On a short notice, nine students from Chinese 101 and one from a former class stepped onto the stage with courage to recite poems, sing songs, and reflect on Chinese history and, for some, on their newfound cultural heritage. From start to finish, they took less than two weeks to prepare for this nerve-wrecking performance. Since not everybody was on the same page, the contest was divided into two panels: non-heritage learners and heritage/advanced learners to be fair with all the contestants.

(Contestants from left to right: Kyle Mery/Estevao or Steven Silveira/Tyrille Viriyincy/Emma Clithero-Michaels/Jadi Lu/Carter Lim/Ellen Ta/Soracha Bunjirdpitapon/Helena Widjaja/Nicole Gonzalez)

This event was part of the International Education (IE) Week Celebration co-sponsored by Global Initiative & International Student Service. Most instrumental were Nancy Will (Undergraduate Learning/Office of Academic Affairs) and Zhuxiao Deng (Chinese Student Association).

It’s exciting to see domestic and international students beginning to mingle with each other.

Last week, all the judges and coaches (provided by CSA) came to UW1 031 to help practice and prepare. Special thanks go to two MCs: Zhuxiao Deng & Mingnan Wu; four judges: Pengfei Zhu, Ruihan Li, Nanan Lee & Hongyi Ding; 7 coaches: Hongyi Ding, Nanan Lee, Wei Guo, Yixin Zhang, Zhongtian Ye, Jiaheng Liu, and Jun Chen.

(MCs & Judges from left to right: Zhuxiao Deng/Mingnan Wu/ Pengfei Zhu, Ruihan Li, Nanan Lee & Hongyi Ding. Fortunately these judges don’t look too Draconian!)
As a result of the teamwork, five winners took prizes home: from left to right -- Jadi Lu/Carter Lim/Soracha Bunjirdpitapon/ Ellen Ta/Helena Widjaja. Honorary mention went to Emma Clithero-Michael for reciting poetry with accurate pronunciation and scansion.

For more pictures, please visit:

http://uwch-4.humanities.washington.edu/~WG/~100/Chinese%20Speech%20Contest%202012A/

Photo Credit:

Chengxuan Guo, MA in Media & Cultural Analysis

As is notoriously known, Chinese is the most difficult language to master. Generally speaking, it is such a headache to learn a language in a place where it is not used on a daily basis; specifically, for native speakers whose eyes are more tuned to reading English letters, Chinese characters overwhelmingly look mysterious. In addition to word order and context, tones contribute most to meaning decoding since Chinese is a tonal language. A classical joke goes like this: the first tone of ma means mother 妈, the second tone of ma means hemp 麻, the third tone of ma means horse 马, and fourth tone of ma means curse 骂. At this stage, students in Chinese 101 are still coping with tones and pinyin. Though the contest was performed with more courage than competence, overall, the result was a pleasant surprise.