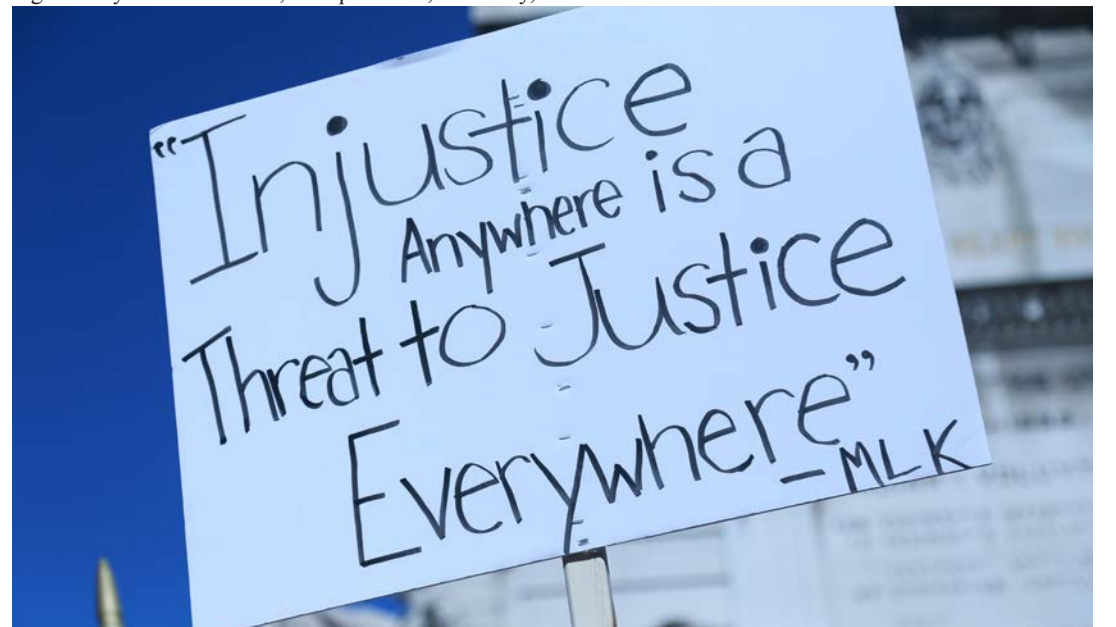


Photo by Lina Huang

ICPAI Celebrates the Year of the Monkey

BY IAAT REPORTER

Indianapolis Chinese Performing Art Inc. presented the new year with an evening full of cultural experience and entertainment last Friday Feb 19 at Zionsville Middle School. The evening comprised of two parts with intermission. 17 programs from local Performers especially with wonderful recitals from young dancers and singers. After the intermission, the Acrobats troupe from Shanghai delivered a fantastic and entertaining show earning plenty of applause from the audience. Tasting snacks were served as audience sat around round tables enjoying the evening's program.

