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## ABOUT THIS COVER

Occupy Wall Street.  
Occupy Oakland.  
Occupy Berkeley.  
Earthquakes, fires,  
the flood in Thailand.  
This covers brings  
together the idea  
that with everything  
going on around us,  
locally and globally,  
it is easy to become  
preoccupied with our  
own issues. However,  
we must not forget  
that no matter how  
big or small, all of  
these events have  
a ripple effect and  
eventually reach us --  
whether we notice it  
or not, tomorrow, or  
even years later.

## editor's note

In the middle of all the nation's Occupy movements that have now surfaced so notably on Berkeley's campus, I find myself feeling more and more bittersweet as the ending of my final semester at Cal draws nearer. There has been so much rhetoric in how disjointed and disconnected the Occupy movements have been, and even though I agree to some extent in regards to the overall message, as a Berkeley student who gets to see some of the dissatisfaction actually materialize in the form of flying tents above Sproul Hall, I have to also disagree. I see pictures and commentary all over news blogs, Facebook feeds and in this issue of **hardboiled**, and realize how unified we actually are in fighting for a basic human right to access and opportunity.

This is when I become nostalgic and sad. Berkeley has been such an amazing experience for me and I know that I am going to miss the friendships, the food and of course, the protests every day on my walk to class. But it's not even just that. **hardboiled**, specifically, has been a space where I have grown tremendously, both personally and politically. It has always been a unifying space where individuals, despite their differences in viewpoints and opinions, have been able to come together and become a collective voice for the community. The place **hardboiled** holds in the larger community is unparalleled and also extremely vital in fostering a sense of unity when so much of the rest of the world stands in conflict, as shown by these Occupy movements. Being part of such an honest and valuable community has really been a proud moment for me here at Cal.

So as I move on to the next stage of my life, I just wanted to say thanks. Thank you **hardboiled**, for empowering me as an Asian American; and thank you for making my four years at Cal so rewarding and unforgettable.

jasmine hui  
layout editor

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

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# Fight the Tape

## How Occupy Wall Street seems to have taken off without Asian Americans on board and the importance of API active participation in the movement

by crystal sitt

Occupy Wall Street has seemingly touched all corners of the world. From the peaceful demonstrations in Los Angeles to the solidarity shown by people in Antarctica, it is truly amazing how much momentum this movement has gained. Although I wasn't able to take part in the Occupy Oakland event this past October, I felt a surge of pride seeing the tens of thousands of protestors and supporters flooding the highway onramp. Despite the feeling of empowerment that washed over me though, I couldn't shake off a nagging question: where was the Asian American representation?

Perhaps Asian Americans have always been a testament to "biting the bullet" and "pulling yourself up by the bootstraps." We were the first racial group to be explicitly barred from immigrating into the United States. We've been slapped with the "model minority" label, the misconception that Asian Americans, despite the obstacles, have done remarkably well in fulfilling the "American Dream:" getting a good education, a good job, and being the token example that other immigrants should follow. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, of the 4,747,000 Asian American households that responded, the median income was \$64,308 compared to the median Caucasian household income of \$51,846 and African American household income of \$32,068. According to these numbers, do Asian Americans deserve to be on the model minority pedestal? Does this put them that much closer to the one percent than any other ethnic group?

From a personal standpoint, I've never had the luxury of living amongst the so-called one percent. My parents immigrated to the U.S. in hopes of a financially secure future. They took their savings along with some loans and opened their first retail store in a Westfield shopping mall in Southern California—the first of what they hoped would be many. Pretty soon, we had enough money to open two new branches and, at the time, it seemed everything would fall into place. Then 2006 rolled around

and my family faced not only a drop in business but a spike in rent. Looking back, maybe the market was just working on supply and demand; regardless, management took advantage of struggling businesses during already tough economic times by raising the lease and forcing tenants to either pay the exorbitant rent or leave altogether.

Yet my parents never really had any leveraging power to begin with; it almost felt like they were picked off due to their lack of autonomy as immigrants. Being an immigrant means being denied many of the advantages that other non-immigrant individuals may have. As an immigrant community and one that is still seen as consisting of perpetual foreigners, Asian Americans will always face challenges on top of the inherent pressures of simply trying to survive. Since only half of all Asian American households in the U.S. responded, the data suffers from response bias and lacks validity in providing an accurate representation of the community. From language barriers to confronting racism, I know my family didn't live the picture-perfect lifestyle painted by those Census statistics.

There is something inherent in the system that makes it extremely difficult for Asian Americans to pull themselves by their bootstraps. We can see this illustrated in the gap between Asian Americans in higher education and Asian Americans in executive positions. Sixteen percent of Ivy League students identified themselves as Asian Americans, but only two percent of Fortune 500 executive positions are held by Asian Americans. This only illustrates that, even if Asian Americans are able to get the resources and achieve success in higher education, there are still factors fighting against us.

Whether you believe that it's the Eastern and Western cultural disconnect, best exemplified by the Asian saying "the loudest duck gets shot" versus Western notions of "the squeaky wheel gets the grease," as the reason

why Asian Americans don't usually have keycard access to the C-suite (i.e. the executive titles: chief executive officer, chief operations officer, etc.) or not, Asian Americans need to make themselves visible by having a bigger stake in protests and political matters. When we don't make ourselves visible, we subconsciously perpetuate the model minority myth. We need to stand up for our community and participate, whether it be in the form of civil disobedience or community mentorship programs in order to fight back against the institutionalized racism that Asian Americans of all socioeconomic backgrounds face.

"Don't fight the tape" is a saying that means don't bet or trade against the trend in financial markets. Asian Americans, though, are seen as the model minority—the quiet kid who doesn't upset the system, sets the curve in class, and does well in life without anyone having to worry. So, we do need to go against the tape and fight against that stereotype.

Moreover, this is a road that needs to be paved as a collective group and not just by a token few. When the only visible issues being tied to the Asian American community are the bamboo ceiling with individuals achieving higher education but failing to land top positions, it makes it seem like those issues are all that is plaguing the Asian American community, which is not the case whatsoever. We have families working overtime just to make ends meet, LGBTQ Asian Americans being misunderstood and misrepresented, and Asian American soldiers serving their country but being physically and emotionally bullied. The work isn't done just because a statistical number seems to illustrate that we've achieved the "American Dream." The Asian American community has made significant progress but there is still a long way to go. We need to keep pushing forward in addressing the socioeconomic issues that Asian Americans still face as a community. We need to revive our community spirit.





Wang Yue's parents leave the hospital in tears.

<http://wearereallyyueyue.blogspot.com/>

Is this a sensationalist story or an example of Chinese attitudes?

Wang Yue, the toddler who was run over twice and ignored by 18 passers-by in Foshan, Guangdong, China, died of brain failure after a week in critical condition. The resulting uproar on both American and Chinese media networks has sparked an international debate about the state of Chinese morality.

Such a debate deals with tricky and sensitive topics. Yue Yue's story is dangerous because people could easily oversimplify the issue and write it off as an expected repercussion of the heartlessness of Chinese people. This could taint American perception of Chinese Americans. Much in the way Chinese immigrants were demonized upon their arrival on American shores, Yue Yue's preventable death could, as Associate Professor Michael Omi of the Ethnic Studies department said, "enforce the older, persistent narrative that life is cheap in Asia."

This is destructive to Asian / Pacific Islander Americans and would take us a step backward in the fight to be seen as "real" Americans. Yet at the same time, we cannot afford to ignore the implications that Yue Yue's death holds for the Chinese people as a combination of many factors, not simply a result of a heartless community.

Thus far, news sources have generally avoided the pitfall of pinning the incident solely on Chinese people's ostensible heartlessness and apathy. Instead, journalist fingers from all around the world are pointing blame to many different factors of Chinese society for Yue Yue's death, including the lack of Good Samaritan laws, fear of fraud, and the speed of economic development. However, common opinion is wandering close to the dangerous assumption that the people just plain didn't care about a kid lying in the street. This can be seen in the world of microblogging, where both Chinese and Americans have been criticizing the 18 passers-by as morally depraved since the video hit the internet.

But we can't and shouldn't forget that such an incident is not the first. Five years ago in Nanjing, Peng Yu helped an elderly woman to the hospital after she was injured on the street. The woman accused him of pushing her over. In court, the now-infamous "Nanjing Judge" ruled that Peng Yu was guilty because "common sense" dictated that "only the guilty help the injured." Peng Yu was ordered to pay her medical costs.

Who, after hearing such a cautionary tale, could blame the Chinese for being a little apprehensive about the ulterior motives of their neighbors? This precedent is a major reason as to why, according to an online survey by Hong Kong-based Phoenix Television, fewer than 7 percent of 20,000 respondents said they would stop while driving to offer help. Forty-five percent said they would not help at all, and 43 percent said they would help only if there was a camera.

The question of Chinese morality is not new. This theme can be seen in American missionary Arthur H. Smith's 1894 book *Chinese Characteristics*. Smith wrote, "Unwillingness to help others...is a trait that runs through Chinese social relations in multifold manifestations."

This observation captures perfectly the racist views that Americans held towards the Chinese in the 19th century. We cannot view Yue Yue's incident through this unequivocal assumption about the Chinese people; instead, we must maintain a broader view of the factors that comprise Chinese

society.

Yet, how far back can we trace this perceived apathy among the Chinese people? To say that the Chinese people are intrinsically selfish is a ridiculous statement. There are a myriad of historical and economic factors that contributed to this incident.

Urbanization has changed how the Chinese act with one another. While once smaller rural communities helped each other in times of need, today's Chinese need to rely on self-perseverance to survive. With China's rapid urbanization and its greater reliance on nuclear families due to the one-child policy, the strength of interpersonal relationships has declined in this new century. Due to the demands of a modernizing China though, the need to care about the welfare of strangers is more urgent now than before, whether that be reducing littering, public spitting, pollution, or rescuing children from the middle of the street.

Another factor is China's Cultural Revolution. What the Cultural Revolution destroyed was thousands of years of common moral standards. The Chinese Communist Party replaced traditional altruism and civility with communal altruism, exemplified by the slogan "Serve the People." Whether the Chinese population actually made a sincere attempt to "serve the people" like they did with their network of friends and family is dubious.

However, with the advent of market capitalism during the 1980s led by Deng Xiaoping, slogans like "Serve the People" were replaced by an urgency for accelerated economic development. The combined destruction of traditional moral codes and the decline of Maoism have created a moral nihilism in China. In an urbanizing society, there is more contact with people but less responsibility for others. The decision to rescue a toddler deformed into a cost-benefit analysis of rational self-interest when it should have been a simple case of doing the right thing.

These factors in no way justify the death of a young child, but blame should not be applied solely to the intrinsic characteristics of Chinese culture or people but the cruel amalgamation of traditional culture, Communism, and market capitalism. More than half of these influences did not even originate in China. These "Chinese" characteristics are mirrored in American history, from the selfishness of the Robber Barons, to the materialism during the 1950s, to the Kitty Genovese case. The bystander effect is not exclusive to the Chinese.

The overwhelming support from the domestic Chinese online community for Yue Yue and her family illustrates a more accurate sentiment of the Chinese people. The Chinese author Yu Hua has said that looking at the video, "you would believe there is no hope [for the Chinese people], but there has been an outpouring of support online." Many such incidents have happened before but never with such a large media reaction.

As Americans, Asian or not, we are limited in the things we can do to prevent ourselves from oversimplifying the issue. We need to understand that it's not an inherent characteristic of the Chinese to care less about human life and that this kind of thought can take us several steps back in the API movement. We also need to understand that culture is influenced by economic, social, psychological and historical factors. Professor Omi put it simply.

"Think about how the media has framed this issue," he warned. "Be very cautious."

# wang yue

morality,  
history,  
and  
market  
capitalism

by hannah song  
and yifan zhang

# NOT YET

# AN APOLOGY

by hannah shin

On Oct. 6th, Senate Resolution 201 was passed. SR 201 is a bill that states the United States Senate: "(1) acknowledges that the framework of past anti-Chinese legislation, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, is incompatible with the basic founding principles of equality recognized in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution; (2) regrets passing six decades of legislation targeting the Chinese people for physical and political exclusion; and (3) reaffirms its commitment to preserving the same civil rights and constitutional protections for people of Chinese or other Asian descent in the United States accorded to all others."

In other words, SR 201 is supposed to be an official apology to the Chinese American community for decades of racist legislation and treatment, and a resolve to protect the rights and liberties of individuals of Asian descent.

It's been almost 130 years since the passing of the only bill to exclude individuals solely on the basis of race. Passed in 1882 and repealed in 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act, which blocked Chinese immigrants from the U.S. mainland and denied citizenship to individuals of Chinese descent, was an apt apex of the racist, anti-Chinese sentiment that had been simmering since 1848, when the first wave of Chinese immigrants had eagerly flocked to "Gold Mountain" in the quest for lucrative riches. After experiencing the first acts of discrimination against them in the form of physical violence and the Foreign Miners' Tax, among other things, many Chinese immigrants moved on to other fields of work, causing a perceived competition in the job market and increasing racial tension.

Even after the establishment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, a slew of racist policies followed, ranging from the Geary Act of 1892, which barred those of Chinese descent from bearing witness in court and required all Chinese to carry residential papers, to the Immigration Act of 1917, which designated an Asiatic Barred Zone from which immigration was denied. The effects of this legalized racism were readily apparent: families were torn as a result of being denied entry or reentry, and assimilation grew increasingly difficult for Chinese Americans who were forced to live on the margins of mainstream American society; having no option but to cluster together, Chinatowns abounded, eventually becoming the fodder for vicious stereotypes and contempt still perpetuated in the present day.

## The US Senate's official apology for decades of racist and discriminatory legislation

So 130 years later, where does this leave the Chinese American community—and in a broader sense, the Asian American community?

While SR 201 may acknowledge the nation's injustice to the Chinese American community, that's really the only thing it does. The fact that the bill sticks a disclaimer that it's not meant to "authorize or support any claim against the United States" or to "serve as a settlement of any claim against the United States," essentially says, "we're sorry, but don't hold us accountable."

But if someone consciously committed a crime, how can you not hold them responsible? If a nation not only admits clear wrongdoing but also remorse, then it's only rational that it should work to correct those wrongs or at least take measures to prevent anything of the sort from happening again. The only reassurance given in the resolution is the reaffirmation of the nation's commitment to protect the rights and liberties of individuals of Asian descent—the resolution merely recommits the U.S. to what it was already committed to do in the first place (and ironically broken, on multiple occasions).

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), who co-sponsored the resolution, has stated that SR 201 is meant to "enlighten those who may not be aware of this regrettable chapter in our history." But this statement raises some doubts: who exactly does the resolution set out to enlighten? If the bill refers to the general mainstream populace not well versed in Asian American history or with Asian Americans in general, it does a pretty terrible job of reaching out to those individuals. Not only is there no direct effort to educate the general public with solid measures like incorporating Asian American history

in school curricula, but there's barely any media coverage on the resolution at all—you have to literally go out of your way to find any information about the resolution or its significance.

So while the resolution is meant to acknowledge past wrongs and ultimately provide closure, apologies without amends are essentially empty gestures. Others may argue that it's the symbolism that counts: a nation acknowledging its wrongdoing is sufficient enough. And to a certain extent, I agree. Acknowledgment, though, is only the first step toward reconciliation; if the nation proffers an apology to the Chinese American and Asian American community, it should take physical responsibility for its past crimes.

It's like slapping a band-aid on a wound and hoping that with time it'll heal on its own. But we know that sticking on a band-aid isn't enough. If we want the wound to truly heal, we need to apply medicine that will not only heal the wound, but will make the area surrounding it sturdier and less susceptible to harm. And even band-aids can be detrimental; what is meant to seal things in for safety can in reality lock in already present contaminants and in turn cause the wound to fester and sore to a point where drastic intervention is necessary. And in this case, measures to promote awareness and prevent future injustices from being committed are necessary to truly salve the wounds of the past.

Words must be backed by actions, and until measures are taken to address specific injustices, this "official" admission of guilt will only be just that: an admission—not an apology.



# API SOLIDARITY OCCUPY CAL

by steven cong



When Occupy Wall Street first began in the middle of September, nobody could have predicted the extent to which it would grow. Driven by anger at the greed of the nation's wealthiest one percent, the movement has traveled across the country to the University of California, Berkeley. Occupy Cal began on Nov. 9th, and a Day of Action took place on Nov. 15th in Berkeley with around 2,000 students involved. Occupy Cal captured how the anger of the rest of the 99 percent could explode from silent frustration within to the powerful community assembled on that day, even in the face of unwarranted police who brutality on students and faculty alike.

How does all this relate to the API community? Why would those “model minorities,” which is a problematic term itself, be frustrated at the exploitation of the poor and the unchecked power of the wealthy? After all, most of them are probably so well off that they belong to the one percent, right? Wrong. On Nov. 14th, my Facebook newsfeed was littered with posts about the progressive API community’s plans for Occupy Cal. APIs were persuaded to all wear red the next day as a sign of solidarity. Sure enough, when the students marched through the city of Berkeley, many API students could be seen in red holding signs that read, “Asian American and Proud,” and calling for funds for Ethnic Studies and the language departments.

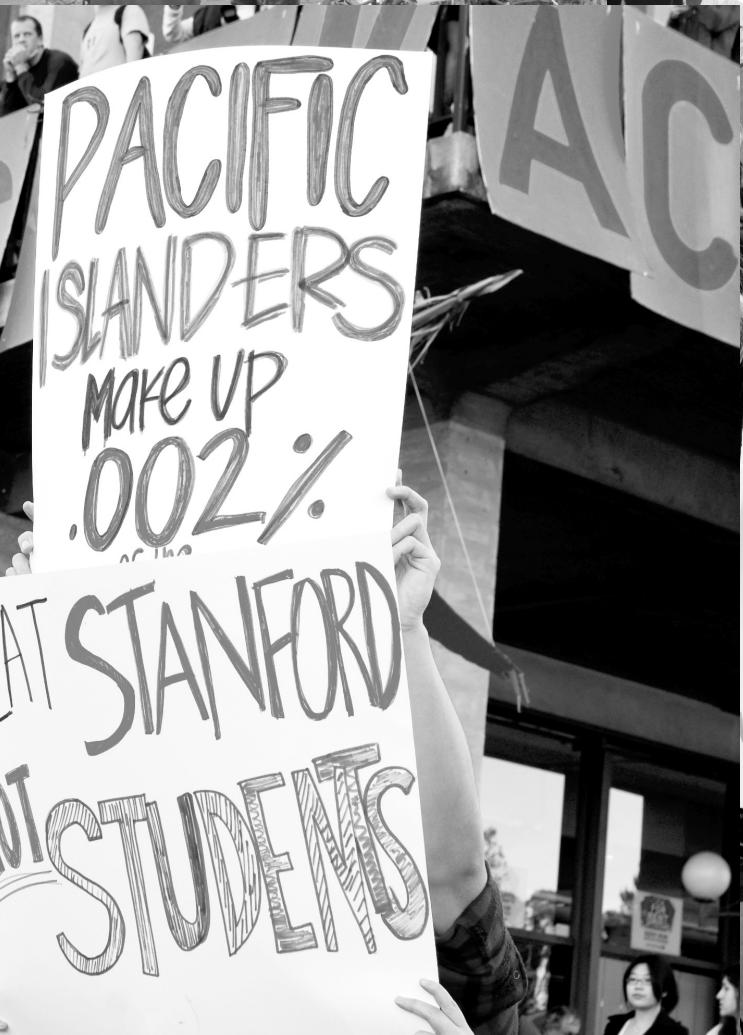
"It's important to stand up for the API community, and...we are the 99 percent. We are not against the police, [and] we are nonviolent, so this is a good way to demonstrate how much power we have together," said Samantha Lai, a second year student at UC Berkeley who participated in Occupy Cal.

Indeed, the past two years had been difficult for API students in Berkeley. Attempts had been made to consolidate the Ethnic Studies department, the African American Studies department, and the Gender and Woman's Studies department into one department. This change would cut an immense amount of resources from these departments and programs like Asian American Studies, as well as deprive students who seek to understand their background of a quality education. Furthermore, Southeast Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Islander students are grossly underrepresented in the UC system, and 40-44 percent of undocumented students in the UC system are API. One should not be surprised that numerous API students marched on Nov. 14th to protest the wealthy elite who control a system that imposed such disparities on our community.

With a potential tuition increase of 81 percent, access to any education becomes limited, and many API youths may never be able to take an Asian American Studies class. Southeast Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Islander students would continue to be underrepresented, and undocumented API students may no longer have enough financial support to continue their education. The greed of the richest one percent of America has damaged society and our system of education, and its impact is very painfully felt within the API community at UC Berkeley.

In the words of Gabbie Guison, a student at UC Berkeley, “[We march] for our community. We just have all these fee increases that are going up, and in a society where higher education is encouraged for social mobility, how are we to accomplish social mobility if we can’t even afford it? This is supposed to be a free education. Like what the fuck is going on?”





photos courtesy of Alyssa Ablao



# THAISA:

## Resurfacing, reshaping, reviving.

Featured photos were taken at two of ThaiSA's Fall 2011 events -- the Annual Stanford-Cal games and Loy Kratong.  
Photos courtesy of Kunnatham Santitham and Mai Kitmungsa

by nina udomsak

The Thai culture is probably best known for its delicious cuisine here in America. But aside from that, what else do you know about Thailand, its people, or its history?

Not much, right? The Thai-American demographic in America comprises less than one percent of the entire population. At UC Berkeley, that percentage is most likely even smaller. The Thai Students Association (ThaiSA), Cal's Thai club, is thus not very active or well-known on campus; members typically hang out with one another and do not reach out to the rest of the campus because, well, no one seems to care.

In the past, ThaiSA officers have most often been international upperclassmen or grad students from Thailand. For the 2011-12 school year, however, the majority of the officers are sophomores, with four Thai Americans (including myself). With this change in leadership, our goals for the year are to be more inclusive of Thai American students as well as students of other ethnic backgrounds. In the past, ThaiSA events were organized for ThaiSA only; this year, we hope to expand our presence on campus and foster more visibility of the Thai culture in Berkeley, beyond just the restaurant food you eat.

"Many students, even Thai students, don't even know that this club exists," said ThaiSA president Nitta Pattarachanyakul. "This year we are hoping to reshape our club to be more involved with campus events and have our own events more publicized and inclusive."

As secretary of the club, I have worked with Nitta and the other officers in ThaiSA's reformation with two critical issues as our catalysts: Thailand's current flood disaster and UC Berkeley's cancellation of the Thai language classes.

"These two causes give us a reason to increase our presence on campus," said Tong Tantrativud, activity chair. "Fundraising events will help flood victims and get people to recognize us at the same time."

Becoming more visible on campus is crucial in securing a fair and respected role in the API community. There were only about 10 students enrolled in the Thai language classes, which shows that because there is strength in numbers, there is consequently vulnerability in small quantities. ThaiSA hopes to overcome that by making up for our small numbers with big actions.

"Despite being a small, ThaiSA is an organization on the rise because of the passion of its members," said ASUC

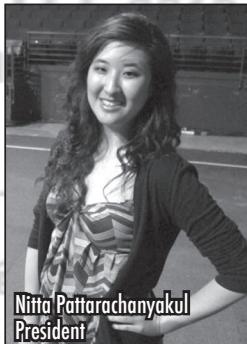
senator Justin Sayareth, who has been greatly helpful and supportive of the club's ventures. "It's great to see an organization that is so dedicated to not only bringing Thai culture to our university, but also to bridging the gap between the Thai community and the Southeast Asian diaspora communities."

Because there are so few Thais at Cal and in America, current events such as the flood tragedy (which has submerged many parts of the country, caused billions of dollars in damage, and has killed over 500 people as of the beginning of November) are relatively unknown by the American public. Spreading awareness and raising funds for flood victims, as well as lobbying for the return of the Thai language classes, have become our primary objectives for year; we believe that it is about time that the Thai community has a voice within the API community, the Berkeley community, and in this country altogether.

A lofty goal, yes. But it is for the first time that ThaiSA has had an external purpose in a long time. And we hope that our efforts will yield progress in the long run—other APIs have seen results from their initiatives, and it's time that we did too.



### M E E T T H E



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President



Nina Udomsak  
Secretary



Ben Vibhagool  
Treasurer



Jessica Gillotte  
Fundraising Chair

### O F F I C E R S



Art Phongpandecha  
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Activity Chair



Tong Tantrativud  
Activity Chair



Boss Nuntaworaporn  
Internal Affairs

Since late July, Thailand has endured the heaviest monsoons and the worst flooding in 50 years. The waters have inundated over two-thirds of the country, swamping rice fields and shutting down hundreds of factories. People have been forced to leave their homes for higher land while some can only watch as their valuable possessions become submerged and destroyed in their own homes. By the beginning of November, the death toll exceeded 500 and damages surpassed 140 billion baht (\$4.55 billion USD). Because of the inundation, vital supplies have become extremely scarce -- grocery stores have been wiped clean of nonperishables.

ThaiSA thus took on a fundraising campaign, led by sophomore Jessica Gillotte and other ThaiSA officers and members. By implementing social media for raising awareness and organizing events for raising funds, we aim to show our support and concern to those in Thailand, despite being 10,000 miles away.

To find a collection of resources for information and aid, as well as updates and photos from the Thai flood, please visit our fundraising campaign's Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/CalFloodRelief>

# MAJOR IDENTITY

by alex lee

While I'm sure no one believes that every Asian American student majors in molecular and cellular biology, there are still lingering stereotypes about what motivates these students. One can't help but visualize the tiger mother, who just definitively exists, pressuring her children to become doctors or scientists at every waking moment. That's a problem. As obvious as it seems, as intuitive as it should be, these students have more individual and sincere stories as to how they chose their academic careers. Just ask them.

First there is Alex Tang, a sophomore studying mechanical engineering. He originally came to Cal thinking he would major in physics. However, both his parents, who both happen to have physics degrees, suggested Tang go into engineering, as they saw engineering as more practical. He followed their advice and is now extremely happy with his decision.

"Where I'm from, everyone is either pre-med or engineering, and I happen to like engineering because it's practical and I'm good at physics," said Tang.

Tang shows that if you're good at something, pursue it. He would like to one day work for a design firm such as Alloy or Tesla and continue to pursue his interests.

Next there is Anni Huang, a freshman looking to major in political science. She currently plans to go to law school after her undergraduate education. When asked for reasons why she wanted to pursue a law degree, Huang said that she didn't want to be like every other Asian Pacific American (APA) majoring in the sciences or other math based majors.

She wants to focus on a single path and not have to worry about other decisions. The freedom to not be constrained by single answers is a plus for Huang. This coupled with her own mother being a lawyer motivates Huang to continue her pursuit of a Doctorate in law and one day become a lawyer as well.

On the other end of the spectrum is Jerry Chen, who loves abstract math and fears the humanities. His interest in a field that causes misery to so many others began at an early age, when Chen's parents started entering him into math competitions and math camps. Chen found the material to

be compelling and built on those interests all the way up to college, where he is now working towards a B.A. in math.

"My parents asked why I wanted to major in abstract math and not applied math, but I overruled them. I'm here in college to learn more about what I like. And besides, Calculus is no fun," said Chen.

Chen plans on going to graduate school so that one day he can become a professor in math and hopefully bring less misery to students than the professors of today do.

Last is Jamie Li, a double major in anthropology and Asian studies. Her story is a bit different than the other three students. Although Li originally aspired to be a bioengineer in middle school, events during high school changed her mind. She realized she didn't like math but the social sciences and humanities instead.

After an interview with a doctor, she began thinking about anthropology which matched her interests in the cultural aspect of academia, while also being a popular choice for pre-med students. The plan seemed set and Li decided to be pre-med and anthropology. Then Li's English teacher asked her a simple question.

"Would you be happy being pre-med?"

That was a pivotal moment for Li. After thinking about it for a while, she realized she wouldn't be happy with math, science, or following the footsteps of other anthropology students that were pre-med. It was too clichéd, so Li decided to go all the way with anthropology.

It was in a Chinese class that Li realized she also wanted to explore that particular culture more. However, she wasn't interested in the literature. Li wanted something more regional, something that explores not only China, but its relation to other countries, its significance in government and politics, and so on. So she decided to major in Asian studies as well.

Li recalls one moment where she had to Google

translate anthropology for her father. When he read it, he was incredulous, remembering Li's early goal of being a bioengineer. In the end though, both of Li's parents strongly supported her choice in anthropology and Asian studies.

When asked about APAs and their majors, Li replied, "There's always exceptions. A student doesn't embody a major. A student identifies as much with a major just as majors need students in turn. A student is a part of the academic field like a member of a community, but people fall under several communities, identifying themselves through a unique combination of connections. People can't be judged based on one stereotype."

The individual stories of these students reflect those sentiments. Each one comes from a different background, which in turn leads to different motivations and ultimately different goals in life.

I don't believe there should be a single answer to how APAs choose their majors. The desire for job security is and always will be a factor, but even then I feel that one's specific motivation is nuanced. Students have their own reasons for picking a major and it would be unsatisfactory to let a stereotype define a group's motivation for their collegiate pursuits, especially when there are those that diverge from the popular choices of the group.

The majors certainly reflect an extension of each student, but the reasons behind them in the first place are not something that can be discovered with sweeping generalizations. To continue pigeonholing these students as hardworking automatons motivated by the tenacity of the mythical creature that is the tiger mom robs Asian American students of their individuality. After all, these four interviewees have shown that there is no single Asian American experience.

# WHITE WOMAN SYNDROME: *Treatment Underway*

by chi tran

## Battling the inequalities for people of color in mainstream media

Why is it that Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) are rarely featured in movies? Not having the spotlight in the entertainment world is one thing. But it is absolutely frustrating when missing person or homicide cases that involve APAs, or other people of color, are also not given adequate attention in mainstream news media. If there is a person of color who is missing or was murdered, the entire nation sees barely five seconds of the case before being shown a piece of news that's obviously more notable, like the "McRib is back!" or something of the sort.

In contrast, when an attractive, white female disappears, she is on the news nonstop. We are talking extensive coverage with the same scenes of the case shown repeatedly, and then a commercial break followed by the same scenes again with more of the same coverage. This is not to say she is unworthy of being on mainstream news media, but why can't the missing African American, or Latino, or APA woman get the same response from the media? Of course, there are many reasons why certain victims are featured more, including age and class, but the prominence of the missing white woman syndrome really denotes race as being a main factor.

Family and friends of victims of color have tried to combat this syndrome, such as in the 2005 case of LaToya Figueroa. Unfortunately, she barely made it through the glass ceiling of national news before her story was shoved aside. A more recent case, involving the nursing student Michelle Le

from Hayward, however, shows the APA community getting one step closer to treating the white woman syndrome.

Le was reported missing in late May 2011. Immediately, the community saw the efforts of her family and friends to raise awareness about Le. Through various methods, Le was kept alive and constant in people's minds. A website\* was created shortly after she went missing, which included updates on the case and blogs from Le's family and the public. It was a way to engage the community in the process of searching for Le and a means through which they could show their support. Even more significant, this website was a way for news reporters to contact Le's family to cover the story.

The one and only Facebook was also highly utilized to mobilize the community in the search for Le. Surely, many in the Bay Area received invites to the searches, fundraising events, and vigils. Not surprisingly, many responded with open hearts and supported the family. Facebook was obviously a great way to reach out to the community, particularly to the younger people, who are very active in social media. Their high activity really helps spread the word at an efficient pace. Like other recent events happening around the world, the movement to bring Le home was being mediated through Facebook.

Not only did Le's family and friends strive to retain the media's attention, they also came up with creative techniques to keep the community motivated and united in the search for Le. One was designing different t-shirts with a picture of Le and her information to help keep the community's focus on the situation. It seemed to be an excellent method that was completely doable for the public.

All of these efforts to raise awareness about Le required knowledge that is more commonly found in the second generation, especially in the APA community. Many members of the APA community are first generation immigrants who came to the United States for different reasons but have probably all struggled in one way or another to survive and break through cultural barriers. The world is very fast-paced when it comes to social media and technology, and at times, it is hard for the older generation of immigrants to keep up. In Le's case, it seemed that much of the work done, from dealing with the press to using social media, was by the younger members of the family and community.

If this case had happened a couple of decades ago,



photo courtesy of michellelemissing.com

Supporters marching

given all the resources we have today, first generation APA immigrants would probably have a difficult time. Le's family is of Vietnamese origin, and 30 years ago, many Vietnamese immigrants were just starting to build their lives here. There were cultural and language barriers that might have hindered their efforts in raising awareness about a situation like Le's. Fast forward to 2011, as the children of those immigrants are being educated in the U.S. and have adapted to this culture, those barriers seem to be deteriorating. Although not all of the first generation may have completely adapted, the second generation is here for them to lean on when needed.

Anthony Vo, an acquaintance of Michael Le, Le's brother, recognizes the role of the second generation, "Michael Le and his cousin Krystine Dinh were very vocal with the media and kept everyone well informed over the Internet. I think being raised and educated here opened up a lot of resources for them to be successful."

Through watching the videos of the gatherings that were organized in honor of Le, it is clear that the second generation was the core of the process. After many years of being guided by and learning from their parents, they took the reins and used the knowledge they gained through education in the U.S. to appeal to the community and effectively mobilize people. This signifies the great distance that the APA community has traveled since first generation immigrants first arrived. Le's family and friends may have only had one goal to find Le and bring her home, but their endeavor benefited the larger APA community in fighting against the disparities of mainstream media, while overcoming struggles of the past.

On September 19, 2011, the Hayward Police Department confirmed that Michelle Le was found. Due to the incredible organization of the community by Le's families and friends, their goal was reached. Though the outcome was not exactly as everyone had hoped, the efforts of Le's family and supporters were definitely not futile. We offer our condolences and wish her family the best as they continue to fight for her justice. Rest in peace, Michelle Le.

photo courtesy of michellelemissing.com



Michael Le, Michelle Le's brother, rallying up the community.



Krystine Dinh, Michelle Le's cousin, and Michael Le leading a march.



Supporters donning "Missing Michelle Le" t-shirts.

\*For more information, visit <http://michellelemissing.com>.

# The Lady and Burma's Dogma

by princess lim

I'm secretly a sucker for biopics. I love the crescendo-vibe of the film trailers and researching if these amazing events actually transpired in the lives of said famous people; but most of all, I find it hardly fathomable that a life could be lived so gloriously. Luc Besson's upcoming film *The Lady* seems to have the necessary features to meet my biopic standards: a heroic protagonist, internal conflict, indomitable struggle against a pernicious force and, of course, that can't-fail epic musical score. The film centers around Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's leading political figure for democracy and non-violence, and details the Nobel Peace Prize winner's humanitarian efforts for peace in a country ruled by an oppressive militaristic regime.

*The Lady* stirred up some curiosity and intrigue for the goings-on of a country that I wasn't very knowledgeable about. Any biopic embellishes reality to some extent to feed the imaginations of an audience, so I set out to get the real scoop from someone who saw Burma from a gritty, real-life perspective. I interviewed Nick Gaw, a Cal alum who emigrated from Burma four years ago. His eye-opening experiences gave me insight into why Suu Kyi is such a compelling inspiration for the people of Burma.

Burma is entirely controlled by the junta, the military regime that controls all aspects of government, policy, education, and social reform (or lack thereof). The state's primary doctrine is submission through fear—fear of freedom of expression, the government, and rule of law. And the first step to subjugating the public is keeping them uninformed. According to Gaw, Burma only spends 1.2 percent of its GDP per year on education. There is a widespread lack of curricula, faculty, and resources in the universities; some students don't even know where the library is because they aren't sure if a library even exists. The schools have to submit all materials to the censorship board to get approval. If there's any mention of Burma's political history in the textbooks, it is censored, and the students do not get the opportunity to learn about politics.

Gaw stated, "We believe the military deliberately limits education so that people would become too dumb to revolt."

Without adequate resources, professors, or facilities, universities aren't equipped to provide optimal education, that is, except for the ones established by the military. Gaw remarks that most people go into the military universities for a better education, thinking that they can rise up in the ranks and instigate a coup, but unwittingly

end up brainwashed instead.

Suu Kyi and other opposition groups are demonized by the junta as obstructors of peace and development in the country, while the military is lauded as knowing best and bringing peace to the country. Yet, not only do high-ranking military officers receive medical benefits, subsidized food, and gasoline, they also sell these same resources to the public for profit and accept bribes from the families of those accused of treason.

Gaw also believed that due to the kind of education that people receive in the universities, "nobody has faith in the diploma. Med school is the only one that everyone aims for since that's one of the few legitimate institutions. My friend who finished medical school earned \$1.50 a month working as a resident intern in a general hospital."

Yes, you read that right: one dollar and fifty cents a month with a medical degree. Only those with the means and resources to study abroad obtain degrees that are acknowledged as legitimate in Burma. Even then, there aren't a lot of high paying jobs in the country. According to Gaw, another friend graduated with a business degree from Illinois and only gets paid \$250 a month from a multi-national company as a management trainee.

Undeterred by the government's flagrant attempts to crush any freedom of thought, speech, or criticism of the current regime, the people relentlessly continue their fight to attain human rights. Teashops are underground sources of news and communication because openly criticizing the government or talking about democracy might mean never seeing one's family again. In Burma, there is no such thing as a peaceful protest because there can be no *protesting*. Gathering in groups of more than five people is illegal, but even a peaceful demonstration by one person will guarantee harsh interrogations by military intelligence: that's like the National Guard forcibly taking you and your friends to prison simply for holding up signs on Upper Sprout.

Even under such an oppressive regime, people are hopeful that these grim circumstances could change under the leadership of people like Suu Kyi. She promotes peaceful dialogue with the junta, not hostility or violence, because she believes that nothing can be achieved with bloodshed. In 1990, she called for a general election and her party, the National League for Democracy, received 59 percent of the votes and were set to claim 80 percent of the seats in parliament. However, the junta voided the



Aung San Suu Kyi

photo courtesy of time.com

votes and refused to hand over power, and instead made sure that she remained under house arrest for 15 of the last 21 years without charge or trial under martial law. Though she was offered freedom if she left Burma, she refused to take it so she could continue her fight for democracy and human rights. It is through her display of intrepid courage that people are inspired to stand for peace and see even the possibility of a revolution in the future.

With midterms at our heels and finals fast-approaching, it's not difficult to push issues that are distant from us to the periphery. However, I hope to bring awareness to the plight of the Burmese people so that action could be taken. The most extensive and effective of responses is urging our representatives in the United Nations to speak about these problems and to respond more strongly to the junta and their unjust practices. Petitioning our leaders is quite the undertaking, so assisting the Burmese people can also be initiated on a smaller scale. Refugee Transitions (reftrans.org) is a non-governmental organization based in Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose that helps recent refugees and immigrants transition to life in the United States. Teaching English, being a peer tutor, or making a donation to those in the program are among some of the things that can assist the Burmese (and other refugees). While *The Lady* is sure to engage audiences with its angle and subject matter, I hope it doesn't neglect to bring a much-needed spotlight to Burma and its citizens.

photo courtesy of vacuumspace.wordpress.com



Michelle Yeoh as Aung San Suu Kyi in a scene from *The Lady*, set to be released December 2, 2011.

photo courtesy of burmacampaign.org.uk



Aung San Suu Kyi in 2002 at a rally in Arakan State.

# A PLAYLIST TO INSPIRE

An API Playlist by steven cong

## Ruby Ibarra



photo courtesy of Channel APA

**Headquarters:** The Bay Area  
**Genre:** Hip Hop  
**Currently bumping:** "Who I Am"  
**Check her out if you like:** a femcee better than Nicki Minaj  
**Hear her at:** [www.youtube.com/user/rubyibarra](http://www.youtube.com/user/rubyibarra)

## Lion's Ambition



photo courtesy of iexaminer

**Headquarters:** Seattle  
**Genre:** Rock/Hip Hop  
**Currently bumping:** "Memories"  
**Check them out if you like:** Nickelback  
**Hear them at:** [www.youtube.com/user/lionsambition](http://www.youtube.com/user/lionsambition)

## Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai

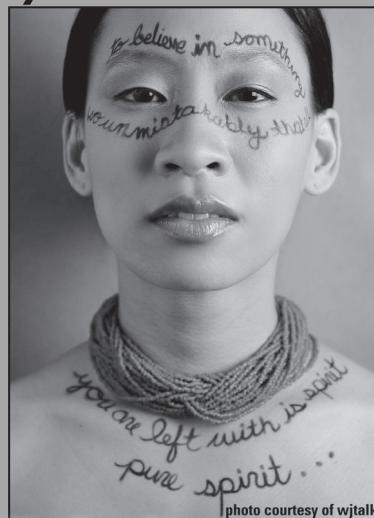


photo courtesy of wjtalk

**Headquarters**  
Brooklyn  
**Genre**  
Spoken Word  
**Currently bumping**  
"Little Red Books"  
**Check her out if you like**  
Defpoetry  
**Hear her at**  
[www.yellowgurl.com](http://www.yellowgurl.com)

## Kero One



photo courtesy of dubtunes

**Headquarters:** The Bay Area  
**Genre:** Hip Hop  
**Currently bumping:** "Pieces"  
**Check him out if you like:** Common  
**Hear him at:** [www.kero1.com](http://www.kero1.com)

## The Fung Brothers



photo courtesy of Angry Asian Man

**Headquarters:** Los Angeles  
**Genre:** Comedy/Rap  
**Currently bumping:** "Invisible People"  
**Check them out if you like:** Just Kidding Films for the comedy, Jin for the rap  
**Hear them at:** [www.youtube.com/user/fungbroscopy](http://www.youtube.com/user/fungbroscopy)

## WINTER MOVIE PREVIEW

by eileen tse

### THE LADY

*limited release opens Dec. 2nd*

Michelle Yeoh of Malaysian-Chinese descent and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* fame plays Aung San Suu Kyi in *The Lady*, which documents the period between 1988, when Suu Kyi first returns to Burma and starts advocating for democracy, and 1999, when (\*warning: spoilers for real life) Suu Kyi's husband, Michael Aris, dies of prostate cancer. Along with trying to be a stirring political portrait of the situation in Burma where the military junta rules with a barbed-wire fist, *The Lady*'s primary focus is the love story between Suu Kyi and Aris and the sacrifices they make for the cause.

*The Lady* has Oscar bait written all over it with effective leads like Yeoh and David Thewlis (playing Aris, Suu Kyi's husband), and its resonant subject matter about a people's struggle against political oppression. Yet, of course, execution is what matters, and *The Lady* doesn't quite hit the mark. The film is solid, but its messages and performances aren't as transcendent as I think the director wanted them to be.

BESSON  
DAVID THEWLIS

### OUTRAGE

*limited release opens Dec. 2nd and currently on demand*

Originally released in 2010, acclaimed Japanese director Takeshi Kitano's *Outrage* is finally available for American audiences. *Outrage* features Kitano doing what he does best, which is creating starkly dark, yet not utterly humorless portraits of yakuza life. The story goes Ikemoto is weary about his subordinate Kato getting too chummy with another boss, Murase. Ikemoto and Murase, however, are essentially allies, but it's a matter of power, so Ikemoto enlists Otomo, another boss, to rough Murase up. It's a little convoluted, but what's clear is that *Outrage* isn't about brotherhood; it's about self interest motivating cruel acts of violence against one's "enemies." For those with a light constitution, stay away because things get bloody violent. But if you have a strong stomach, *Outrage* is savage yet slick, just like the yakuza.

### A VERY HAROLD AND KUMAR 3D CHRISTMAS

*now playing*

Who would have thought that a stoner comedy with two Asian American leads could look like such a desperate cash grab? If featuring a stoned child in the trailer, resurrecting Neil Patrick Harris after he was killed in the *Guantanamo Bay* film, and being a Christmas movie weren't enough, it advertises 3D right in the title. Yet, somehow it all works because the bromantic chemistry between Kal Penn and John Cho's characters is as effective as ever and the creators really go balls to the wall with the 3D, making full use of this gimmick-tastic technology. Although no one was exactly calling out for a third film, no ones complaining because this distastefully endearing romp is a lot of fun. That is if you're into the crude humor that one would come to expect from a Harold and Kumar adventure. Otherwise, what are you doing even considering this movie?

CHRISTMAS COMES PREMATURELY