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ABOUT THIS COVER

editor's note

I had my first **hardboiled** experience three years ago when a friendly staff member on Sproul handed me the latest issue. As a freshman, I readily accepted it, along with flyers for almost every other campus org on Sproul that day. It would take me another few weeks until I realized that the key to walking down Sproul was to just avoid eye contact.

But don't get me wrong, taking that issue was one of the best decisions I've made during my four years here at Berkeley. I read that issue cover-to-cover, marveling at how insightful and passionate the articles were. Later at my first DeCal meeting, I was surprised at how friendly and welcoming everyone was. To me, **hardboiled** was a safe space, one in which everyone's voices were heard. That's racist. That's inspiring. That's just plain weird. I instantly felt an overwhelming sense of acceptance, of community—one that extended far beyond the classroom.

Since then, my **hardboiled** family has become my rock, one of the few things that remains constant in this whole crazy college experience. Jasmine and Chi were there to celebrate the end of the LSAT, while TT never hesitates to accompany me on late night food runs. Chats with Tawny always brightened my day, and meeting up with Julie and Monte in New York City was the highlight of my winter break. And now with graduation approaching in just a few months, I can safely say that my friendships, my conversations, and my experiences here at **hardboiled** have shaped me into the person that I am today.

So dear **hardboiled** reader, even if you accepted this issue from a staff member on Sproul out of pity, consider coming to one of our DeCal meetings. I can promise you that the friendships you'll make here at **hardboiled** are ones that last for life.

Always in bold,
katherine bai
story editor

Liked what you read? Feel like joining our staff? Want to send us angry letters? Then contact us!

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EDUCATION FOR ALL, BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

How Proposition 209 stifles diversity in education

by stephanie wong

Some students may attend a four-year university for the promise of a better career. Some may have parents or teachers remind them of college-bound futures before they can even understand basic algebra. Some may have never questioned why they want to attend a higher education institution, except for the notion that it is what everyone else does. But none of the students at any public education institution in California has been placed in that institution with consideration of their race, sex, or ethnicity, since the passage of Proposition 209 in late 1996. Therefore, only a few students who want to go to college in hopes of a better career or out of a passion to learn must combat multiple obstacles in making their pursuit of higher education a reality.

On Feb. 13th, a multicultural student coalition attended a hearing at the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to rally for a repeal of Prop 209. The civil rights activist group By Any Means Necessary (BAMN) challenged Prop 209 under the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. When California voters approved Prop 209, also known and strategically pushed as the California Civil Rights Initiative, state government institutions, such as the UC system, could no longer consider "race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin" in public education, public employment, or public contracting. Basically, it was an anti-affirmative action act that used the rhetoric of anti-discrimination to offset its discriminatory-by-colorblindness policies; yes, I just coined that term.

Colorblind policies essentially neglect any characteristics, histories, and experiences associated with certain racial and ethnic groups. I am not referring to stereotypical characteristics that are oftentimes used to undermine or poke fun at a certain group or groups of people. I am referring to social, economic, and political obstacles pertinent to certain minorities.

By ignoring a person's history and experiences, we neglect any of the struggles that may have put a person on a different route and experience. We thereby discriminate their strengths or capabilities, especially with approaching challenges. Experiences and histories of struggle should not prove a point about a group's weaknesses. Instead, they can shine light on a student's power in strength, capabilities, and resilience. Although not all API students have gone through these moments or periods of struggle, family or community struggles from earlier generations can transcend throughout future ones. We need these sorts of perspectives in the classroom. Until there is greater diversity on my television shows and movies, in my classrooms, in my government that reflects the diversity of this state and country, I don't believe that race and ethnicity are not factors that keep certain groups persistently at the bottom. Merit and performance are not biological.

Another way in which members of the API community are stripped of their histories and experiences within and out of America is through the umbrella-term: Asian. Beneath this umbrella, there are a variety of subgroups that have different histories and experiences within the United States. These differences in stories should be even more a testament of what we need to hear in order to diversify our conversations in the classroom, to challenge the ways we understand foreign or domestic policies, economics, theories, and solutions.

Most news coverage on the recent student rally focused on Prop 209's effects on students from black, Latino, and Native American communities. However, according to the Fall 2010 University of California



Photo courtesy of flickr.com

Statistical Summary of Students and Staff, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, and "Other Asian" groups have all decreased in UC Berkeley's undergraduate enrollment from 2009. Whereas, the UC Berkeley's international student enrollment from 2009 to 2010 has increased 32 percent for total undergraduate enrollment.

According to CalServe senator Sydney Fang, there was not a very high turnout from the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community, but she also pointed out that one difficulty in organizing rallies is that some of the students most affected cannot make it out to the events due to other commitments or obligations.

Fang wishes to see greater solidarity within the API community. She said, "As students of color, we face a lot of the same struggles and have common histories, so being in solidarity means that when one community or [a member of the API community] excels or rises above, then we all do well."

Furthermore, in response to the criticism that affirmative action steals the placement of well-qualified students like Abigail Fisher, whose case will be considered by the U.S. Supreme Court and who believes that because of affirmative action she was not accepted into the University of Texas at Austin, CalServe senator Fang said, "It's not about competing against each other, but it's about how do we open the doors for more people."

Whether or not the Court comes to its senses to repeal Prop 209, our commitment to our siblings', cousins', children's, our nation's future in holding their own dreams, should include affirmative action, diversity, and quality education in K-12 levels. Here at Cal, there are APA support groups for current youth in local areas, like Oakland Asian Students Educational Services (OASES) and Recruitment and Retention Centers (RRCs) under the bridges coalition. Perhaps these can be our next steps in

supporting diversity in higher education.

Why not reconsider why you are attending a four-year university? Instead of considering your grade-point average, SAT score, or extracurriculars and rather than focusing on the high-paying career you might want after college, consider why you want to be here. Is it the prestige of attending the "No. 1 Public University"? Is it a place to connect with others who come from similar backgrounds and think like you?

What is the purpose of higher education?

No matter what our reasons are for attending higher education, higher education institutions, like Cal, should bring together a mixture of students from different backgrounds, with different interests and perspectives so that we can unite in becoming problem-solvers and innovators in whatever fields we choose, for the sake of our future—or at least that's a big part of hope.

Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, and "Other Asian" groups have all decreased in UC Berkeley's undergraduate enrollment from 2009.

Poison Ivy

How Non-Race Blind Admissions at the Nation's Elite are Affecting APAs

by princess lim

The debate regarding college admissions policies has persisted since affirmative action in California was banned by Prop 209. Proponents of affirmative action argue that it promotes academic readiness among those who are admitted, regardless of race, and that the admission standard for state educational institutions is placed on merit, independent of race, rather than in addition to race. Opponents assert that this leaves behind certain minority groups who have not had the resources to attend SAT courses and tack on countless extracurricular activities to their transcripts. A crucial question remains: In their mission to increase diversity and take race into account, do non-race blind schools also end up discriminating against certain groups because they can admit students partially on the basis of race?

The Ivy Leagues are not race blind in their admissions processes and this focuses attention on how they choose to admit the students that apply. Over the past five years, the percentage of Asian students has remained static at about 20 percent, dubbed the "Asian ceiling." On the other hand, institutions like UC Berkeley are race blind

in their admissions processes and Asians comprise about 40 percent of their student body. Caltech is also race blind in their admissions process and Asians comprise one-third of their student body. What accounts for this disparity between these schools and the Ivy institutions? Is it possible that it is due to the fact that California does not take race into account when considering an applicant and the Ivy Leagues do? This could very well be the case.

Princeton sociologist Thomas Espenshade affirms that racial discrimination against Asian applicants occur in the nation's most elite universities. In 1997, he conducted a survey that found an Asian American student needs a 1550 SAT score to have an equal chance of gaining admittance when compared to a Caucasian student who only needs a 1410, or an African American student, who only needs an 1100. Due to this supposed "Asian ceiling," some half-Asian, half-Caucasian students now check the "White" box when applying for such

schools. For those who are full Asian, it's difficult to implement this strategy. For some half-Asians, however, they consider it a necessary maneuver to ensure they have a fair chance of getting into Yale, Harvard, or Columbia, as any other person of another racial group would.

If such discrimination really exists, is indicating the "White" box rather than checking the "White" and "Asian" box acceptable? Employing this strategy may give an unfair advantage over full Asians who cannot get away with it, but if these institutions do in fact put Asians to impossible standards and discriminate against them, then I believe it is entirely reasonable to utilize resources that give one the highest chances.

Some may think that checking one box rather

Asians so that they do not surpass the "Asian ceiling." However, it is undeniable that pervasive stereotypes that portray Asians as overachieving robots persist in our culture, and that cultural lens inevitably impacts how Asians are perceived in academic settings. The disparity of Asian admittance rates between race blind and non-race blind schools are also undoubtedly evident.

Private schools have historically used preferential admittance for children of alumni, the wealthy, and celebrities. However, if the Ivy Leagues should one day follow the example of Caltech in their race blind policies, certain racial groups would no longer be excluded on the basis of race, when the student has gone above and beyond the necessary requirements to prove his academic worth.

This is a very nuanced form of discrimination because the admissions officers would

neither confirm or deny its occurrence, but Kara Miller, a former admissions reviewer at Yale, attests that Asians were held to a higher standard: "Asian kids know that when you look at the average SAT for the school, they need to add 50 or 100 to it."

If there is veracity to Asian discrimination in the admissions offices of these Ivy League schools, this is indeed a complete misuse of the non-race blind admissions process. Instead of using the process to diversify their campuses, they are using it to selectively weed out those ethnicities whom they think unfit to grace their halls of prestige, on the basis of race, rather than on the basis of effort and merit. This conduct is especially abhorrent because world-class institutions are supposed to be pioneers in progress and thought. A necessary step in restoring this credibility would be to regard Asian applicants as individual persons of accomplishment, rather than a faceless horde of overachieving nerds.

It is undeniable that pervasive stereotypes that portray Asians as overachieving robots persist in our culture, and that cultural lens inevitably impacts how Asians are perceived in academic settings.

than two might be dishonest in that it denies part of one's identity and cultural heritage.

Margaret Zhou, a member of the Mixed Student Union at Cal, feels that it would not feel right for her to just check one box: "I feel like my thoughts and personality have been shaped by my transnational and multiracial experiences, and so it wouldn't do to just check one box. Just saying I'm Asian wouldn't be totally true because I haven't lived the life of someone who was born and raised mostly in Asia, and it would ignore the privileges I am given in some situations when I'm able to pass as white. Basically, just identifying with one side of my heritage would be an offense to the family and the parent on the other side, and since I'm lucky enough to be part of very loving families in the U.S. and in China, I want to appreciate all my family members by just identifying as mixed."

It's impossible to know for sure that Ivy Leagues are purposely admitting a set amount of

GETTING TO KNOW

LiNK



Cal students versus the North Korean Regime

by alex lee

This is a spotlight for a club. However, this club doesn't deal with things like networking to get ahead in the job market or solicit your attendance for some quirky activity. Instead, the Berkeley chapter of Liberty in North Korea begins with the documentary *Kimjongilia* to show how millions of people are suffering from fear and starvation under a totalitarian regime and then asks you: what are we going to do about this blatant violation of human rights?

Unfortunately, many still don't realize the dire situation going on in North Korea. Who can blame them when most of the media about the country involves the late Kim Jong Il or the possibility of nuclear weapons? For all they know, North Korea is just a communist country with a caricature of a leader that threatens the world's stability. Still, since the early 2000s, more media is being released involving the concentrations camps and the severity of treatment prisoners' face.

This leads to LiNK's overall purpose: educate people that there's a problem to begin with. This is not an advocacy for communism, nor is it seeking sympathy for the leadership of the country. Instead, the members of LiNK wish to raise awareness that North Korea puts its own people in work camps, fails to feed them even the most meager of meals, and imposes endless propaganda of how successful the country is, which is a complete lie.

What is it that necessarily motivates these students to deal with such depressing issues that most would just sympathize for a moment before ignoring it and getting back to their routine lives?

LiNK president, Emily Chi, describes, "The people of North Korea are voiceless. They have no channels to speak freely and those that do escape fear speaking out against the regime because of the danger it puts any family members in that are still in the country."

Essentially, our free speech needs to speak out for the people who are otherwise unable to.

Now some may think that if the country is really that terrible, why don't they just leave? The thing is the only way to leave the country is to escape by crossing the northern border between

Korea and China. The only sure way of accomplishing this without getting shot is to bribe their way across the border, which usually means selling all of their possessions and homes, if they haven't already sold it for food.

And here's the kicker: even though these people have risked everything to leave the country, crossing the North Korean border is no guarantee of their safety. If the escapees are caught by the Chinese authorities, they are sent back to North Korea where they and their families are made an example of by being subjected to a firing squad. In other cases, refugees are abducted by human traffickers and sold as servants or sex slaves, facing brutality just as bad as the concentration camps they fled.

The situation is depressing, terrible, immoral, and choosing to ignore the issue and do nothing will only continue the problem. But how does one even begin trying to make a difference in what appears to be an impossible mission?

As it turns out, LiNK is holding a fundraiser this upcoming March to help fund the underground railroad that transports refugees to Mongolia or Southeast Asia, where they won't be repatriated. From March 12th-16th, students can sign up to take part in a weeklong challenge taking place the following week where they will try living off the official rations of a North Korean citizen—about a cup of rice a day, for five days. The rice is provided by the club and they encourage participants to donate whatever money they would have spent on food that week to the cause. Last year, LiNK raised approximately \$2,500 which is enough to save one refugee. This year LiNK hopes to save two.

LiNK faces many challenges as they try to make a difference in the lives of North Koreans. Whether it be just getting students to know what the club is actually about or coping with the emotional toll one is put through when dealing with millions of deaths, LiNK stands strong in their goal to make one more refugee's life better. The club members' support for each other is their strength, and they will continue to fight until the lives of North Koreans are improved.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Fundraiser sign up:
March 12th-16th at LiNK table on Upper Sproul

Fundraiser: March 19th-23rd



Q & A with members of LiNK

hb: What made you want to be a part of LiNK?

Carrie: I was exposed to the atrocities in high school through a documentary. It left an emotional mark on me and so I've been a part of LiNK since last semester.

hb: What are the meetings like?

Youngeun: The format is always changing, but we do a lot of informational lectures to educate people more about the issue. We also have film screenings and forums so we can discuss the issues with the student body.

hb: What keeps you going through all this?

C: Where's the fairness in all this? People in the same era as me are living in starvation. How is that fair? It makes me grateful that I was so fortunate to live somewhere else, but I don't think it's right for people in this day and age to live in fear while others live in comfort.

hb: If you could tell the student body anything, what would it be?

Y: 2012 is the 100th anniversary of the late Kim Il Sung, and I feel that this is a symbolic time for action. This is a critical time to think of how to be more aware of international issues and get the US more involved.

Rising and Representing: APIs IN THE MILITARY

by yifan zhang

I could talk about a group of Filipino Americans who fought with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans in 1814. I could also talk about how a handful of Chinese Americans fought alongside both Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. And how could I forget about one of the most decorated units in the American Armed Forces: the 442nd Infantry Regiment, the famed Japanese-American Nisei unit who fought the Nazis in Europe? Among the soldiers in the unit who were awarded the 21 total Medals of Honor is Senator Daniel Inouye, who lost his right arm during his service. Despite these numerous accomplishments, Asian Americans continue to be discriminated against, yet the increasing number of future Asian American officers and enlisted men will hopefully make the military more inclusive.

The history of Asian Americans is far from rosy. Even though the 442nd Infantry Regiment is now considered one of the most highly decorated regimental units, discrimination against Asians during World War II prevented official recognition of the Nisei soldiers, leading to many of the decorations, including the 21 Medals of Honor being awarded 50 years later.

The plight of Asian Americans in the military did not get better as the United States entered the Cold War. In the following decades, Asian American GI's often found themselves as the only Asian Americans in their combat units, surrounded by hostilities from not only the enemy, but within their units. During the Vietnam War, Asian American soldiers were often mistaken for the enemy, spit with racial slurs, beatings and death threats. When Vietnam veteran David Oshiro was injured in combat, his helicopter Medevac was delayed because U.S. soldiers were afraid he was Vietnamese.

The military institution that belittles the accomplishments of Asian Americans still exists. Nineteen-year-old Private Danny Chen killed himself because he was singled out as the sole Asian American in the unit. His enemy was not the Afghan insurgents but the enlisted men in his own unit. Racial slurs were mixed with the physical abuse he was forced to endure.

More Asian Americans in officer roles will hopefully improve the perception of Asians in the military. With

more Asian officers, other servicemen will be less willing to make racial attacks on Asians Americans either because they respect their commanders or they do not want to be disciplined.

Asian Americans have already made an impact on the military establishment. A total of 103 Asian American officers have attained the position of general or admiral. Most prominent is General Eric Shinseki, who served as Chief of Staff for the Army under both the Clinton and Bush administrations. After graduating from West Point in 1965, he served as an artillery forward observer, and during his service in the Vietnam War, he lost a portion of his foot in combat after stepping on a land mine. Yet, General Shinseki may only be the tip of the iceberg for Asian American officers, for a new generation of Asian American officers is following the footsteps set by Shinseki and other senior officers. Approximately 10 percent of United States service academy students are Asian American, which is double the proportion of Asian Americans in the U.S. population. The new influx of Asian junior officers will increase the general percentage of Asian officers, which is currently at 4 percent. Some of these younger officers might rise in the ranks and eventually become the role models and leaders of a future American military.

In addition to elite service academies such as Annapolis and West Point, Asian Americans are also joining ROTC programs at universities like Stanford, Harvard and [of course] UC Berkeley. Take Jukay Hsu for example. After graduating from Stuyvesant, he went to Harvard and was part of the ROTC program. Instead of pursuing a PhD in economics, he joined the Army, eventually rising to the rank of captain and has since returned safely to New York after a tour of duty in Iraq.

The most obvious solution to make the military more inclusive to Asian Americans is to have more Asian Americans in the military, especially as

officers. As I have witnessed in high school, Marine recruiters are currently targeting Asian Americans who simply want to enlist as privates. Yet, Asian Americans who

want to go to college directly or have already graduated should also give military service a second look. More Asian Americans need to recognize that military service and educational attainment are not mutually exclusive, that one could receive a degree from Harvard while having a leadership position in the Army afterwards.

Want to become a lawyer? You could become a JAG (Judge Advocate General) lawyer who represents both defense and prosecution in military courts. Looking towards a medical career? Military surgeons are always in short supply. Do you have sights on dental school? The Navy always needs dentists. Military service and leadership needs not only guns and bullets but also the skills of trained professionals. With more Asian Americans in the military as platoon commanders, lawyers, doctors, dentists, nurses, and chaplains, perhaps the perception of Asian American in the military might change.

As more Asian Americans join service academies and ROTC programs, more Asian Americans will become junior officers and, eventually, senior officers. If Danny Chen's commanding officer was Asian American, perhaps he would not have been as indifferent to Chen's racist and brutal treatment. Perhaps Chen could have had an Asian American role model in the military, giving him a glimmer of hope as to who he could become. Hopefully in the future, we will have fewer stories like Danny Chen and more like Jukay Hsu.



Danny Chen

RACIAL



Harry Lew

CAMOUFLAGE

frightening about this reality is that we American citizens put our faith in the hands of the men who "serve our nation," the so-called "Army Strong." Yet judging by how vague and unresponsive the U.S. military is in uprooting these blatant hate crimes, how can APA communities not wonder how many others are undergoing the exact same brutal practices?

These military hazings were first brought up in two high-profile 2011 cases: Harry Lew and Danny Chen. Although both were in different branches of the military, they faced similar circumstances of aggressive treatment by their peers.

New York Magazine revealed that "eight men charged in connection with [Chen's] death are all white and range in age from 24 to 35," and that these men were guilty of racial slurs, neglect of duty, and abuse of authority, even going so far as to put Chen in a hard hat and force him to give commands in Chinese.

What's

Looking back at last year's events, it's apparent that for Asian American soldiers, to "Be All You Can Be" is as hopeless an achievement as the "American Dream." No matter how much blood, sweat and tears colored people may shed for the sake and pride of the red, white and blue, reality often undermines their so-called freedom to prosper and succeed.

Although Danny Chen died on October 3, 2011, I didn't spot any news articles circulating his case on Facebook until December. It was one of those posts my friends shared with half-hearted remarks, such as "Poor guy," "That's horrible!" and

"How could anyone do this?" It's easy to distance ourselves from a person's harsh situation and think, "I'm blessed to be living a life like mine and not his." But this hate crime is based on something much larger than the individual. The military hazing of men like Chen is founded upon racial inequalities and prejudices that communities of color struggle against every day.

It also mentioned that because Lew fell asleep on guard duty, "his fellow lance corporals ordered him to do push-ups, then stomped on his back and legs if he didn't do them right; poured sand in his mouth; punched him in the back of his helmet; and forced him to dig a chest-deep foxhole."

When questioned whether Lew faced any racial discrimination within the military, however, "several Marines said Lew was the target of some jokes and teasing, like many other Marines of all ethnic backgrounds, but they weren't aware he was discriminated against because of his race," according to Associated Press.

Whether or not Lew's sufferings explicitly stemmed from racism as in Chen's case, ignorance alone can't propel "jokes and teasing" to the harsh aggression that led Lew to kill himself. To present Lew's suffering as an accident is an insult to the glaring issue at hand—that those in the military subconsciously accept hazing and bullying without understanding that these are manifestations of social inequalities.

While these military reports suggest a strong correlation between the hazings and the suicides, the court rulings determining the perpetrators' fates don't reflect the gravity of these violent events. In fact, the Army recommended dropping the charges of involuntary manslaughter against Specialist Ryan Offutt, one of the suspects involved with Chen's death.

An MSNBC update this February on the latest court-martial decision stated that "Orozco was acquitted of charges involving the assault, cruel treatment and humiliation of Lew."

Defense attorney Captain Aaron Meyer maintains these actions as well-meant, justifying that "Orozco was authorized to have a Marine in the squad do physical training like push-ups if the purpose was to maintain good order and discipline, there was no malice involved, and the training didn't physically exhaust the Marine." Of course, every soldier needs to have a battered body and a mouth full of sand to know good discipline.

Although military superiors like Meyer acknowledge the presence of these actions, they make light of the situation when these victims' families are in grief, their demands for compensation unheard. The fact that racism against ethnic minorities is never explicitly stated as the main cause of these hazings is but a testament to the lack of social justice within the military system. How ironic that our nation fights for freedom and justice when we can't enforce that within our own ranks of power.

Since Sept. 11th, America's race awareness has spiked with a hypersensitivity to the threat abroad in the Middle East. It's

unlikely, perhaps even unpatriotic, to address any threat within our own country in a time that calls for nationalistic pride and support for our armed forces. During a recession when everyone needs money to keep afloat, mainstream news stations can't highlight any discriminatory issues within our military without fear of being labeled as traitors to the "greater good of society."

What's even more shocking is the lack of awareness and reception by the APA community, let alone by the general public. How much does the community really care about military hazings in the realm of public issues?

In the struggle to integrate themselves into American society, Asian Americans have grown up emphasizing certain social values over others. In fact, New York Magazine quotes that Chen's mother was against him going to the military, "preferring him to be something else, something safer. Maybe a pharmacist."

Perhaps that in itself is adopting a cultural hegemonic value that it's uncommon and somewhat remarkable to see Asian Americans in the U.S. military. There's also the fact that the U.S. military-industrial complex has influenced the countries from whence APAs came from. Considering what happened with U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, it's not surprising why Vietnamese American immigrant communities don't exactly idolize the military.

When it comes to issues of racism and discrimination in the military, different Asian American communities can't seem to relate on the same level due to their unique cultural and immigrant backgrounds. Considering how insulated Asian Americans are in their respective communities, different ethnic groups may be more focused on their own local issues and concerns. The overall apathy towards military hazings could additionally be attributed to a general lack of political awareness and participation.

Contrary to however the U.S. military and media may try to put it, the actions escalating to Chen's and Lew's suicides were not unforeseen and could have been addressed. APAs deserve every right and opportunity to do well in the military as much as they do in education, business and politics. Even though it's important to retain individual ethnic backgrounds and histories, it's about time that APAs gain a "panethnic" sense of unity and solidarity and overcome being pushed aside in America's peripheral vision. In doing so, we can promote social and economic justices that benefit all groups of color. We can develop a strong political awareness that can see through the racial camouflage that the U.S. military has slipped into, and protect our soldiers from discriminations that go by unnoticed.

Hazing Asian American Men in the U.S. Military

by christine tran

Still Searching For Answers

ONE YEAR LATER, WHERE IS THE REAL INFORMATION ABOUT FUKUSHIMA?

by denise wong

In the one year aftermath of the Tohoku Earthquake, Japanese citizens are still searching for answers in the face of crisis. That is, in the wake of tragedy, the Japanese government's "leadership" more closely resembles an espionage clusterfuck, suggesting a divestment in the health of those most continually affected by the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

By now, most of the world is familiar with the March 11th catastrophe: the Tohoku Earthquake claimed about 22,000 lives after a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and ensuing tsunami devastated northeastern Japan, particularly Fukushima Prefecture, where the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is located. The resultant nuclear meltdown, which released consequential amounts of radioactive material into the environment, has been continuously identified as the worst nuclear calamity since Chernobyl.

Clearly this is not an easy situation to repair. Thousands have been displaced while the government struggles to clean up a literally deadly disaster site. However, its understandably sparse restoration efforts appear more like negligence when considering the lack of transparency authorities have exhibited throughout the recovery phase.

For one, the government has failed to follow through on expert recommendations that would address radiation in Fukushima's unique environment. For instance, Fukushima is comprised of 71 percent woodlands, which exacerbates radiation levels when radioactive soil washes into residential areas due to rainfall. Contaminated rainfall also aggregates in street gutters and is absorbed by the leaves of certain shrubs. Moreover, there exists the perpetual danger of consuming food and water with dangerous amounts of radioactivity. But according to a report by Health24, officials have not evacuated children and pregnant women, in spite of repeated expert counsel to do so.

In fact, officials have also stated that it is unnecessary to evacuate certain regions that fall below the 20-millisievert annual limit of radiation, despite contrary findings by local residents, who are conducting their own radioactivity tests due to government distrust.

Therein lies the more shocking problem: local residents and farmers are now conducting radiation tests and publishing their results because of a growing belief that the government disingenuously downplays the severity of the situation in Fukushima.

According to the New York Times, along with the discovery of tainted beef in July, one incident in particular heavily prompted local producers to disregard official information and take matters into their own hands; farmers in Onami, a small farming town near the power plant, debunked the government's flawed conclusion that much of the food cultivated in the region was safe to consume.

The authorities' methodology lucidly displays their inaccuracy: the authorities' assessment of food grown in Onami only tested two of its 154 rice farms. Officials have also acknowledged the fallibility of randomly sampled tests, considering that perilous levels of radiation are much more concentrated in some areas of Fukushima than in others. Of course, many are also questioning why farming is even being allowed in the highly unsafe region in the first place;

prefecture officials have reported that about 20 percent of the farms in Fukushima are contaminated with Cesium, though allegedly only 30 surpass the Japanese government's safety levels.

A comprehensive, unified report on the levels of radiation in the area is yet to materialize, though one is presently in the works. According to Business Week, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation is currently working to publish an international and independent analysis of the Fukushima disaster and its repercussions. Given the substantial discrepancies in the global and domestic reports of radioactive material (Business Week estimates that studies by the government-operated Tokyo Electric Power Co. reported up to 77 percent less radioactive emissions than have overseas assessments), this study is evidently necessary. In fact, inconsistencies in the government's official numbers have aroused public suspicion ever since the immediate aftermath of the quake. But Business Week also reports that the report will not be ready until May 2013, indicating that it will be more than a year until Fukushima residents can definitively know how hazardous their prefecture is.

But in the midst of all this confusion, one question remains: one year later, where is the real information about Fukushima?

Those more sympathetic to the government argue that overseas agencies sensationalize their reports on Japan's radiation levels. Anti-nuclear activists utilize the situation to further their agendas, while media outlets, particularly those who have covered the story in-depth, hyper-exaggerate the circumstances in order to draw in viewers.

This issue is problematic, but those who claim that reports have been sensationalized miss the point. The figures put out by the government have been discrepant, the methodology has been faulty, and there are clear political reasons why the government would want to leave the situation be. Skepticism is healthy, but there are otherwise no reasons not to believe more urgent international reports.

Many in Fukushima believe the government's inaction aims to maintain order and avoid compensating many of the agricultural businesses negatively impacted by the disaster. According to the Times, agricultural officials have even openly recognized that offering more details would frighten away consumers, and that if farming ceased in an area due to radiation, it would take years before the public allowed it to start there again.

The situation of Fukushima is a public health issue, but it is also a political, human rights issue about government unaccountability. What Fukushima needs now from the API community (and Americans in general) is not only philanthropy, but international pressure. As Americans, we saw similar mismanagement during Hurricane Katrina and during 9/11. As APIs, we are witnessing the little people being screwed over by their government. Those similitudes should motivate us to act.

Even though the facts are still nebulous, there is no way for Japan to navigate unless its authorities cut the bullshit and clear the fog. The monster needs to be silenced before it continues to grow.



Lost Between Generations



How younger generations see Asian American identity through older generations

by sam lai

While I have been fortunate to have visited Taiwan several times with my family, I took those vacations for granted as a child. My older sister, brother, and I lived comfortably with our Taiwanese parents in Los Angeles, but at times Ma and Ba needed a change of scenery. They wanted to go back to Taiwan not because they felt sick of Southern California suburban life in the way their children did, but more that they have always felt at home in Taiwan. Once a year, during either summer or winter breaks, we would fly to Taipei to stay with wàipó and wàigōng, my maternal grandparents.

My siblings and I welcomed these trips with a different kind of anticipation than my parents did. Born and raised in America, we never thought of Taiwan as a place we belonged to, and perhaps we saw it more as tourists than as locals no matter how familiar we grew with the surroundings. Young and materialistic, I would buy as many trinkets as I could stuff into my suitcase. I came to see Taiwan as a shopping spree, having more skill in spending money than in speaking with my grandparents.

I have not been to Taiwan in over two years, and I say this not to complain but to highlight a moment in my life which I am still trying to understand. The last time I went to Taiwan was October 2009. My wàigōng had passed away, but since my sister and brother had to study for midterms at the time, only I could be there for the funeral, and for a day at most because I still had school.

Unable to join in the hymns because I could not read the Chinese lyrics, I sat feeling only numbness. I knew I should have felt loss, a grief I saw when my mother and grandma held each other as the funeral staff pushed the casket into the cremation chamber. Regret more than any kind of anguish haunts me when I think of my grandfather.

Not until I came to Berkeley did I start coming to terms with my grandfather's death and what my family means to me. Away from home, I could step back and reflect on how my parents identify themselves as Taiwanese compared

to the way I see myself as Asian American. From my classes, I heard about the generation gap, a broad term that generally describes the conflict in ideologies between older generations and younger ones. The most common perception of the generation gap involves immigrant parents and their US-born children, but taking into account the fluidity of Asian American identity, nationality alone does not influence interpersonal relationships within families. Rather, the beliefs and ideologies that individuals absorb from living in the United States and other countries gives a transnational perspective on the Asian American generation gap.

For 1.5 generations like freshman Bonita Choi, the emphasis on being educated came not just from parental pressure, but also an overarching pressure for recent immigrants to assimilate. Born in Korea and raised in Vancouver, Bonita remembers her mother talking to other Korean moms, overhearing how their children felt afraid to go to school because they did not understand English.

"My parents went to university in Korea, and when we first immigrated, we lived in a bad part of Vancouver," Bonita commented.

Knowing the struggles of her parents and other Korean immigrants to adapt and integrate, Bonita said, "I agree with them about the value of education, [so] I always felt like I had to go to school."

A major point of struggle between the older generations and their descendants sparks from the desire to conform to Anglo-American rules but also preserve ethnic background. For younger API generations, knowing one's history can be limited by a number of factors: geographic barriers, a lack of fluency in particular language, and the very validity of memory. All of those aspects became clear to me when I took a beginning Mandarin class in community college a year after wàigōng's funeral. Speaking conversational Mandarin came to me gradually, but on paper, the traditional characters turned me into a bungling monolingual. For hours on end, I

would practice by writing the characters over and over again until they covered a whole page. From this routine, I gained a literacy at the same level as my young cousins' in Taipei, to whom I exchanged two letters before lapsing back into English-only once I started going to Berkeley. The brief correspondence between my cousins and I unlocked a door that had been closed for a long time, providing an emotional contact made possible only through a common language.

From my own experiences, the generation gap relates more to the absences and silences that result from a lack of communication and understanding. Younger generations may struggle to comprehend the demands of older generations, but each side should take the time to listen to each others' stories, because every day that passes takes them further away from knowing specific details from the past.

From a recent discussion with my friends, one of them thought that the generation gap can never really be solved, and I have to agree with him. Yet I have hope that even as the differences between generations persist in weakening family relations, they can be overcome through open communication.

A few months ago over winter break, I dug out old videotapes taken by my father, dating back to my parents' early marriage in the 80s. I felt bored at home, and finding footage that preceded even my older sister's existence piqued my curiosity: what kind of life did my parents have when they first came to the United States, as newlyweds and recent immigrants? A thrill of joy seized upon me when I caught a glimpse of wàigōng in one of the videos, and I called over my parents to watch with me. My father left the room not long after, but my mother stayed, transfixed by the moving image of her father on the TV. Simply from her eyes, I knew she missed him, and always will. That moment brought home the fragile opportunity that the generation gap presents: in the face of loss, older and younger generations can unite in finding the missing pieces.

WHITING OUT THE YELLOWGIRL

THE SILENCE SURROUNDING THE REVOCATION OF A UC BERKELEY GRADUATE'S ROLE IN A RACIST POLITICAL AD CAMPAIGN

by laurie song

During the 2012 Super Bowl, former Republican U.S. Representative Pete Hoekstra ran an extremely disturbing advertisement in Michigan, his home state, as part of his campaign for U.S. Senate, starring a racist caricature of an Asian woman representing the sinister "Chinese" beneficiaries of his opponent's spending plan.

The 30-second ad opens with the ringing of a gong and ominous Oriental music as the camera pans across a rice paddy with palm trees in the background. A young woman with a conical straw hat tied around her neck bikes up to the camera. In choppy pidgin English but a perfect American accent, she smilingly thanks Hoekstra's opponent, "Debbie SpendItNow" (Debbie Stabenow), for spending so much American money and borrowing more from "us"—implied to be the Chinese—that the American economy weakens, allowing the Chinese to take American jobs.

This indisputably xenophobic portrayal of Asians perpetuates stereotypes long embedded in Western culture. From the late 19th century, Chinese immigrants in Western countries have been objectified as the "Yellow Peril," a term that both immediately racializes and accuses all of these yellow-skinned foreigners of endangering the Western way of life. Throughout the 20th century, Asians continued to be associated with malicious cunning in mass media, perhaps best exemplified by the "Fu Manchu" archetype of the criminal mastermind in pop culture: intelligent, heartless, and bent on destroying Western civilization.

Hoekstra's ad doesn't just fear monger by playing on outdated stereotypes with a modern female Fu Manchu; it also undermines the individual cultures of different countries by presenting an Orientalized landscape containing various indistinct elements of Asian cultures. Though implicit, it is obvious that the woman in the ad is supposed to be Chinese. However, the looming vermilion clouds and shadowy palm trees behind fields of rice evoke a different image in the average American's subconscious—the Vietnam War and

all of its horrors. This mixed, mysterious, exotic Oriental setting portrays the woman as representative of an Asian mass menace and only intensifies the divide between Asians—even Asian Americans, often viewed as "perpetual foreigners"—and the West.

Of course, the great irony is that the actress portraying this machinating Oriental "yellowgirl" (the name of her image in the html code of Hoekstra's now-removed website for the ad) is none other than Lisa Chan, a Chinese American and recent UC Berkeley graduate with a degree in Sociology. Chan, a 21-year-old who lists youth empowerment, education, and pageantry among her passions on her website, released a brief statement of apology on her Facebook page that was later rescinded; coincidentally, Hoekstra's ad was finally taken down around the same time—weeks after its release.

In the formerly released statement, Chan said she was "deeply sorry for any pain that the character I portrayed brought to my communities" and that "this role is not in any way representative of who I am."

Though she identifies herself as part of "her" communities, she simultaneously distances herself from the character she knowingly and willingly portrayed as a hired actress. Chan apologizes for the character, but not for her portrayal, citing her own involvement in communities, work to empower others, and recent graduation as excuses for her ignorance. She also fails to mention the critical point in this controversy—the fact that her portrayal was racist and offensive. Her apology would have been the place for her to start working toward undoing some of the damage by addressing the issue at hand, but she asks for forgiveness instead. These are the questions I would like Chan to answer: If you are so involved in community empowerment, why did you decide to go through with this at all? Will we ever hear a real apology from you?

At first glance, Chan appears to be true to her self-portrayal—a role model for youth actively involved in

community issues. However, with the rescission of her non-apology, as well as a brand new website featuring airbrushed glamour shots of herself and inspirational quotes, it is clear that the issue of her involvement in this racist advertisement has been whitened out; whether this was done so in deference to her contract or for personal reasons is unclear. While her former non-apology was vague and evasive, she at least attempted to demonstrate regret for her role in the controversy, stating that she was "determined to resolve [her] actions." Now, with the complete whitening out of the incident, it is dubious this will ever happen.

Chan was the one person in the position to step forward, explain herself, and use the attention to raise awareness of racism and Asian Pacific American issues. Instead, she appears to have funneled her time and resources into self-promotion. When I look at Chan, I see a bright young woman, recently graduated from this institution and involved in various community projects—ostensibly a face that could represent some of us in the APA community—who has, by attempting to hide any evidence of her involvement in Hoekstra's ad campaign, made the second-worst decision of her career.

Hoekstra's advertisement, as well as the subsequent removal of all material with no explanation or apology, is a jarring wake-up call to all of us. How is it that, in today's society, a Chinese American graduate of UC Berkeley—in Sociology, no less—is hired by a white man's political campaign to portray a disgusting, fear mongering racial caricature of a Chinese person that is subsequently broadcast statewide before being called out for racism? How is it acceptable for said actress and campaign to then remove all content, only after being repeatedly criticized in the media, without a sincere apology acknowledging personal fault to the APA community? If nothing else, it is apparent that we, as a community and as a society, still have much work to do.



The Debbie Spend It Now website has been taken down and redirects to PeteSpendItNow.com. However, it has been reuploaded for viewing at www.angryasianman.com/debbiespenditnow/
Photos courtesy of Angry Asian Man

FROM THE BENCH TO LINSANITY

THE PHENOMENON THAT IS JEREMY LIN

by steven cong

When Taiwanese American basketball player Jeremy Lin was dropped from the Golden State Warriors on December 9, 2011, it seemed as if our worst fears were confirmed. It was all hype, and nobody would be challenged to think twice about the stereotypes that limit Asian American men. It was natural to picture Lin in Harvard, but the NBA still didn't seem like a place for some skinny Asian kid who graduated from an Ivy League. Of course, all of that is history now, and nobody can ever keep a straight face while making those claims again.

On Feb. 4th, Lin scored 21 points in a win against the New Jersey Nets while playing for the New York Knicks. He followed that up with another victory against the Utah Jazz scoring 28 points, only to surpass that with a jaw-dropping performance against the Los Angeles Lakers in which he garnered 38 points. That week was marked by a streak of wins that launched Lin from his reputation as a benchwarmer on the Golden State Warriors to a phenomenon whose impact far transcended the average basketball player. Linsanity had begun.

It was incredible. Those figures lit a fuse that exploded within the realms of social media and the internet. Lin became a household name on Twitter and Facebook, and Asian American blogs like Channel APA and Angry Asian Man provided frequent updates on Lin's successes. Asian American entertainers like Gowe (Gifted On West East) and Jin composed songs that paid tribute to the newborn legend, and comedians like the Fung Brothers even made two short videos about the so-called "Jeremy Lin Effect." Asian Americans across the nation tweeted, Facebookeed, and blogged about Lin. Linsanity swept the nation in less than a week, and many people may want to know why.

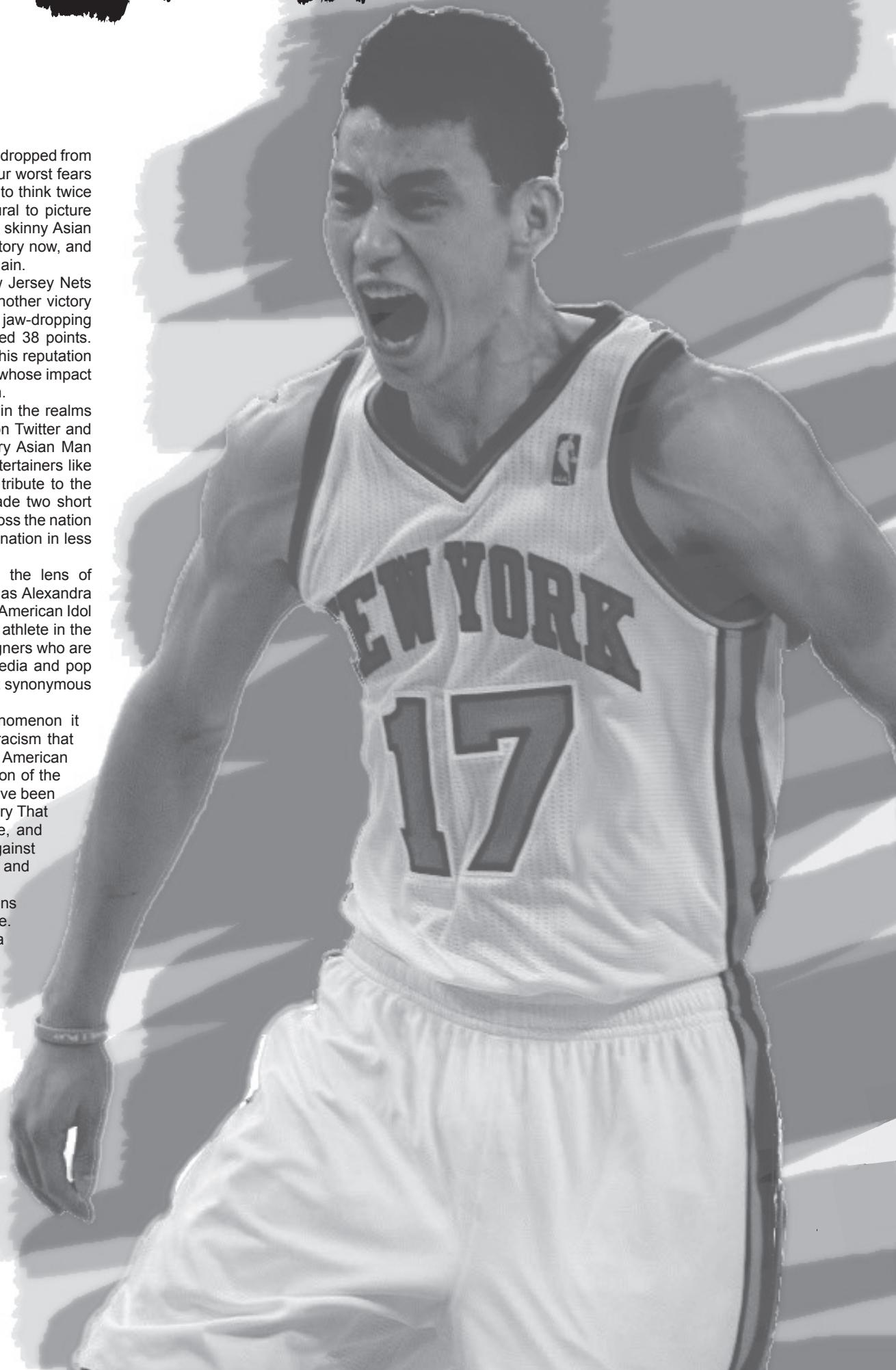
Asian American men have always been viewed through the lens of stereotypes. We're the skinny yellow peril that comes in "hordes," as Alexandra Wallace of UCLA would describe it, and we're the William Hungs on American Idol who are more comfortably positioned as the "geek" rather than the athlete in the mainstream American psyche. We're seen as weak perpetual foreigners who are consistently and systematically emasculated through American media and pop culture. So when Lin came to dominate a traditional American sport synonymous with masculinity, it got people's attention.

Linsanity would have happened either way, but the phenomenon it became was only possible due to this age of social media. The racism that hides behind our social etiquette, the dialogue concerning how Asian American men were historically – and currently – viewed, and the raw emotion of the Asian American community regarding Lin's successes would not have been as evident without the internet. When articles like "The Subtle Bigotry That Made Jeremy Lin the NBA's Most Surprising Star" blew up online, and when ESPN described Lin as the "Chink in the Armor," racism against Asian Americans was brought to the forefront of national discourse and productive dialogue could ensue.

While Lin's success does evidence racism and microaggressions in America, this fact alone is not why Linsanity is so remarkable. Rather, Linsanity is remarkable because it utilizes social media to create a medium through which conflict between mainstream perceptions and the reality of the Asian American community could gather widespread attention. The next time some kids try to bully an Asian American youth who society sees as weak and submissive, they'll have to contend with the image of Jeremy Lin dunking on national TV.

I remember catching a Warrior's game back when Lin was still in the Bay. When he still didn't get a chance to enter the court and play ball even with only two minutes left in the game, the entire stadium erupted into chants of "We want Lin." Even then, the Asian American community cheered Lin on, hoping he would be the hero it had long waited for. Now he's become just that. Linsanity represents a reflection of both the racism that afflicts the Asian American community and the dreams of the community itself. It's a channel between the issues Asian Americans face and the mainstream consciousness, and a challenge to the stereotypes that obscure the reality of the Asian American community. Jeremy Lin is a phenomenon, and the way his career develops in the future will substantially affect the way Asian Americans are racialized and treated in America.

Photo courtesy of wired.com



MARCH EVENT SHOWCASE

This month, **hardboiled** went out to some events to support our Berkeley community. Check out some of our staffers' reactions and experiences!



Theatre Rice: Occupie!

by **kassie pham**

On March 2nd and 3rd Theatre Rice, the first modern Asian American theatre group on campus, had their mid-semester show: *Occupie!* The event showcased the talents of Theatre Rice members through improv, drama, comedy, and film. Mostly known for their comedic acts and films, the drama portion of the show struck a chord with many in the audience. The dramatic act about internal turmoil over a break-up when the empathetic heart conflicts with the blunt, rational mind. A percentage of the proceeds from the event will be going to the Asian American Donor Program (AADP), a community non-profit organization specializing in conducting outreach and donor registration drives in the Asian, Pacific Islander, and Multi-racial communities.

The Empowering Women of Color Conference

by **casey tran**

The weekend of March 2 was the 27th Annual Empowering Women of Color Conference (EWOCC). The conference opened with a dialogue between philosopher, activist Grace Lee Boggs and political activist, scholar Angela Davis on Friday. Boggs and Davis spoke about the need to vision the communities that we want to build and re-imagine our daily lives. The dialogue was part of a three-day conference of speakers, workshops, and performances. "I learned from the last speaker, Radmilla Cody, that we need to heal collectively and it made me realize that it's okay to invite people into our healing process," said Lauren Liu, recent Ethnic Studies & Asian American Studies graduate.



UPCOMING EVENTS!

APIICON 3/17

INVISIBLE RUNWAY 4/5 **cal taiko 4/8**

PCN 4/15 **hardboiled launch party 4/25**