In Memory Of “Mamba”

On April 13th, 2016, Kobe Bryant scored 60 points in the last game of his career over the Utah Jazz and ended his career with a 101-96 win. On November 29th, 2015, Kobe announced that this would be his last season after a loss to the Indiana Pacers 103-107. Every single basketball fan was shocked. Kobe has impacted the league so much that even now, many people support the Lakers instead of the Clippers. Another reason is that Kobe started his career in Los Angeles 20 years ago, and now he will retire as a Lakers veteran.

I started playing basketball when I was 12. Back then, all of my classmates were talking about Kobe and that’s how Kobe became known to me. I started supporting the Lakers and that is when Kobe started to have injuries. It was tough for Kobe to be as good as before after suffering from injuries, and it takes tens of ice packs off the court to keep him on the court for a few minutes. To me though, Kobe was one of the greatest basketball players I had ever seen. Although many people keep telling me that Michael Jordan was the greatest basketball player, or LeBron James, but I tell them one thing: that Kobe played in Los Angeles Lakers for 20 years and never left.

I always had dreams playing basketball on the same court with Kobe, and he would give me suggestions just as Michael Jordan taught Kobe in both the All-Star game or a regular matchup. I was surprised that Kobe wanted to retire. First, he has the highest salary in the whole NBA league--25 million. Second, at the age of 37, Kobe can play a few more years just for his fans. Third, he is third in NBA All-Time scoring list, only about three thousand points away from the second, and he can slowly work up and take the second spot.

Kobe inspired so many people to play basketball all around the world. He went to China several times, and that brought Kobe a lot of Chinese fans. You can see Kobe shoes, jerseys, t-
shirts all over cities in China, almost everywhere. I used to collect Kobe’s shoes, but after a while, I started wearing them because I wanted to show off to my friends.

In the first few years after Kobe was drafted, everyone believed that he was going to be the next Michael Jordan, but in my opinion, he did not become Michael Jordan, but instead became a player much better than Jordan was. Although he was number 8 back then, he is now number 24, and as you know 24 > 23.

Now, Kobe is retired. He would not be on the court anymore with all the other great basketball players, but he will stay in our mind for many generations.

**Community Service**

Community service-- I first heard this term when I arrived the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, I was wondering what community service was. Is it just a kind of work that the school “forces” you to do if you attend the school? It turned out to be the opposite.

During my first year in this school, I was in an Algebra class, and one thing we did when we were all done with our homework was to get on the truck and transport firewood to either the wood house or a classroom. It was a fun time, and we also learned a lot about wood during community service.

Last year we only did community service when we were told to. All we did was clean up the 8th grade classroom, and after that we always went to the “little basketball court” to enjoy our dunking session. Although we were not supposed to dunk on that hoop, we still did it. It was fun but sometimes we played overtime and were late for Social Studies class. Then, the Social Studies teacher would get mad, so after that we decided not to do that anymore.
This year I had Ethics in Religion and Philosophy class, and we had all kinds of jobs to do on any random day. We would just walk into the classroom, and the Ethics teacher would tell us that we were going to do something to help the community. I always felt that it was fun to get out of the classroom and not have the teacher lecturing for the whole period. Also, I would feel that I should take responsibility for the service we were planning to do.

Community service can benefit us in many different ways. It would help me build up my arm muscles when I would lift heavy leaves or branches. Assisting the community, even a little bit, would make me feel good for the rest of the day. Although it was not enough to support the whole community, when added up, it should not be viewed lightly.

Community service would also support the community significantly. Community service could be anything that needed to be done in the monastery, of which my school was a part. For example, cooking was most important in the monastery. If there were not any volunteers to cook for the monastics and all the people who lived here, then it would become a big problem. Another example is the leaves on the street and the branches that fall from the trees. If no one was willing to sweep the street and take the leaves to the dumpster for burning, then the whole monastery would be a huge mess--the street would be covered with leaves and the whole city would smell like a dumpster.

Community service benefits the world. Much of the world now is about making money and always getting something in return. But community service is the work that we feel like doing without the need for wage as a motivation. This could just be helping neighbors out or giving a person who doesn't have a car a ride to the place he or she needs to get to. If all people in the world were willing to help, whether just in their own community or anywhere in the world, this would make a peaceful world.
Honoring Elders Day

Once again, today is the annual Honoring Elders Day. Over the last few days, the volunteers who work in the dining hall have been preparing food for the event. Then early this morning, hundreds of elders arrived.

This year’s theme for Honoring Elders Day was “It’s A Small World,” which means that all the people who live on the Earth are one family, and there should be no racism in anyone. The event was also meant to entertain the elders and to honor them.

There are a few parts that elders are excited about in this event. One of them is definitely going to be food. In the City Of Ten Thousand Buddhas, food for important events is always better than the usual food we eat. Also, all the Girls’ Schoolers serve them. But by the way, the food they served in the dining hall was not as good as before, although it’s still better than the dishes we eat normally.

Another part of the celebration is the performance. For performances, the Girls’ School has Chinese Dance and Chinese Orchestra. But, for Boys’ School, we have much more. We have Dragon Dance, Lion Dance, 24 Season Drumming and Chinese Orchestra. This year, the Dragon Dance was kind of messy, but for the people who do not know Dragon Dance that much, I am sure they couldn’t tell since the dancers recovered from mistakes well.

I interviewed one of my elderly teachers today. He said that both the boys and girls did a good job on everything. But when people get up and speak, they have to speak more clearly. He felt that the boys’ version of the “It’s a Small World” was kind of messy and needed more practice before performance.
To us, the only part that is interesting is Girl School. Usually, we talk about the Chinese Dance for the whole week after Honoring Elders Day. But, we think that when we see the Girls’ Schoolers even if we were asleep, we would wake up immediately.

Mr. Koo was also very happy that every year the Association of the Student Council puts together a celebration for the elders who live in the community.