

LiMing serves Durham's growing Asian population

The Asian grocery and food court provides authentic Chinese food to a steadily increasing Asian community

By **Stella Jiang**
UNC Staff Writer

Durham residents use LiMing's Global Mart not only for groceries, but also for the authentic Chinese food available at LiMing's food court.

A rapidly growing Asian population has led to a greater need for authentic Asian food in Durham.

According to the U.S. Census, 3.6 percent of Durham's population in 2000 identified as Asian. Within 10 years, the population increased by approximately 70 percent, with 5.1 percent of the total population identifying as Asian in 2010.

Zulin Yang, the manager of LiMing, said the dishes the food court provides are authentic Chinese dishes.

"Of course the dishes are authentic," Yang said. "Taiwan beef noodle is authentic. Spicy chicken is also authentic."

Guo Zhang, the chef at LiMing's food court, said he insists on making authentic Chinese dishes despite working in the United States.

"I started my cooking career when I was 15 years old, and at that time I was in China," Zhang said. "I have been in the U.S. for four years and I still insist on making authentic Chinese food."

LiMing's food court offers three dishes with rice as a set meal for lunch and dinner at \$6.99 each. In addition to the set meals, customers can also order dishes from the menu.

Zhang said Chinese customers like the dishes at the food court.

"I once heard some [Chinese] elderly people say they liked the dishes at the food court," Zhang said. "[They] said the dishes were really like what they



Simon Young, an employee at LiMing's Global Mart, is packaging prepared food for customers. (Staff photo by Stella Jiang)

had in China."

Xiou Cao, a third-year doctoral student in Molecular Genetics at Duke University, said he comes to the food court two or three times a week.

"I like the prepared food here because it's like homemade," Cao said. "I am not fastidious about food, but the food here is like what I can have at my home in China."

Yang said the chef, Zhang, usually decides on the flavors of the dishes, but he also makes adjustments to flavors based on customers' demands.

"People from different places have different preferences on flavors," Yang said. "If customers like to have salty dishes, chef can put more sauces in the dishes."

Zhang said it was necessary to adjust the tastes of his dishes to local flavor.

"Americans here like to have dishes sweet," Zhang said. "I will make adjustments for that and add a little bit more sugar."

Chapel Hill resident Scott Bell said he and his family shop at LiMing once a month and eat the prepared food each time they shop.

"The kid eats it," Bell said. "This is [my son's] favorite

Chinese restaurant. This is his favorite place to come. The barbecue pork, and rice, and green beans — that's his favorite."

Zhang said that as LiMing's manager, Yang decided on the raw materials for the food court, and Zhang decided how to process those materials and use different ingredients.

Zhang said it wasn't difficult to find Chinese ingredients in Durham.

"I feel like you can find any ingredients in America," he said. "I thought Sichuan pepper, green zanthoxylum and pastured poultry would be the most difficult ingredients to get in the U.S., but it turns out you can find them easily."

Yang also said ingredients were not an obstacle to making Chinese dishes.

"Chefs can find any sauces, vegetables and meat they need at LiMing," he said. "They just need to go to the shelves and take what they need."

"As long as you make palatable food and set reasonable prices for the dishes, people will come back for you," Zhang said.

The interviews with Chinese sources were conducted in Chinese. Direct quotes were translated from Chinese to English.

LiMing's Global Mart

Store Hours: 9a.m - 9p.m. daily

Location: 3400 Westgate Dr

For More information call (919) 401-5212 or visit <http://lm-globalmart.com/en/>