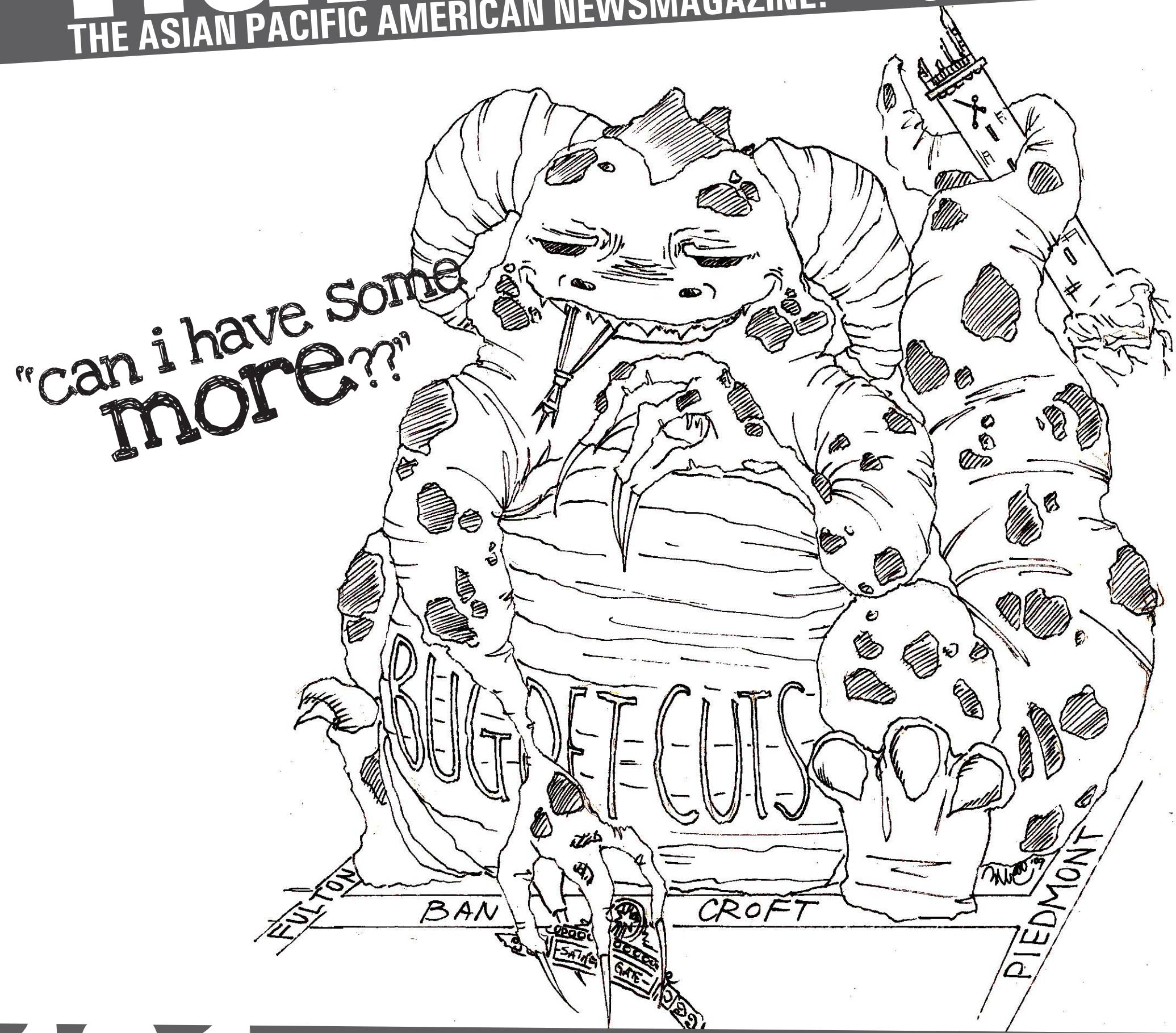


hardboiled

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NEWSMAGAZINE!

OCTOBER 2009



13.1

IN THIS ISSUE... FEELING THE CUTS / TO LEARN
OR NOT TO LEARN / APOLOGY NOT ACCEPTED /
THE CONNIE CHUNG SYNDROME... AND MORE!

13.1 hardboiled

OCT 2009

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hb meetings

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editor's notes

Dear hb reader,

With the advent of budget cuts and fee hikes, we've raised hell—we've talked the talk and, as evidenced by the rally on the 24th, we've certainly walked the walk... and now it's midterm season. Good bye rabblerousing, hello late night library trips (with the inevitable awkward bear walk) and caffeine overdosing. I'll be the first to admit that the mid-semester slump has put a dent in my activism but it's time to keep the momentum going.

When the robustness of Asian Pacific Islander (API) courses and the API progressive community is at risk, we have to keep on pushing ahead. Fee hikes not only create an unfair burden to students across the board, but it becomes a financial barricade for prospective API UC applicants from backgrounds and experiences that make the progressive API community progressive. We saw what the administration was willing to do to API culture and language courses last year before the students created ad hoc committees and mobilized against the cuts. And this was when the threat was not even close to the magnitude it is now. The administration has not seen API education and languages as a priority before these cuts and they definitely will not now—unless we make them.

While the walk out gave us the push that we needed, this energy cannot be sustained without continued discussion, planning and participation. We need to reevaluate our methods when the administration has learned to neutralize our efforts through emails overtly stating their support of the movement while covertly making an administrative and state issue solely a state issue. Although we find inspiration in the sixties and kickass TWLF legacies, we have to understand that new times call for new strategies. Are we engaging with the community to recognize our common needs? Are we working on alternative policies rather than (in addition to) bashing the Regents?

So before crashing after that 7th coffee, take a peek at our article on budget cuts, educate yourself, and keep on fighting to preserve our education, our future, and OUR university.

In over-caffinated, sleep-deprived solidarity,

Cecilia Tran
Story editor

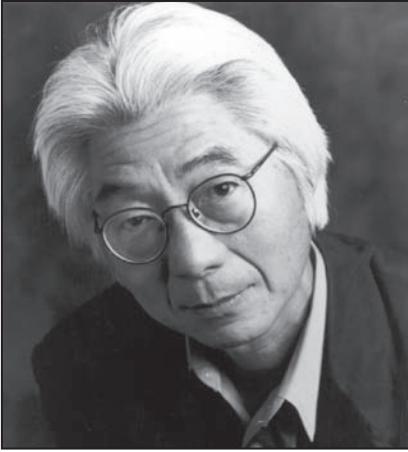
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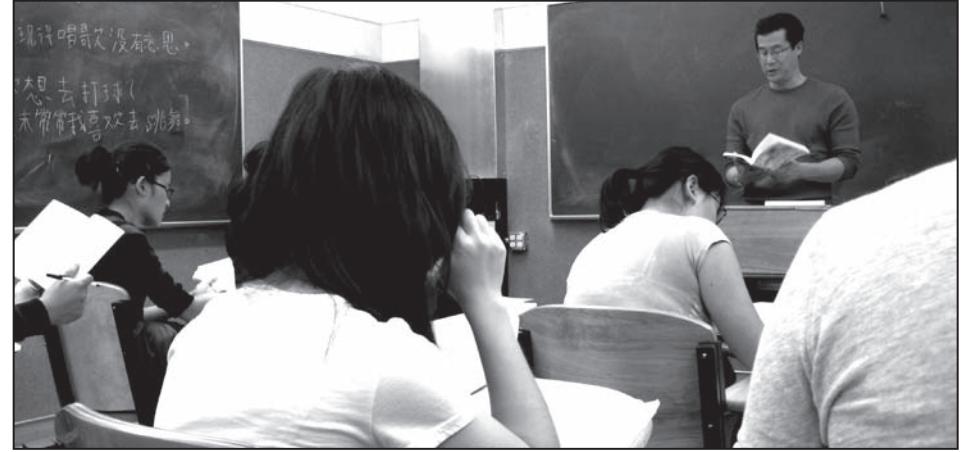
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LEFT During the summer, the Asian American Studies Department experienced the loss of Professor Ronald Takaki, author of *Strangers from a Different Shore*. This loss brings up questions of what the future for the Asian American Studies Department will look like.



RIGHT Professor Greg Choy lectures to attentive students on Asian American literature. What will the future of Ethnic Studies look like with the impending loss of faculty and resources?



the ROAD AHEAD

Remembering Ronald Takaki and exploring the future of Ethnic Studies

by annie kim noguchi

Each day, I read a quote I have posted above my desk: "How do we free ourselves from our past, if we do not even know this past?" Author of this quote, Professor Ron Takaki (1939-2009), is often called the "father of multicultural studies." After the third world Liberation Front strikes in the 1960s, Professor Takaki was one of the first to offer courses on race, ethnicity, and community, eventually creating the first graduate-level program in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. Asian American Studies Program Lecturer Harvey Dong describes Professor Takaki as "a unique academic, an activist educator who challenged the master narrative, and who was and continues to be a model for a university tenured professor."

Professor Ron Takaki passed away this June at the age of 70. His campus memorial three weeks ago was packed—standing room only for just a small portion of the students, colleagues, family, and community members whose lives he has touched. Ethnic Studies professors, students, and family described a fun-loving and gregarious activist, committed both to his work and his family. Most strikingly, all spoke of Professor Takaki's commitment and contributions to Ethnic Studies, of his ground-breaking work as an academic, a teacher, and a public figure who contributed tirelessly to the field of multiculturalism.

As I sat at his memorial in the International House auditorium, I couldn't help but think about how Professor Takaki's work and passing have affected me. Another of his quotes helps to explain why Asian American Studies is so important to me: "The task for us is not only to comprehend the world, but also to change the world. In our very comprehending, we are in fact changing the world."

Asian American Studies has helped me to situate my life and my history in the current racial, political, and social topography. It's provided me with the tools and the knowledge to bridge the divide between my where I came from and my family's history, and my experience at Berkeley, training for whatever career awaits. In comprehending an alternate history and an alternative way of looking at the world, I am changing my world.

However, with Professor Takaki's passing, I am also reminded that Asian American Studies continues to exist only with the scholarship of our professors and the engagement of our students. With the recent budget cuts and the loss of two tenured professors in the program, Ronald Takaki and Ling-Chi Wang, where is the future of the program?

Many of the professors I spoke with in the Asian American Studies (AAS) Program agreed that AAS is "at a juncture," as Professor Michael Omi put it. One direction he is a part of is a move towards community based studies. Professor Omi is the UC Berkeley campus representative for the UC AAPI Multi-Campus Research Program, established

to draw on resources system-wide to disseminate knowledge about AAPIs to California legislators and community based organizations. The University of California "has an obligation to apply its research expertise to the study of AAPI related policies."

Lecturer Hatem Bazian also links community engagement with the AAS program. His class, Muslims in America: Community and Institutions, emerged after 9/11 and

"Our Asian American Studies Program is more than simply a major. It's our community of students, teachers, faculty, thinkers, and activists working together to understand and change the world. It's your story, it's my story, and it's our story."

is now part of the AAS Program. In addition to Asia having the largest segment of Muslims, many South and Southeast Asians were targeted for backlash after 9/11. As a result, bridges were created between the Muslim and APA communities—the Asian Law Caucus came forward and asked the Muslim community what they needed, and the Japanese American Citizens League co-sponsored events with the Muslim community. Even on campus, the Nikkei Student Union and the Muslim Students Association facilitated an event together highlighting their shared experiences of discrimination and backlash. Professor Bazian suggests that it's time that we all examine ourselves and determine where we can "bring new energies" to the program and the field.

Professor Khatharya Um also focuses on the growth of the program, describing its transformation over the last few decades. The arrival of Southeast Asian refugees added new dimensions to the APA community and a "new layer of complexity" with transnational ties even deeper and more entangled. There has been a growth of scholarship of Southeast Asians and a "closer bridging of disciplines." In the past, Asian Studies focused primarily on Asia, while Asian American Studies was primarily American-centric. However, now the field is becoming more transnational and diasporic, an identity which is being formalized in responses to student need in a name change of the program from Asian American Studies to Asian American and Diasporic Studies.

How do these professors' views for the future fit into

the reality of the AAS program's success? Chair of the Asian American Studies Program, Elaine Kim, points out that while the field is blossoming nationally, development at Berkeley has been slower in the last 20 years. Perhaps this is related to the fact that AAS faculty at Berkeley have been engaged elsewhere. According to Professor Kim, many of the faculty in the AAS Program advise graduate students, and many faculty are also busy holding administrative positions. Again, this raises the question of replenishing our AAS faculty.

However, while our faculty may be dwindling, lecturers Hatem Bazian's and Harvey Dong's class sizes are growing. Enrollment in Professor Dong's AAS courses has increased, even though the university is cutting its size.

Why then, is no search being conducted to hire new faculty for tenured positions? While it may not be a priority for the university, it is important that students are a "part of the conversation," as Professor Omi suggests, and express their vision of AAS. Students must make their needs known, because no involvement and no demand on the university means we're losing ground. "If you look back at history, the guarantors are the students," says Harvey Dong. "It's up to students to study the issues, decide whether or not they agree, and then question and make changes." Students are the "living testimonials," says Professor Um. They need to be "out there, talking about why AAS is important."

And so the question of faculty and resources continues to arise. While the need to replenish faculty predates the budget cuts, the overall budget crisis has made it that much harder to hire new faculty. Professor Um puts it bluntly: we need to replenish our faculty, or we are "seriously in trouble." And, as many professors have said, it's up to the students to make their need for a robust AAS Program known. It's up to the students to decide what they need and agitate for it. After all, it is our university and our education.

Our Asian American Studies Program is more than simply a major. It's our community of students, teachers, faculty, thinkers, and activists working together to understand and change the world. It's your story, it's my story, and it's our story. It's important that as students, we think about how Asian American Studies applies to us, and what we want to see from the program. Whether a major or not, we are still students in this community. It's time to become engaged, become involved, and become part of the discussion about the field of study that seeks to understand and disseminate knowledge that is so closely tied to our communities and ourselves. Whether your actions include becoming an AAS major, taking an AAS class, joining hardboiled or another community group, or simply continuing to educate yourself, it's time for action, learning, and development. In the words of the late Professor Ron Takaki: In our very comprehending, we are in fact changing the world.

To learn or not to learn

Taking back the mother tongue

by justin ko

What's a word?

Besides a vaguely symbolic splotch of ink on a blank page, a word is a motley assortment of letters, symbols, pictographs, or sounds that the brain associates with some sort of meaning.

As such, words of any language are merely components of a much greater concept; the concept of language itself, which everyone seems to have a say on. Philosophers such as Hobbes and Locke, for one, view language as a natural and inevitable extension of the speech which humans have within themselves.

As university students, we make the decision whether to include the study of foreign languages as a part of our education. More often than not, however, linguistic classes are set aside in favor of science and business courses. But there are those who do feel that languages are worthy of study here at Cal.

Renee Bell, a freshman, hails from Sacramento, but her mother was born in South Korea. Though her father is not of Asian descent, and she admits to being "definitely not fluent in Korean," Bell maintains that learning to speak better Korean is an integral part of understanding her identity.

"It's a part of my heritage. The language really appeals to me, I like a lot about it [such as] the sounds, the written language has its own history, and it's a cultural artifact in itself. Of course all languages are useful for a certain reason, but for me, Korean is a lot more personal. It's more than being useful... I have a certain obligation."

To fulfill this obligation, she is taking Korean 1A. Her proficiency in the language, like that of many local-born Asian Americans, is largely limited and often not enough to "engender a full conversation." But what stands out in students like Bell is a desire to improve the status quo. "It's definitely something I wish to change," she says, "especially with the respect you have with your elders, you should definitely make the effort to communicate with them effectively."

It would be a gross understatement to say that language is useful. Devoid of language, it would be simply impossible for us subsist as anything beyond a self-preserving sequence of chemical reactions.

Language enables us to draw meaning from symbols and sounds as well as understand the concepts that define our very lives. Survival is ultimately achieved through communication; both communication with others, for biological and psychological sustenance, and the inner communication alluded to by Hobbes and Locke.

Reflective dialogue within the self, to some degree, defends against the absurdity and irrationality of existence. More importantly, it allows others to understand and interpret our actions and thoughts long after we cease to live in the traditional sense.

Language to me is a way we can feel a tangible connection to shadowy ancestors older than the Greeks, older than the Bible. By "ancestors" I mean not only individuals directly related to my family, but rather, people that simply used my mother tongue. In a similar way, language enables me to feel connected to future generations. As such, I believe that language is something that will persist through all generations and offer a thread to weave them together.

Butian Li is an international first-year student at Cal from Dalian, China. Attending English classes is mandatory in Chinese schools, and she says that the

majority of high school graduates from China continue to sharpen their English ability. The comparison here is that Li is naturally fluent in Mandarin whilst attempting to improve her English, while local-born Asian Americans like Bell are fluent in English but are trying to relearn their native languages.

Li says, "English is just a useful tool because I have to attend school here, and I have to learn English, even if I was in China. You can never know if it will be useful in the future. But I think in the very beginning you may learn a language as a matter of identification. I think language plays both roles."

She also notes that appearance is a key factor in the assumptions people make regarding language proficiency or lack thereof. "I think there's a difference between me learning English and those people who look [like they should be fluent in] Chinese but are actually not. For me, it's fine, because I think people still regard me as a foreigner, but for them, people have the assumption that [because they look Chinese], they should speak Chinese fluently." The linguistic stereotypes and expectations based on race mentioned by Li create a double standard that Asian-Americans of all backgrounds must face on a daily basis.

Our endeavours to connect with the past are all limited by the constraints of our knowledge.

I, for example, cannot trace my origins much further beyond the fact that my great-grandparents on both my father and mother's side were born in the Guangdong province of China. But what little I do know about my predecessors—that they communicated using the Cantonese language (indeed, it's different enough from Mandarin to be considered a separate language)—is enough for me to feel a connection with them. In other words, I need no more than a language to feel a link to past and present Cantonese speakers and to sufficiently trace my background.

Like many local-born or otherwise "Westernized" Asian Americans, my fluency in my native tongue of Cantonese waned significantly by the time I started elementary school. It seemed to me a natural progress, for the television shows I watched, the toys I wanted, the books I read were all written in this West Germanic descendant known as English. And indeed I would argue that it is natural for a person born in the United States to lose not only proficiency in an immigrant native language, but also an appreciation for what it means to be a member of that immigrant community.

As Asian Americans, somewhere down the line we all came fresh off a boat, a steamer or a canoe or a junk, and to deny this fact is to deny that at one point in time a particular ancestor of ours made a momentous journey that may well have terminated or initiated our bloodline with it.

It is exceedingly paradoxical how we wish to live memorable lives that hopefully mean something to our posterity, while the memories of

our own forerunners have been largely discarded. If communicating in their language is the best we can do to keep these memories alive, then we need to make it a priority to relearn that language.

Members of the South Asian community are by no means excluded from this inner conflict. Prateek Thatikunta, another Cal freshman, was born and raised in San Jose. His family speaks Telugu, the primary language spoken by the people of Andhra Pradesh, one of the most prominent states in India.

The fact that Telugu is the fourteenth most spoken language in the world, while only the third most spoken language in India, is a testament to the sheer amount of linguistic diversity in India and Asia as a whole. Thatikunta says that his ability to speak Telugu is sufficient to carry a conversation, since he has spoken it since he was born, but it "could definitely be better," and it "gets worse and worse each year." This is a difficult trend to reverse for him, since, as he says, "the only time I speak Telugu is at home, and since I'm not at home anymore, I definitely am going to be losing contact with it."

However, he is satisfied with the fact that he is fairly fluent and can communicate with his parents and relatives. "I'll never lose enough contact with Telugu that I can't speak it if I need to. I can always speak enough." Thatikunta is lucky in that he has largely escaped the language decay that befalls many second generation Asian-Americans; however, Telugu is nowhere near as accessible in terms of education on the Cal campus as is Korean or Chinese.

As such he faces obstacles of different types in the common endeavour to retain native language ability.

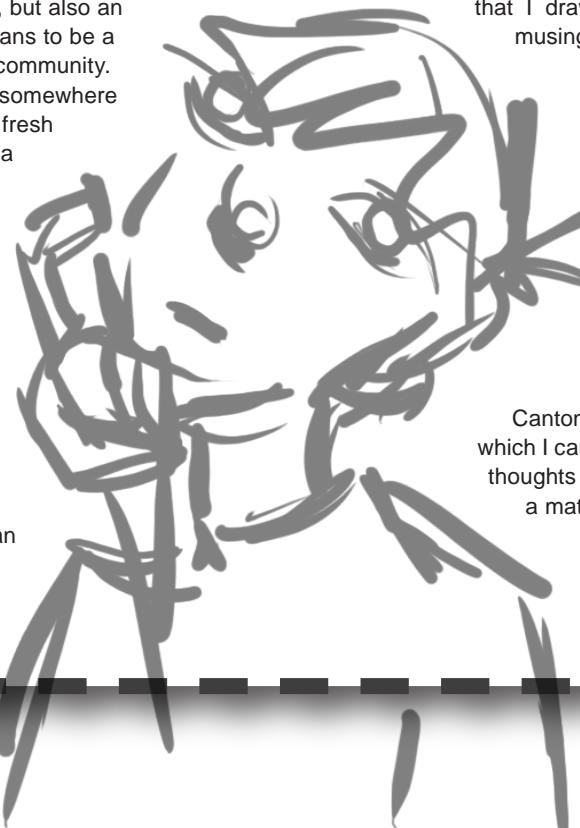
I would argue that this is an advantage to being Asian American—we can identify with predecessors in our not-too-distant past, and with a collective culture that is becoming increasingly relevant in the present age to people of all ethnicities.

Whether or not we as Asian Americans choose to identify with this community is a decision that I believe is as significant as the decision to immigrate in the first place. I recognize the irony behind this statement, given that it was written in what I hope to be persuasive and well-written English. But it is not from the Germanic and Latin roots of the English language that I draw the significance of these musings, but rather, from the

broader understanding of the need to probe one's roots—an understanding that can be expressed in every language known to man, including Cantonese. English to me represents a universal language, a vessel into which I can pour my thoughts.

However, the dialect of Cantonese represents a vessel from which I can drink and be satiated by the thoughts of my ancestors. It is simply a matter of paying respect where I believe respect is due.

But what's in a word, anyway?



breathing bold & beautiful beats

Music artist Marié Digby releases her third album, "Breathing Underwater" by sherry gong

You may recognize her cover of Rihanna's "Umbrella" on YouTube. Or you may even remember that she won the Pantene Pro-Voice contest with her song "Miss Invisible." Half-Japanese and half-Irish, Marié (pronounced Mar-ee-AY) Digby has risen from YouTube to Hollywood Records with her covers of popular songs as well as original songs about love and the conflicting emotions related to love.

You may not know that Digby entered UC Berkeley intending to major in philosophy (and then continue to law school like her father did), but dropped out after her first year. Contrary to what you may expect, her Japanese mother encouraged Digby to do what she wanted.

Digby's music admits how human she is, more so than compared to some mainstream artists. In her song "Unfold," she sings, "You see I am the bravest girl/ You will ever come to meet/ Yet I shrink down to nothing/ At the thought of someone/ Really seeing me." She is honest about her insecurities and uses music to open herself up to love and to the world.

As an Asian American, it is refreshing for me to see an artist (add to that an Asian American artist) being so genuine. And the point isn't that I like her music because it addresses aspects of being Asian American. Rather, her music expresses things we all go through: love, loss, growth as human beings. Digby just happens to be Asian American, and that fact along with her universally touching music makes the Asian American community seem less like an "outsider" community. Her music shows that Asian Americans have feelings, too, and we can make music that non-Asian Americans will like.

After her debut album "Unfold," Digby released an album in Japan titled "Second Home," which contained covers of Japanese songs, though Digby still hopes to release an original album with Japanese lyrics only.

Her third album "Breathing Underwater" (available everywhere), has just as meaningful lyrics as her first, though with a more upbeat theme, which is exactly what Digby intended. Not wanting to be boxed into the "guitar girl" image, Digby added new rhythms to her music. This shift seems to mirror a change Digby herself experienced recently; while working on "Breathing Underwater," she fell in love, and the album is a reflection of her experiences with that

relationship.

Digby used to think that her bi-racial background specifically helped her career because people wanted something different. But her opinion has changed somewhat.

"I don't necessarily feel like I'm held back, but it is certainly something I'm much more aware of," she told Nichi Bei Times. "I think people look at me and I look Asian and I'm proud of that, but I think it scares people too because there haven't been Asians [successful] in this industry."

Digby seems to be a part of the trend of ordinary people becoming famous through YouTube. YouTube connects artists directly to their audience without having to be funneled through an agent or record labels. This is particularly important for Asian American artists because not many of them are able to jump through these conventional hoops to fame. Record labels do not see Asian American musicians as being profitable or marketable, but that is something we want to change.

You might say that it's impossible to change the entire industry. It won't change overnight; that's not realistic. But one of the obvious ways we can show that Asian American musicians are profitable is to support them (not just spiritually, but financially). We can also do what I am sure most of us have been doing: sharing YouTube videos with each other. More specifically, we can share videos of Asian American musicians with other Asian Americans as well as non-Asian Americans.

Perhaps Digby's story is just one of many that will convince other Asian Americans that they don't have to feel restricted in the entertainment industry; race doesn't have to be the deciding factor in an artist's success anymore. Although race and ethnicity perhaps still play a role in who gets a record deal and who doesn't, being Asian American no longer means you're automatically excluded from the game. Although I do not encourage you to drop out of UC Berkeley, I do encourage you all to follow your passions whether it's music, art, math, English, or something else. That is exactly what Digby did.

In her own words, "I knew making it in music was impossible, but I didn't care what it took."

photo courtesy of musicremedy



Digby is the 15th most subscribed musician of all time on YouTube.

comfort foods that take you back home

by rachel lee

When I first came to Berkeley as a freshman, I often turned to Asian food to remind myself of home and ease my homesickness. I soon found myself frequenting Durant Food Court, popularly known as the "Asian Ghetto," for my fix of Asian Cuisine. Perusing each restaurant one by one, I discovered that Thai Basil's Basil Combination Fried Rice really did melt in your mouth, that Bear Ramen House had some tasty Spam Kimchi fried rice, and the list goes on. But you can only eat food out of clear containers and plastic bags for so long. There was something about the steaming bowls of hot rice cake stew, broiled just the way they're supposed to, and the side dishes that have always accompanied my entrees at home that never failed to soothe me. I missed it; and after a while, I found it.

As it turned out, familiar foods were just around the corner. I didn't have to go too far to discover Espresso Experience. Located on Bancroft directly across from Bear's Lair, I was immediately attracted to the words "bulgogi sandwich." I've had bulgogi, and I've had sandwiches but why would you put the two together? I was soon shown that you could in fact put them together, and the Korean couple that owns this quaint restaurant café proves that you can do it well. Their personable attitudes and impeccable memory make you feel remembered each time you walk in. The extra conversation that went on the other day even after I ordered my bulgogi sandwich and side of shaved ice was refreshing and reminded me of my own mother, who'd ask about my day as I ate an after school snack at the dining table.

But when I want Korean food served the way my own mother does at home, I go to Toust in Sather Lane. The past few stores that occupied this space in the lane all had a rather short running track, but Toust has managed to stay open for over a year now. I attribute their success to the Korean grandmother chef who cooks food like she's still in Korea. Served in traditional Korean stone pots with metal silverware and complete with traditional Korean side dishes, Toust offers quality food at low prices that make you forget you're a broke college student looking for a good deal.

Located on Telegraph and Dwight, Racha Café is tucked a little further way from the typical Telegraph restaurants we see on our walk to campus and back, making it an easy place to get away and forget that you still are in Berkeley while enjoying an authentic Thai dish. The traditional Thai décor and wall art definitely helps with that too. The restaurant is pretty spacious and usually not crowded, unlike the other Thai restaurants in the area where you're usually pushed up against the wall and can hear the conversations at all the tables surrounding you. This is the place I go to when I want to get away from campus and still enjoy an authentic bowl of pad see ew at college student prices.

As winter draws near and the cold Berkeley weather settles in, what could be better and more comforting than a warm bowl of pho? PhoHoa on Shattuck and Kittredge was the first restaurant I tried in Berkeley and since then I've gone back at least once a month for a good, cheap bowl of pho that never changes each time I go. In fact, you can even build your

own pho at this place! But the best part is that there are so many more entrees beyond the regular #2 that I was surprised when a friend ordered a salmon dish over pho. And here I thought pho was their forte. The salmon dish is well prepared and served with extra side dishes. Their menu also includes the Thai iced teas I love.

Sometimes you're not in such a quick rush to grab a good meal, and you want to splurge on something nice. Either that, or your parents are in town to visit and you can actually get them to pay for a good meal that's authentic enough to feel like home-cooked food. Great China, located on Kittredge and Oxford, is definitely one of my favorites in the Berkeley area. The two-story restaurant is always busy and I've always had to wait in line for at least ten minutes. Yet the wait is definitely worth it because the food is tasty and it's an easy place to feel as if you're surrounded by family. The large circular tables and circular tray centered in the middle reminds me of all my favorite Chinese restaurants. Great China offers a wide array of food for not-so-expensive prices. This is the next place I'm taking my family when they come to visit.

Since I've discovered these restaurants, I know where to go when I get the itch for something homemade. While none of these restaurants can actually be exactly what you're missing from home, they definitely can help. Sometimes when you're sick and in need of that little something from home to comfort you, a bowl of comfort food is just the right pick-me-up to get you going again.

my china is gray

Countries are not black or white, red or blue, but only shades of gray

by jasmine wang

Sixty years ago on October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the beginning of the People's Republic of China with the words, China "has stood up." Though hindsight shows us that the coming decades would be filled with uncertainty, intense struggle and cruelty, these words were nevertheless appropriate for the time.

The birth of Communist China was an undeniable step away from the violated, impoverished and war-torn China that defined the preceding century. I specifically use the term "violated" because it is what best describes the British empire's smuggling of opium into China during the 18th century, an action which incapacitated millions and led to the Opium Wars, the cession of Hong Kong, and the desecration of the Summer Palace in 1860.

This theme of foreign violation continued into the 20th century and culminated in the invasion of the Japanese during World War II and the massacre that was the Rape of Nanking. Therefore, it was not prosperity or even peace that Mao Zedong declared; rather, it was the existence of a fighting spirit—China would never again be held at the mercy of others. This commitment to reconstruction and a renewal of strength, while certainly not a justification for the pains of the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward, no doubt promised the possibility of a future where prosperity and peace would be attainable.

But why does this matter to me? Why is it that my eyes cloud up when I read about the tumultuous history that the Chinese people have lived through though I was born and educated in America? Why did I feel an overwhelming wave of pride when I watched the opening ceremony for the Beijing Summer Olympics in 2008? I certainly did not live through these past sixty years of development, nor have I ever fought or suffered for China. But, I suppose, my existence is a result of this history and so I have always felt a natural sense of profound gratitude and devotion toward the motherland of my parents. This, I am sure, is also nourished by my close relationship with my mother, who has allowed me to live somewhat vicariously through her experiences.

Mine is a unique and somewhat

unsettling point of view to have as an American. While bookstores carry titles exposing the atrocities of the Mao era, I see the same time through my mother's eyes. As a junior high student, my mother eagerly volunteered to be shipped to the rural countryside to work as a farmer. Life was harsh and her education was significantly delayed, but what she remembers most prominently is the kindness and humbleness of the villagers she lived with and the camaraderie that existed among the youths.

Similarly, though Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party are widely vilified in "Western" culture, the choices of my grandparents have taught me that no situation is as simple as it seems. Coming from a well-off and politically active background, my father's family suffered immensely during the Cultural Revolution. They were stripped of their belongings, publicly humiliated at rallies, and thrown into prison because they were seen as deviants and threats to the accepted ideology. Yet, until her death in Beijing, my grandmother's devotion to the Communist Party, her country, and its potential has never wavered. It seems she has always seen a China beyond that of Mao's shadow and the actions of the few (though in China that may mean millions); choosing to observe and trust in the macroscopic direction of positivity China is progressing towards instead of condemning the government for its failures, though she has every reason to do so.

It is with this multi-generational and cautious perspective that I view the current media coverage of the political and ethnic clashes in Tibet and Xinjiang that have come to define the West's perspective of China. While I am in no position to dispute facts reported about specific incidents, what I do notice is an extreme lack of both historical and present-day context in the reports. For example,

though the handling of the Uighur uprising was bloody and may have been oppressive, what is China's general policy on minority issues? I am certainly no expert on this matter, but what I do know is that minorities are not subject to the One-Child regulation and are encouraged via an affirmative action of sorts to pursue higher education—none of which has been reported or even disproved by the media.

This selective representation of China is unjust and particularly influential. Though the Chinese government is itself a master manipulator of the media, it has little power to manipulate the American image because American pop culture is so incredibly pervasive and self-propagating. Conversely, American information about China is almost always filtered through what media sources decide to report. This is particularly dangerous, as it leads to an insensitivity and lack of understanding of the Chinese people's perspective and does not particularly facilitate a desire to learn more.

To illustrate this, last semester, recognizing my own biases, I found myself quite enthused to attend the Dalai Lama's visit to Berkeley in an effort to better understand the person whom the "West" so fervently supports in the issue of Tibet. I did not expect to first be presented with a speech by Sharon Stone, who had in previous months made the

statement, without apology, that the Sichuan Earthquake which killed over 68,000 people was in fact a result of "Karma. When you're not nice then bad things happen to you." Suffice it to say, it was difficult to sustain a neutral opinion for the remainder of the program, as I felt angered and disappointed in the organizers of the event. If the same comments had been made about 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina, such a person would never have been invited to instruct virtue.

October 1, 2009 is the sixtieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China and the government has planned an enormous parade to take place in Beijing. Being an American, it is almost like a coming out of the closet experience for me to admit that I am immensely proud of the progress China has made these past sixty years. Stripping away the controversies and continuous strife, what is evident is that the majority of people in China have food to put on the table and a sense of newfound opportunity—this is a feat in itself. As a nation that has "stood up" from a state of decay, China must continue to be progressive and handle its deficiencies and faults with the responsibility of a major member of the global community. In return, China must be viewed critically, constructively, and within the context of the ashes it has risen from.

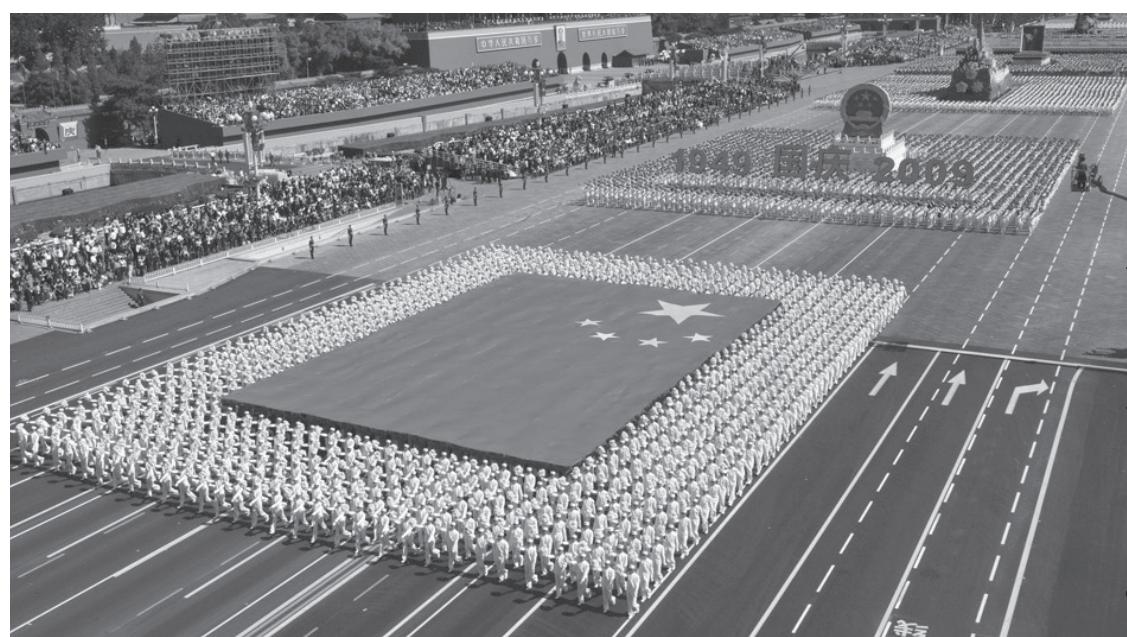


photo courtesy of xinhua news agency



Students protest the budget cuts on September 24th.
photo by T.T. Tu

FEELING THE CUTS

How present budget proposals threaten the voice and interests of Cal's API community

by denise wong

On September 24, 2009, approximately 5,000 demonstrators stormed both Sproul Plaza and downtown Berkeley as part of a system-wide walkout against the Regents of the University of California's mismanagement of the current budget crisis. Weeks of unprecedented student and faculty criticism towards the state and university administration culminated in this historic walkout. It also marked the first instance in these weeks of organizing and debate that the budget proposals' impact on API students was openly discussed outside of API spaces.

Lack of discussion on the budget cuts' impact on APIs is the largest obstacle preventing APIs from creating a unified stance on this issue. The fact that students will be paying more for longer waitlists, larger classes, decreased resources and a generally lower quality education should not be an issue that garners apathy. Rally speakers and students alike have lauded the walkout's success, likening it to the protests of the Free Speech Movement and declaring it the return of a long-dormant tradition of Berkeley activism; however, reported figures of attendance prove meager when compared to the sheer amount of API students whom the proposals will adversely impact. The amount of APIs at the walkout was obviously less than 5,000. APIs constitute about 45% of the student body, and the fact that our numbers alone could potentially effect real change but have not been utilized to their full potential is shameful.

It is imperative to examine the implications of these budget proposals' effects on API students. These cuts would slice students' bank accounts at the jugular for visibly lower-quality academic services, which is reason enough to take alarm. However, these cuts would also impact Berkeley in several different ways, making huge blows to not only APIs but API interests—that is, the values and goals that give direction to the API community and ensure that it transcends merely racially-based organizing. Here's a summary of three major ways in which these budget cuts will directly impact API students and API interests:

BUDGET BREAK DOWN

To reiterate a point made multiple times during the past few weeks, the nature of these cuts indicates steady strides toward the privatization of UC Berkeley. These budget proposals include:

- A 32% fee increase (\$2,500) for in-state students, resulting in about \$10,000 per year
- A 7% fee increase in Spring 2010
- An additional \$1,000 fee increase on business and engineering students
- An in-state enrollment reduction of 2,300 students
- 1,900 layoffs across all campuses, as well as professor furloughs (forced, non-paid off-days)

1. Vindication for cutting classes, departments, and educational programs relevant to API interests

Historically, ethnic studies, the department that

houses Berkeley's Asian American studies program, has been continuously assailed by budget cuts. These cuts were often backed by an unfortunately pervasive and incorrect view that the discipline promotes racism and self-segregation by concentrating on race and racial history. Opposition to the department has existed since its inception, and has frequently materialized through budget cuts and hiring policies that inhibit the young department's growth. According to department chair Beatriz Manz in a May 4, 2009 article in The Daily Californian, the department took an 8% budget blow this year.

Given its highly contentious status, it is unsurprising that both Berkeley and UC administrators have frequently placed the department on the chopping block. Times of economic crisis make it easier for the administration to squelch ethnic studies and repress the expansion of Asian American studies curricula, despite an increasing number of API students.

These proposals threaten not only ethnic studies and Asian American studies, but also other classes relevant to APIs and API student development, such as language classes. The victory of the student movement to protect East Asian Language from the budget cuts in 2008 is rendered irrelevant with the current threat. According to a September 10 radio interview given by API Education and Languages NOW! members Andrew Leong and Amy Lee, the most current most pressing issue is job security for non-tenured lecturers, members of faculty most vulnerable to lay-offs. Asian language classes are taught by lecturers rather than tenured professors, rendering them most susceptible to cuts. Not only do lecturers work more hours and make less than professors, but they are also prohibited from striking due to union-negotiated contracts, according to Leong and Lee. It thus does not matter how many exponentially the API student body grows or how high the demand for language courses is. Shortages of lecturers indubitably translate into shortages of API language classes, especially those that have been continuously trivialized as "service courses," marginal contributions to students' holistic edifications.

2. Exclusion of low and middle-income APIs from enrolling, especially in pre-professional fields such as business and engineering

It is already obvious that such dramatic tuition raises will price out API students from underserved, low-income communities, but similarly damaging are the differential fees levied on students in business and engineering. The notion that an additional \$1,000 fee on business and engineering students would effectively preserve the character and diversity of Haas or the College of Engineering assumes the homogenization of these colleges' student bodies. This dangerously insinuates the validity of the "model minority" myth when it comes to API students. The model minority myth, which erroneously proclaims that Asian Americans are somehow inherently genetically wired to succeed, is already an assumption that has deleteriously steered UC admission policies against API students. When UC President Mark Yudof was asked by Los Angeles Times about how Asian American students would be affected by the new UC admissions standard he off-handedly replied, "They'll be fine."

In theory, this fee fortifies the existing "glass ceiling" that looms over APIs in professional fields by restricting the social mobility of APIs and other students of color from low-income backgrounds. Berkeley is consistently ranked among

the top ten of business and engineering undergraduate programs, and is notably one of the few public universities that can boast such high rankings. Such fees will deny one of the most viable resources for social mobility to many low-income and now middle-income students of color, who are concomitantly unable to qualify for financial aid and afford mounting student fees.

"When you think about engineering and b-students, there are already students of color struggling to keep themselves in those majors," said Jennifer Phung, External Relations Coordinator for REACH!, Berkeley's Asian/Pacific Islander Recruitment and Retention Center. The high propensity for financial success is largely what attracts underserved APIs to pre-professional majors. Given the increasing costs of getting into college in the first place, the imposition of high differential fees would put underserved APIs at an even greater disadvantage to attain educational access and would further exacerbate their underrepresentation in various levels of these professional fields.

3. Smaller API progressive spaces, resulting in a silenced voice for API interests and issues

A less salient point in the ongoing dialogue in how budget cuts affect students of color is the decrease of students in the progressive community. Berkeley's progressive communities are responsible for initiating and defending such academic programs as ethnic studies and Asian language courses (Tagalog, for example, began as a DeCal course), as well as spearheading efforts to recruit students of color.

What has emerged from underprivileged API students' abilities to achieve educational access at Berkeley is the student leadership that allows the API community to have a voice. Many of these involved students come from underserved communities in California, and the proposed decrease of in-state enrollment will indirectly quell this voice. This would occur through a variety of consequences: firstly, the college admissions process already favors wealthier students, and reduced spots for resident students make the jobs of low-income API applicants even harder. Secondly, despite the rhetoric surrounding this issue, this policy was not designed to benefit out-of-state and international students, but rather, to benefit those who can pay the exorbitant out-of-state tuition. It is in this way that these proposals also diminish the education of progressive out-of-state students; the mistreatment of immigrant workers, hindrances to API political power and the displacement of Chinatown and Manilatown residents occur not only in Oakland and San Francisco, but also in Philadelphia, Boston, Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn. A reduction in in-state students who drive these progressive communities will result in less people from whom out-of-state students can learn. As the number one public university, Berkeley has an obligation to educate the world, and in straying from its roots, it does all of its students a huge disservice in allowing them to advance the communities from where they come, from wherever they may come.

It is as such that the proposed budget plans will affect all aspects of the API community, its students, and its interests. In the aftermath of the September 24 walkout, the question that hangs above everyone's heads is what to do next. Nonetheless, the question of how the cuts will affect the API community must be widely addressed before tackling the question of how APIs can effectively solidify this movement.

California State Legislature officially apologizes to Chinese Americans for past racial discriminatory laws. Apology not Accepted

by michell ho

On July 17th, the California State Legislature quietly passed the Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 42, a bill meant to officially apologize to the state's Chinese American community for racial discriminatory laws passed as far back as the Gold Rush of the 1850's. These discriminatory laws, which affected about 25,000 Chinese immigrants, denied Chinese the rights to own property, marry white women, work in the public sector, and testify against whites in court. The new bill also acknowledges the work Chinese Americans contributed in constructing nearly 80% of the Western portion of the Transcontinental Railroad. It ends with listing quite a few Chinese Americans CEOs in big companies who have "made" it in today's society.

However, almost everything described on the bill can easily be found in any history book that discusses Chinese Americans. Yes, it is important to talk about what happened, but the bill looks more like a list of historic events involving Chinese Americans than an apology. It does not explicitly address the racial injustices behind the laws. It barely even mentions the word "racism." It goes on to talk about the Statue of Liberty and how the laws did not adhere to the American ideals of freedom and hope. Oh. Like we didn't know that already.

This isn't the first time a government has made an apology for what it has done to its people in the past. In 2006, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Chinese Canadians for the unequal taxes forced upon them in the late 19th century. In February 2008, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made an apology to the Aborigines for past racist laws, especially the one that forced separation of children from their parents. Five months afterward, the United States Congress made a formal apology to African Americans for slavery and the infamous Jim Crow laws. Perhaps most famous of all, in 1988 President Ronald Reagan signed the historical Civil Liberties Act that granted each of the surviving 120,000 Japanese American internees \$20,000 dollars in reparation for their imprisonment in internment camps during World War II.

But what is the purpose of California's apology? An apology is a sincere, heartfelt statement that expresses guilt or regret for one's past actions. One reason we say sorry is because we hurt other people's feelings by doing something wrong. To say you are sorry does not mean making reparations or passing a formal bill. The word "sorry" did not even appear at all in the bill. So was this bill passed only as a result of pressure from Chinese communities, as California hopes to look good by admitting its "wrong" and showing responsibility for the past?

Or is California just following the "wave" of apologies other countries have made to their people?

The bill expresses its "regrets" for the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first federal law that excluded an entire population based solely on nationality. This law virtually denied all ethnic Chinese immigrants entry to the United States. It was followed by the Scott Act of 1888, which prohibited re-entry to the U.S. for undocumented Chinese immigrants who were here before 1882. The Geary Act of 1892 renewed the Chinese Exclusion Act for 10 years. Finally, in 1902 the law was extended indefinitely to exclude all Chinese from entering the U.S., until it was repealed by the Magnuson Act of 1943. Large scale immigration for the Chinese did not take place until the passing of the Immigration Act of 1965, which finally opened up entry to the United States for various immigrant groups. These were just a few of the

racist laws against the Chinese. Does an apology on a good ol' summery day in July compensate for over 150 years of painful discriminatory practices imposed on Chinese immigrants? No.

But wait. That's not all. What about the immigrants who weren't Chinese? They suffered racial discrimination and multiple racist laws as well. The Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, Laos, Cambodian, and South Asian Indians immigrants all experienced racial discrimination during the same time period in California, but have yet to receive any formal apology. Once again, the California State Legislature has made the infamous mistake of overlooking the distinct identities of different Asian American groups. Other Asian ethnic groups, not just the Chinese, were also affected by the "perpetual foreigner" ideology, and each clearly had its own unique struggles with racial discrimination in America.

One cannot deny the fact that so many years passed before this apology came along. Most of the victims of these discriminatory laws have already died. So who is California apologizing to? Is it to the descendants of the Chinese immigrants so that we don't make a big fuss over the government's past wrongs? Assemblyman Paul Fong (D-Cupertino), who co-sponsored the apology bill, asserted that "By apologizing, we'll hopefully close those wounds and close a sad chapter in our history."

I don't agree. An apology cannot "close" wounds inflicted by racist laws over a century ago. An apology cannot account for all the Chinese Americans endured, struggles that still leave behind their emotional marks on the second or third Chinese generation today. An apology cannot eliminate history. If the purpose of this apology is just to close a sad chapter in the history of America, then there is no meaning in it.

Most importantly, an apology is meant not only to express regret for what happened, but also to recognize what led up to the mistakes made. In this case, there should have been a greater emphasis in the bill on why California decided to ban Chinese immigrants in the past: for example, because of the color of their skin. In addition, the bill should have addressed how the racist laws affected Chinese immigrants psychologically—how did the Chinese feel about the grand scale of discrimination against them?

But nowhere does the bill explicitly state these issues.

I believe that to some extent, California issued this apology to save face for its legislature. By mentioning a few Chinese Americans CEOs and members in Congress, the bill tries to make a sort of amends for its injustices.

This inclusion in the bill is somewhat awkward, because it is as if having Chinese Americans in these positions can right the wrong of racial discrimination. Of course it is important to have representation of Chinese Americans in the business or political arenas and to acknowledge their achievements, but mentioning this in an

www.library.ca.gov/goldrush



apology bill is inappropriate. It suggests that California has now somehow compensated for the past since there are Chinese Americans at the top of the social ladder and part of the political world today. The bill seems to infer that simply being Chinese, rather than their abilities, led them to those prestigious positions.

As a Chinese American, I will never forget the history of my ancestors in this country. The chapter will never close. The wounds will always be there, to remind me of what it took for me to be here, right now, living in the freedom paid for by the pain my ancestors felt throughout the past decades.

It is definitely a step forward for Chinese Americans now that California is admitting its past prejudice toward Chinese Americans and bringing light to the often hidden history of Asian Americans in general. I do applaud the bill for acknowledging the contributions of Chinese Americans and recognizing California's past racial discrimination toward immigrant minority groups. I also applaud the bill for confessing the fact that this discrimination did not represent the ideals of freedom and equality promised to all of America.

But it is certainly debatable how real and sincere this apology is. After all, it is mostly a regurgitation of the history of Chinese Americans. More importantly, the bill does not really focus on the reasons behind the injustices. It never mentions the emotional or psychological impact of racial discrimination—how the laws changed the way Chinese immigrants faced their struggles and lived in America. It never brings up how hard it was for Chinese Americans to make a stand in today's society.

Moreover, if this is an apology for California's past racial discrimination against immigrants, then there should be a formal apology to each of the ethnic minority groups that have had marked a history in California. If not, then don't call it an apology. Call it an acknowledgment of Chinese Americans' contributions to the growth of California. Is it truly an apology if it comes 159 years after the fact, after thousands of Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans have already been put through a living hell? I don't think so.

"If the purpose of this apology is just to close a sad chapter in the history of America, then there is no meaning in it."

When “Asian American” doesn’t

mean Asian American

Has the meaning of term changed since the 1960s movement?

Asian American.

The term seems relatively simple: American-born persons of Asian descent. But for many South Asian students on the Berkeley campus, the term is a little more complicated than that.

“People tend to think of Asian American as [East Asian]... Filipino or Chinese,” Amit Kapadia, a second-year, said.

The term “Asian American” was first coined by activists in the 1960s. Their intent was to create a pan-ethnic community encompassing a variety of different Asian ethnicities that would come together to address issues such as stereotypes and racial discrimination. To a large extent, this goal of stirring political and social activism within the Asian American community was achieved, as demonstrated by the formation of the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) in 1968 by Berkeley graduate student Yuji Ichioka. Along with the Third World Liberation Front, the AAPA and other organizations pushed for the formation of an Ethnic Studies program on the Berkeley campus.

With the establishment of the Ethnic Studies program also emerged other disciplines, including South and Southeast Asian Studies. But even before the establishment of the latter, the university already had a history with South Asian discourse. The Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS) was established in 1959, dedicating its study to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and the Maldives.

The term “South Asian” has been considered to fall under the larger umbrella of “Asian American.” However there is some dispute about this grouping. Borne out of a purpose to include people of diverse backgrounds, the term “Asian American” has come to mean different things to different people.

“I would to an extent [consider myself Asian American]. But not at Berkeley; there are [many Asian] countries represented here, a large majority of them are East Asian. When people think of Asian American, they think of Chinese. It has to do with the mentality of other people. They tend to group people together as Asian American,” Astrid Fernandes, a second year, said. She identifies more with the South Asian community.

Although Berkeley does offer many South Asian languages such as Sanskrit, Punjabi, Hindi-Urdu, and Bengali, according to graduate student instructor Joina Hsiao there is a tendency for an East Asian focus within the Ethnic Studies program. While students have the opportunity to major in Chinese and Japanese, they cannot do so for South Asian languages. In addition, funding for the Chinese and Japanese languages is greater because they are established majors.

So why the focus on East Asia in our course offerings? Is it due to a lack of demand

or interest in South Asian courses? Perhaps the problem extends beyond the limits of the campus; an East Asian focus can be seen outside Berkeley as well. Hollywood often characterizes Asian Americans as East Asian, but rarely as South Asian or Southeast Asian for that matter. The focus on East Asians in the mainstream media is perpetuated in our

can define a significant part of a person’s identity. For instance, some South Asians choose not eat beef in honor of their religion. For them, religion is very much a large part of their identity and understanding this point is important in acknowledging their individuality. When we fail to understand the distinctions between cultures, we also fail to see people as the unique individuals that they are.

The tendency to think of “Asian Americans” as a homogenous group is a problem for many students. Fernandes believes that emphasizing geography in classrooms is something that could be done to raise awareness about other nationalities or ethnicities that fall under the Asian American category. “We could change what people think of as Asian geography. Also emphasizing global studies. People just need to know early on about these issues. Also mass advertising and having distinctive categories on the application process. The frustrating part is that on applications, they aren’t consistent. They have a separate group for Middle

Eastern, but not for others,” Fernandes said. One way that students can educate themselves about the different regions of the world is through the International and Area Studies program at Berkeley, which comprises of prominent scholars from all over the world.

Categorizing leads to the tendency to homogenize a group of people, concealing their cultural, religious, and linguistic distinctions. When we fail to recognize these distinctions and fail to see a group of people as unique individuals, that’s when categorizing becomes problematic.

For some South Asians, the identity of “Asian American” doesn’t quite fit them as individuals. On the other hand, for other Asians—East and Southeast—perhaps the term “Asian American” doesn’t quite fit either. The term was, after all, was borne out of a political movement in the 1960’s to fight stereotypes and racial discrimination. The question I leave you with is: does “Asian American” still mean the same thing to us as it did in the 60’s? Or has it taken on an entirely new connotation?

“I believe that East Asians and South Asians enjoy a flux of rich traditions and cultural practices. Some common concepts that reverberate throughout these two cultures are the idea of respecting elders and engaging in ritualistic, religious celebrations according to the lunar calendar. The cross-cultural adaptation of Buddhism also creates some religious and philosophically similar practices and artistic depictions. We also delight in the seemingly-exotic spices in our diverse dishes and speak a multitude of regional languages,” Ameeti Mishra, the South Asian Coalition Building Director at Berkeley, said.

While South Asians do have cultural and religious similarities with East Asians, it is also important to note the differences. Hsiao postulates that South Asian students may not want to identify themselves with the term “Asian American” because it takes away a certain distinction. While Asian cultures do have similarities, students don’t necessarily want to be put in a seemingly homogeneous group. “People should be aware of the differences, culturally, linguistically, religiously,” Hsiao said.

This sentiment is affirmed by second-year Akshay Nathawat, who feels that the term “Asian American” is too inclusive. “We should look at humanity as itself. Categorizing is not the best way. Culturally, it works, but when we categorize according to look or behavior, it’s not the best way,” Nathawat said.

Being aware of the differences in culture, languages, and religion is an important part of recognizing individuality. These aspects

by casey tran



Farhat Desai

Two students perform Bhangra, a traditional Punjabi folk dance at Raas Garba, an event hosted by Indus and Indian Student Association in the Pauley Ballroom on Friday, September 25.

Students perform Garbas, a traditional Western Indian dance.

Farhat Desai



sister, sister

why asian american sororities are important today

by kenny gong & sunny kim

Let's just imagine for a second that we're Asian American, freshmen girls at UC Berkeley. Trying to navigate a brand-new campus with so many damn people all around, we run into the many Sproul-ites trying to lure us with free food. Eventually, another Asian American girl approaches us and hands us a flyer from an Asian American sorority on campus. Having never felt the need to fully explore or analyze our racial identity, it comes as a shock that we feel so intrigued by an all-ethnic, pan-Asian organization. After rushing and pledging, we're eventually initiated into the "Asian American interest" sorority, where we begin to find sisterhood and community.

Sure, this exercise is clearly far from a comprehensive representation of the experience of Berkeley's student population, which varies greatly in age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status; however, its specificity indeed encompasses a significant demographic of the university. Currently, 42% of undergraduate students at UC Berkeley self-identify as Asian American.

The history of the exclusion of Asian Americans from the Greek system has led to the rise of all-Asian American organizations. During the last three decades, an influx of Asian American interest sororities occurred in college towns around the country, anywhere there were communities of Asian American students. Now, though, we have begun to see more representation of Asian Americans in formerly white-exclusive sororities, while there are also many disparate Asian American student groups on campus.

We, the authors, were wondering if there still are justifications for why Asian American interest sororities should still exist. We spoke with Emily Chang and Tina Lo, two members of Sigma Omicron Pi, and we were able to see that today's racial politics are still too nuanced to disregard the

significance of an all-Asian American sorority.

Going back to that 42%, it is true that there is some Asian American representation in traditionally white sororities. However, it is also true that the Panhellenic sororities are still predominantly white. So for Asian Americans in these sororities, there may be an obvious transition from feeling like you are part of a majority in a classroom, to finding yourself a racial minority once you enter your sorority house. According to Chang, "Asian American women can find a sense of belonging and community within Asian Greek organizations that they might not necessarily find in Panhellenic sororities."

Asian Americans are often more likely to find common points of interest and relate to issues that are specific to Asian American community with other Asian Americans. An "Asian American interest sorority" like Sigma Omicron Pi creates a space for such dialogue to occur. For instance, Asian American women might enjoy discussing a new Korean drama they recently watched. Or, considering how HPV disproportionately affects Asian American communities, an Asian American sorority might consider hosting an HPV campaign event to raise awareness about getting tested.

Also, although Asian Americans form a significant portion of the student population at the Berkeley campus, the fact is that this percentage is not representative of the country's racial breakdown. After entering the "real world" where Asians are clearly a minority, Asian American women may have to come to the realization that the Berkeley bubble is now popped. With a national population percentage of 10%, Asian Americans are still marginalized and seen without the disaggregated lens that is so heavily emphasized at Berkeley.

The qualifications of a bond, specifically the bonds

of sisterhood attributed to sororities, are frequently tied to the existence of commonalities and shared interests or desires. Indeed, considering the history of oppression faced by the Asian American community, it makes sense that there would be a strong desire for a collaborative effort to negate the racism and xenophobia of the early twentieth century.

But does an Asian American interest sorority offer more than a sisterhood by helping its members shape their ethnic or racial identity? Or is it simply a sorority modeled after a Panhellenic sorority that happens to have an Asian American majority? Tina Lo of Sigma Omicron Pi said, "Sisterhood can help form ethnic identity simply because people close to you can influence you, especially those you respect and admire. If you see other confident, strong, and successful Asian women, you will strive to be the same."

We agree that sisterhood is an important aspect of Asian American interest sororities, but we also believe more can be done to serve the "Asian American interest." Both Chang and Lo said that currently, more emphasis is put on sisterhood than on cultural and historical exploration; we believe the latter should be emphasized as well.

Marginalization of Asians may not be as obvious as in the past, especially on the Berkeley campus, but the ongoing underrepresentation of Asian American women both in the Panhellenic sororities as well as in various professional sectors is enough reason for Asian American interest sororities to exist—they create a space where Asian American women can openly discuss and share thoughts on race. And through this process, Asian American interest sororities can offer not only a sisterhood but also an opportunity for their sisters to explore their identity, culture, and history.

Japan is lovin' Mr. ジェームス Have you met Mr. James?

by eileen tse

He's an interesting guy; you could spot Mr. James a mile away wearing his signature black rimmed spectacles, red polo shirt, and khaki slacks. Mr. James is a 43-year-old white man who hails from Ohio and is currently on a tour through Japan. What brings him to Japan, you may ask? Well, persuaded by his inquisitive daughter in pigtails and black rimmed glass (it must be hereditary) to move to the land of the rising sun, Mr. James is on a mission to satisfy his cravings for his favorite hamburgers of his youth (when he himself was a college student in Japan) and spread the mutual love for McDonald's Nippon All Stars. He may not speak proper Japanese, but he sure knows a thing about a mean hamburger.

...Or so the story goes for McDonald's marketing campaign in Japan. Nippon All Stars consist of four sandwiches that are currently available as a limited time offer between August and November. Concocted by one of the biggest advertising agencies in the world, Dentsu, Mr. James, with all his "Anglo-nerdiness" included, is the official mascot for Nippon All Stars. So far, he's been featured in five commercials, where he yells "Tamago (egg)" instead of "Tamaya" during fireworks and professes his love for a chicken sandwich at a geisha. It would seem likely that even without this self-deprecatingly endearing fellow, the hamburgers would have sold well because they are after all "All Stars," and who doesn't love a Big Mac with an egg in it?

The problem of the matter is that Mr. James portrays Caucasians in Japan as "gai-jin," which is a derogatory term for foreigners that implies being distinctly alien and humiliatingly unable to assimilate into normal Japanese society. The Foreign Residents and Naturalized Citizens Association (FRANCA) is offended by Mr. James and argues that he embodies a lingering prejudice against whites in Japan. It's understandable that FRANCA would feel this way because, especially in rural regions of Japan where citizens may have little to no contact with actual Caucasians, Mr. James perpetuates a specific

image of white people. Mr. James is a nerdy, fast food loving simpleton who can't grasp the language and speaks katakana (Japanese alphabet typically reserved for foreign words) all the time.

Yet at the same time, Japanese media is often littered with images that put Caucasians on a pedestal, having them speak perfectly articulate Japanese—such images could easily squash the "negative stereotype" of Mr. James out of people's minds. Another particular McDonald's advertisement features Caucasian models dressed in typical red and yellow Ronald McDonald garb, looking not like fools, but glamorized individuals. There is no doubt that Caucasians are at least viewed with a certain level of novelty, although not always in an overtly "racist" manner.

So it is no stretch of the imagination that Japanese people are in fact loving Mr. James. Dentsu isn't one of the top ad agencies for nothing; this marketing campaign is quite

meticulously crafted. Mr. James, though fictional, is marketed as a living, breathing person who comes

out to your local McDonald's store for meet n' greets, and even keeps his own frequently updated blog. The character of Mr. James posts about his travels in Japan and all the nice people he meets who love to give him fan art projects and dress like him with glasses and red shirt in tow. Going through the blog history, his early posts are written in embarrassingly vast amounts of katakana, but his more recent posts seem to possess a more elevated command of Japanese with hiragana and kanji, albeit still in simple diction. Is Dentsu trying to illustrate a gradual improvement in Mr. James's Japanese due to his immersion in it during his travels? That is some thorough insight right there.

I don't see American advertising campaigns going beyond the one dimensional "sushi chefs" dancing around for grilled chicken (I'm looking at you KFC). It may sound like I'm defending McDonald's marketing strategy, but in actuality I'm not. Although effective, this campaign is a misstep for

Japanese McDonald's, as it does illustrate that there is still a profound amount of political incorrectness in this modern era of globalization (I'm still looking at you KFC). Like when the APA community gets riled up over misrepresentations of Asian peoples in the media, the fury of FRANCA over this particular advertising campaign is not to be taken lightly and dismissed as a group of people just being overly sensitive. In incidences like this, a necessary light is shed on the universal plight of any ethnic identity being profiled as a caricature for the sake of selling something. I realize it is supposedly "all in good fun," but people need to wake up and realize it's not just "satirical" to poke fun at someone's race.

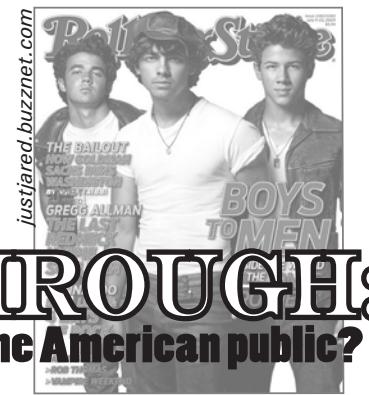
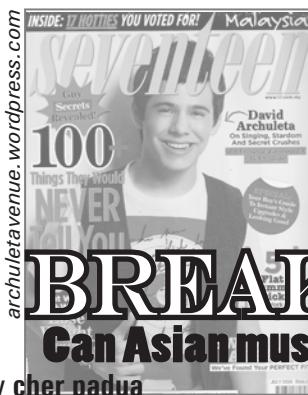
The way I see it, Mr. James is a little more than the two-dimensional "gai-jin" that some are accusing him to be. I can't deny that I do like Mr. James, as the smiley Japanese children featured on his blog seem to genuinely like him. He's not on the same level as your run-of-the-mill mascot like Ronald McDonald. While Ronald McDonald is iconic, he's creepy and I wouldn't even sit on a park bench with a statue of him. Mr. James, on the other hand, makes me want to be his friend and practice Japanese with him because not only is he enthusiastic about other cultures, he looks like he'll treat you to a Nippon All Star hamburger.

Nippon All Stars will end in November, and so likely will Mr. James and his love for McDonald's hamburgers in Japan. His brief stint as a quirky mascot came with a little more controversy than they could have bargained for.



mcDonald's dmnp/jf

Controversial McDonald's spokesman Mr. James attempts to learn Japanese.



by cher padua

Back in the Philippines in elementary school, I was already aware that familiarity with Western pop culture carried a level of bragging rights with my peers. While we admired the successes of our own native actors and musicians, it was much cooler to idolize American artists. This is why many popular Asian entertainers feel they must also gain fame in the United States in order to be truly successful.

To many in Asia, America is the land of milk and honey. This vision rings true for members of the public just trying to get by, as well as for glamorized celebrities. South Korean girl group the Wonder Girls has taken the leap in the hopes that they will be welcomed here. Still, they have little going for them. The days when girl groups were famous in America are long gone. Beyoncé is now a solo artist and who knows what happened to the Pussycat Dolls. The Wonder Girls have missed the train by a few years with no indication of when, if ever, it's coming back. The list of Asian entertainers wanting to make it big in the U.S. goes on. Names like Utada Hikaru and Se7en come to mind, artists who can't seem to break the American entertainment industry, finding popularity only amongst the Asian and Asian American community.

In contrast, American entertainers such as the Backstreet Boys experience a more positive reception from Asian countries regardless of their popularity in their home country. Miles and miles of girls holding placards proclaiming their love for these entertainers whom they know little to nothing about are willing to stay on their feet for hours, as they mouth the words to songs in a language they probably barely understand.

Once artists, musicians or actors hit it big in the United States, their chances of being well-known, even loved, in Asia are quite high, quite unlike the fate their Asian counterparts face in America.

It is interesting to note however, that this unlucky streak for Asians seems to occur only in the music industry. There are Asians and Asian Americans who have been influential in the Western pop culture from acting to filmmaking. Take for example Yunjin Kim, a Korean actress who is part of the ensemble for ABC's "Lost." In the hit television series, she plays a Korean woman who on some occasions even speaks fluently in her native language. Most notably, Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki has gained prominence and critical acclaim in the American entertainment industry for his animated films like "Howl's Moving Castle"; he has also won the prestigious Oscar award for Best Animated Feature for "Spirited Away."

That being said, it is in the music industry that they still find it hard to establish their niche amongst Western audiences. This may be because the music industry and its audience are fickle. The market bosses cater to artists who are easily marketable or are predicted to be the next big thing; when this venture fails, those artists are quickly dropped. Imports do not have the avenues that new American pop stars such as Taylor Swift had in "American Idol" or Miley Cyrus had in the Disney Channel, and therefore rely on their label's promotion and word of mouth, strategies with no certainty for success.

Could the "Korean Justin Timberlake" Rain be as well-received as his American counterpart?

her fluency and accuracy with the English language and her incredible musical talents.

This is indicative of the huge disparity between the reception Asian or Asian American performers experience in the U.S. and that which American performers, no matter how outdated they are, receive in Asian countries. This double standard and inconsistency trickle all the way down to the most ordinary exchange in our day-to-day lives. What people see in their pop idols, they emulate in their daily interactions. This is how an ordinary person may start to feel the dire need to Americanize themselves, or get the idea that it's not okay to be proud of one's heritage.

This is not a criticism of any particular race. It is a mere illustration of the racial bias going on in the world today. The glorification of all things American while other cultures are left in the backburner is as true and as insulting now as it was when I was 10. It is quite problematic that in the 21st century, the world is still suffering from racial bias that affects people from all walks of life, ranging from the wealthy and the famous to ordinary folks living ordinary lives.

is imitation really the sincerest form of flattery?

Hollywood makeovers of Asian films hint at deeper problems of cultural differences and the portrayal of Asians in the media

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. It's an aphorism tinged with sarcasm—no one likes a copycat after all. Yet American remakes of Asian movies are simply accepted; many Americans aren't even aware that the movie they watched had its origins in China or Japan. Am I elitist for cringing over the latest Hollywood version of yet another Japanese horror or South Korean romance? I'd like to pose the counter-question: if the original was good, why is a remake even necessary?

It's been suggested that remakes merely reflect an increasingly transnational world where goods and information move through increasingly porous borders. This idea of an "Asian presence" in American cinema is met with both enthusiasm and dismay. Enthusiasts emphasize that remakes bespeak the rising prestige of Asian cinema. The not-so-enthused worry of America's undergoing "orientalization."

But why not simply export the Asian movies to America in original form? After all, American films have a large presence in Asia, and Asians watch subtitled or dubbed versions rather than remakes.

Is it that remakes are profitable? For instance Martin Scorsese's "The Departed" (2006) grossed \$289,847,354 worldwide, an amount that completely eclipses the original "Infernal Affairs" (Hong Kong, 2004) which garnered a comparatively modest \$8,708,932. Roy Lee, the Korean-American producer who brought movies like "The Ring" to America, has even made a business out of the process, his brokering of Asian movies gaining him the title "king of remakes."

Given the speculative nature of the film industry, remakes have backfired. Take "My Sassy Girl," a South

Korean romantic comedy that has gained popularity all over Asia - but apparently failed to interest American audiences. The remake, which did poorly in test screenings, was relegated to the movie graveyard as a straight-to-DVD release. Roy Lee stated in an interview with the Associated Press that American men rejected the idea of a woman bossing around a man in a romantic relationship. Truth of the matter is, "My Sassy Girl" was extremely specific to South Korean culture (love motels and mandatory military service are just a few of the things you wouldn't find in America today), and simply couldn't mean the same to Americans.

Apparently simply remaking a movie doesn't guarantee the remaking of success—you have to take cultural differences into account. Indeed there's a translational quality to these second-generation films despite the fact that they've intentionally averted subtitling and dubbing (two things the American public apparently hate). It simply makes sense to replace the samurai of Akira Kurosawa's "The Seven Samurai" (1954) with the cowboy in "The Magnificent Seven" (1960), a figure particularly entrenched in the American idiom.

Thus, remakes function as makeovers, giving a facelift to the setting, storyline, and characters. In "The Ring," America's 2002 rendition of a 1998 Japanese horror film, the setting is changed from Japan to Washington, ostensibly replacing the ethnically-Japanese cast with white Americans. This route seems to be the most typical of Hollywood remakes. A slightly different approach is taken by "The Grudge" (a 2004 remake of the 2003 Japanese film "Ju-on: The Grudge"). Like "The Ring," the core cast consists of white characters, with Sarah Michelle Gellar as the lead. However, the remake is set in Japan.



"my sassy girl,"
hollywood film
adaptation
<<

"my sassy girl,"
original Korean
film >>

www.imdb.com, www.koreanmovie.com

Is "The Grudge" more authentic for locating itself in its native Japan? I can't say, although I do believe that's what the producers were aiming for. After all, "The Grudge" was riding on the coattails of the very successful "The Ring," widely known to have been based on a Japanese film. Locating the movie in Japan makes the ghosts of the movie particularly Japanese—and this Japanese exoticism is set up to contrast a white American point of view.

In Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), the author suggests that watching a movie allows viewers to temporarily assume the point of view of the main characters of the film. For "The Grudge," the movie's point of view has become "Americanified" by the selection of white actors for the leads. This identification is reinforced through the contrast created by casting ethnically Japanese ghosts. I'd call it pretty racist to locate horror in the "other." This also happens in the 2008 remake of "Shutter," initially a 2004 Thai film. The remake is set in Tokyo (the original was set in New York), with two white leads, Joshua Jackson and Rachel Taylor. The part of the vengeful ghost is played, unsurprisingly, by a Japanese actress (Megumi Okina).

Are Asian countries as different as Thailand and Japan so easily conflated? It makes me think of the 2007 Academy Awards, during which "The Departed" won for best adapted screenplay. The commentator incorrectly attributed the provenance for the original as Japan rather than Hong Kong. That's 1,717 miles off the mark. Maybe this isn't too exceptional for Hollywood, the great homogenizer of movies, but the American public—Asian Americans included—deserves more.

Nevertheless, racial bias still plays a major role in the lack of success of Asian Americans and imports from the East. These artists face an uphill battle in breaking through the forces of xenophobia suffered by the entertainment industry today. When Asians mispronounce an English word, it's embarrassing. However, when Americans mispronounce a Japanese word, or mess up a phrase in Mandarin, it's cute and endearing. It is necessary for Asian entertainers to adopt the American way in order for them to even be considered in the industry; even then, there is no guarantee of being successful merely because they look "different." The Wonder Girls are criticized for their accents while Utada, an American-born Japanese singer/songwriter, found little success in the U.S. despite



THE CONNIE CHUNG SYNDROME

The absence of Asian American males in news broadcasting

by ivonne ho

Most, if not all, Asian Americans know who Connie Chung is. She is most remembered for being co-anchor of *CBS Evening News* with Dan Rather back in 1993.

Chung was the first Asian American and second woman to be named a nightly anchor for a major news channel. In 2002, she was paid \$2 million a year working for CNN on *Connie Chung Tonight*. To simply say Connie Chung is successful is an understatement; her high social and economic status makes her a recognizable icon in the field of journalism.

Chung initiated the boom of Asian American females' entry in news media, with journalists such as Lisa Ling and Carol Lin as prominent successors. Lisa Ling, most notable as the co-host of ABC's *The View* and investigative reporter for *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, is going to host her own talk show on the Oprah Winfrey Channel (to be launched in 2010). Carol Lin has paved a successful career in journalism as a news anchor and correspondent for ABC and CNN.

So, it is not surprising that this situation is dubbed the "Connie Chung Syndrome." Asian American female news anchors are ubiquitous. It is not hard to find at least one in each major news broadcasting channel. But...WHERE ARE THE MEN?

So often in the news we see the pairing of a white male and an Asian American female but never the opposite—Asian American male and white female. In 2002 USC's Annenberg School of Communications conducted a research named "Asian Male Broadcasters on TV: Where Are They?" to study the low ratio of male broadcasters compared to female ones. Within the top 25 news markets, there are a total of 106 Asian American anchors—86 females and 20 males; in other words, 81% are women while only 19% are men. Even though this study was conducted seven years ago, not much seems to have changed since then. Perhaps these statistics resulted from the fact that viewers are so familiar with this combination

that any change will disturb the status quo.

Let's speculate on the different reasons that possibly contributed to the numbers above:

1.) White male dominance. The theory of "White Supremacy" isn't just an idea of the past: it certainly exists today, albeit in a much less prevalent form. This mindset, which uplifts the white race while degrading the others, might be one of the barriers that prevent Asian American men from gaining more successful news broadcasting jobs. In this mostly white-dominant profession, it seems like Asian American males are only assigned to roles of either the weatherman or sports reporter. Do female women from a minority pose less of a threat on television than men from the same minority? Having more Asian American males as news anchors can be interpreted as raising the social status of Asian American males to that of white males, thus eliminating the superior status of white males in this industry. This view implies that the current status of Asian American men is lower than that of white males.

2.) Yellow fever may play a role in this rigid trend. After all, Connie Chung is married to Maury Povich. Yellow fever is the slang term describing white men's fetish for Asian American females, exoticizing and objectifying them as stereotypical young, submissive, slim women. A mostly white news audience may have this attraction towards Asian American females and prefer them paired with white male anchors. At the same time yellow fever worships Asian American women, it tends to effeminate Asian American men. Often-times, Asian American men are seen as shy, awkward, and lacking masculinity; notice that all of these adjectives are negative. This type of socially damaging depiction of Asian American can be a harmful barrier that keeps them out of mainstream news media.

3.) No talent? And of course, some argue that Asian American men are not entering this field because there is a lack of talent. Really? I don't think so. One clear example would be the gender ratio in my Media Studies class. About half the students are guys. To me, there is no obvious shortage of talent or interest in media from Asian American men. Richard

Lui, a UC Berkeley graduate, is the first Chinese American male and only Asian American to anchor alone for the channel CNN Headline News. Although his accomplishments are comparable to that of Connie Chung's, Lui is still much less popular. The problem is that the dearth of Asian American anchormen seems to justify the unproven belief that they are not as qualified as white males to appear professionally on television and report the daily news.

Whatever the cause may be, no explanation is enough to justify this imbalanced gender ratio. Why can only Asian American females break through the racial barrier and enter the industry while Asian American males cannot experience the same? The disproportion definitely undermines the extent of Asian American representation in public media. It is necessary to keep balances in terms of race and sex.

So why does this all matter? It matters because it skews the image of Asian American males, making it appear as if they are not talented enough to become anchormen. It matters because the non-representation impedes Asian American males who want to be future news broadcasters from achieving their dreams. It matters because no one is doing anything about it.

Taking away Asian American males' opportunities to be news anchors is taking away the gender equality necessary for a group's full representation. The Asian American community isn't comprised only of women; men are an equally important part! We often advocate for gender equality in today's society. We have achieved progress to some extent, but have we achieved equality between Asian American women and men? America, known as the "Land of Opportunity," is not living up to its great name as we can witness through the many Connie Chungs and not enough Richard Lius. The lack of Asian American men in news media will continue to feed the stereotype that marginalizes Asian American men as outsiders not talented enough to make it on television. It is not that there aren't any Asian American male anchors at all, but there should definitely be a lot more. Hopefully, bringing more Asian American men into the industry can cure the insidious infection of the Connie Chung Syndrome.

How I am Celebrating Pilipino American History Month

by carlo de la cruz

On September 10, 2009, the California legislature announced its unanimous approval of Senate Concurrent Resolution 48, which officially recognizes October as Pilipino American History Month. Authored by Senator Leland Yee, D-San Francisco/San Mateo, the resolution marks October 18, 1857 as the earliest documented instance of Pilipino presence in the continental United States. Meanwhile, the Pilipino American National Historical Society (FAHNS) acknowledges 1763 as the year of the first Pilipino permanent settlement in the United States, with the establishment of the St. Malo Parish community in Louisiana—ascertaining the centuries of pre-colonial presence Pilipinos have had in the country.

During the month of October several events will take place to recognize and honor the contributions, legacies, and stories of the Pilipino American community. Established in 1988 by FAHNS, Pilipino American History Month symbolizes the need and importance to promote awareness and understanding of Pilipino Americans in a multicultural American historical narrative.

But it is not only the need to contextualize the stories of Pilipino Americans in the larger American history that is important. As Pilipino Americans we must continue to write our own stories and narrative while being critical of our legacies in a political, cultural, and social context. For hundreds of years the history of the Philippines, Pilipinos and Pilipino Americans has literally been written for us. Even today, our community struggles to combat the hegemony of the colonial narrative that has framed our history for centuries.

The building which houses the Asian American Studies & Ethnic Studies program, for instance, takes its name from a Philippine imperialist, David Prescott Barrows. Barrows served as the Secretary of Education

for the Philippines government—a U.S. colony at the time—and played an instrumental role in writing and framing the history of the Philippines, a narrative which included descriptions of Pilipinos as the "little brown brother of the Americans." It is ironic that the very disciplines that create alternative narratives for Ethnic peoples must be housed within a building named after the man that wrote the original colonial history for the Philippines.

As a people, we will always carry that colonial history with us, and we must not forget or deny its existence. But we must also never be complacent and believe that the legacies and consequences of that colonial history are gone. Even today, as Pilipino Americans celebrate the 246th anniversary of Pilipinos settling in America and the 21st anniversary of FAHM, we as a community continue to struggle. It is vital for us to not only recognize the struggles we've faced as a community historically, but presently as well. The struggle for full benefits for Pilipino WWII veterans is not over, nor is the struggle to gain adequate protection and recognition of hate crimes committed against people of color. Pilipino American History Month must be a time when we do more than reflect upon the histories of our people and our community. We must be engaged and critical of current policies and politics that continue to adversely affect our community, such as the privatization and exclusion of people of color from public institutions like UC Berkeley.

This Pilipino American Heritage Month, I plan to celebrate by becoming engaged with issues that continue to affect our community, and other historically marginalized communities. By simply being critical of the past, and without engaging in current politics, we fail to uphold the legacy that our ancestors forged so bravely with their tired and calloused hands.