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**API HATE CRIMES**  
**WILLIAM HUNG IS A HUGE STAR**  
**HB GUIDE TO BAY AREA PERFORMING ARTISTS**  
**H.R. 3077**  
**KEN OAK INTERVIEW**  
**POLYSICS *NEU* REVIEW**

**7.5**  
MAY 2004

# hb

## 7.5

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## editor's note

# hb

There is something so very appealing about a reality television show that centers around plucking abnormally skinny women out of oblivion and thrusting them into the world of modeling. UPN's "America's Next Top Model" has provided me with endless amounts of joy every Tuesday night. Yes, I even forgo One Tree Hill in order to indulge in this even guiltier pleasure. Basically every week, each contestant is critiqued on their body shapes (or more accurately their lack of one), weight, and their fashion runaway walks by a panel of judges. Of course, all the truly important things in life seem to be considered, it seems. The one thing I truly respect about the show is that it is somehow aware of its own shallowness. Girls getting vicious by not waking each other up in time for a photo shoot or one girl's quiet yet oh-so-painful struggle to battle a possibly deadly disease. These things have to be scripted in all of its soap opera-esque glory, right? Come to think of it, Tyra Banks is one smart cookie. Mixing catty, malnourished women with unrealistic drama seems to be a winning combination.

However, the show jarred me out of my very comfortable sofa when it decided to tackle the issue of race. Janice Dickinson, apparent "first" supermodel and all-around über-bitch, decides to preach race to one of the contestants, who is a hapa. Dickinson, a white woman, finds that April's non-committal attitude to embracing her "Asian-ness" to be hazardous to her chances at winning this competition. Somewhere between the complete ignoring of April's hapa-ness and more profoundly disturbing quips on what kind of "unique-ness" sells, Dickinson concludes that April has a great chance for winning because she is "exotic." Wow. Who knew a television show had such a capacity to be so darn wrong?

First of all, Miss Dickinson needs to understand that calling an Asian woman "exotic" is hardly a compliment. I simply cannot understand why being called "mysteriously foreign" deserves a thank up in return. Are Asian women some uncharted territory that provides intrigue for the rest of the population? Are we equivalent to pieces of art, food, and other handiworks that are also often tagged as being "exotic?" This direct objectification is as offensive as it is dangerous. The danger lies in the fact that many Asian women find this type of attention to be flattering and even advantageous. Certainly, April was not given a chance to respond to such lame ponderings on race, but would she have found that adjective to be as demeaning as it should be? Or would she have returned to her room that night and wondered how she can play up her "exotic-ness" a little more? Are other API women who are watching this show supposed to think that somehow all will be well as long as we fit into these "exotic creature" caricatures?

Of course, the show ended neatly in its hour timeslot, but I was left to wonder if the show had not exacerbated the continual objectification and subsequent exploitation of Asian women. Most likely it affirmed some people's perceptions of Asian Americans. But, perhaps, I am not giving people enough credit. Who can not bear to laugh out loud, when Dickinson proclaims April's "exotic-ness?" Dickinson, herself, becomes a caricature of the dumb, washed-up model who now have nothing better to do besides call new prospective models fat and give them truly unfounded advice. She's almost so dumb that you really can't take what she says all that seriously. Her stupidity is no excuse for her troubling remarks, but with Dickinson in the middle of it all the "exoticizing" of April almost seems to be a parody in itself. Or, so I hope it will be seen as such to the masses that tune in to the show.

I didn't write about this particular episode in order to provide a solution to this one-sided portrayal of API women by mainstream media. Quite honestly, I wouldn't know where to attack first or even how to attack. Instead, I can only hope that other API women and men heard Dickinson's comments and felt a sense of anger. The last thing that we need to be doing is to perpetuate our own stereotypes against ourselves. And, in order for that to not occur, awareness is perhaps the best weapon we have at this point—that and perhaps banning Dickinson from television perpetually.

Oh, and April did not win the competition by the way. A white girl did.

julie carl  
hb story editor

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# Anti-API Brutality All Over This Great Nation

by julie carl

Violence against API's has been on a startling rise with the start of this new year. All across the nation, there have been reports of incidents where API's have been harassed, insulted, beaten, and even killed because of their skin color. However, with the hesitance of most law enforcement agencies and media outlets to name these attacks as racially motivated, many of these occurrences go unnoticed and ignored.

On February 21, 2004, 19 year-old Huang Chen, an employee at Ming Garden, a Chinese restaurant, was beaten and stabbed to death in New York City. Chen was delivering food to Charles Bryant and Nayquan Miller. The two teenage boys allegedly beat Chen with baseball bats and stabbed him with knives. Chen was found in a plastic garbage bag in a pond at Brookville Park, which was located a couple of miles away from the home of Bryant and Miller. Subsequently, the two alleged assailants were found at the address given by the Chinese restaurant. According to the New York *Newsday*, both youths were arrested and charged with the second-degree murder and robbery of Chen.

Chen is believed to be a victim of a hate crime, a phenomenon that is growing in New York City known

as "chink-bashing." Chinese restaurant deliverymen are brutalized, often robbed and beaten, as they make their delivery rounds.

However, Chinese food deliverymen are not the only ones in danger of violence targeting them. Lafayette High School located in Brooklyn has recently seen a rising trend of Anti-Asian violence on campus. Ching Kit Ho, an 18-year-old, student was attacked as he was going up a stairwell at school. He is in need of surgery to fix his broken nose.

Another female API student was also harassed as she was standing in line for food in the school cafeteria. She was taunted with racist slurs before being physically assaulted.

Charges have not been brought against the students accused of attacking Ho or the female student. In fact, the school police have failed to acknowledge that these attacks were based on the race of the students.

Far away from New York City, on the University of Iowa campus, another hate crime was reported by an API student. Janice Chang was walking home with a white, male friend when they were assailed by four white men. They called her a "chink" and her friend a "chink lover."

Chang was shoved to the ground, while the four assailants proceeded to beat up her friend. His jaw was broken in three different places.

The four perpetrators have been arrested, but their names have been protected from the public, allowing the hate crime to fester under a blanket of anonymity. University of Iowa has yet to create measures that ensure the safety of API students on campus.

Down in Los Angeles, it has been reported that the monument commemorating Japanese American soldiers who fought during World War II has been vandalized. The monument, which is located in Little Tokyo, has been considered to be a very crucial part of celebrating Japanese American accomplishments and history. Star symbols were carved into the monument itself. Local police are still looking for suspects, and they are not sure if this crime was racially motivated.

This trend of anti-Asian American violence and sentiments should serve as wake-up calls to alert not only the API community but also the law enforcement, law-making bodies, and other civil rights organization. The legacy of Vincent Chin lies in the prevention of these racist acts.

## Jackie Chan Is Fucking Pissed Election Time in Taiwan

by dan nguyen

President Chen Shui-bian was recently reelected in Taiwan's March 20 elections by only a margin of .2%, equivalent to less than 33,000 votes. In protest, opponent Lien Chan and his supporters have called for a recount.

Lien Chan claims that the counting and voting process was marred with errors that resulted in 332, 297 invalid ballots. He wants these ballots inspected, with the possibility of closing in on the President's weak victory. Chen claims these votes are not rigged and is happy to proceed with the recounts. He even allowed the high courts to bypass time-consuming hearings usually needed to authorize the recount in hopes to quickly end this controversy.

Mr. Chan also claims that the assassination attempt of President Chen the day before the election was a gimmick to gain sympathy votes from the public. Chen denies those claims and has hired US specialists to investigate the shooting and discredit any conspiracy theories. Taiwanese officials have identified a man walking abruptly from the scene though closed-circuit cameras, but have no evidence to link him to the crime.

Taiwanese officials have advised China not to interfere with the recount, and they hope to resolve the issue as quick as possible in order to restore the democratic state of Taiwan.

## The Fight to Save Anna Mae He

by julie carl

A child custody battle has been drawn along the racial lines over 5-year-old Chinese girl, Anna Mae He. Her American adoptive parents, Jerry and Louise Baker, have been accused by Anna's Chinese biological parents, Shaoqiang and Qin Luo He, for taking the child without their permission. Anna was handed over to temporary foster care back in 1999 when her parents were met with hard times. Anna's biological parents claim that they never planned to permanently give up the child. The Bakers contend that they can provide a better home for little Anna.

Anna's biological parents have also charged the Bakers and their lawyer with taking advantage of the fact that neither Anna's father nor mother are fluent in English. Their lack of understanding of the American law caused them to give up the rights to their daughter. The parents were under the impression that they were signing for the Bakers to get medical attention for Anna. However, the Bakers are not backing down. They claim that they are not to blame for the misunderstanding.

In addition to the legality of the situation, the Bakers are convinced that Anna is better off with their family. They consider the biological parents to be emotionally unstable and incapable of "correctly" loving their daughter. The Bakers are afraid that if they let Anna go back with her parents then she would be treated badly, for she is a female. These culturally racist arguments have been used by Bakers' lawyer in the courtroom.

The judge has until the end of April to come up with a decision. With Asian Americans' capabilities to be good parents on the line, little Anna will just have to wait to live with whomever the court appoints as an appropriate family.

For more information: [www.isthisamerica.com](http://www.isthisamerica.com)





## THE WONDER OF KEN OAK

In an already overcrowded music industry inundated with convention and driven by profit, is there room left for anyone looking to challenge stereotypes and break some boundaries?

Ken Oak sure hopes so. I interviewed the 28-year old Korean American LA based singer-songwriter over El Taurino burritos talking about music and being Korean American in the entertainment industry. Ken hopes to continue the success of his 2003 released EP *End Credits* by releasing his full-length LP *Half Step Down* this summer. His EP features the title hit song “End Credits” and the song “Wonder,” which was featured on an episode of MTV’s show *Surf Girls* and on the NBC special *The Road to Ironman*.

Though his music style is comparable to John Mayer, Jason Mraz and Howie Day, Ken Oak has a sound that is uniquely his own. “I’ll always have a sound that contains a lot of acoustic guitar and cello, which gives my music a darker feel.” Oak incorporates cello into many of his songs, adding another dimension of sound and emotion to his songs. His four song EP is varied, which ranges from catchy and more pop-based, to a more melancholy, contemplative sound. Ken also writes his own lyrics, which for him carries pragmatic as well as artistic weight. “I think it’s really important to write your music, not only because its better to sing your own material, but of the money in songwriting.”

Oak first got interested in music in third grade when he learned the cello, taking

private lessons and performing in orchestras and recitals. He was then introduced to guitar in high school, springing from his growing interest in the rock and grunge bands of the time. Oak spent a year at the University of Michigan as an undecided major, then transferred to the University of Southern California to pursue a music major. “I made a deal with my dad that I could pursue a music major if I took the LSAT and went to law school after I graduated. So I took the LSAT and got into NYU Law School, which is where I wanted to go. But I decided to pursue music full time instead.” When asked if he had any regrets, Ken responded “No, I have no regrets at all,” reminiscent of William Hung’s own mantra.

After working in Virginia as the music director for local churches, and playing in small venues in the DC area, Oak came to Los Angeles in 2003 to record his first album with producer Howard Karp. “Meeting Howard was probably the most important moment of my career.” Karp has worked with such bands as Lifehouse and Sum 41, and helped Ken put together his current band of drummer Shane Chin, guitarist/vocalist Stefon Taylor and bassist Mikhail Davies. Ken currently plays small clubs and venues throughout the Los Angeles area solo and with his band, and also plays shows featuring Korean American/Asian American artists and entertainers.

I asked Ken about being Asian American and trying to break into a genre of music dominated by Caucasians. Ken views being Asian as a benefit to his career, saying that, “I will always have a niche market solely because of my ethnicity.” He sees his ethnic community around him there to support and encourage him because he is an Asian trying to make it in an already crowded industry and genre. However, he feels that being Asian shouldn’t be a deciding factor in his success or not, but his music should ultimately come first.

With his distinctive mix of guitar and cello and a smooth soothing voice, it will be his music, and its quality alone, that will definitely move him forward.

For more infromation visit: [www.kenoak.net](http://www.kenoak.net)

“  
Ken views  
being Asian  
as a benefit  
to his career,  
saying  
that, ‘I will  
always  
have a niche  
market  
solely  
because  
of my  
ethnicity.’  
”

by veronica louie

## KYOTO AGREEMENT: BUSH SCREWS UP AGAIN

How many Americans actually know what the Kyoto Agreement is? It is mentioned repeatedly that Americans grow more and more apathetic to domestic and international news and events. Ironically enough, America likes to boast about its democracy and “accredited” media but many citizens are still left unaware of issues that will affect their lives today and in the future. Sometimes Americans can get so caught up in their own capitalistic lives that they forget about the rest of the world and the impact they have on others.

The 1997 Kyoto Agreement was presented in Japan as an international proposal to restrict the emission of greenhouse gases, mainly carbon dioxide. It was significant as the first international pact to address alarming issues about global warming and the effects on future generations. The agreement was to decrease the emission of harmful gases by big business nations and developing countries by 5.2% in the year 2012, based on emission levels in 1990. The 1992 International Climate treaty principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change claimed that leading nations such as the United States and Europe were expected to set an example for the rest of the world to follow. This treaty was signed by George Bush Sr., but George W. Bush has halted the progress of the agreement by not agreeing to the Kyoto Agreement in 2001. He is adversely opposed to the proposal, stating that such an agreement will be detrimental to the American economy and will put many people out of work.

He has tried to quell the outrage by advocates of the agreement by drafting up his own alternate plan. His idea is to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by eighteen percent over a period of ten years, slowly cutting

back emissions without imposing harm on the American economy. The only problem with his proposal is that Bush fails to take into account the rapidly increasing rate of emissions every year, and an eighteen percent reduction over ten years will not make a dent in reduction overall. In fact, the United States continues to increase its emissions while other nations are trying to reduce theirs. Bush has even suggested that America should buy the percentages not used by other countries so as not to exceed “domestic” emission. The United States comprises five and a half percent of the world population, but it emits a quarter of greenhouse gases into the world. The proportion of American people is drastically unequal to the amount of

are strong advocates of the agreement, and have tried to negotiate with other nations, like Australia, to join for the past few years.

Many people still ask the question, “Why should I care about global warming anyway?” Some argue that global warming is all a big hype, and that the world is taking its course with the increase in climate. It is true that global warming is a theory, but even though greenhouse gases have not been scientifically proven beyond a doubt as the link between global warming, it does not mean that people should commence in polluting the Earth. There is no harm in trying to preserve the Earth, and many would rather do this than face the consequences of irreversible conditions.

It is a widely held belief that the greenhouse effect will not hurt us in the near future, that we do not know enough to assume it has any detrimental effects, and many may not even live to suffer its effects. These beliefs are not true, and global warming does concern us everyday. Every year the climate on Earth grows more and more warm, and it has been like this since industrialization in the eighteen hundreds. A rise in temperature, even just a few degrees each year, will have profound effects on the human population and the environment. A hotter climate will cause more storms, flood in the north, drought in fertile food producing areas, and diseases like cholera and malaria. Melting permafrost in the northern hemisphere will cause land to erode in places like England, Florida, and Italy. Changes in temperature and its effect will occur too rapidly where humans, animals, or plants will not be able to adapt fast enough through evolution. Evolution is a process that takes time, and since species will not be able to adjust it will lead to their extinction. This is already noticeable with forest fires caused by dry land and the extinction of animals around the world.

“A hotter climate will cause more storms, flood in the north, drought in fertile food producing areas, and diseases like cholera and malaria. ”

emission they should be releasing in comparison to the rest of the world. The example America is setting is not one towards the preservation of the world.

Global warming is a global issue that should be taken seriously and addressed by every nation and not just those who choose to participate. Many countries have asked the question, “What can we do without the United State’s support?” As a global power since World War II, the United States has heavy influence on world environmental policy. But because Bush has chosen not to participate, he has deterred the success of the Kyoto pact. America’s decision has caused other nations to be hesitant, or to believe that their involvement is insignificant in the span of things. For example, in 2001, Japan abandoned the Kyoto protocol which it had originally agreed to. Japan became discouraged because of its economic rut, but decided the next year to commit to the treaty again. It has not been until recently that European nations have decided to go along with the agreement without the United States. They

# William Hung Is a Huge Star!

by **albert wu**

You like William Hung. Maybe you are one of those incessantly amiable people who thinks they like William Hung because the way he swings his arms over his head and the way he hits those high notes. Maybe you think his outlook on life is inspiring.

Maybe you're a little more bitter and you like William Hung because there is a certain amount of ironic pride in the widespread popularity of the nerdy underdog.

Or maybe you're honest. In which case would admit that you like William Hung because you just can't be bothered to confront your own racial stereotypes. William Hung makes you comfortable. He's non-threatening and he corroborates what you already thought was true about Asian-American males. His ching-chong-chewy accent helps you sleep comfortably at night knowing that Asian-American males are just as you thought they were. His civil engineering major is what makes your cereal sweet in the morning. And because his pants are high, because his eyes are slanted, and because his teeth exaggeratedly protrude, you get through the rest of the day.

We all use racial stereotypes, but because William Hung is in the spotlight, we no longer feel the need to reexamine the ones we hold about Asian-American males. I know there are many good-intentioned William Hung supporters and fans inspired by his sincerity and humility in both defeat and success. Only a hater would think that there is nothing valuable in his message that we simply be ourselves. But anyone who wants to take William's message to heart must also recognize that it is that much harder to be yourself in a society when one person's farcical popularity can lead to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes surrounding that person's entire race.

As for my Asian brothers who support William Hung, I understand where you're coming from. I too support the increased presence of Asian males in the entertainment industry. But not this way. Not in a way that serves to maintain certain negative stereotypes pertaining to us. It is interesting to note that Hollywood's first African-American star, Lincoln Perry, played a character named Stepin Fetchit, a blackface caricature of African-Americans. Like the African-American supporters of Perry, we Asian-Americans are in a precarious position. Many Asian-Americans may feel that supporting William Hung is supporting the Asian-American community. But because William Hung garners so much media attention, it is especially important for people to understand the implications of William Hung's popularity on future Asian-American portrayals. True, William is not acting deliberately as a ridiculous racial stereotype as Perry did, but the fact that we like him, the fact that we plaster him on our walls and clamor to take pictures with him comes from something that is far from simply supporting an underdog, which William is, or championing strong moral bearings, which William has. No our infatuation for William emerges from the security that his persona affords us. If you want to see strong Asian-American representation in the media you need to think twice about supporting someone who allows us to wallow in our basest most predictable prejudices. With all this said, I still like William Hung. I feel a slight twinge of pride every time UC Berkeley is mentioned, and it takes a certain amount of confidence to sing in front of the intimidating Simon Cowell. We have to remember, though, that this representation is all we have out there. And if this is all we have out there, is that what you really want to be a reflection of you?



# The hardboiled Guide to: Asian American Performance Artists in the Bay Area

by jimmy thong tran



For all you William Hung fans, SORRY...There are a lot more WAY MORE FUCKING TALENTED Asian American performing artists in the Bay Area (Oh, and please stop claiming that you're laughing with him). Let me share with you those whom I know are dope in the Bay. (I also managed to ask some of them oh so fun questions here and there).

## 18 Mighty Mountain Warriors

A comedy troupe since 1994, they're dope shit. I remember this one skit they had on the Chinese Olympic basketball team, fuggin hilarious!!! They are vets. Theatre Rice, you guys need to learn a thing or two from them!

Get schooled youngins: [www.18mmw.com](http://www.18mmw.com)

## Brent Weinbach

And I always thought substitute teachers were dull. Brent, who also rolls with Sheng (since they all took the same stand-up comedy class under Allan Manalo) will hit you with a very unique style. I feel weird because he found my blog online.

### Goals as a comedian?

Enjoy laughing the most out of anything. Enjoy making other people laugh. Make as many people [laugh] as I can. The more exposure, the better. That's my goal.

### Ever experienced racism on the stand-up circuit?

Not really. One time I went to the club in Oakland, it was a Black club, I don't know if the guy was being a dickhead, he wasn't letting me in the club. I had to get someone who was in the club. I don't know if the guy was being a dick...maybe it was because I wasn't black but that's pretty much it. I don't think racism really exists in the stand up scene. Maybe prejudice. Stereotypes exist, you know. Sometimes comics come around and fit the stereotype. A black comedian might be talking about white people all the time. Or maybe someone might come around and talk about their mom not wanting to be a comedian [all the time]. It's more like [stereotyping] comedian archetypes. What's cool about the Asian comedy scene is that there are a lot of comedians who aren't talking about their background [falling into an archetype]. There's no hatred.

He too will be performing at the API Issues Conference 2004 so spread the love to Brent (not the virus though): [ntwrk507@yahoo.com](mailto:ntwrk507@yahoo.com)

## Clarendon Hills

3 years, 100 shows strong and superballs, they roll with the likes of The Skyflakes so in my book, they're dope shit, even though I haven't heard any of their music (yeah I know, shame shame). Yes they did perform on campus between Tan and Latimer hall in October 2003.

Ask them their ages: [clarendonhills.punkrock.net](http://clarendonhills.punkrock.net)

## iLL-Literacy

Have you ever seen Adriel Luis (Youth Speaks alumni and current workshop facilitator) rip it? No you say, then buck up and check them out punk! They're a spoken word collective created about 2 years ago based out of UC Davis.

### Why is iLL-Literacy so dope?

iLL-Literacy's dope because it has several components to it, and people gravitate towards particular parts based on their passions. There's the organization component, where we hold events on campus at UC Davis such as open mics, workshops, and showcases. There's the educational component, where we go to middle schools and high schools and mentor the youth in writing workshops. And of course, there's the performance aspect, where as a collective we perform! Right now we've been going through the process of taking spoken word/poetry beyond its political values. Although a lot of spoken word and grassroots arts are politically

based, and this will always be a vital part of it, oftentimes the artistic values are forgotten. Political arts are truly effective when they can also be simply considered good art in of itself.

**If art is considered to be good art solely because it has a political message, then where's the artistic value?**

iLL-Literacy already has a foundation on socially conscious art. Now we're focusing on creating good-ass performances to spread the word.

### What inspired the creation of the Broken English conference?

Although iLL-Literacy is not an APIA collective, the overwhelming majority of the artists in the collective are. We don't choose to hide this, and we embrace what makes up the collective at the present. Right now in the Davis/Sacramento area, there aren't a lot of spoken word things going on, but it's on the rise. Especially in Sac, there's been a strong rise in African American-based spoken word. A lot of the scene has trickled over to Davis as well, and iLL-Lit has definitely been involved with that. Even still, APIA spoken word in this area has been pretty much limited to iLL-Literacy. Our goal with Broken English is to establish a presence of APIA spoken word and performance arts in the Sac area. By creating this foundation, we can look further into elevating the Sac/Davis spoken word scene as a whole. Check out the Broken English Conference and the Bombs and Butterflies showcase on April 24<sup>th</sup> at UC Davis.

[www.ill-literacy.org](http://www.ill-literacy.org)

## Kiwi

Kiwi is one dope Pinoy MC (half of the Native Guns, apart of the Balangstan Collective). He always rips it up for the community and recently released his first album, "Writes of Passage: Notes of a Native Son."

**Oh man, this album is hotter than the bag of shit you left on Ward Connerly's doorstep. What's a favorite hook of that you've written?**

Probably the hook from "Yours Truly": "this is for you and yours / coming from yours truly/this life is one big battle this is my tour of duty/the pure beauty that lives in all people/until we all equal / we fight / so off we go..."

**What was the hardest song to record on your album?**

Without a doubt, "looking back at me." such a personal piece.

**What is the connection between art and activism, if any?**

Ideally, artists should be at the forefront of social change, meaning that not only is the message reflected in their art, but in their actions. art and culture is the spirit of the movement.

[www.groundworkmusic.com](http://www.groundworkmusic.com)

## Melinda Corazon Foley

In the summer, I interned at Youth Speaks in SF and was fortunate enough to befriend Melinda. Also was fortunate enough to catch an excerpt of her play, Coconut Masquerade, and all I have to say is TAKE THAT MAMET! Not only is Melinda an accomplished playwright, she is also a renowned spoken word/slam poet who currently moved down to LA.

**What's your ultimate goal for "Coconut Masquerade?"**

I want "the Coconut Masquerade," my first in an intended series of poetic verse scripts, to go up on stages across the globe and then to ultimately, translate successfully to screen - while maintaining the verse language. As you know, it's written entirely in verse, and I will stick by that composition, regardless of people's desires for "conversational language." We now have a culture utterly transformed not only by one of the most important global artistic contributions of the United States - Hip Hop, and all of its resulting sons, daughters, and stepchildren - but also by a speed of technological, ethnic, and media-based evolution, which changes the face of our nation at an increasingly astounding rate. I wanted to write something, which reflects those influences, by incorporating contemporary hip hop/spoken word cadences and a little conversational language, but on the whole, showcases

an 'under-language' which speaks to the essence of thought. The distance between what we say and what we believe. That's what makes poetry so powerful. It's always there - in the silences, in the air, under the computers and HD TV's, in the cracks on the freeways, in the beige-cream silk of my lolo's coffin before they closed it and put him to rest. The world moves so fast, and we ride along with it, even in our artistic expressions. Hardly able to say fully what we mean or what ... but I digress ... basically: I want Coconut to go up as I'd intended - without being diluted to fit a generalized concept of what works. And I want the world to experience it.

#### **Odessa Chen**

So my friend, we'll just call him "Bruce Cheung," has been ranting and raving about this gal, saying she's even better than Jenny from Rilo Kiley. So please support this local Indie rocker dope- to the fullest with your love and money. Headliner at "Til Our Chests Burn."

#### **How do you feel as an Asian American in Indie Rock? Do you ever feel you are being "judged" by different standards?**

Although I'm in the minority as an Asian American and a woman in music, I'm used to being in the minority. Some people will like me more because of my race or sex and some will like me less, so I think it balances itself out. I feel incredibly supported by the Asian American community which is wonderful. Growing up in Baltimore, Maryland my family was fairly isolated, so I don't take this type of support for granted. That said, my audience is very broad. It's just in the past few years that Asian Americans have discovered my music. I think most people judge the music based on its genre, lyrics, and the quality of musicianship. In the end, I believe in music's power to transcend social and cultural boundaries and I strive to make music that does so. The perfect song on a lonely Thursday afternoon in spring is "being in love" by Songs:Ohia (Jason Molina).

[www.odessachen.com](http://www.odessachen.com)

#### **DJ Phatrick**

You may have seen him in such places as Lower Sproul and "People's Park" (for the annual Hip Hop In The Park). Mr. Patrick Huang aka DJ Phatrick can rock any party you hire him for, whether it be a hardcore high school "we want to hear some Clear Channel playlists" party or a Seattle "Boy I miss Nirvana" shindig. He has been involved with Students For Hip Hop since his freshman year (as well as Theatre Rice: he is also a brilliant performer). Oh yeah, he will be DJing National Collegiate Slam Finals.

#### **Weapons of Choice when DJing?**

Technics 1200 and Rane Mixer 56.

#### **What kind of events do you prefer DJing if any?**

I prefer DJing to an open-minded audience, doesn't matter what event; a party where I can play anything from E-40 to Ella Fitzgerald, from Bossanova to Booty music.

Book him for your "Get Bush out of Office" party: [pkhuang@berkeley.edu](mailto:pkhuang@berkeley.edu)

#### **Proletariat Bronze**

Freshly assembled in 2003, this Asian American Spoken Word/Poetry collective is comprised of Rupert Estanislao, Jason Bayani, Mesej1, Leonard Shek, Jaylee and Mush. They have performed at various events (APATURE, War on 54, Mission 2003), recently hosting Berkeley's Official Poetry Slam at the Starry Plough. Be on the lookout for my fellow CalSlam teammate, Mush, competing in the upcoming National Collegiate Poetry Slam, taking place on this very UC Berkeley campus April 8-10 baby!

#### **How and why did Proletariat Bronze decide to form [as] a collective?**

When me [Jason] and Rupert got into the scene, we were the only Pilipinos in the [local] slam scene. When we got in, Mesej1 got in too. We were the only Asian Americans in the slam scene at the time...I was on the San Jose slam team, Mesej was on the Oakland team and Rupert was on the Berkeley team. When we went to Minneapolis, we met Leonard Shek, who then the initiative to put us together. Took us a while before we started writing together but we got used to each other and used this group as a workshop [for each other]. We wanted to add new members 'cuz you know, strength in numbers. We could do some really good things with it. We asked Jaylee and then Mush to join (because they were blowing up in the scene).

[www.proletariatbronze.org](http://www.proletariatbronze.org) or [bouncebak@hotmail.com](mailto:bouncebak@hotmail.com)

#### **Shalja Patel**

Went to last year's Asian American Prisoner Support Committee fundraiser for Eddie Zheng, Mike Ngo and Rico Remedio and her performance caught me out of nowhere. From then on, I came to learn of Shalja's brilliance. Last seen on

campus at the War on 54 event in October (Take that PROP 54!).

#### **How and when did you get into Spoken Word poetry?**

I've been a poet all my life. But I first saw spoken word in San Francisco 4 years ago, and it blew my mind. So I began to slam, and went to the National Slam Championships in 2000 as anchor for Team Santa Cruz. I've been growing as a spoken word artist ever since. What recent event has inspired you to write? The challenge for me right now is that there's so goddamn MUCH lunacy on the planet, it's hard to focus on each individual idea I want to write about. The piece I'm working on right now was sparked by a quote from a US soldier in Iraq who shot and killed an Iraqi woman, a civilian, because she was in the doorway of a building that was a military target. He said: "The chick was in the way."

#### **If you met George Bush Jr. (aka DUBYA) in person, what would you ask him?**

Dude, have you ever considered taking an ESL class? It would help you get ahead.

#### **Do you know of any South Asian artists we should all check out?**

Pireeni Sundaralingam [www.wordandviolin.com](http://www.wordandviolin.com). There are some amazing artists on the Mango Tribe collective [www.mangotribe.com](http://www.mangotribe.com). Two that I know of are Sarwat Rumi, and Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. [www.daniland.com/talent/talent.php?varshailja\\_patel](http://www.daniland.com/talent/talent.php?varshailja_patel).

#### **Sheng Wang**

UC Berkeley graduate and co-creator of the infamous in all Asian American classes and "Issues" conferences all over for the film, Yellow Apparel, this guy is currently ripping it up on the stand up (comedy) scene. Check him out at the upcoming API Issues Conference 2004 on April 10th.

#### **How do you come up with your material?**

Mostly within my own mind and what I encounter in daily actions and activities.

#### **Have you gotten any phone numbers after any of your sets?**

No. Not yet but I'm really hoping to tonight (March 25<sup>th</sup>) at the Brain Wash (it's a local café/Laundromat in San Francisco). I got an e-mail once (out of nowhere).

And you too can e-mail him: [hellacleanfoo@yahoo.com](mailto:hellacleanfoo@yahoo.com)

#### **The Skyflakes**

Bassist, Jericho Saria, is a good friend of mine (he's a good playwright and sketch comedian as well). Their latest album of greatest hits up until now, *Calling in Sick*, is a beautiful album I bumped while I was in Vietnam in Winter 2001. It's like (Black Rob) WHOA! Jericho Saria's sister has such a beautiful voice that is like (Keanu Reeves) WHOA!

Push them down because they're meatheads: [www.theskyflakes.com](http://www.theskyflakes.com)

#### **Tallulah Danielle C. David**

Alike Golda Supanova, a lot of us have also had crushes on this lady. She is a third year UC Berkeley student who loves to sing you absopositively beautiful songs with her guitar.

#### **What is a favorite song (of yours) and what is it about?**

It's untitled...I already performed it but let me think of what to call it...you can call it "Siren." It's about, crap, that one is really personal. It's about my dad. When are you releasing an album? I want to have one out by my birthday (July 1, 2004).

[tallulah@berkeley.edu](mailto:tallulah@berkeley.edu)

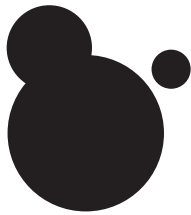
Unfortunately, I do not have enough space to feature the many more artists that deserve coverage. I plan on creating an Asian American Artist Portal so for now, visit my website ([www.angelfire.com/poetry/jymme/](http://www.angelfire.com/poetry/jymme/)) for the B-Sides to this article (remaining Q & A, links to other artists, etc.) so please check it out! Peace in the EAST (BAY!)!!!

#### **Asian American Artists All Over The Map!**

Golda and FullBlownSoul, Jupitersciples, Karmacy, Dealership, Pidgin, Prach Ly, LCC Theatre, Magnetic North, Denizen Kane, Bao Phi, Isangmahal Collective, Ishle Yi Park, Giles Li, Bambu (Native Guns), Ishle Yi Park, Beau Sia, Mango Tribe, DanDiggity, Mountain Brothers, Margaret Cho, Lyrics Born, Jin, Rex Navarette, 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder, Fingerbangers, the list goes on and on...

Jimmy Thong Tran is a performance artist himself, competing in the 2004 College Unions Poetry Slam Invitational 2004 at UC Berkeley in addition to performing at "Til Our Chests Burn." E-mail your viruses at [tranman@berkeley.edu](mailto:tranman@berkeley.edu) (BRING 'EM ON! APPLE FO' LIFE!) Go Cal Serve!





# H.R. 3077

## International Studies in Higher Education Act

by allen hong

For the Department of Homeland Security, it appears that the Patriot Act is not enough.

In 2002, the federal government pushed for legislation that would allow it to recruit civilians in a national surveillance program called Operation TIPS. Individuals in the program would have had personal access to people's homes because of their jobs as electricians, plumbers, and cable servicemen, among other things. The agents' duty would be to report suspicious activity to through a government hotline. Of course, the public would not know the identities of people in this "Citizen Corps." The move to expand homeland security did not pass legislative scrutiny, but recent developments in Congress indicate that conservative figures are on the move once again.

**With its numerous loopholes and misleading language, the bill is a subtle attempt to turn higher education into another arm for homeland security.**

H.R. 3077, the International Studies in Higher Education Act, hits close to home because it attacks the foundation of university education. The bill will set a precedent by giving homeland security the ability to review and restrict federal funding for academic programs. The Title VI funds come from the 1965 Higher Education Act and provide the means for teaching and research in modern languages, area studies, and international studies. Both public and private universities receive government support in this manner.

The bill's statement of purpose reads, "The events and aftermath of September 11, 2001, have underscored the need for the nation to strengthen and enhance American knowledge of international relations, world regions, and foreign languages. Homeland Security and effective United States engagement abroad depend on an increased number of Americans who have received such training and are willing to serve their nation." These lines advance the position that a solid education must honor the viewpoints of the current administration and prepare citizens to participate in homeland security efforts. The writers of this bill rely on the familiar strategy of labeling valid criticism of foreign policy as anti-American. In truth, nothing could be more American than allowing universities to be places for

informed and unrestricted thought.

With its numerous loopholes and misleading language, the bill is a subtle attempt to turn higher education into another arm for homeland security. Sections of the bill call for the review of university curriculum by an "International Education Advisory Board," federal investigation of "foreign language heritage communities" on college campuses, and guaranteed federal recruiter access to individual students for all institutions seeking to renew their Title VI funds. The text also makes multiple references to the role of higher education in "the national effort to educate and train citizens to participate in the efforts of homeland security."

The International Education Advisory Board possesses the ability to change modern languages, area studies, and international studies programs in universities. Two of the seven chairs in the Advisory Board are reserved for Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Agency. Two other seats are set aside for Presidential appointments. This group's responsibility is to present its recommendations to the Secretary of Education, who is required to take the Advisory Board's feedback into account when granting funds to universities. In this way, ideological support of the government agenda becomes inextricably tied to the funding of teaching and research in colleges across the nation. By reviewing course curricula, reading materials, and hired faculty, the representatives will be able to impose their views of what is appropriate for the classroom. Such a measure undermines the basis of higher education because it comes at the expense of free speech and academic freedom. Universities gain nothing when federal policies place any kind of limits on the viewpoints that can be expressed.

**Universities gain nothing when federal policies place any kind of limits on the viewpoints that can be expressed.**

In addition to evaluating academic programs in universities, the Advisory Board will work with the Secretary of Education to study "foreign language communities." Such communities are residents or citizens who are native or non-native speakers of foreign languages. Particular groups will be watched more closely because

H.R. 3077 deems that they are "critical to the national security of the United States." The surveillance of selected communities for government purposes without prior suspicion undermines the idea of equal protection under the law. Students who are being monitored must bear the unnecessary burden of public scrutiny even if they have done no wrong. This provision will undoubtedly increase the resentment in the certain communities and marginalize entire ethnic communities.

The Office of the UC President, Chancellor of UCB, ASUC, Graduate Assembly, and American Civil Liberties Union have been working to stop the bill's progress. ASUC Senator Imad Ahmed and his assistants have put much effort into flyering, tabling, speaking to student groups, mailing listservs, and circulating a petition online. Student activism at the local level is crucial right now because the legislation is very close to being signed into law. H.R. 3077 has already passed in the House of Representatives and is currently up for debate in the Senate. The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee is drafting a Senate version of the bill for legislative approval. Senators may vote on the bill as early as this month. Once the two houses meet to merge the two bills, it will be too late for any kind of public input.

Allowing H.R. 3077 to pass in the Senate is a risk that America cannot afford to take.

Sign the petition to stop H.R. 3077:  
<http://www.petitiononline.com/nohr3077>

Write a letter to California's Senators about H.R. 3077:

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-3841

Senator Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-3553



# YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH

## Tom Cruise and the historical accuracy of *The Last Samurai*



!! The film beautifully captures the crucial turning point in Japanese history where Cruise manages to dodge 39,495,271 rounds of bullets, while all the Japanese Samurai around him fold like crumpled origami. What explains Tom Cruise's seeming immortality? The answer is simple. He is a vampire."

by junichi p. semitsu

As an American of Japanese descent, I am an expert on all things Japanese.

Admittedly, I've spent little time in Japan, I can't read the language, and I've never studied anything relating to – or rhyming with – Japan. Nonetheless, I satisfy the two prerequisites necessary to be recognized as an authority on the Japanese: (1) I have a Japanese name and (2) I eat rice. This explains why strangers – who don't know that I speak perfect Asian – nonetheless consider me the spokesperson for Japan and ask questions such as: "What, exactly, is wasabi?," "Why did you rape Nanking?," and "Are you a sumo wrestler?"

More recently, I've been carpet-bombed with questions about the veracity of events depicted in the epic film *The Last Samurai*. It seems everyone trusts my answers to complicated questions about the Meiji era of Japanese history, simply because I can pronounce "tamagotchi."

So by request, let me take this opportunity to explain the answer to the burning question: "Was Tom Cruise really the last Samurai?"

The answer is a resounding, unconditional yes! The proof lies in the film itself, which is, actually, a documentary of the Samurai revolts.

A brief overview: Tom Cruise is an alcoholic American civil war general requested by the effeminate Emperor of Japan to train their first modern, conscript army to fight any rebellions. Shortly after the Emperor shows Tom Cruise the money, ancient warriors known as the Samurai easily defeat Cruise in battle. Not only do they stop him from completing his mission, they had him at hello.

However, instead of beheading Tom Cruise, the tribe of Samurai – who are bitterly opposed to opening Japan up to Western influences – choose to keep him alive because, naturally, they are open to his Western influences. In a few months of captivity, Tom Cruise masters the way of the Samurai and the Japanese language. (The latter of which turns out to be unnecessary since the leader of the English-hating Samurai speaks perfect English, evidenced by his careful enunciation of fortune cookie messages.) The distrustful Samurai, naturally, grow to trust Tom Cruise, especially after watching him rock climb Mount Fuji with his bare hands while receiving secret messages through his explosive sunglasses. Master Cruise and the Samurai join forces to fight the Japanese army, as well as a few ninjas.

The film beautifully captures the crucial turning point in Japanese history where Cruise manages to dodge 39,495,271 rounds of bullets, while all the Japanese Samurai around him fold like crumpled origami. What explains Tom Cruise's seeming immortality? The answer is simple. He is a vampire. Unfortunately, he did not grant immortality to any of the Samurai by biting them because, apparently, he doesn't like Japanese food.

While Cruise neglected to create a little vampire Samurai girl, he did manage to find romance in Japan, as documented in the movie. A Japanese woman named Taka (which means "Fallopian tubes" in Japanese) falls in love with Tom Cruise, who, by the way, had just finished killing Taka's husband in battle. Why would a woman choose to do the nasty with her late husband's murderer and then dress him up in her dead lover's battle outfit? She is either enraptured by Cruise's ability to seduce and destroy, or, quite simply, she respects the cock. Regardless, her behavior conforms to the new traditional Bushido code of loyalty: "Thou Shalt Love The Man Who Decapitates Thy Husband." In terms of important cultural developments, this commandment is second only to Top Ramen's invention of "Oriental Flavor."

While *The Last Samurai* bravely captures this one era, it fails, far and away, to elucidate other important ways in which Tom Cruise has impacted Japanese history.

For example, little is known about how Tom Cruise was also an ace Navy pilot who, during World War II, trained Japanese kamikaze pilots in the ways of aerial dog fights. He earned the nickname "Maverick" after teaching them to fly right into the danger zone and introducing karaoke to the Japanese with his rendition of "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling." Although Emperor Hirohito initially believed that Tom's ego was writing checks his body couldn't cash, the Emperor sent a telegram to Maverick-san on the morning of December 7, 1941 that read "Banzai!" (roughly translated: "You can be my wingman, anytime.") Unfortunately, Tom Cruise never received this message because it was intercepted at Pearl Harbor by Ben Affleck.

While Tom Cruise's impact on the development of Japanese history is too expansive to cover in one essay, there are many other documentaries that capture his influence. For the rise of the Japanese fuel-efficient automotive industry in the 1980s, I recommend the film "Days of Thunder." To witness how Tom Cruise convinced the Japanese government to accept Commodore Matthew Perry's demand to open ports for trade during the Edo period, I recommend "Risky Business." For a depiction of how Tom Cruise convinced an elf, a fairy, and a pack of gnomes and trolls to fight against the Lord of Darkness in the Sino-Japanese War, I recommend either "Legend" or "Eyes Wide Shut."

Well, that's it for now.

Next week: did Kevin Costner actually join the Sioux tribe and defeat Custer at his last stand? We'll talk to my friend Alex who is an expert on Native American history since he once built a teepee as a Boy Scout.

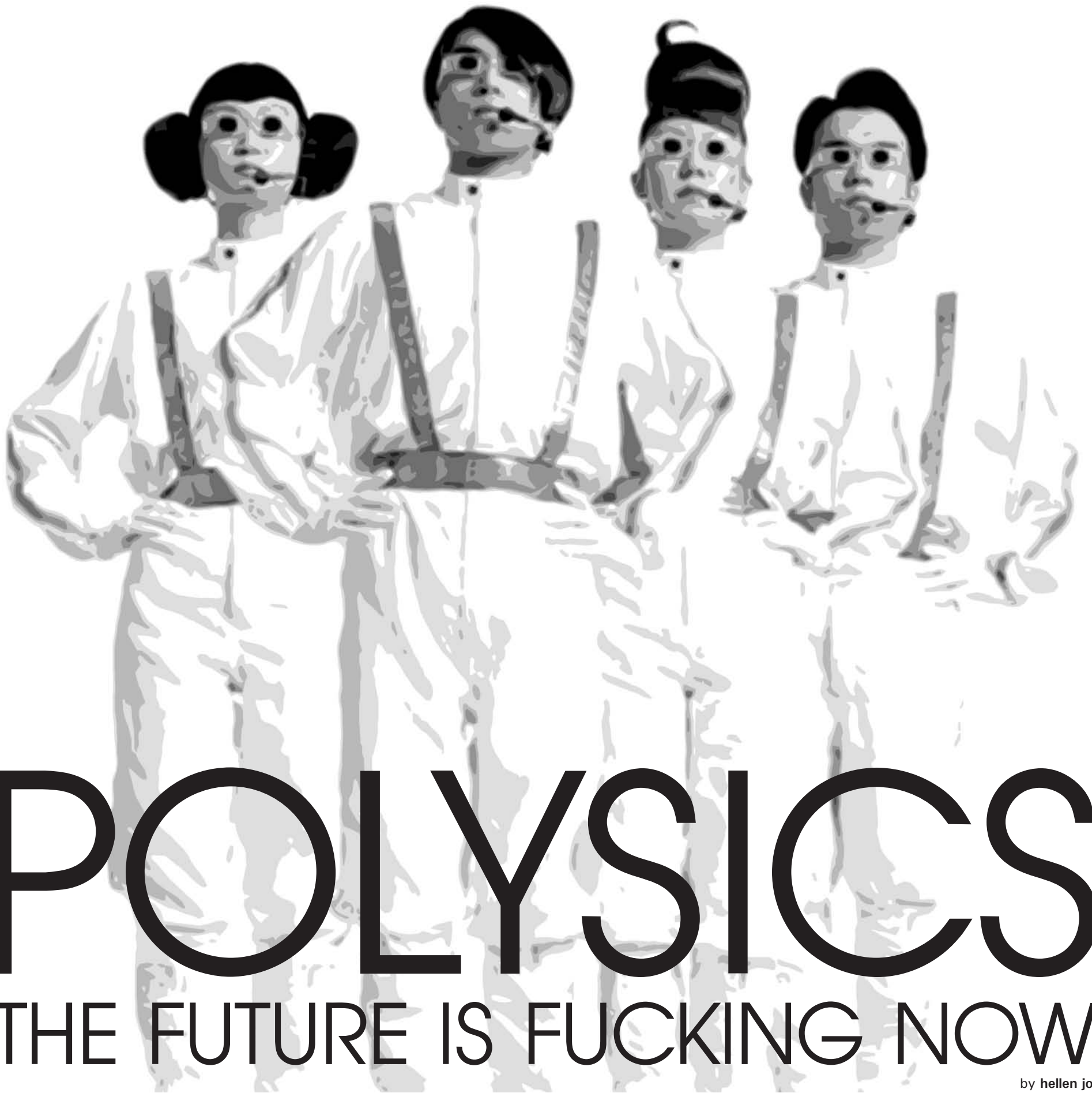
## K.W. LEE UNITES KA STUDENTS AT CAL

by susan kum

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, close to seventy-five curious UC Berkeley students ventured in 2060 Valley Life Sciences Building to hear pioneer Korean American journalist Kyung Won (KW) Lee speak on the vaguely titled topic "Korean America: where we have been, where we are at, where we are headed." However, it was more than the Pulitzer-nominated journalist's first occasion speaking at UC Berkeley that was historic. In light of UC Berkeley's fractured and divided Korean American student population, it was the three prominent Korean American student organizations KSA, KASO and CKS sponsoring the event together that was equally striking. It was a highly symbolic gesture towards the need for unity and solidarity among the Korean American students at Cal, and was actually at KW Lee's demand that the groups unite and host the event together.

KW Lee, who is referred to as the "dean of Asian American journalism," has devoted his entire career to investigative journalism, focusing heavily on race relations and minority issues. He is renown for his work on the Los Angeles riots of 1992, and uses that event as a gauge for the strengths and weaknesses of the KA community. His two hour talk to Cal students encompassed a range of topics, from Korean immigration history to the media's negative portrayal of Korean America merchants to quoting the works of James Baldwin and W.E.B. DuBois. At the root of his argument was his emphasis that this generation, the first real Korean American generation, "is the first and last line of defense." He argued that political and community cohesion among the KA community is not only possible, but necessary for the community to survive.

KW Lee was able to inform and educate a sheltered, middle-class and fairly disconnected community of Korean American students of the rich history that they are a living part of, and the crucial direction of the future that they must claim and negotiate. His message is that Korean Americans must unite and not let our individualistic, divisive natures get the best of us. He notes that the Korean American character is distinguished by "individual successes and collective failures" and that without a united front, oppression and stagnation is the fate and the future of the KA community. His rhetoric never rang more truly or more appropriately in this setting, where the normally self-interested and self-serving Korean American student community at Cal finally gathered, paying homage to great figure of Korean American history, and thus paying homage to the potential of a bright Korean American future.



# POLYSICS

## THE FUTURE IS FUCKING NOW

by hellen jo

Polysics, a band which describes themselves as the “Tokyo New Wave Mutant”, can be understood as a collision that is both panicked and graceful; manic drumming and guitar riffs crash into synthesized sounds of space ships, bad video games, and a dial-up modem. Frontman and guitarist Hiroyuki Hayashi squeals and screams in what sounds like a Martian dialect of futuristic Japanese; the CD jacket of their album “Neu” reveals that he is actually singing an interplanetary form of English. The songs of Polysics, available on their EP compilation “Hey! Bob! My Friend!” as well as on “Neu” [2001, 2003 Asian Man Records], possess their own multiple talents; listening to them will make you dance convulsively with your friends, and at the same time, it will drive away all of your neighbor’s pets and compel your landlord to call the cops.

On stage, Polysics translate their high-tech, high speed punk into the might thrash spectacle of the future. Donning Devo-inspired identical jumpsuits and metallic goggles, they perform exactly like they sound. Hayashi gyrates wildly with his guitar, screaming in rhythm and inciting the audience to frenetic pit violence, while the rest of the band delivers explosive drum/bass/synthesizer noise in a remarkable show of physical restraint. Even though they scream loud and play

hard, Fumi (bass), Junichi Sugai (drums, voice), and Kayo (synthesizer, vocoder, voice) perform in a stiff, robotic manner, while remaining expressionless behind their goggles. Hayashi attributes this performance style in a 2002 Giant Robot interview to “the ultimate coolness of techno: to lack characteristics.” Though this visual uniformity is in contrast to their frantic sound, it actually heightens the brain-scramble of a live show.

Theirs is exactly the kind of music that we, as young and excitable children of the late 80’s and early 90’s, knew that we would see and hear in the futuristic 2000’s. Flying cars, laserguns, teleportation; everything else we expected to have come about by now has failed our young imaginations, leaving us disappointed, bitter, and disillusioned. It’s already 2004! Where are the battling Transformers? Why haven’t the Teenage Ninja Turtles mutated yet? What the hell happened to the Terminator? We’ve been lied to; technology is a sham, and progress is fucking dead. But retain hope, young New Wave Mutant; the future is now, and Polysics are on time.

*For more information visit [www.polysics.com](http://www.polysics.com) and [www.asianmanrecords.com](http://www.asianmanrecords.com)*



# Korean Christianity

by susan n. kum

In examining modern Korean American culture, it is impossible to discount the dominating presence of the Christian faith and Judeo-Christian ideology. Christianity is inextricably linked with the very identity and essence of who Korean Americans are today. The Reverend Billy Graham once said to Washington State Senator Paul Shin that while Germans have brought math and science to this country, and Chinese good food, Koreans have brought churches. On the UC Berkeley campus, where Koreans make up 4.4% of both undergraduate and graduate students (Fall 2003), there are three Christian organizations specifically targeting Korean Americans, with at least seven others containing a major percentage of Korean American students. Accompanying the immigration influx of Koreans in the 1970's to the United States was a deeply ingrained religious foundation in Christianity that perpetuated into the next generation: Korean Americans. While any religion is stifled and outlawed in the North Korean regime, South Korea today maintains a Christian population of 49%, compared to the 2% of a Christian Asian population.

The first introduction of Christianity in native Korea was as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century by invading converted Japanese armies and a visiting Jesuit professor, but it wasn't until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when Catholicism was officially introduced a small number of Koreans by a Korean envoy to China. A group known as the Shilhak ("Practical Learning") scholars studied Catholic literature to learn more about Western culture and were attracted to what they saw as the egalitarian values of Christianity. This educated elite support of Catholicism proved significant to the dissemination of Catholicism after it was officially established in Korea in 1784, though it was still met with opposition by government officials and intellectuals who felt Catholicism threatened the values of a Confucian society. Catholicism continued to grow in Korea, to a strong 10,000 in 1801, but was stymied by the regime of Queen Regent Sunjo who declared practicing Catholicism an act of high treason. The Catholic Church went underground after this edict, yet extreme persecutions continued until 1871 with King Kojong coming into power. A Catholic population grew significantly in the 1870s and 1880s, and had penetrated every part of Korea. The Catholic denomination continued to grow in the 20<sup>th</sup> century despite the increasingly dominant presence of Japan in Korea mainly due to the neutral attitude the Catholic church took regarding Japanese rule.

Japanese missionaries first exposed Korea to the Protestant faith in the 1880's, yet major missionary efforts were ultimately led by the United States. In 1884, the first Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries to Korea were named and both started their work simultaneously in Korea. When Dr. Horace Allen, the Presbyterian missionary, used Western medicine to save the life of the injured Prince Min, the royal court put a great deal of faith and approval in the missionaries and their work. Thus, the first hospital using Western medicine opened in 1885 called Kwanghyewon. However, there was still a deep distrust and fear of foreigners that permeated Korean ideology. Many Koreans felt that the foreign teachings were "evil learning" and were hostile to evangelism efforts. Through institutional practices such as medicine and education and not direct evangelism, missionaries were able to reach out to the people. Christian missionaries knew the heavy emphasis placed on education in Korean culture, and set up schools all across the country. A uniquely Protestant aspect of their missionary work was the Nevius method, named after Dr. John L. Nevius of China, which stressed self-support, self-propagation, self-government and independence of the church. It put importance on the church's self-determination and on the need for natives to perpetuate the evangelical work.

Like the Catholic Church, the Protestant church maintained a neutral position toward impeding Japanese rule, which allowed it to continue its evangelical and institutional work. Missionary schooling in Korea was the only one that provided a complete system of schooling from primary to college level, and its popularity and demand grew in the early 1900s.

The Japanese occupation in Korea, from 1910-1945, marked a

new era for Christianity and churches in Korea. While the Japanese government was initially friendly toward Christianity, it developed into a policy of oppression and suppression. This shift in policy was instigated by the Japanese view that the Christian church was the only viable threat to their power, and the prominence of Christians in the independence movement against Japan and Korean nationalism. The Conspiracy Trial of 1911 and the Independence Movement of 1919, or Samil Undong, inextricably linked Korean nationalism and independence with Christianity. In the Conspiracy Trial, 123 Koreans suspected of being in the independence movement were brought to trial for a fabricated charge against the Japanese government. While most of them were acquitted, 98 of the men being Christian left a lasting impression on the Korean psyche that Christians was associated with and desired Korean liberation. The signers of the Declaration of Independence in the Independence Movement of 1919, 15 of the 33 who were Christian, also further entrenched Christianity in this political cause. International condemnation of the brutal treatment by the Japanese following the Independence Movement of 1919 led to more liberal and tolerant policies in the 1920s yet came to an end in 1931 when Japan began a campaign for conquest in Asia. The 1937 process initiated by Japan on the Korean people of "Japanization," in which the Korean language was suppressed and Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names. Japan also attempted to enforce their national religion of Shinto, and the expulsion of prominent missionaries made it increasingly difficult for Koreans to resist the practice of worshiping the Shinto shrine. The largest Christian denominations in Korea, the Methodists and Presbyterians, finally complied, thus suppressing all other possible resistance to the order. The Japanese government sought to "Japanize the Church", and created a Japanese Christianity in Korea from the unification of Japanese and Korean Methodist churches and teaching of Shinto in seminary.

After the end of World War II, Christian missionaries began returning to the south, while in the north, the church was seen as a threat to Communist rule and suppressed. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 was detrimental for Korean Christians, as Communists viewed them as anti-Communist and supporters of American imperialism, and were thus targeted. The period immediately following the Korean War, in the wake of division and destruction, served to be most conducive to a massive foreign evangelism campaign. Hundreds of millions of dollars poured into Korea by foreign "Christian" countries such as the United States, and Catholic and Protestant aid agencies also donated medical, food and other relief supplies. Many Koreans receiving aid were attracted to Christianity out of gratitude and became converted. Following the Korean War beginning in the 1960s, South Korea saw a tremendous rise in Christian conversions as industrialization and democracy took hold. Churches now act independently of missionaries' work and are trying to develop a distinctly "Korean Christianity", working off the principle of minjung shinhak, meaning "theology of the people."

The undeniable and pervasive hold Christianity has on Korean culture and ideology can be attributed to various historical factors that made Christianity appealing and a welcome alternative. The rise of Christianity is linked to a discontent felt amongst the people of inequality, injustice and oppression, as well as Christianity's association with Korean pride and nationality in the independence movement during Japanese occupation. The aid that Korean churches provided for Koreans devastated by the Korean War as well as offering stability in tumultuous times following the modernization of South Korea have also played a factor in the prominence of Christianity in Korea. This strong Korean Christian identity undoubtedly has carried over into the United States, where an estimated 80% of the 1.2 million Korean Americans attend church. It is impossible to understand the Korean American identity and its strong foundation in the church without examining Korea and its history of rejection, turmoil, acceptance and embracing of Christianity.

the arrival and proliferation of  
Christianity in Korea



# the MISADVENTURES OF MANHATER!

THE FEMINIST ANTI-HERO!!

versus

NERDIGO COMICS  
ISSUE NO. 27

Because of her