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Students showcase native crafts, toys at cultural exhibit in Union

By: Rebecca Perez

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The scenery in the K-State Student Union reflected that of an outdoor bazaar in a foreign country Monday.

As part of K-State International Week, students from international groups showcased their homelands during a cultural exhibition.

The display included exhibits from the Philippines and Taiwan, which were the most popular, and also Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, China, Saudi Arabia, Africa, Thailand and Japan.

Elizabeth Maghirang, member of the Philippine Student Association, said the theme of the group's table was "The Filipino home," showcasing handicrafts that would be present in Filipino homes.

"We wanted to bring awareness of the culture and traditions of the Filipinos and show their openness and hospitality," Maghirang said.

The students stationed at the booths were eager to share their culture with students. A group of local grade-school students were also in attendance, taking detailed notes of each booth.

Many of the booths offered interactive components with their display. One was the Taiwanese booth, which had tops that people could spin, pinwheels to make and whirly bird toys to fly. Each visitor was able to poke a box covered with tissue paper so they could get a prize. The prizes were either fake Taiwanese money or plum candy.

The Japanese booth painted calligraphy with black paint on students' hands. Risa Iwada, sophomore in textile marketing, was a calligraphy artist. She said she studied calligraphy in elementary school and that learning calligraphy was difficult.

Many African nations were represented by the African Student Union. There were items from Kenya and the Congo, among others. They had soft furs from feral cats that are used for decoration, a woven sign that said 'Bonne Sante' and carved statues of African women. They also had traditional water gourds and antelope horns.

Sri Lanka is a small island with nice beaches, said Manuja Lamabadusuriya, graduate student in chemistry.

She said it is mostly a Buddhist country, but there are three different races. The majority of the people in Sri Lanka are Sinhalese, the second group are the Tamil, and the final race of people on Sri Lanka are a mixture of European and Sri Lankan. She said the money in Sri Lanka is called Rupees.

Thailand's display was centered around the Songkran festival that takes place from April 13 to 15. Paween

"Mac" Piyasil, graduate student in software engineering, said the Songkran festival is a water festival that is three days long.

They anoint the elderly with water that has been scented with jasmine or roses, to show respect. Dried, white soy is added to water along with scent and liberally applied to the skin, as well. Thailand's heat makes the water festival quite fun as friends and relatives splash each other with water.

Ming Hu, graduate student in bioecological engineering who manned the Chinese table, said the exhibit benefited both American students and international students.

"I learn from others so that I can help my country, and I have learned a lot from K-State students and faculty," Hu said.

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