

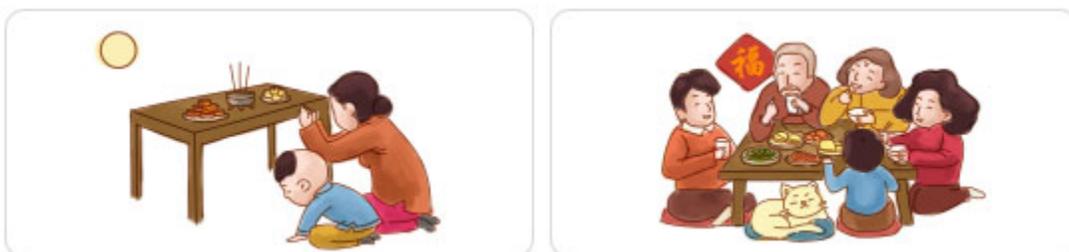
Hello PASPDI members,

Happy September and welcome back! While the break may have been short, we hope that everyone has had a joyful and relaxing break. Fall semester is here; however, do not worry, “be excited!”

You may notice that our journal for September is a bit different this month. Rather than a traditional journal writing on social injustice and healthcare topics, I would like to take this opportunity to inform everyone about an important cultural event for the majority of Southeast Asian countries, the Mid-Autumn Festival. I hope that the information from this journal may educate you further about your future patient’s culture and background. The more effort that we put in to understand the admirable uniqueness of each community, the more genuine humility that we can express.



You may have heard about the Mid-Autumn Festival previously, as it often is addressed as the Harvest Moon Festival. You may also notice that around this time of the year, many Asian grocery markets begin selling these delicious baked goods called Moon Cakes. The Mid-Autumn Festival is one of the most important holidays besides Lunar New Year, which is recognized by many East and Southeast countries such as Vietnam (Tết Trung Thu) and Japan (Tsukimi). It is held on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Lunar calendar when there is typically a full moon at night. This is a long-standing cultural event that has existed since the Shang dynasty (1600-1046 BCE) and the term "mid-autumn (中秋)" first appeared in Rites of Zhou which is an old writing collection from the Zhou dynasty (1046–771 BCE).



Mid-Autumn Festival is an important festive event: It is a time for big family reunions and a fun time for children to play with the iconic paper lanterns. Traditionally, parents would be busy all year long to grow crops for harvesting and often were away from their children. So, this event serves as an opportunity for the whole family to take a moment to share quality time with each other and to rest. In Chinese culture, the moon itself also symbolizes “reunion,” and many believed that rejuvenation was associated with the moon and water. Therefore, most families set up a table with moon cakes and other offerings on the night of Mid-Autumn and make wishes to

the Goddess of the Moon, Chang'e. Afterward, the night involves a big dinner with many delicious foods and sweets such as moon cake, dango, and songpyeon. As for the children, they also have their shining moments to show off their special lanterns to their friends and have fun. Even to this day, I still recall the simple happiness when I ventured through the neighborhood with my red star-shaped paper lantern along with my siblings and friends.



As mentioned, the Mid-Autumn Festival is observed by many East and Southeast Asian countries. The interesting thing about this is that these countries and ethnic groups celebrate this important event quite differently from one another because of the unique cultural incorporation and old tradition. You may see dragon dances or a huge parade that takes over a large section of the city. Despite the different styles of celebration, all individuals who participate in this festive event are connected by a strong unified bond and belief. They all share a similar respect for family reunion and appreciation to the Moon Goddess who blessed them with a fruitful harvest season.



Significant events such as the Mid-Autumn Festival are what remind us of our unique cultural background, and its legacy should be shared. Everyone has a special event that they hold dear to their hearts, despite how big or small. We not only must recognize the cultural identities that make us who we are, we must embrace them. Celebrate it! Every time someone steps up and says who they are, the world becomes a better, more interesting place.

Thank you for reading!

Sincerely,
Hoan Nguyen and the PASPDI Board | Class of 2022

Resources Links:

1. <https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/mid-autumn-festival.htm>
2. <https://www.travelchinaguide.com/essential/holidays/mid-autumn.htm>
3. <https://www.dienmayxanh.com/kinh-nghiem-hay/nguon-goc-va-y-nghia-ngay-tet-trung-thu-tet-trung-1286157>
4. <https://asiasomeday.com/vietnam/en/tet-trung-thu-mid-autumn-festival-in-vietnam/>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-Autumn_Festival#cite_note-xinhua-4