

ISSUE 12.6

hardboiled

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NEWSMAGAZINE! MAY 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOMING HIS
HOLINESS,
THE DALAI LAMA



AND FEATURING

MANIAC OR NOT,
BINGHAMTON'S MEDIA
SENSATION

FIGHTING THE
ADMINISTRATION
... AND MORE!

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COVER ART

my pham

ABOUT THIS COVER

The cover represents the Dalai Lama as a celebrity figure whose name many recognize but whose teachings have become shadowed by his status as a pop icon. The four different squares represent the four different gestures that have been captured of the Dalai Lama during his "public" appearances. Juxtaposed beside the "public" image is the Dalai Lama's "private" self. Although the Dalai Lama is known by many through his public appearances, he still fulfills his religious, private role by maintaining his internal meditative devotion which is, of course, an essential precursor to his public teachings.

editor's notes

Dearest **hardboiled** reader,

So, just between the two of us, how did you end up with this issue of **hardboiled** anyways? Was it that ridiculously persistent girl on Sproul shouting, "Why don't you care about Asian American issues?!?" (Sorry about that). Or was it that friend who does all of those "Asian things" on campus who passed it on to you? Well, the fact of the matter is that I could care less if you're a big shot Asian Pacific Islander community organizer or just someone who hasn't yet mastered the skill of Sproul avoidance (iPod headphones in and eyes averted while incomprehensibly muttering to self). What matters is that you're sitting here with an open mind, willing to peruse a newsmagazine about real issues that affect our world.

I first heard about **hardboiled** as a dorky freshman, eager to grab any opportunity to hone my journalism skills. One year and three huge changes in my major/career track later, I am now a dorky sophomore who no longer intends to pursue a media-related career. Yet I'm still utterly in love with this publication. Why? After writing a series of articles for **hardboiled**, I realized that it wasn't so much the writing that got me fired up; it was the issues. It was the issues that I don't find, and probably won't ever find, on the cover of mainstream newspapers. It is the story angles that forced me to think critically about what a policy or international event meant to me and *my* community. **hardboiled** is the first publication that I've been exposed to that rejected the "objective" stance and wasn't afraid to be **bold** and embrace opinions rather than mask them with

pseudo- impartiality.

My wish for you is that **hardboiled** will sneak up on you just like it did to me. Who knows, maybe an article about injustice against ethnic minorities in China or the plight of North Koreans will get you riled up enough to do something about it. Call me idealistic, but I'm a firm believer in accidental activism.

Here's to hoping,
Cecilia, Story Editor

"If Texas Representative Betty Brown Had Her Way..."



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

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ONE FACT *yields a* DOZEN

by joyce kwon

One fact can yield multiple interpretations. We look to the same cloud but you see a hippo and I, a grazing cow. We witnessed the same rocket launch but we saw a nuclear missile test and they, an experimental communications satellite. But the fact remains.

There is a cloud in the sky and it was created by a rocket launch on April 5, 2009. Our interpretation of this fact, then, cannot hinge merely on the fact itself, but must be taken in political, social, and in particular, historical, context.

We must resist the temptation to give in to convenient cookie-cutter paradigms of understanding North Korea, spoon-fed to us by the American media. Instead, we need to actively seek out alternative viewpoints arising from research and reflection.

In this way, we may progress beyond the simplistic caricature of North Korea as a brainwashed nation under a lunatic leader, and begin to dialogue on the current state of North Korea on a deeper and better-informed level, while remembering its place in history.

Unified Korea had existed for about a couple thousand years, starting off as a few kingdoms that eventually formed Koryo Dynasty in 918 AD, until it was divided by foreign superpowers at the end of World War II. Liberation from the Japanese annexation of 1910 to 1945 over the Korean peninsula proved short-lived, as the US and the USSR promptly divvied up the nation in their race to win the Cold War against each other, snuffing out Korean hope for true independence and liberation from imperialism. In this climate,

North Korea established itself as a sovereign nation on September 9, 1948, under leaders of many competing Communist factions, and initially struggled with internal conflicts arising from the great amount of diversity in the ideological

spectrum.

However, anti-Japanese partisan Kim Il-Sung gradually rose up and purged all rivals to his own guerilla faction that fought in the mountains of Manchuria. He built himself up as a nearly mythological and invincible figure, effectively deifying himself and mobilizing an entire nation to form his own cult of personality that would continue to worship him, even after his death in 1994.

Mindful of the weight and power of history, he eliminated the "Hojok," the Korean family registry, so that his own family lineage would become the only legitimate subject of "Chesa," or ancestral worship. In addition, he greatly exaggerated each North Korean feat over the South and the U.S., such as the USS Pueblo Incident on January 23, 1968, in which North Korea captured a U.S. Navy surveillance ship.

The North Koreans still have this ship on display as a historical reminder of their accomplishment; by continuing to maximize the significance of this incident, they breed a sense of national pride coupled with a hatred for all things American.

This anti-Americanism certainly did not grow out of nothing. We must not forget the atrocious American aerial bombings on North Korea in the early 1950's, in which the American forces casually dropped napalm that leveled cities and burned millions of innocent civilians to death.

These attacks also destroyed crucial irrigation dams for the North's food supply, contributing to death from starvation, since instant deaths from fire-bombings failed to satisfy the American appetite for carnage. While this event has been conveniently erased from our collective historical memory, the North Korean regime continues to vividly remind their citizens of this horrific American legacy, holding the U.S. accountable for its overlooked war crimes to ensure that history

does not repeat itself.

In response to its violent history, North Korea has invested in an extensive underground system to protect itself and has made the military its number one priority, over the starving population and dwindling economy. It makes sense that a small nation once nearly wiped out by the U.S.'s weapons of mass destruction would desire the means to protect itself. The country's military power offers it a bargaining chip in negotiating during six-party talks regarding its nuclear program. Otherwise, North Korea would have little to no power in resisting the demands of the U.S. and its allies; it would be coerced into giving up whatever semblance of independence, dignity and pride it possesses and prizes for having clenched onto its beliefs for over half a century, despite unfavorable conditions with the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of the U.S. as a superpower.

In light of history, we can begin to understand the present North Korean regime and its actions without falling back on half-baked and misconstrued perceptions, readily formulated by the American regime to pacify inquiring minds. Let us wake up from our collective amnesia and remember the history of the U.S.-Korean relationship in analyzing North Korea today. Without looking back to history, we cannot interpret the present. And that's a fact.



Viewing contemporary
North Korea
through the lens of history

living in harmony?

Influx of Korean Americans in Little Tokyo forces two communities to learn to live together despite past conflicts

by alex tagawa

When you walk into Little Tokyo, you probably expect to enter the heart of southern California's Japanese American community. Most would go there for a taste of Japanese food, culture, or shopping. However, this may no longer be the case.

Once a thriving Japanese American community, Little Tokyo in Los Angeles is now one of three remaining Japantowns in the United States. In 2007, parts of Little Tokyo were bought out by 3D Investments, a Beverly Hills based real estate company.

The sale of the New Otani Hotel and the Garden and Weller Courts has led many community members to fear that Japantown will eventually cease to exist. They worry that 3D Investments will not look out for the best interests of the community or continue efforts to preserve its history.

Little Tokyo has also experienced a series of demographic shifts. The majority of residents and businesses are no longer Japanese or Japanese American, especially after the Little Tokyo Shopping Center was purchased by a group of Korean American investors in 2008. According to the L.A. Business Journal, the investors are planning on turning the Little Tokyo Shopping Center into a Korean-themed shopping and entertainment center.

This sale has brought about a different tension within the community. It is no longer an issue of Japantown simply being bought—race is now being added to the problem. People emphasize the fact that Japantown was bought by Korean Americans, rather than just being worried that it has been bought.

In reality however, Japanese Americans and Korean Americans have been sharing the space for years. Koreans actually already own many of the restaurants and shops.

Moreover, the demographics of Little Tokyo reflect the changing shape of the Japanese American community. As the Japanese American community becomes more "Americanized", residents gain the mobility to move outside of Little Tokyo. Even the new Japanese immigrants have chosen not to live in Little Tokyo. Instead, they choose to live in ethnoburbs such as Torrance, where there is a large Japanese American population.

Although many Japanese have left, they continue to see Little Tokyo as a symbol of the Japanese American community. This is why they are opposed to Korean Americans coming in. Many still believe that there is the need for a physical space that the Japanese American community can claim and hold as a symbol. However, only a handful of people are making efforts to actually try to maintain what is left.

As more Japanese Americans begin to move out

of Little Tokyo businesses, there is an increasing need for someone to take them over. Koreans currently have a higher immigration rate than Japanese. Many Koreans who have bought property in Little Tokyo are part of the post-1965 immigration. The 1965 Immigration Act ended the use of a quota system, allowing more Asians to enter the United States.

Under this Act, a preference system was set up that selected immigrants from seven different categories.

the community or taking over their space.

Maybe the younger generation of Japanese Americans needs to follow the steps that their elders have taken to accept Korean Americans as part of the Little Tokyo community. As more Koreans move into the Little Tokyo Towers senior facility, Japanese American and Korean American seniors are setting their differences aside.

They are looking beyond the history and the terrible memories of Japanese colonialism in Korea, and finding things that they have in common, such as singing karaoke.

They have formed a "Good Neighbors" group to help work out conflicts, they hold joint karaoke nights with songs in Korean and Japanese, Koreans learn Japanese and Japanese learn Korean so that they can communicate better, and they have a Korean-Japanese bilingual newsletter called "Bridges" through which they can share parts of their culture. Most would assume that the older generation of Japanese Americans and Korean Americans would be affected by the demographic change the hardest, given the history of Japanese colonization in Korea.

However, they are actually the ones learning the most from it, by taking a proactive role and turning the increase in the Korean population into a completely positive thing.

The issue that Little Tokyo faces is extremely complicated. Little Tokyo is an important part of the Japanese American identity because Japantowns serve as an important symbol of the history and struggle of the community. They serve as a meeting place and a location for non-profit agencies and community organizations, which helps bring the Japanese American community together.

It is sad that the changes occurring in Little Tokyo are being viewed more in terms of race than in terms of the actual development. People focus more on the fact that the community is being bought by Korean investors than they focus on the implications the changes have on the Japanese American community.

Changes are occurring in the types of stores that are opening and the people that are running the businesses; however, many Japanese Americans are not stepping up to open stores or restaurants to maintain Little Tokyo as their own community.

In another light, these changes in ownership might be just what the community needs. Perhaps they will motivate Japanese Americans to make a difference and do something for their community. Most importantly, perhaps these changes will mobilize younger Japanese Americans to follow the example set by their elders and learn to live in harmony with their Korean neighbors in Little Tokyo.



Photo Courtesy of Pacific Citizen



This tower, located in the heart of Little Tokyo, may become a symbol of the past, as pieces of Little Tokyo are sold.

Photo Courtesy of Pacific Citizen

Family reunification was the main focus, but skilled workers, laborers to fill positions where there were labor shortages, and political refugees were also given preference under this system. The 1965 Immigration Act has made it possible for more Koreans to immigrate to the United States.

Dr. Sachiko Kotani from Kyoto University also attributes the number of Korean-owned businesses in Little Tokyo to Korea's postcolonial association with Japan. In her studies, Kotani found that although most Korean American business owners are not directly influenced by Japan's colonization of Korea, the linguistic and cultural familiarity with Japan has been passed on to the younger generation.

She also found that the Korean tenants in Little Tokyo had no intention of changing the symbolic images of

Bringing in the Bengalis

Bengalis struggle to establish a “Little Bangladesh” in what is currently Koreatown

by nashia lalani



All it takes to spiff up a tasty curry is a bit of garlic, onion, ginger, curry powder, a few more spices and voila! Just as all of these ingredients are needed to stir up a bowl of delight, so too does each and every one of us contribute to this huge melting pot of cultures which we find all around us today. Various ethnic groups all come together in perfect harmony create the diverse society that we live in today.

Sound too cliché? Yeah, I totally feel you. Here's the real deal. Just as you may add a bit too much spice, creating a curry that is too overwhelming for your taste buds, a combination of different cultures sharing one environment does not always lead to a perfect outcome. Different groups indeed struggle and clash with one another to gain more representation and add more or their own flavor, so to speak, to a particular space. From the Chinatown in San Francisco all the way to the Koreatown in Los Angeles, different ethnic groups struggle to establish a space to call “a home away from home.” For many immigrants that enter the U.S., creating such a niche has benefits that are two-fold; while ethnic enclaves create a comfort zone for newcomers, they can also provide a profitable way for new immigrants to start their own businesses. Established in the 1870s, Koreatown in Los Angeles is an ideal example of such a locale. Recently, a debate over allocating some of this space for the development of a “Little Bangladesh” has fueled quite a bit of controversy. The growing number of Bengalis in the area have been pushing city officials for a little bit of name recognition in this busy location. They are asking for a section of businesses from Third Street to Wilshire Boulevard as well as from Vermont Avenue to be renamed “Little Bangladesh,” as per the original petition.

Residents have mixed reactions. Some shop owners don't see the big deal in supporting the creation of this area and appreciate the sense of multiculturalism. Others claim that not only have the Koreans put in great effort over the years to build a cultural abode for themselves but the area requested cuts right into a big chunk of Koreatown where few Bengalis are even living. In addition to the sentimental aspect in this name change, there is also a debate over the economic control that comes with the renaming. As one veteran of the locale, Margaret Ko, explains, “It means power.”

So is the issue really about cultural superiority or is it about gaining an economic advantage? Gregory Rodriguez, a staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, brings some insight to the latter argument. He writes that “ethnically designated neighborhoods areas are as much about marketing and branding... as they are about where people live, their actual New World turf or even ethnic pride.” Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it's all about the moolah and getting a little more customer attention. We see this branding everywhere in Berkeley. Why else do you think the Tibetan shops sell more generic silk scarves than other non-ethnic shops? But is this necessarily a bad thing? With the economic downturn, I think not. Some may see this as using culture as a commodity rather than appreciating it as a priceless treasure. Given the current circumstances, however, it seems like a good idea to use our distinct cultures to not only share cultural goods with people of other ethnicities, but to bring home some money to make ends meet. For the growing population of Bengalis, if sharing their tradition through food and clothing helps them maintain employment and feed the family, it is definitely

something to consider.

It is not that the Bengalis are unable to do this now, as there are various Bengali-owned stores spread throughout the neighborhood, but it's just not the same. It's about having the name to market that brand to tourists as well as locals of different ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, by adding in such a brand name area as “Little Bangladesh,” Bengalis may be able to attract Bengalis from other regions. The game is in the name, people. Sounds great, right? That is, if the Koreans were willing to give up a bit of their territory to accommodate the growing population of Bengalis. It is true that the Koreans have invested a lot into building Koreatown into what it is now, a place with a lively atmosphere full of restaurants, theatres, clubs, and internet cafes. Yet even though Koreans do represent a significant percentage in this area, Koreatown has come to be known as one of the most diverse communities, with a growing number of Latinos, African-Americans, Armenians, and other groups. It is thus in the best interest of the Koreans to build unity with their fellow immigrants and other ethnic groups. Doing so will not only boost business, but also maintain a cooperative atmosphere within the community. Having gone through the immigrant struggle themselves, it makes sense for Koreans to aid other segments of the population in pursuing the same opportunity to build a distinct space in new and unfamiliar grounds. After all, both groups share a similar experience. As the negotiations for the boundaries and even the idea of building a “Little Bangladesh” continue to be debated, it wouldn't hurt Koreatown to show some solidarity toward a fellow immigrant community.

Singing Out of Tune

Ineffective satirical video harmful to image of Asian American women

by diane ling



A controversial music video titled “Single Asians” was recently released by a Yale University capella group. The video, a racialized parody on Beyonce's “Single Ladies,” features two minutes of lyrics that incorporate almost every Asian stereotype in existence. Because all four girls performing are Asians, supporters insist that the video's content is not only acceptable, it is funny.

I cannot disagree more. This video tried to be funny, but as far as I'm concerned it failed. I found the humor tasteless and offensive to the Asian American identity. The sub par performance leaves the viewer feeling something was lacking that would have really made it shine as a satire, rather than just another piece of media that perpetuates the same old Asian stereotypes. The video ultimately fails as a satire because it leaves no room for meaningful discussion on the subject.

The first two verses are about the stereotypical Asian girl who “[lives her] life for med school.” Some sample lines read, “You ain't hardcore enough for me...An A-minus ain't the same as an A, is it?” These lyrics echo the model minority stereotype, which is a problem, but they're not nearly as self-degrading as the verses that follow.

The lines “Let's make some noise for all the boys who have yellow fever. I'll be Lucy Liu, or Sailor Moon, a geisha just for you” struck me as extremely disgusting. These girls pitifully compromise their self-dignity by catering to the idea of “yellow fever”, which portrays Asian American women as exotic sex objects desirable to white men. A poor attempt at parody, their nonsensical statements come across as a lame joke. Is it funny that the girls are pretending to be stereotypical exotic, Asian women?

Next, a smiling girl sings “Me love you long time” while forming a heart with her hands. Again, this repulsive image perpetuates the idea

that Asian women are submissive females whose only goal in life is to love their men. It does not help that while one girl sings the above lines, the rest dance with white guys that suddenly appear. This just reiterates the cliché theme of “yellow fever.”

Finally, the singers adopt fake Asian accents in the lines, “We from Beijing, we dry cleaning, and practice vio(r)in.” At this point I could only wonder what these girls were thinking. They invoke the “fob” stereotype, which perpetuates Asians as foreigners. Their performance invites others to laugh derisively at immigrants with imperfect English, turning the Asian identity into a caricature of a human being.

Even if these girls were only poking fun at Asian stereotypes, they have now helped to propagate them. They have also inadvertently invited others to objectify themselves and other Asian women. This is extremely irresponsible considering that their affiliation with a prestigious university lends high visibility to their actions. If intelligent students from such a powerful institution are willing to publicly humiliate their Asian identities, that just sends the wrong message to the general public.

Because the girls are Asian, many people (including Asian Americans) accept their jokes and don't see what they're doing as racist. However, the widespread toleration of such a production brings up a serious issue regarding attitudes toward Asian stereotypes.

Asian Americans who find the video funny only affirm their lack of understanding of their own cultural identity. When we regurgitate racial stereotypes constructed by non-Asians, we do it out of an attempt to laugh at our differences and to assert our own normativity. When hearing those fake accents, for example, some might think:

“Who is this? This sounds totally alien, it's not me, it's different, so let's laugh at it.” However, we do in fact know who these people are – they're our family members, friends, maybe even ourselves. Our laughing at them only shows our disconnection from a culture whose history is intimately linked with our own identities.

On sites where the video is posted, many supporters assert that those who feel offended are “taking themselves too seriously” and “don't know how to take a joke.” These comments are problematic because they close any possibility of discussion about the video's faults and implications. No one wants to be told that he or she can't take a joke. But there are people out there who, like me, think this video is insulting and detrimental to the image of Asian American women –

We need to speak up. We need to insist that jokes which deride Asian identities are *not* funny, and make it known that Asian stereotypes are still a very real problem that Asian American communities face today. Informed discussion is necessary to mend people's ignorant attitudes toward this subject.

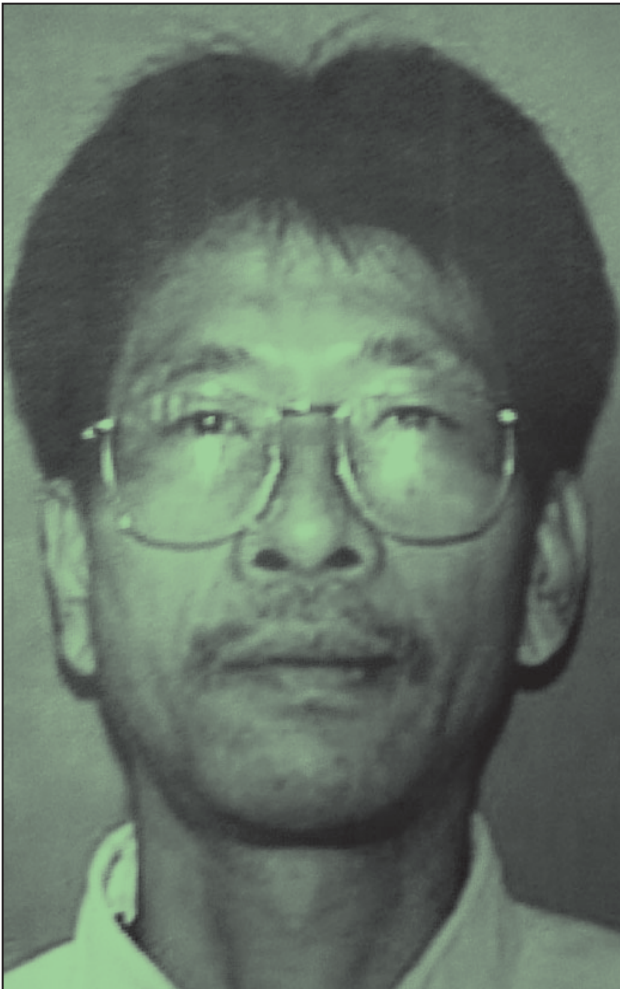
Making fun of stereotypes is perfectly acceptable, but it can be done in a much more intelligent and constructive way. True satire does not solely aim to evoke laughter. It aims to give a critical view on the subject and to provide an open forum for discussion that leads to corrective change. For an effective satire,, the girls should have made it clear that such stereotypes are not acceptable, instead of just affirming their existence for the sake of entertainment. That would have allowed for a much more creative and less offensive project that truly empowers Asian American women while casting off the stereotypes that threaten to engulf our identities.

Maniac or Not?

Binghamton's Media Sensation

Does the media give us a good enough picture of Jiverly Wong?

by elaine chen



Press describes Wong as "a loner who loved guns and hated America." Image courtesy of <http://photos.syracuse.com/>

Given that Google News lists about three thousand and growing articles on this subject, you'd think that I would be satisfied with the information out there on the web about the Binghamton, New York shootings by Vietnamese American Jiverly Wong (or Voong).

But ironically, I am desperate for more, seeking coverage on gun control or mental health treatment or even some sort of response to the way the media is portraying this tragic event. Instead, I am met with article after article attempting to psycho-analyze, with morbid fascination, the mind of "the killer" or "the immigrant who wanted to destroy lives before he destroyed his own."

Although it's hard to read past the lines of embellishment in this rampage, what are the singular facts of what happened?

On April 3rd, with two guns and a hunting knife, Wong barricaded the backdoor of the America Civic Association, an immigration community center described as a place that "helps immigrants settle in this country."

After closing off the back exit of the building, he entered and shot thirteen people before shooting himself.

But a scenario like this cannot be stated without sufficient context.

I honestly felt nervous before diving into all the information available on this topic. How will the media portray Asian, immigrant men? With the Virginia Tech shootings fresh in people's minds, how will the media spin this? I had a sickening fear that stereotypes were now shifting from Asian men being dorky, asexual beings to quiet, psycho killers with the potential to explode at any moment.

I was definitely not disappointed by the number of articles out there sensationalizing the news surrounding Wong. A cryptic letter and photos of Wong that were sent to a media station in New York further encouraged all this.

Wong was depicted as a crazy, America-hating, ticking time bomb based on interviews with co-workers, many of whom had only had one-time encounters with him. News sources highlighted Wong's statement, "I don't like America. America sucks," which was said in response to "Do you like the Yanks?" Other articles noted how he wanted to kill the president.²

Eager to dig up a motive behind the act, numerous articles started with similarly phrased lines: "The maniac who shot 13 people dead in a Binghamton immigration center before killing himself was described Friday as an angry loner who loved guns, hated America and talked about assassinating the President."

And after haphazardly framing a picture of Wong through these interviews with coworkers, the blame game begins! What is really the problem?

The economy, the difficulties of learning English, adapting to America, job insecurity, family... the web of explanations for Jiverly Wong's actions expand and grow. Of course, Wong's not exempt from the blame game. He is eagerly labeled as a maniac, a psycho, and a coward.

What's even more fun than hastily made judgments and labeling? Random scientists with no involvement at all giving opinions based on poor coverage! One example:

Park Dietz [is] a criminologist and forensic psychiatrist at UCLA who analyzed the Columbine High School shootings in Colorado in 1999.

How will the media portray Asian immigrant men?
...I had a sickening fear that stereotypes were now shifting from Asian men being dorky asexual beings to quiet psycho killers who are about to explode at any moment.

"What will be revealed if the investigation goes deep enough is that many people in a shooter's world knew that he was angry, mad, unreasonable, scary at times, and recently some of them came to learn that he was threatening and armed," said Dietz, who is not involved in the Binghamton investigation.

"They've known that for a long time, but none of them did what they should have done with that information."

What's my beef here? So what?

The media has been sensationalizing everything from mass killings to the president's dog (Did you hear?? His name is BO!). My problem with the media right now is the lack of conversations being started on understanding immigrant communities and socialization, analyzing problems with mental health access, or even questioning gun control laws.

Yeah, learning English is *hard*, but what about everything else an immigrant faces in America? Why don't we

My problem with the media right now is the lack of conversations being started on understanding immigrant communities and socialization, analyzing problems with mental health access, or even questioning gun control laws.

talk about the financial and social instability of settling into a new country which might forever contextualize you as a foreigner?

What about noticing the lack of available resources for him to turn to in order to deal with the so quickly condemned mental illness he struggled with?

How about the social stigmas of even trying to access mental health care?

And can someone *please* tell me why the heck people are still able to so easily buy a gun, especially after the number of shootings that we've witnessed growing up? Why are we still clamoring for second amendment rights when the irresponsible exertion of these rights results in the harm of others?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not justifying Wong's actions by trying to expand the picture of the problem. I condemn his actions and his choices. No matter how deeply we investigate into this, the situation remains the same.

What I do want to say is that I think what we must first do is really grieve over the violent actions of this man and extend sympathy to the victims who were deeply affected by this incident. We also must recognize how dangerously the media construes the events, and feel indignant at the attempts to play to our emotions in order to sell stories.

It is important to not expand this incident any further by trying to zero in on Wong's motives, problems, and life. Let us not so easily condemn Wong as a special case, a freak of nature, an abnormality, but see him as someone who could've very well been us.

What is more, we need to make constructive efforts to understand the greater elements that played key roles in this incident and start a dialogue on key problems which contributed.

That is the only way we can build knowledge and awareness in order to move for greater change to prevent these things from happening in the future.

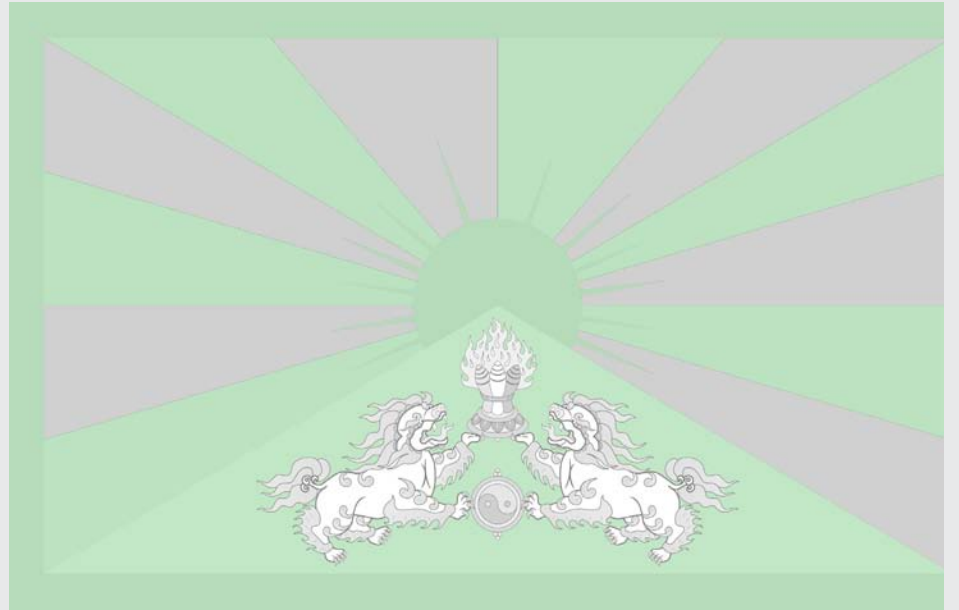
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WELCOMING HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA:

An exploration of the Berkeley student body's reception and knowledge of the Dalai Lama



The snow lion flag of Tibet

www.craftedresistance.org

by emily yu

When Cal students turn up in the thousands to camp and wait outside the Zellerbach ticket office for hours, you better believe this wait is for something bigger than a venue for a rock star or the return of a Jedi. This happened on March 11th, when students lined up in anticipation of obtaining tickets to see his Holiness the Dalai Lama give a lecture entitled “Peace through Compassion” at the Greek Theatre. The lecture took place on Saturday, April 25th.

When you hear the name Dalai Lama, what first comes to mind? Mystical figure? An ethnic and spiritual commodification? Wait, isn't he ...Gandhi? These perceptions came up in casual conversations with other Berkeley students who shared what people they knew thought of the Dalai Lama. The different identities associated with him struck me as pretty provocative. They ran the gamut of personally charged opinions to misguided ignorance. This range piqued my interest in how other Berkeley students perceive the Tibetan leader and why they found it worth waiting hours in line to see him.

To get a sense of who the Dalai Lama is to Berkeley students, I interviewed eight fellow Cal students to see what they knew about him. Did their motivation to see him have to do with his fame or their knowledge of him? And why does it even matter?

The first hurdle: who is the Dalai Lama? Thankfully, no one ventured to say that the Dalai Lama is Gandhi, reincarnated or not. The Dalai Lama is a political and Buddhist spiritual leader of Tibet, well-known for his reputation and leadership. Everyone I interviewed was at least able to answer some variation of his religious and political role. They correctly associated his world-renowned title with his role as a human rights and peace advocate

as well as a Tibetan spiritual leader.

A few peers already had knowledge about the Dalai Lama or did more research on him after getting the ticket. One student had a collection of the Dalai Lama's books in his house, and another had read the Dalai Lama's book *The Art of Happiness*. Two of them knew that the Dalai Lama had received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to seek peaceful solutions for the liberation of Tibet from China.

However, when it came to more extensive knowledge about the Dalai Lama, the majority of interviewed peers were honest about their lack of information. Aziza Abduragimova admitted, “I was not at all well-informed prior to getting the ticket, nor am I well-informed now.” Some had read an article or did some basic research on the Dalai Lama, but few could articulate aspects of the Dalai Lama (like his position, teachings, or work) beyond his identity. However, most did little follow-up research on the Dalai Lama after the hype of getting the ticket, citing schoolwork and the lack of time as reasons for this. In response to her own and the general student body's uninformed state, Phia Xiong observed, “People are politically open-minded but don't know much about the Dalai Lama.”

After a failed uprising against the Chinese in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet and has spent the following decades in exile, working with international institutions like the United Nations to hold China accountable for their violation of human rights. The Dalai Lama has also been an ardent speaker and activist for world peace and harmony, traveling across the world to share Buddhist philosophy and partake in interfaith dialogue. He has been denounced by the Chinese government for advocating Tibetan independence; he has claimed that he supports more political autonomy in Tibet. In December 2008, the Dalai Lama announced his semi-retirement, passing on the leadership of the country to an elected parliament in-exile.

Though the students I interviewed were relatively uninformed about what the Dalai Lama has done and achieved, they had a general sense of his spiritual leadership, as well as a less pervasive impression of his impact as a political and peace activist. They also shared a sense of urgency and awe in anticipation of his visit.

On why it was worth standing in line so long for the tickets, Eugene Wang commented, “He says he may not reincarnate anymore. Even if he did reincarnate, it would take another 20 or so years before the next Dalai Lama gained full political and religious power, and another 20 more years for him to become influential – I'll be 60 by then.” With the Dalai Lama nearing the age of seventy-four and the possibility that he is the last Dalai Lama, this once in a lifetime opportunity really becomes more valuable.

The Dalai Lama has managed to avoid stigmas associated with religious people and thereby attract a very diverse audience worldwide. His experience and reputation has made him a revered and highly respected figure, to the extent that what he has to say is valued by all kinds of people in different ways. As someone curious and not as familiar with the Dalai Lama, Jasmine Hui said, “I want to hear what he has to say... [and] how that relates to us.” Phuntsok Tseten, who follows the Dalai Lama's teachings more closely, said, “I want to learn how I can be more compassionate to others.”

In a way, you can say that the Dalai Lama's fame supersedes the knowledge of what he has done. At the same

time, the magnitude of the things he has accomplished is exactly what makes up his fame and is consequently why people, even without knowing the specifics of what he has accomplished, want to listen to him. As Atit Shah noted, “He's a world-renowned figure coming to Berkeley. He's done so much in the world... You want to be able to say that you saw the Dalai Lama.”

But do we rest here? Do we just sit, watch, and listen to the Dalai Lama, reveling in his fame but never fully realizing what the Tibetan leader has dedicated his life to and why? Or is there something more at stake here that calls for us to be more actively aware global citizens? On the one hand, “[The Dalai Lama] fell under the bigger umbrella of ‘neat, uniquely U.C. Berkeley things to do,’” as noted by Natalie Tsang. In other words, he was another cool, famous person to see and hear. But we also have to ask ourselves: what do we take away from an event like this? Is it just for bragging rights?

The Dalai Lama brings with him almost fifty years of experience traveling the world and raising global awareness about peace, human rights, and religious harmony. He assumed full spiritual and temporal powers of Tibet at the age of sixteen, and in the five decades after his exile, used his Tibetan Buddhist philosophy to advocate peaceful solutions for humanitarian crises. His motivation for doing this isn't just an idealistic projection into the future; much of it is grounded in the history of his country's political situation. After the 1911 Revolution in China, Tibet declared independence, but in 1949, Communist China invaded Tibet, and forced the signing of the “Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” which allowed Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Since then, the Human Rights Watch has reported alleged human rights violations of Tibetans under Chinese rule.

In response to why he wanted to see the Dalai Lama, George Chin remarked, “You see Stephen Hawking to hear about space, so similarly you want to hear the Dalai Lama talk about peace.” But it's more than just listening to what the Dalai Lama has to say about peace. It's also about understanding peace in context, the peaceful resistance the Dalai Lama encouraged Tibetans to exercise in the protests last year, and the peaceful resolution that he seeks between China and Tibet. The issue of repression and human rights violation in Tibet continues to be an issue today. The goal of his peace talks is to end this.

That's what we need to understand. So many Berkeley students turned up to listen to the Dalai Lama with open minds. This willingness to listen also allows for an opportunity to learn about something outside the Berkeley bubble. There's substance to the Dalai Lama's fame. We need to educate ourselves about the lack of political freedom and human rights that Tibetans face because this is the basis for what the Dalai Lama has dedicated his entire life to. If we respond to fame like that, we should definitely respond too by educating ourselves. And this calls for an active engagement with what he has so graciously shared with us at the Greek Theatre.

That means asking ourselves why the Dalai Lama gives a speech on peace through compassion. If we can answer that, it's a start. If we can explain it to someone less informed, that's another step forward. And if we can explain why it matters to us as global citizens, even better. Because, in the end, that's a Berkeley thing to do. Politically open-minded we are, uninformed we can be, but in the end, apathetic and ignorant aren't what being a Berkeley student is about.



www.religion.ucsb.edu

The 14th Dalai Lama visited and lectured at Berkeley on the weekend of April 25, 2009,

a voiceless outcry

by laylaa abdul-khabir



A Muslim Uighur woman walks with her son past security forces in Xinjiang. *photo courtesy of Newsweek*

Why the Muslim Uighers' struggle in China's Xinjiang Province is not as public as the Tibet conflict

When many people think about China and human rights, the issue of Tibet immediately comes to mind. Coverage on China's human rights record has tended to ignore other less-known regions and ethnic minorities that suffer repression at the hands of the Chinese government.

Xinjiang province in Northwestern China is home to the Uighur people, a Muslim ethnic group that has struggled for self-rule with China for decades. The 8 million Uighurs form 46% of Xinjiang's population. They have fought for and won, in 1933 and 1944, the independence of their own territory, called the East Turkistan Republic. Each of these periods of rule were short-lived, however; China soon reclaimed the territory and to this day maintains that Xinjiang is an "autonomous region" that is irrefutably a part of China.

China's heavy hand is seen across the region today, from religious restrictions on Islamic practices to the unjustified detainment and execution of Uighur activists, which is under-reported. As Uighurs' voices are left out of the world's consciousness, China gets a blank check to continue its oppressive activities in the region.

The Uighurs [pronounced WEE-gurs] are a Turkic people that have lived in modern-day Xinjiang from as early as the 9th century. Xinjiang was ruled by the Qing Dynasty Manchus from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century, a period during which numerous Uighur revolts occurred. In 1864, the Uighurs successfully established their own state, which was named Yettishar. However, Yettishar was re-conquered by the British-backed Manchus in 1884 and was at this point renamed "Xinjiang" or "New Territory." Uighurs continue to refer to the area today as "East Turkistan" or "Uighurstan," rejecting the Chinese-appropriated name.

Uighurs feel little kinship with the dominant Han Chinese

ethnic group, with whom they don't share culture, language or religion. China has long feared the rise of a transnational Uighur state formed from Uighur communities in Xinjiang and neighboring Central Asian countries. Resentment brews among Uighurs over China's perpetual intervention, which is seen as an attempt to suppress or eradicate local culture and religion.

Political movements for Xinjiang independence from China primarily emerged in the 1940s as a series of attempted uprisings against local warlords and the Chinese Communists. The movements have existed for decades, with peaking and waning levels of popularity. The more radical of these separatist groups are frequently blamed for sporadic incidents of violence in Xinjiang, including attacks and bombings. The most prominent independence group today is the East Turkistan Islamic Movement

(ETIM), an organization established in the 1990's that China has blamed for much of the violence that occurred in that period.

Determined to contain the "separatist" ambitions of Uighurs, the Chinese government imposes a net of rules and restrictions to keep Xinjiang under tight government control. China suppresses religious practices in the Muslim majority region, hoping that by squashing religious identity, nationalist aspirations will die as well. Freedom to pray and study Islam is heavily regulated. Government workers are forbidden from attending mosques and religious schools, and cannot display any religious symbols in public, including the headscarf for women and beards for men. The only Qur'an allowed to be read is the official government-sanctioned one. Signs posted on mosques by the Communist Party limit the length of the imam's lecture during Friday services and prohibit prayer in public areas. During Ramadan, the Muslims' holy month, restrictions tighten even more. Headscarves and beards are prohibited altogether, and teachers and students are told not to observe the fast. In a New York Times article dated Oct. 18, 2008, it was reported that Kashgar University enforced this rule particularly strictly as the school tried to make students eat during the day and locked them inside in the evening to prevent them from returning home to break their fasts.

China blames the sporadic violence and unrest in Xinjiang on the need for government crackdown. As reported by MSNBC last August, as China headed toward the Beijing Olympics, the government warned that the East Turkistan Islamic Movement was the single "biggest threat" to China and the Olympics. Four days before the Olympics, an attack carried out by two Uighur men on Chinese

border police that killed seventeen was linked by the Chinese government to the ETIM. China cited this incident as a reason to further step up its level of scrutiny in Xinjiang, and significantly increased the patrols, arrests and detentions it already conducted in the region. The state arbitrarily arrests Uighurs on charges of "illegal religious activities" or "threatening the security of the state," most of the time without citing specific reasons. The BBC in April 2005 reported that a joint report released by Human Rights Watch and Human Rights in China stated that thousands of Uighurs are arrested by the Chinese government every year, and that more than half of those in Xinjiang's re-education camps are there for practicing 'illegal religious activities.'

Given the mass detentions, abuses and systematic repression of rights in Xinjiang, where is the international outcry?

"Given the mass detentions, abuses and systematic repression of rights that can be observed in Xinjiang, where is the international outcry? Why is Xinjiang not spotlighted for human rights abuses, especially by Western critics and the past Bush administration, who were quick to leap to the defense of Tibet?"

Why is Xinjiang not spotlighted for human rights abuses, especially by Western critics and the past

Bush administration, who were quick to leap to the defense of Tibet? In the past 8 years, the Bush administration has largely turned a blind eye on China's abuses in Xinjiang. When George W. Bush declared his "War on Terror" following September 11, 2001, China lined up beside him in part because the state saw its own opportunity to benefit by labeling the Muslim Uighur separatists as a "terrorist group," and in some cases, went as far as to say they were "Al-Qaeda linked." In a moment of shifting rhetoric, as the Bush administration was warming up its vocal cords to repeat "terror threat" and "militant Islamic extremists" over and over again as a justification for its war over the next many years, China saw a chance to simply transfer the rhetoric over to a situation that had long been a thorn in its side. Human rights groups and scholars of the region rebuked the notion that Uighur independence movements were a militant threat connected to Al-Qaeda, but the damage was done. The 2005 joint human rights report later stated that China had "opportunistically [used] the post-11 September environment to make the outrageous claim that individuals disseminating peaceful religious and cultural messages in Xinjiang are terrorists who have simply changed tactics."

China shows little sign of ending its operations and loosening government control in Xinjiang. Many nameless and faceless Uighurs continue to be arrested, detained, or executed, their stories never reaching the press. Xinjiang has missed the U.S. shortlist for popular human rights repressed regions to act concerned about, and the media coverage is not likely to increase. Xinjiang lacks the star power of the Dalai Lama as a worldwide advocate, as Tibet has. Instead, most people respond with "X--what?" when hearing or reading about the region for the first time. The future looks potentially brighter with the rise of Uighur leaders who are increasingly speaking out against the human rights abuses. For now, however, Xinjiang's inhabitants must endure in silence.

For more information about China's repressed minorities and actions you can take, visit <http://www.ir2008.com>. Or read the summary online of the Human Rights Watch report mentioned in this article by searching the title: "China: Religious Repression of Uighur Muslims."



A People's Liberation Army political poster in a town in Xinjiang, despite the Uighurs' discontent with the government's rule. *photo courtesy of NY Times*

fighting the administration the administration's lack of transparency in IAS RESTRUCTURING

by roohi ebrahim



photo courtesy of Support IAS Coalition

The plan to restructure the International Area Studies Teaching Program (IASTP) has been far from welcomed by students and faculty. Currently, the IASTP is comprised of six undergraduate majors: Asian Studies, Development Studies, Latin American Studies, Middle East Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Political Economy of Industrialized Societies, as well as three graduate degree programs: Asian Studies, International & Area Studies, and Latin American Studies. The program is home to about 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students on campus. In addition, the teaching program services students from other majors all across the University.

With such a variety of majors under it, the IASTP encompasses a number of the few departments on campus that helps ethnic groups understand their history in a non-Eurocentric way. Damaging its robustness could limit its efficacy in this respect.

University officials' decision to restructure the program can be best described as a unilateral action with complete disregard for transparency. The administration has made this decision without involving the most important stakeholders—students and faculty. Although Executive Vice Chancellor Provost (EVCP) George Breslauer says he consulted several faculty members regarding the decision to restructure, he also states, "Consultation does not mean taking a vote ... The role of senior administrators is to consult, not to concede decision-making responsibility choices to public vote. We are responsible for making the hard choices, since unanimity and consensus are typically unattainable."

My question here is: does this type of consultation even hold any weight at the end of the day since the administration ultimately holds all decision-making power? In fact, the majority of faculty members found out about the decision to restructure at the same time as students, through an e-mail that was sent out right before spring break.

So who did the administration even bother to consult with if it wasn't with the people involved most in IASTP?

What needs to be acknowledged is that without a dean, the department would lose its representation on the administrative level. According to the current IAS Associate Dean Ananya Roy, the Global Poverty and Practice minor—the fastest growing minor at UC Berkeley—might not even exist today were it not for the advocacy of a dean's office and the Blum Center. It becomes quite evident after analyzing these elements that eliminating the dean would hinder further development in IAS.

Moreover, the EVCP's decision to restructure the IAS Department by eliminating the deanship position sets the dangerous precedent of decision-making without integrating the opinions of faculty and students. The EVCP's consultation process has been sharply criticized and questioned. The vast majority of IASTP students feel entirely excluded.

Student and ASUC representatives have tried to set up appointments with administration to discuss these changes in detail.

However, administration has not been cooperative. In response, Support IAS Coalition members stated in a letter to the Chancellor and EVCP, "We do not accept your dismissal of ASUC representatives by avoiding or postponing meetings.

Nor do we accept your dismissal of our concerns as invalid while you refuse to provide evidence to the contrary." Last Wednesday, Support IAS Coalition members organized outside of California Hall to set up an appointment with the dean to discuss the restructuring of the IASTP.

The EVCP's decision to restructure the IASTP

isn't just an isolated case—it reflects a systematic problem of transparency in decision-making that affects various departments.

This is just a continuation of the administration's attitude from last year when the East Asian Languages were threatened with a 40% and 66% cut to the Japanese and Korean language programs, respectively.

The decision to restructure certainly debilitates the IAS department as a whole.

However, Breslauer doesn't think so. He states in an e-mail to Academic Affairs Vice President Carlo de la Cruz, "Removal of the IAS deanship resolves a structural problem that has persisted throughout much of the twenty-year history of this unit. There has been a persistent, often counterproductive, tension between the interests of the dean and interests of the directors of many research institutes." Breslauer openly states that the university prioritizes research more than it does the undergraduate education and future of IASTP students.

Another important aspect to note is that the extremely limited information given to students by administration seems to constantly be changing. At first, the EVCP had said there were no budgetary reasons behind the restructuring. Later, he claimed that eliminating the

deanship position would save the campus approximately \$250,000 and was much needed given the university's budget constraints.

However, in a more recent meeting with Carlo de la Cruz on April 17, 2009 Breslauer updated the figure to \$150,000. More importantly, he added that "hard budget

times make this reorganization easiest to digest but the main reason is not necessarily budgetary." Because the arguments for the restructuring are constantly being changed, it is difficult for students to find out what exactly is happening. This is a problem; we need a better system of communication between students and administrators to allow students to truly understand all the changes being made.

What does this mean for all IAS majors? How exactly are current and prospective students within the department going to adapt to these changes? For those of you who are unfamiliar with IASTP, it is a program that prides itself in being a department with a diverse range of students who have a broad range of interests. It offers courses which support both contemporary and historical research on every region of the world. The program has served as a model institution for several universities across the country and many campuses have started upgrading their programs based on our standards and prestige. Therefore, downgrading the program on our campus would put us out of sync with other universities. For example, UCLA has a Vice Provost that is specifically dedicated to its IAS Department while the IAS Department on our campus is not even going to have a dean.

From an Asian and Pacific Islander (API) standpoint, restructuring the IAS department fundamentally damages a program that gives students an international perspective. Many API's have benefited from the IAS department because it enables them to develop a better understanding of their heritage, while non-API's learn more about API histories and cultures.

The program tries to provide students with a multi-perspective, non-Eurocentric view so that global issues are not just talked about in terms of the West vs. the Orient but in a dynamic and historical context.

Meghana Dhar states, "As an IAS major, I have been able to take a variety of courses that have allowed me to see the different aspects of global culture and I do believe that those aspects and experiences are not replaceable by any other department."

In fact, the IAS department encourages students to take courses in a multitude of departments on campus. It is this unique interdisciplinary approach that has attracted so many students to the department. The IASTP is a valuable asset to the UC Berkeley campus; it would be an incredible loss to have it downgraded in any way.

As students we need to take action now against our administration's non-transparent and unilateral approach. Given the economic recession at hand and the budget cuts already directed toward California public schools, it is inevitable that crucial budget decisions will have to be made. It is frightening to imagine what might happen next year since the administration has already decided that they are the sole decision makers and do not need to consult all parties at stake. The time to take a stand is now—before it's too late.

For those of you who are interested in learning more or joining the IAS Coalition, check out the Facebook group "Support Cal International and Area Studies" or the student coalition's new blog at www.supportIAScoalition.org. You can contact the group at supportIAScoalition@gmail.com.



ias.berkeley.edu

IAS is home to nearly 50 interdisciplinary, comparative, and area research centers, institutes, and programs. These units support both contemporary and historical research on every region of the world, facilitating the work of more than 800 affiliated faculty and 900 affiliated graduate students.

THE FOUR ELECTED TO REPRESENT YOU

Why your new execs did not attend the APAC API Forum

by melani sutedja



photo courtesy of Bare Magazine

None of the four Student Action execs attended the APAC API forum held on April 6.

Ah, the partisanship never smelled riper.

By the time you read this, you probably know and are celebrating (or really pissed) over who won the ASUC Executive and Senate seats – but ask me three weeks ago, and I wouldn't be able to guess. All that jazz about John Moghtader's recall either completely turned off potential voters, or further disaggregated the API community into their respective "CalSERVE" and "Student Action" niches.

So in lieu of the mass phone-bankings, the ideologies, and the friend/classmate/floormate-from-freshman-year loyalty, the question of "who do you vote for?" was really: "who do you trust?"

Enter, the APAC ASUC Election Forum. Put on by the Asian Pacific American Coalition, it was supposed to be a space for candidates to flesh out their stances on issues ranging from concerns about increasing student fees to sexuality. Its purpose was to help Asian and Pacific Islander students make an informed decision when voting.

With around 27 guests scrunched in the front rows of 145 Dwinelle, the event was a cozy and personal affair. CalSERVE Academic Affairs Vice President candidate Isaac Miller discussed the need for townhall discussions in light of the IAS restructuring, while DAAP Presidential candidate Ronald Cruz emphasized the need for the student body to organize collectively. Yet, the real issue on everyone's minds that night was obvious – where were Student Action candidates Will, John, Tu, and Dani?

During the break, one audience member vocalized her anger with the Student Action's failure to show up. "Our community's already a minority," said senior Laura Thammovang. "I am completely insulted that Student Action didn't come. Everybody's got midterms, stuff to do. I spoke to John Tran and to folks, but I had very important questions about my organizations. Just recognize that they're not here."

The facilitator then acknowledged the white elephant in the room. "Student Action withdrew from the forum," he said. "They rejected the invitation. They stated a reason but asked not to make mention."

THE CONTENTS OF AN EMAIL

Thanks to the alleged snub, the internet was set ablaze that night with angry Facebook tags in both protest and defense of the party. Others confronted the candidates themselves when they flirled on Sproul.

"I was walking to class when Will came up to me to ask if I voted," said Junior Linda Vu. "I asked him why didn't he or the other Student Action candidates show up to the APAC Forum.

He said he injured his leg so he couldn't come. But he looked fine to me. And when I asked about the other SA candidates, he said they could not show up because of prior arrangements."

Talking to the candidates themselves painted a different story of what happened.

They said the APAC forum was fundamentally biased from the outset, and because they did not agree with how the forum was run, they did not wish to attend.

"We received an email that clearly shows CalSERVE received individual invitations to this event, since the email sent to us was also sent to calservecoordinators@gmail.com and senatemanagers@googlegroups.com, which are clearly CalSERVE list serves," said newly elected Academic Affairs Vice President John Tran.

He also said that though the election forum was to determine which candidates can best represent the community, the APAC forum was biased against Student Action because the endorsements of APAC had already been promised to CalSERVE.

"All three of the APAC facilitators are clearly partisan because they are actively involved in guiding certain CalSERVE candidates," said John Tran.

Candidates said they wanted their reasons for not attending to be out in the open, and did not know why facilitators did not make that clear at the forum.

Newly elected Vice President Tu Tran was more blatant in his sentiments, especially after friends from REACH! and Berkeley Cambodian Student Association forwarded him the e-mail. He said organizations such as the Berkeley Teochew Association and Asian American Association did not even receive invitations.

"It didn't make sense for us to show up. It was a

"Two of the candidates are running on an API platform and for them not to be present in a forum for the most all-encompassing API space on campus – APAC – it is a rejection of their duties as a representative," - Fong Tran

biased space," said Tu Tran. "I didn't have an injury, but I didn't want to show up."

A former-supporter of CalSERVE Presidential candidate Van Nguyen, Tran acknowledged the partisanship present within the API community. "The API comes together – just not during elections," he said. "The parties jockey and fight for votes, it's the nature of the election and you're never going to change that. It's just dangerous when an organizing body like APAC starts to align with one party heavily. Chances are you're going to divide the API community even more so."

Yet APAC facilitators asserted that despite the logistics of how the e-mail was sent, the candidates should have come to the event to acknowledge the API vote.

Jenilyn Sotto, the external affairs coordinator of APAC, said that though candidates accused the organization of lacking outreach and representation, the very first listserve contacted for the purposes of this event was the UCBAPAC listserve – which includes AAA, VSA, APATH, and other API communities.

"As Spring 2008 AAA External Vice President, I have made it my personal mission to outreach to AAA and ensure their inclusion in the APAC listserv and space," she said.

In response to Student Action's allegations that

the forum was skewed against them, APAC officials said the candidates should have used the event to extend an overture of friendship to traditionally oppositional spaces.

"Many of the students present at our forum were swing voters, willing to hear the rationale for both sides before casting a ballot," Sotto said. "In fact, our coalition is equally split between 'progressive' and 'conservative' party lines, with our largest member organizations falling into 'conservative' affiliations – and still SA called the coalition and this event 'partisan.'"

Supporters, like senior Fong Tran, also remain adamant in their sentiments towards what they call a snub.

"Two of the candidates are running on an API platform and for them not to be present in a forum for the most all-encompassing API space on campus – APAC – it is a rejection of their duties as a representative," he said.

A DIVIDED VOTE

Now, I can go on and on with the "he said" or "she said." But by the end of the day, we've already gotten our elected slate whether you like it or not.

I can make it a point in this article to blame APAC for not being upfront with the audience and admitting some fault, or I can blame Student Action from not trying to outreach at this event, but it'd really be superfluous to do so.

With more than half of the Senate and two of the Executives being of API descent, the only thing we can do is hold the folks that you've elected into office – whether Student Action, CalSERVE, or Independent – accountable to the needs of the community. Will being a part of APAC now be painted as being anti-Student Action? To take it even further, will any of the Student Action candidates represent the voices and needs of marginalized students if a situation arises, or will their voices be ignored because of their possible APAC-affiliations?

There have been beautiful creations that have conjured out collaborations, such as the API Issues Conference or Rock the Vote, though arguments in Fi Comm meetings has still yet to get everyone out by 1 a.m.

Bypassing petty group loyalties – though it makes me the more cynical that I used the exact same phrase in last year's **hardboiled** article – I think there are some chances at reform. CalSERVE Senator Mary June Flores and Student Action Senator Sarah Cho have collaborated this year in working towards initiatives concerning the API community. Let's see more of that rather than news of another potential recall.

So this article will end on an unsettling note. All you folks whose candidates got in – because you agree with the ideologies, you are in the same sorority as a candidate, or you were just pissed at the recall – see what they will do you for you, especially on a campus that thinks you are overrepresented, perpetually foreign, and at times, exclusive.

The ASUC candidates and organizational members I talked to from both parties complained about how spaces on campus are partisan, so let's see if our new leaders can walk the walk. God forbid the Daily Cal will emerge with a new ASUC scandal- let's leave it to Dalai Lamas, retired police chiefs, and the always beloved frat-night-gone-wrong to make the headlines. To the new slate: the ball is in your park.

made in

by tawny tsang

The silver lining to China's falling exports on American consumerism

It seems as if almost everything these days has a little sticker that reads, "Made in China". However, according to BBC News, China's exports have experienced a drastic decline of 17% just this past month. The export industry accounts for nearly half of China's GDP, so this decrease is causing a wave of factory closures and staff layoffs, perpetuating the poverty of the labor class.

While it is easy to point to the global financial meltdown as the basis of all this, doing so negates the basic economic principle of supply and demand. Most of the orders that China receives for its products come from the United States, but the demand for these orders has decreased of late. Recent events commenting on the contaminated infant formula and plastic items have brought the quality of Chinese products into question. Who wants to buy anything that may cause exposure to toxins?

It's not so much that the world's third largest economy is feeling the effects of the current world economic crisis, than that they just aren't making goods that meet international health standards. This unfortunately not only affects consumers but also Chinese laborers. According to the newspaper *China Daily*, over two million people in the Guangdong Province alone are unemployed and those who are lucky enough to have a job earn on average an equivalent of \$295 a month.

There are several suggested remedies to this problem, such as implementing trade agreements and quality regulations for factories producing international products. Following this logic, if the standard of quality is raised for Chinese exports then the global market would be more accepting of those products and therefore place larger orders. However, China is a big place and there are just too many factories to adequately regulate. Implementing regulations also makes it more difficult for workers to become employed

because the stricter sanctions on quality increase production costs, leaving less money available for wages. The government is also extremely lax about controlling firms. According to the *New York Times*, some Chinese companies routinely shortchange their employees on wages, withhold health benefits and expose their workers to dangerous machinery and harmful chemicals, like lead, cadmium and mercury.

With this knowledge, some may be inclined to boycott Chinese products. After all, who could, on an ethical level, enjoy something knowing that a child made it under excruciating conditions? However, contrary to what is commonly believed, factory jobs are far better than some of the other options available. For example, some of the unemployed in China scavenge for pieces of plastic in garbage dumps to sell to recyclers for the equivalent of five cents per pound. Factory work is an alternative to manual forms of labor like pulling rickshaws. At least the factory provides protection from the rain and the sun. And while U.S. policy makers mean well in favoring labor standards and trade agreements as an attempt to reduce oppressive working conditions abroad, a position in a factory or sweatshop is something of a dream to the unemployed during this economic downturn.

This puts well-informed American consumers into somewhat of a pickle. On the one hand, buying more Chinese products may counter the decline in Chinese exports and therefore allow more people to become employed there. And with the interconnectivity of the international markets, increased economic activity there will trickle down to increased economic activity here. However, doing so would also perpetuate the poor standards firms have on regulating product quality and worker conditions. One may wonder, "what to do?" because on some level, consumption is necessary for survival. Well, something not to do is to pay so much attention to China because in reality, not

everything is made there.

For example, lots of things are made in Cambodia. Cambodia's largest industry is its textile industry and it manufactures garments for the international market. Although it is a small South East Asian country, it has been able to attain successful trade agreements with the U.S. by developing a well-monitored labor system in exchange for additional quotas to the U.S. market. Vietnam and India have also recently stepped up to follow the model created by Cambodia. While there will be costs to this monitoring, firms will overall save money by reducing the costs of multiple audits and third-party inspections. However, a large part of this financing comes from the buyers. And the buyers are determined by sales in the U.S. market. For Cambodia and other Southeast Asian countries to continue this worker-friendly approach to factory jobs, it is crucial that their firms receive enough support from consumers abroad. The most direct way to do that is to buy their products.

And don't worry – China's big enough to take care of itself. According to BBC News, China's government has implemented a stimulus package that aims to increase consumerism to counter the economic decline due to falls in exports. Although the value of the dollar has been declining in relation to a number of other currencies including the euro, RMB, and yen, it is still powerful in determining the welfare of international industries.

As Asian Americans, we are members of a diaspora society. Purchasing items that can benefit particular countries is a way to connect with the global community. With this knowledge, we can become more discriminating buyers. When making your next purchase, don't only pay attention to garment's style, size and price, but also consider where it's coming from. Doing so will not only make you look good but feel good too.

YouTube and Music in the Far East

The wrath of censorship in China today keeps its citizens and Tibet in the dark

by melody ng

Times have changed but it seems the presence of censorship in China has not. Recently, access to YouTube has been blocked and the incoming flow of foreign artists allowed to perform in China has been noticeably diminished. The source of this decreased accessibility to these specific mediums of entertainment stems from a few newly instated regulations; but that's nothing shocking in a country that openly exercises censorship, even today.

While researching the cause of the regulations imposing this blockade, I expected to find articles citing how fear of too much influence from the Western music and media threatening their own culture motivated the Chinese government to enforce these constrictions on music and internet accessibility.

This assumption spans several years back: I remember reading about many western bands that had their hands tied in compromises they were forced to make in order to be allowed to perform in China. In 2003, The Rolling Stones were forced to omit certain songs because of their sexual explicitness and drug references for a concert in China, the Chinese government not being too fond of the sex or the drugs in rock and roll, and the influence those messages may send to their youth. I assumed that I would find the same motives for the recent restrictions imposed on YouTube and performances from foreign artists.

China's policies in the past and present have been enforced in large part for the "good" of the youth. China has roughly 200 million of young Chinese accessing the Web everyday. It seems what the Chinese government hope to achieve from this lockdown of information is a pristine environment for their youth to grow up, free from the risk of cultural, mental, and political corruption. China believes that the censoring of certain information is necessary in order to make sure their youth grow up without having to feel conflict that may arise from the clashing of foreign ideals (introduced through foreign media) and the traditional beliefs of their country.

In order to achieve those means, China has been cracking down on websites that have 'objectionable' content. Along with a stricter eye on the web, came a tighter policy on foreign musicians allowed to perform within the country's walls.

In the past, it may have been cultural differences – a stern attitude regarding profanity and the modesty of the artists during performances – that caused conflict between artists and the Chinese government's willingness to host live concerts on their behalf. I was astonished to find there was more to the recent wave of censorship in China than just culture clash.

Censorship reeks of a political agenda in the wake of recent events in China. On Monday, March 23, 2009, Internet users in China took notice of popular video streaming website, YouTube's increasing inaccessibility. Access to YouTube gradually halted within 24 hours of Monday night. Although this is not the first time China has taken YouTube off the map, I was surprised to find Tibet at the heart of YouTube's lock down.

Many sources claim that the Chinese government, in the previous year during the Tibet riots, had blocked access to YouTube from Internet users because it hosted video footage of Chinese policemen inflicting violence upon citizens during the Tibet protests. Conflict between Tibet with China has reached an all time high as Tibet fights to reclaim its independence; China has ruled over "Tibet territory" since 1951. There are claims that YouTube was blocked again this March for the same purpose: to prevent access to a video released by Tibet's government-in-exile displaying Chinese authorities beating Tibetan citizens participating in the protests during March of last year.

Reasons given for the temporary block on YouTube included China's Foreign Ministry's comment: "taking up management of the network according to the laws" and the "need [for the Internet] to be regulated by law in order to prevent the spread of harmful information and national security." These vague justifications skirt around the real reason for the blocking of YouTube: the spread of information that conflicts with the country's own interests – silencing Tibet, and keeping its citizens complacent throughout their efforts.

Tibet also has grounding in the banning of performances from British band Oasis in the previous month. Ticket stopped selling abruptly despite successful sales after the Chinese government learned that band member Noel Gallagher participated in a "Free Tibet" benefit concert in 1997. It seems that

conflict with Tibet has sparked a major crunch on the Chinese citizen's access to music as well as YouTube.

Oasis is not alone in being blacklisted from China. Conflicts involving support of Tibet have put red tape on the tours and performances of other foreign artists. Some attribute this limitation to an incident that originated during Icelandic singer Bjork's performance in Shanghai in March of 2008; she intermittently whispered 'Tibet' throughout her song 'Declare Independence'.

Bjork's stunt is said to have been the main motivation for the Chinese Ministry of Culture releasing the following statement on July 17, 2008: "any artistic group or individual who has ever engaged in activities that threaten national sovereignty will not be allowed in [China]," a warning to all incoming foreign artists to leave any personal "political agendas" (at least Pro-Tibetan ones) they may be harboring at home. Bjork now faces permanent blacklisting from ever performing in China, as do other of her unnamed Pro-Tibet musician-compatriots.

Live music was not the only variety of music scrutinized for evidence of pro-Tibetan support. Further investigation into the matter led me to discover that around August of 2008, access to Apple's iTunes Store was restricted, if not blocked entirely, for offering a pro-Tibetan album ('Songs for Tibet' on which singers and songwriters such as Moby, John Mayer, and Sting appeared) to its users.

While I am a strict opponent of censorship in all forms, I also have to question the role cultural dynamics have in influencing China's policy to block their citizen's access to information as crucial as the events surrounding the Tibetan conflict. China is not the only country to have had blocks placed on YouTube: Thailand blocked access to videos on YouTube that may have proven offensive to their king (in their country, an offense to the king is prohibited by law). The vulnerable minds of the youth provide incentive for its maintenance of what has been dubbed "the Great Firewall of China." That being said, I still cannot accept China's "good intentions" for their practice of such blatant censorship; especially when we know there are less than honorable ulterior motives behind them.

Japanese-American
singer-songwriter,
Utada Hikaru
Photo courtesy of
www.utada.com



by ryan sadakane

BREAKING THE GLASS BARRIER THROUGH MUSIC

asian popstars take on the US music scene



South Korean trilingual
popstar, BoA
Photo courtesy of
www.boaamerica.com

True representation is something that I think all Asian Americans have found in sparing amounts. Media images of us often come in caricatured form (i.e. Pokémon, the Yellow Ranger, Mulan, or Bobby Lee). Is there any hope that we might hear genuine Asian/Asian American voices in the mainstream media? The answer may lie in recent releases by two superstar Asian artists as they try to break into the US market: Utada and BoA.

Hikaru Utada is well known for her breakthrough album *First Love*, which is the best selling album in Japanese music history, and for her Kingdom Hearts theme songs. Entirely fluent in both Japanese and English, the native New Yorker tried to break into the American music market in 2004 with her album *Exodus*. Unfortunately, it flopped upon release due to lack of promotion, experimental sound, and strange lyrics.

BoA's singing and dancing abilities have made her one of Asia's most idolized pop stars. She is best known for her bubblegum dance-pop songs and ballads. Her huge success was largely possible because of her ability to learn new languages quickly and crossover from South Korea to Japan and now, to the United States.

At the core of both artists' recent releases has been not an attempt to bring Asian music to America, but rather, an attempt to imitate American music – complete with R&B and electronic dance pop. There's no use of Japanese or Korean. Also, in order to connect with a wider audience, these albums don't address Asian American themes of struggle, racism, and solidarity but dwell on typical topics

like love, breakups, and girl power.

Unfortunately, the stereotype of "Asian accents" will haunt judgment of BoA's release. This is due to the double standard and fetishism in how Americans perceive accents and decide which ones they accept. While British accents are classy and Latin accents sexy, Asian accents are seen as unattractive and at times comical, a mark of foreignness and incomprehensibility. In preparation for her debut, BoA underwent some major accent neutralization and her songs reflect an almost conscious use of heavy vocoder to electronically distort her voice à la T-Pain to make her accent less noticeable.

Utada's second English effort, *This Is The One*, is the most interesting music-wise, ranging from jazz/bossa-nova in "Me Muero" to acoustic R&B in "This One (Crying Like a Child)". Utada's lyrics remain true to what made her famous in Japan: they are quirky, funny and unusual (In "Come Back to Me", she sings about photoshopping her memories). But be warned while listening to "Dirty Desire"; she invokes the Asian stereotype in the lyric "Love you long time", perhaps to reclaim it as her own fantasy or to make an ironic joke about her sexuality as an Asian American female. In spite of the album's shortcomings, there's still enough risk and intrigue in it to warrant a second listen.

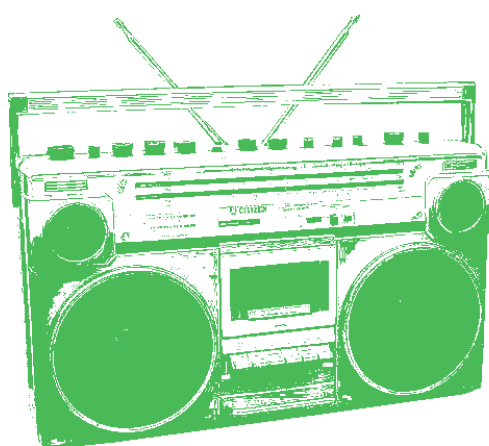
BoA's self-titled album sounds right at home in the club. None of her songs are ballads, a result of her slight attempt to break away from Asian music tastes and capitalize on the club market. Her lead single "Eat You Up" plays hip-hop beats with a strong bass synth, as BoA confuses her desires for a guy with her appetite in hilarious lyrics. However, while very catchy, the album does not sound terribly different from current American pop songs and her lyrics lack any poetic nuances.

Are BoA and Utada good representations of Asians and Asian Americans? That's debatable if they forgo their artistic visions to mimic American pop-stars, as BoA has chosen to do. However, while BoA adopts a globalized pop image recycling trends of the present, Utada alters a mainstream sound to fit her artistic style, which I think makes her a more exemplary representation of Asian Americans.

BoA and Utada serve as tests for the American pop market, which may or may not be tolerant enough to embrace Asian Americans in the pop scene. Whether this is the glass ceiling for these artists remains to be seen. Still, with enough luck, promotion and willingness to present American pop with something new, Utada and BoA will break the color line of the American music industry.

Debate with Ryan at ryansadakane@gmail.com.

At the core of both artists' recent releases has been not an attempt to bring Asian music to America, but rather, an attempt to imitate American music



[RADIO STATION] hardboiled may 09 mix

5 Asian American artists / musicians
to check out for this month!
compiled by **davin chang**



NATIVE KOREAN ROCK

Headquarters: Englewood, NJ

Genre: Acoustic, Soft Rock

Latest Release: None

Check them out if you like: Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Karen O

Hear them at: myspace.com/nativekoreanrock



LADY DANVILLE

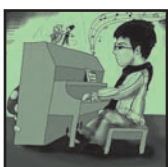
Headquarters: Los Angeles, CA

Genre: Acoustic, Pop

Upcoming Release: Lady Danville EP

Check them out if you like: The Shins, Ben Folds

Hear them at: myspace.com/ladydanville



FRANKLIN JEN

Headquarters: Berkeley, CA

Genre: Jazz, Electronic

Latest Release: Chaos Theory

Check them out if you like: Girl Talk, Brad Mehldau

Hear them at: franklinjen.com/listen.php



SANAWON

Headquarters: Chicago, IL

Genre: Indie-Pop

Latest Release: Bonfire Night

Check them out if you like: The Cardigans, The Sundays

Hear them at: myspace.com/sanawon



VOXTROT

Headquarters: Austin, TX

Genre: Rock, Indie-Pop

Latest Release: Vuxtrot

Check them out if you like: The Smiths, The Cure

Hear them at: myspace.com/vuxtrot