

On the July 4th Blessings of Liberty - MabuhayRadio

Written by Dr. S. B. Woo

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On July 4th, we celebrate the blessings of liberty, which we enjoy as Americans. Let's all display a flag, shall we?

Patriotism is "love and devotion to country. The questions are how we love it and how we express our devotion."

There is a great article in *Time* magazine by Peter Beinart on patriotism (July 7 issue). I can't do it justice by summarizing it. Nevertheless, I'll try with the aim to entice you to read the article itself. He wrote and I paraphrase liberally:

"American patriotism wears two faces. Conservatives prefer the patriotism of affirmation. Liberals choose the patriotism of dissent. Conservatives think that being born into a nation is like being born into a family. You love it because it is yours. Liberals think patriotism is a struggle to narrow the gap between American ideals and America's reality. To conservatives, the devotion to America must come first, struggle to improve it is secondary. To liberals, America must earn our devotion by making good on its ideals.

"Both brands of patriotism have defects. Celebrating America too unabashedly risks becoming self-righteous and turn patriotism into nationalism. However, loving America purely because of its ideals could lead to switching allegiance to other nations too easily.

"America needs a mixture of both brands, because love of country requires both affirmation and criticism."

Many Asian Americans are personal embodiments of this ideal mix. We give America our primary allegiance*. At the same time, we are engaged in a great struggle prodding America to fulfill its core value -- equal opportunity for all Americans.

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Please display a flag. July 4th is affirmation time.

Comments are welcome at

<http://www.80-20educationalfoundation.org/politicaledu/posterboard.asp>

Warmest regards,

S. B. Woo

President, 80-20 Educational Foundation, Inc.

* What if a naturalized citizen still has strong feelings for his/her old country? That is quite OK, so long as he/she gives first allegiance to America. America is a great-and-wise nation. It knows that people who can forget their old country over one naturalization ceremony could easily forget America the next moment. # # #

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