

THE IDENTITY ISSUE

PACIFITIES

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER NEWSMAGAZINE AT UCLA
VOLUME 32 ISSUE 2 | WINTER 2010



IDENTITY



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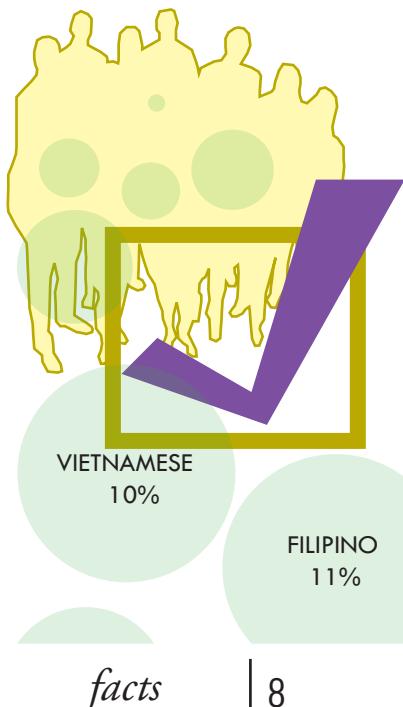
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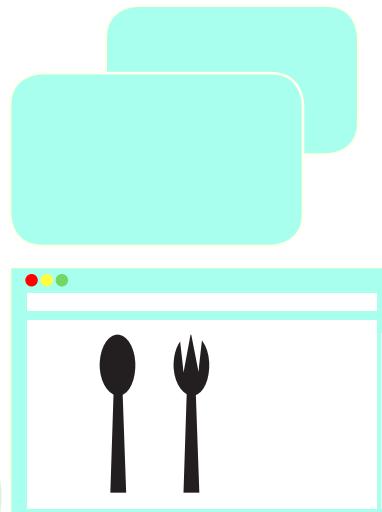
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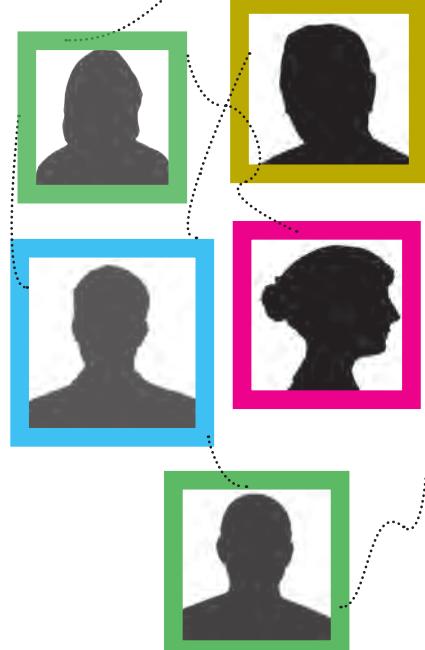
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PACIFIC TIES

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Malina Tran

MANAGING EDITOR
Shirley Mak

A&E EDITOR
Ray Luo

COPY EDITOR
Huong Pham

DESIGN EDITORS
Alice Mongkongllite
Malina Tran

ONLINE EDITOR
Evelina Giang

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Keli Arslançan
Claudia Li

WRITERS
Dale Douk
Evelina Giang
Karen Lee
Ray Luo
Shirley Mak
Azusa Takano
Layhearn Tep

CONTRIBUTORS
Dieu Huynh
Stepfanie Aguilar

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Kevin Le
Wesley Wong

STUDENT MEDIA DIRECTOR
Arvli Ward

STUDENT MEDIA ADVISER
Amy Emmert

We are located at:
118 Kerckhoff Hall
308 Westwood Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90024
pacties@media.ucla.edu
310.825.1004

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Letter from the editor

"Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it." - Franz Fannon

We need to re-think our identity. Among other schools, UCLA boasts a relatively high Asian American student population. We have about 38 percent of our student body who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander. Some people are dismissing the model minority concept not because of its inherent and problematic nature--but simply because they don't view the Asian American community as a minority anymore. They point to the students and say there is no issue of access to higher education. They refer to the median income and conclude that yes, it is comparatively high. If we are breaking grounds as a community, then why are there still students slipping through the cracks of education? Why are families still struggling to make ends meet, and why are hate crimes still a prevalent issue? If Asian Pacific Islanders are making such positive strides and leaps, then why should Pacific Ties and its mission even exist?

Our generation--and our roles as students of this university--is shaped by certain privileges and advantages. As we become more acculturated, we may lose sight of our identities. Granted, identity is a fluid structure (see the story on Khazumoto) but I ask you to be critical of how you define yourself. It can easily be determined by your family history or lineage, your positioning in society, even the food you eat and the people you identify with. Or a mixture of the above, or none at all. Who you are, ultimately, who you choose to be. And as iterated by people from our photo gallery page, our identity is also developed by

Pacific Ties does not function for the sole purpose of writing all things API-related. We provide relevant information and accurate portrayals of APIs by shedding light on issues that have been marginalized or overlooked. We work with and provide coverage of the community because at the end of the day, we belong to this community and we identify as members of this community. Our efforts are linked to the intersectionalities of our identities. But it is only a starting point and one of the strongest ways to continue to serve the community is through the media lens of our analysis and our dialogue.

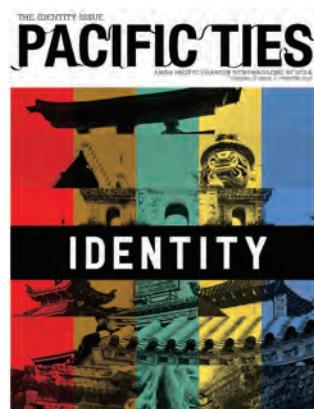
Quite frankly--the name of the issue humorously offers a double entendre--we all have identity issues. Our community often views someone who has strayed from their roots as having "identity issues," but how is retaining your traditions and cultural practices not an issue with Asian or American identity? How is assertion of self-love (due to an unconscious practice of low self-esteem and self-hate) not an issue of identity? Does the PacTies staff have issues with identities? We all have identity issues, in one shape or another. I ask you to look at and think about the relevancy of your identity and community in this generation--the here and now.

In solidarity,

Malina Tran
Editor-in-Chief

COVER ART

Designed by ALICE MONGKONGLITE



Fourth-year DESMA major Alice Mongkongllite is the artistic (albeit quirky) genius behind the creative work round here.

The cover page showcases distinct architectural designs across cultures --Japanese, Thai, Khmer, Chinese, Vietnamese. It thus prompts us to question the core of identity. Does culture or history or even tangible relics define our identity? Does the lineage of our families from Asian (or non-Asian) countries constitute who we are today? How is it complicated by our American consciousness and identity?

JOIN PACIES STAFF 2009-2010

Since 1977, we have been committed to serving the Asian Pacific Islander community on-campus and beyond. Pacific Ties has provided readers with a unique perspective, alternative coverage & relevant source for contemporary news, culture, art, politics, entertainment and issues.

STAFF POSITIONS* AVAILABLE IN:

- Writing
- Editing
- Advertisement
- Photography
- Website development
- Design
- Illustration

* Experience preferred but not required.

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FOR QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION |
feel free to e-mail us at pacties@media.ucla.edu

GLOSSARY

We cover so many topics and issues here at PacTies that language often gets technical. Here's a handy little glossary to help you out while reading through the issue. Throughout our publication, you will find various acronyms related to the ways we identify ourselves:

- AA: Asian American
AAPI: Asian American Pacific Islander
APIA: Asian Pacific Islander American
APA: Asian Pacific American
API: Asian Pacific Islander
AB540: Assembly Bill 540; exempts qualified undocumented students from paying out-of-state tuition
CADC: California Democracy Act Coalition or California Democracy Act Campaign
CAPSA: Critical Asian and Pacific Islander Students for Action
DESMA: Design | Media Arts
JET: Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program
Khmer: native word for "Cambodian," refers to the people/language/culture of Cambodia
LAO: Laotian American Organization
LCC: Lapu the Coyote that Cares
IDEAS: Improving Dreams, Equality, and Success
QAC: Questionnaire Assistance Centers (Census)
SEA: Southeast Asian
TDD: Teletext Device for the Deaf (Census)
UC: University of California
(California system of 10 institutions of higher education, includes Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Riverside)
VCN: Vietnamese Culture Night
VSU: Vietnamese Student Union
Womyn: alternative spelling for "woman" (see backpage for explanation)

STAFF CONTACT INFO

- Malina | mtran@media.ucla.edu
Shirley | snak@media.ucla.edu
Ray | rluo@media.ucla.edu
Alice | amongkongllite@media.ucla.edu
Evelina | egiang@media.ucla.edu
Huong | hpham@media.ucla.edu
Keli | karslancan@media.ucla.edu
Claudia | clic@media.ucla.edu
Dale | dale.douk@gmail.com
Karen | klee@media.ucla.edu
Azusa | atakano@media.ucla.edu
Layhearn | ltep@media.ucla.edu
Dieu | dieuhuynh@gmail.com
Stepfanie | stagular@media.ucla.edu

NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Chinese

February 14, 2010

Theme:

Happiness, prosperity, health, and luck.
Year of the Tiger, 2010

Colors:

Red & gold. Red symbolizes joy, virtue, truth and sincerity.

Greetings:

Xīn nián kuài lè (Mandarin) -
"Happy new year!"
Gung Hay Fat Choi (Cantonese) -
"Happy new year!"

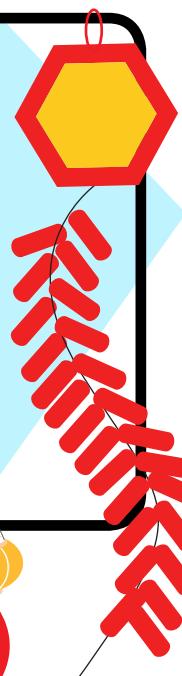
Customs:

Passing of red envelopes
(even amounts are preferred for good luck)
Gift exchange
(mostly food, fruits, small things among family & friends)
Cleaning the house
(to get rid of bad luck and bring in new luck)
Acquiring new things
(haircut, clothes, shoes, etc.)
Visiting the temple with family and having family dinner.



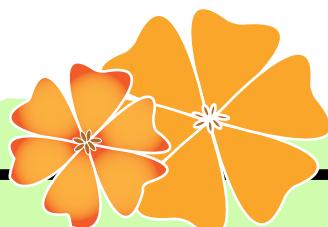
Food:

luóhàn zhāi - vegetarian dish
yóujiǎo - new year dumplings
jīn júzi - mandarin oranges
guāzǐ - melon seeds
nian gao - new year pudding
ròugān - sundried meat
yú shēng - raw fish salad
chicken & fish dishes
noodles
taro cake
turnip cake



Vietnamese

February 14, 2010



Greetings:

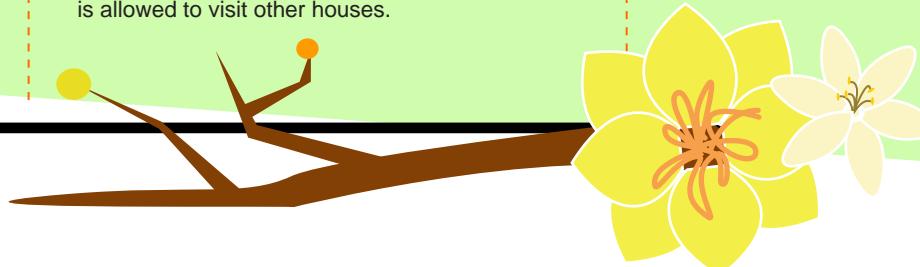
Chúc mừng năm mới -
"Happy new year!"
An khang thịnh vượng -
"May you have security, good health, and prosperity."

Decorations:

Cây nêu (decorated bamboo)
Hoa mai (peach flower)
Thủy tiên (paperwhite flowers)
Van tho (marigold)
Bonsai plants

Beliefs:

On the first day of New Years, no one can enter a house unless they were invited.
The person who is usually invited is one that is good tempered and wealthy because they are representative of the kind of luck that is to come.
There is no sweeping as it means 'sweeping luck away'
No one who has experienced a recent family loss is allowed to visit other houses.



Food:

Hột Dưa - roasted watermelon seeds
Dưa Hành - pickled onion & cabbage
Củ Kiệu - small pickled leek
Thịt Kho Nước Dừa - meat in coconut juice
Bánh chưng - sticky rice w/ meat or bean fillings wrapped in Dong

Cambodian

April 13-15, 2010



Greeting:

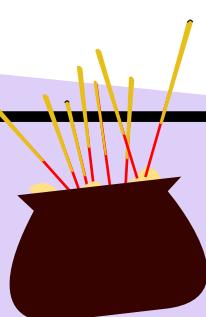
Sursdey Chnam Thmey -
"Happy new year!"

Customs:

Day 01:
Maha Songkran - celebration of the new year
Light incense & candles at shrines
Give thanks to the Buddha's teachings
Wash face, chest, and feet with holy water during the morning, afternoon, and evening.

Day 02:

Wanabat
Help the poor and homeless
Perform charity work



Day 03:

Tngay Leang Saka
Buddhists cleanse Buddha statues and elders with perfumed water for longevity, good luck, happiness and prosperity in life.



Games:

Chab Kon Kleng - Participants appoint a person to play the hen that leads chicks. Another person is picked to be the crow. While both sides sing a song of bargaining, the crow tries to catch as many chicks as possible as they hide behind the hen.

"Chol Chhoung" - Two teams stand in rows opposite of each other. The two teams throw the *chhoung* (scarfball) back and forth until someone is hit. Once hit, their team must dance while the other team sings.

ACROSS CULTURES

Thai

April 13-15, 2010

Greetings:

Sawat dee pee mai or Suk san pee mai - "Happy new year!"

Meaning:

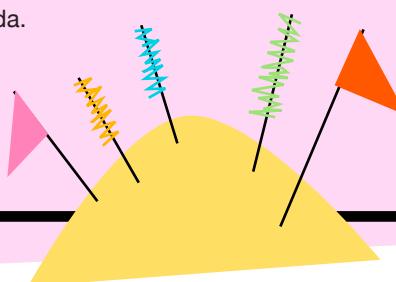
Like many East Asian cultures, the Thai new year is meant to embrace a fresh start. It is a time for celebration and is often called a water festival due to the customary practice of splashing water on each other. The splashing symbolizes the cleansing of bad demons, debt, and luck.

Customs:

Visiting temples (*wat*) for prayer and good fortune.
Pouring of water on Buddha statues and elders for respect, luck, and prosperity.
Honoring ancestors
Give offerings to monks at temples
Freeing of caged birds and kept fish

Sand Pagodas:

Sand pagodas (*phra chedi sai*) are made by families. Usually, monks will prepare the sand to be used while novice monks help make decorative flags and sticks. Competitions are held and a winner is declared for the best pagoda.



Mien

February 14, 2010

Theme:

Peace, health, prosperity, and happiness

Customs:

On the morning of New Years day, adults of each household gather rocks and bring them back to their home. The rocks symbolize wealth and prosperity. Adults also boil and dye eggs red so that they can be used as charms for children to wear. Later during the day, families bow in prayer at altars for good blessing from gods.

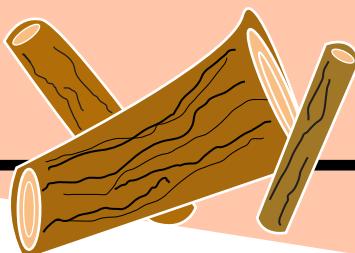
Preparation:

Foods for animals - Corn, hay/grass, seeds.
Firewood or dried logs
Sweet rice cakes "*njuov zong, njuov ziux*" - Meat wrapped and steamed.
Eggs - Used as good luck charms for kids or guests, usually red and netted with long strings (loops).
Clothes/ outfits - Spending money or buying clothes on New Year's Day is not allowed.
Fire crackers

Restrictions:

The New Year celebration lasts for three days. During these three days, one cannot:

- spend money
- hunt animals
- perform farm work
- gather firewood from forest



Hmong

December 26, 2010 - January 2, 2011

Then & Now:

The Hmong New Year was first celebrated to give thanks to ancestors and honor spirits. It was traditionally celebrated for 10 days after the harvest season ends, usually during November and December.

Today, Hmong New Year lasts for three days. However, festivities in the States are held towards the end of December and lasts for about a week. Throughout the celebration, the Hmong wear traditional clothing, enjoy traditional music, foods, and dance.

Rituals:

Hu Plig (Soul Calling) - Call back souls in the family to unite with the family
Txi Xim Kaab (Honoring Xim Kaab) - Offerings to the God of Wealth
Pe Tsab - Ask for blessings from elders
Ntxuav Kauv Laug - Cleanse the body of dirtiness
Ntuag Qhauv - Rid household of bad luck.
Tso Plig - Release the souls of the dead

Pov Pob:

Pov Pob is a traditional courting game played during New Years. It is played with a ball that is tossed between two sides, one for boys and another for girls.

Every time the ball is dropped, the person it was aimed for has to give away one of the ornaments on their clothing to the thrower. To retrieve it, they must sing a love song to the thrower. The ball is usually thrown to the person who is seen as a potential marriage partner.

NEWSPRINT

FEEDING YOUR APPETITE WITH SHORT NEWS ITEMS THAT YOU CAN REALLY SINK YOUR TEETH INTO +
IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CAMPUS AND LOCAL NEWS FOR THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR MORE

Suicides Rate Rises Among Koreans in New York

December 30, 2009

Money problems have been the prevalent cause of the rise in suicides among Koreans in New York.

Yongho and Soonhee Kim immigrated from South Korea and opened a nail salon on Long Island, but by the winter of 2008, they were deeply in debt and unhappy. They were facing a lawsuit over nonpayment of rent on the salon and were behind on the rent for their apartment in Oakland Gardens, Queens.

On February 25, 2009, the couple left a note for their 20-year-old daughter outside the apartment, doused themselves in gasoline and set themselves on fire, the police said. The fire killed them and destroyed their home.

As reported by the local Korean Consulate General, the number of suicides had more than doubled in 2009 from 6 in 2008 to 15. All of the victims were Koreans, said the consulate, which does not keep statistics on Korean Americans.

Kyungkeun Kim, the consul general, said he believed that the actual total of the number of Korean suicide victims might be more than twice as high. The Korea Times had reported in September 2009 that at least 36 Koreans and Korean Americans in the New York region had taken their lives so far in that year.

Many Koreans have a mentality that places a particular emphasis on academic and professional achievement, and failure can cause shame and embarrassment.

The rise in suicides among Koreans in New York mirrors an increase in South Korea where the suicide rate in 2008 was 26 per 100,000 people, up from 24.8 in 2007 and 21.8 in 2006, said Dr. Myung-Soo Lee, director of the Seoul Suicide Prevention Center.

Figure Skaters of Asian Descent Have Risen to Prominence

January 2010

Eight of the 23 women who competed Saturday in the long program at the United States figure skating championships were Asian Americans. The reigning women's Olympic champion, Shizuka Arakawa, is Japanese. Amplified in the legacies of Michelle Kwan and Kristi Yamaguchi, Asian women have won seven of the nine medals at the last three world championships. Reasons for this phenomenon include body type, hard work and discipline and diet. According to Frank Carroll, Kwan's old figure-skating coach, Asian skaters have light, quick bodies and they're able to move very fast, which are definite assets for figure skating. Also, they often avoid large quantities of beef in exchange for a diet of rice, fish and vegetables.

Utada Hikaru's First U.S. Tour Sells Out

January 2010

Utada Hikaru's first concert tour outside of Japan, Utada: In the Flesh 2010, sold out in just five hours after being opened to the public on Nov. 13. The tour included eight cities in the U.S. and two dates in London. Hikaru is a Japanese singer and songwriter who rose to prominence in the U.S. after contributing two songs to the Kingdom of Hearts soundtrack. She is considered one of the best Japanese singers of all time and has sold an estimated 50 albums worldwide. Her Dirty Desire remixes were released on Amazon.com, Zune Marketplace, and on iTunes on Dec. 21.

Jacqueline Hong-Ngoc Nguyen Nominated to U.S. District Court

December 2009

President Obama nominated Judge Jacqueline Nguyen to U.S. District Court judgeship, Central District in California. Jacqueline Nguyen is currently a Superior Court Judge for the County of Los Angeles, a position to which she was appointed in August 2002. She was the first Vietnamese woman to serve on the federal bench for the Federal Court. Judge Nguyen received her undergraduate degree from Occidental College in 1987 and her law degree from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1991. From 1991 to 1995, Nguyen worked in private practice where she specialized in civil litigation. From 1995 until August 2002, Nguyen was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Central District of California. During her tenure in that office, she served as Deputy Chief of the General Crimes Section.



Judge Jacqueline Nguyen is the first Vietnamese woman to serve for the Federal Court

Former Director of UCLA Asian American Studies Center Passes at the Age of 70

February 2010

Lucie Cheng, founder of Center for Pacific Rim Studies and former director of UCLA Asian American Studies Center (1972 - 1987), has passed away on January 27 at the age of 70 in Taiwan. She had battled cancer for several years.

Cheng was born in Hong Kong on February 11, 1939. Her family later moved to Taiwan where she attended Taipei First Girls' High School and National Taiwan University.

She studied at the University of Hawaii and attained a bachelor's in sociology in 1962, later on receiving a master's degree in library science in 1964 and sociology in 1968, and a doctorate in sociology in 1970.

Among Cheng's most notable achievements is her study of 19th century Chinese American prostitutes, "Free, Indentured, and Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in 19th Century America," published in 1979 in the journal Signs, where she challenged the misconception that all Chinese prostitutes were slaves. She brought to light the fact that some women were able to make enough money off of prostitution to buy brothels of their own.

Cheng became the editor of Lih Pao Daily, the newspaper founded by her father, in 1991 after his passing. She wrote controversial columns on women and labor.

She founded the Cheng She-Wo Institute for Chinese Journalism at Shih Hsin University, where she also taught.

"She revolutionized Asian American studies. . . . She helped create it as a serious discipline," said Edna Bonacich, a UC Riverside professor emeritus of sociology and ethnic studies, who knew Cheng for 30 years.

Youth and Minorities Disproportionately Hit by H1N1 in L.A. County

January 8, 2010

New data that had been released in January indicates that the H1N1 flu disproportionately struck the young and minorities of Los Angeles County.

Approximately 55 percent of the patients hospitalized by the H1N1 flu in Los Angeles County were Latino, according to the most recent data available from the county Department of Public Health. Of the 237 patients, 17 percent were white, 8 percent black, and 4 percent Asian.

The flu has also struck the young and middle-aged more often than senior citizens, as indicated by an age breakdown of Los Angeles County H1N1 hospitalizations. Approximately 93 percent of those hospitalized were younger than 65.

One reason for the skewed proportion of minorities infected by the H1N1 flu is that there is a low percentage of younger people obtaining vaccinations.

"The number one thing anyone in California can do to protect themselves and their community is to get vaccinated," said Al Lundein, a Department of Public Health spokesman.

In January, officials planned to announce a new program in which individuals can text "No Flu" and their zip code to a phone number, and receive a response with a nearby clinic or pharmacy with the H1N1 vaccine.



Students attend a community meeting regarding attacks.

Budget crisis continues to hurt students

By LAYHEARN TEP

They say cut back, we say fight back!" Shouts thundered throughout the UCLA campus as enraged students vehemently expressed their strong opposition towards a potential move by the UC Regents to pass what could be the highest fee increase in UC history. In an open plaza, a separate band of students dressed in a somber black bespeaking of grief and mourning suddenly dropped to the floor in unison, as if dead. The clamors of angry protest had abruptly ceased. All was silent. Many were puzzled as to what had just occurred. After a few minutes of murmurs, signs were raised with the glaring message: "R.I.P. Public Education." This heartfelt outpouring of emotions signaled an early warning on the ramifications that this fee increase might have on public education and individual students.

To some, this bold and pronounced act was only a demonstration; to others, it was a harsh reality. On November 19, the Regents cast a near unanimous vote that had the effect of crushing the dreams of some of this nation's most promising and deserving students, one of whose voice was helplessly silenced. Flor, a third-year transfer student from Argentina rallied throughout the day to ensure her future at UCLA was secure--although to much dismay.

"It wasn't even a question anymore of whether or not I would have to withdraw from a quarter(s) at UCLA so that I can work to afford to go to school here, it was a reality," said Flor. "I had to rethink everything: my future plans, my life, everything. I was discouraged. I was sad and I was disappointed. I kept thinking about my sister who is applying to UCLA next year and other future students who won't be able to access higher education because of this."

Flor is an undocumented AB540 student. Under California Assembly Bill 540 (passed in 2001), students are allowed to pay in-state tuition if they fulfill some criteria of residency. However, "AB540 students" do not receive access to financial aid. With the recent 585 dollar fee increase, AB540 students are having the most difficulty paying for their tuition.

"I currently work two jobs to raise enough money to pay for a quarter," said Flor. "Everyday I have to wake up at 3:30 am to catch the bus to Long Beach. Then I take another bus to Westwood to get back at by 6 pm, where I have to work at 6:30 pm in Westwood until 11 pm. I'll come home, set up lunch, shower, sleep till 3:30am then start the process all over again."

"Our students are dropping out like flies. We need to help

If you would like to help support undocumented/AB540 students, please visit www.ideasla.org where you can donate online through PayPal

now," said fourth-year environmental science major Suza Khy, a representative of CAPSA (Critical Asian and Pacific Islander Student for Action) who launched a campaign last year to bring awareness about API AB-540 students.

In response to questions of accessibility to higher education, Chancellor Gene Block cites the Blue and Gold Plan and the UC's high fee-high aide model: "One-third of the revenue from the (fee) increases goes toward financial aid, including the UC's Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, which covers UC fees for students whose annual family income is less than \$60,000. That figure will be raised to \$70,000 next year."

But some students feel this is not the solution. "The high fee, high aid model isn't working. It's a temporary solution to the university problem. They are placing the fiscal burden on students," said Khy.

Moreover, undocumented AB540 students do not have access to the Blue and Gold Plan. "It's only fair that students should have access to a pot of money that they pay into too," said external vice chair of IDEAS (Improving Dreams Equality Access and Success) Nancy Meza. "And especially to the point that they are directly affected by the fee increases. In order to help our members, we are literally fundraising for survival."

Teaching abroad in Asia as a post-grad trend

By SHIRLEY MAK

For many recent graduates leaving college, school is not yet out of the picture. But instead of sitting in a classroom full of students, they'll be teaching one, via one of the many teaching abroad opportunities made available to them by countries seeking English-speaking instructors.

With the declining economy still intact, an increasing number of college graduates are postponing job hunting and graduate school applications for a chance to go abroad, as a means of exploring foreign lands as well as putting their college educations to good use. Many of these teaching abroad programs offer a generous salary on top of free room and board and transportation, but the strongest incentive for teaching abroad seems to lie with teaching itself.

"I've always loved teaching and working with kids, and I'm obsessed with traveling and learning about other cultures," said Maura Deignan, an anthropology major who graduated from UCLA in 2008 and is a current participant in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET). "This program offered me the chance to see the world while working and hopefully making a difference in the lives of other people."

JET is arguably one of the most competitive and sought after teaching abroad programs in the nation. With 4469 participants in 2009, it is also the largest teaching exchange program in the world. Started in 1987, it sought to strengthen international ties between Japan and the rest of the world and currently invites college graduates from 36 participating countries to serve in local Japanese government offices as well as public and private elementary schools, junior high and senior high schools. The one-year contract enables participants to act as cultural ambassadors, not only teaching English language and culture to Japanese students but also allows participants to learn Japanese language and culture.

While graduates have different motivations for doing JET, the opportunity to acquire teaching skills in a foreign country is a common reason.

"I was thinking about being a history teacher, but learning how to teach English in another country sounded like it'd be more a more exciting path than going through teacher certification," said Brittany Toda, a psychology and history major who graduated UCLA in 2009.

Toda, who is part Japanese, also expressed a desire to learn the Japanese language, a sentiment shared by others who wish to do the JET program.

"My minor was Japanese so that's how I got interested in Japan," said Derek Antoku, who graduated in 2009 with a degree in biology. "I want the chance to work on my language skills and I also feel more comfortable living somewhere where I already know the language."

Although Antoku anticipates becoming a doctor in the future rather than a teacher, he believes that his experience abroad will be helpful no matter what career he chooses.

"I want to have intercultural experience so that I'll be a better doctor," said Antoku. "In California you have people from different cultural backgrounds so I thought living somewhere else would be a good experience to have."



UCLA alumna Maura Deignan poses in Japan during her stay for the JET Program.

U.S."

Because JET offers a number of benefits for its participants, acceptance into the program has become increasingly difficult to come by. Besides the general competitiveness of JET, cultural differences and the daunting unfamiliarity of living abroad also pose as formidable challenges for those wishing to participate.

"Compared to people (living) in California, Japanese people are closed," said Daigo Nakayama, a Japanese foreign exchange student who graduated from Cal. State Northridge with a degree in cinema and television arts in 2009. "They feel anxious when somebody they don't know comes very close to them (physically)."

Antoku, who studied abroad at the International Christian University in Tokyo during his last quarter at UCLA, encountered a similar phenomenon.

"It's more common for Americans to talk to strangers than it is in Japan, so sometimes it's hard to make friends if you don't know anybody," said Antoku.

In the year and a half that she has been in Japan, Deignan has definitely experienced her share of culture shock.

"There is a big emphasis on maintaining social harmony here, and that means having to sometimes restrict yourself from doing what you want to do in order to make things easier for everyone around you," Deignan said. "Differences at schools are even bigger. There are many more rules for the students to strictly adhere to."

Culture fatigue, a term coined at the end of the 1990s to describe the exhaustion and inability to assimilate as a result of constant contact with a huge variety of multi-cultural influences, is prevalent for visitors to a foreign country.

"Sometimes it feels as if I'm playing a game to which everyone else but me knows the rules, or like everyone else is in on a joke I don't understand," said Deignan.

Despite the prevalence of cultural differences, not all of them are negative – on the contrary, some may serve as the biggest incentive to do JET.

"The teacher-student relationship is a lot stronger in Japan than it is in America, as Japanese teachers take an active role in their students' personal lives," said Deignan. "My experience here in Japan has exceeded my expectations... I realized how fulfilling being a teacher is, and how teachers actually learn a lot from their students as well."

The Application Process for the JET Program

1. Application deadline: late November (application form, personal statement, 2 letters of recommendation, official transcript)
2. Interview selection: late January to early February
3. Actual interview: late February
4. Results: early April, placement information: May to June
Benefits include: roundtrip ticket, language courses, paid vacation, health insurance, guaranteed housing, salary, reimbursed transportation, alumni network

<http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JET/index.html>

The JET program is attractive in part because Japan is often a sought after destination for those looking to travel in Asia.

"Gauging from the trip I took there recently, I was intrigued by their culture, in particular how ancient culture is meshed with the development of the current era...when you see the two of them side by side, they somehow complement each other," said Chance Kinney, a psychology major and political science minor who graduated in 2009 and recently applied to JET. "There's a lot of ancient culture that doesn't exist in the

Finding California's heart and mind

Using the California Democracy Act to end the undemocratic rule

By DIEU HUYNH

In 2002, my family immigrated to the United States from Vietnam, when my sister was 18 and I was 12. At the age of 18, my sister went to a community college near home and worked two jobs in order to support our family and also her college education. After five years, she was able to graduate from UC Berkeley in 2008, and is currently pursuing her degree to become a pharmacist at the University of Washington, Seattle. Without Cal Grants, and without government housing, my sister would never have had the chance to go to school, and to make sure we have a roof over our heads.

In November 2008, my parents, my sister and I went through the extraneous process to become citizens, and cast our first ballots in the United States. Like many others in the immigrant communities, our family works hard to become full participants in American society. Thanks to Cal Grants, I was able to go through my first year of college at UCLA without being a burden to my parents, who already had financial problems of their own.

Financial aid for struggling students, healthcare for children, and other social commitments are more than just programs. They are investments. Every dollar that goes into education will come out to be three or four dollars in economic activity. More than services, they are a reflection of our values. They show that we as a society care about the well-being of every individual. As a team, we do not let anyone fall behind. As a body, we take care of all our limbs and organs, our hearts and

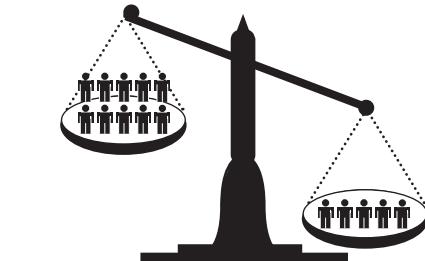
minds.

In the summer of 2009, as part of his proposed budget, Arnold Schwarzenegger wanted to eliminate Cal Grants. For the annual budget of 2009-2010, the state decreased eight billion dollars of funding for education. These are not "cuts"; these are amputations. Should we cut off the brains of students, so they cannot go to school? Or maybe we should cut off the hands of working people through furloughs and layoffs? Or should we cut out the hearts of the hospital patients? Has California lost its heart and its brain?

It has, but it's not California's fault. It's not even necessarily the legislature's fault.

Similar to Congress, California also has two houses, with 80 assembly members and 40 senators. Every year, we need two-thirds of the legislators in each house to agree on something in order to pass a budget or raise revenues. This means one-third of the legislators can refuse to go along, and hold the government hostage (27/80 of the assembly members or 14/40 of the senators).

The two-thirds rule is undemocratic for one practical reason: the minority party usually does not want to compromise, and can use the two-thirds rule to delay any budget or revenue decision. Again and again, California's government risks completely shutting down. The one-third minority group refuses to budge, until they get what they want: privatization of our schools, making government inefficient, and refusing to raise



revenues for necessary programs like Cal Grants. Thanks to the undemocratic two-thirds rule, college tuition at a UC college is now 794% more than what it was in 1970, after adjusting for inflation. Thanks to the undemocratic two-thirds rule, all state employees have to either take furlough days or be laid off.

When the budget is not passed, the state government loses money in late fees, has less money to take care of our hearts and brains, and the minority wins. In 2009, 28 out of the last 32 budgets in California were late. For every day the budget is late, \$40 million gets added to the tab. This can lead to more than \$1 billion per month if the legislature cannot pass a budget.

When the budget is passed, resulting in amputations to our hearts and brains, the minority wins. To counter gridlock and restore democracy, I am currently working on a ballot initiative called the California Democracy Act to change the state constitution by requiring the state legislature to make budget and revenue decisions with a simple majority vote.

Recently, Schwarzenegger promised to shift funding from prison to higher education, in part due to the voices of parents, students, worker and community protesting the budget cuts. We have to keep the momentum going.

For more information on the California Democracy Act, e-mail california.democracy.coalition@gmail.com or visit www.californiademocracyact.com

A fusion of tradition, technology

Khmer distance learning helps retain culture, language

By DALE DOUK

As a Cambodian American, I juggle speaking English and Khmer (the official language of Cambodia) every day. Despite years of practicing my heritage language at home, my skills and vocabulary are deemed useless due to a shortage of resources, courses and teachers from the community.

Students of Hmong, Mien, Lao, Burmese, Indonesian and other minority descents share the same story. We often feel excluded when the foreign language requirement does not offer the languages integral to our identities. Although it is understandably infeasible for an institute to offer less commonly taught languages, students struggling to personalize and identify with their education should not go unrecognized.

At the end of spring 2009, the UCLA campus announced its first ever course in Khmer Language for Heritage Learners, starting fall 2009. The catch? The professor would be teleconferencing from UC Berkeley.

The course, a special distance learning program, works in conjunction with UC Berkeley and is facilitated via live telecommunicating technology to UCLA. Students from the visiting campus interact with the professor and students from the host campus through a specialized camera, television and network connection and attend class in a sound-insulated room reserved in the Instructional Media Laboratory of Powell.

Distance learning promotes access to less commonly taught languages and opens up more opportunities for heritage speakers to further enhance their linguistic skills for course credit.

"It's much more interactive than I expected – we go to class, take notes and actively participate, just like the students at Berkeley," said Lisa Chorn, a fourth-year psychology major

at UCLA.

Culturally relevant courses go beyond the walls of Powell, allowing students to bridge the cultural and language barriers that have long divided generations of refugee or immigrant parents and their American-born children.

"I feel a lot closer to my parents after taking this class. They notice I'm as serious about my education as I am about preserving our language and culture," said Monica Chum, a fourth-year English major at UCLA.

Professor Frank Smith, who has been studying the Khmer language for more than 20 years, designed the course to teach basic to intermediate level Khmer reading, writing and oral skills. Discussions are immersed in cultural context, ranging from the prominent Khmer religion of Theravada Buddhism to understanding village life and current news. Professor Smith visits the Khmer class at UCLA a few times each quarter to personalize the experience and connect with students face-to-face. He also holds normal office hours on Skype.

The Khmer class originated through the advocacy work of the UCLA Center for Southeast Asian studies and Center for World Languages. Distance learning benefits the visiting campus by saving money on instructor hiring, whereas the host campus benefits by allowing more students to take advantage of a rare resource.

However, one challenge with distance learning and teleconferencing technology is that they can make learning incredibly inconvenient for students. Though there have been many improvements, technical interruptions such as static, poor camera focus and choppy sounds still exist.

"I think it's a great opportunity to share the language...



UCLA Students in the Khmer 100A course with their visiting Professor from Berkeley.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DALE DOUK

but sometimes the interaction is a little strange because we will just sit there and watch each other speak," said John Munger, a fourth-year peace and conflict studies major at UC Berkeley.

Logistics of the distance learning program also inconvenience students based on scheduling (i.e. semester vs. quarter), unit transfer and simultaneous enrollment. Simultaneous enrollment requires students to enroll full-time on their home campus before considering the intercampus course, which can result in a very full study list.

Still, it is commendable that the university is providing more opportunities for students to make the foreign language requirement relevant to their own lives. In an increasingly competitive job market, students who expand their foreign language knowledge gain a unique edge. Knowledge of a foreign language can also supplement the experience of studying abroad.

By learning less commonly taught languages, students interested in civic and community engagement will be better equipped to assist their own communities, as well as become more aware of where they come from. Classes like the Khmer language course prove that identity and education do not exist in a vacuum but rather, build off of and influence one another.

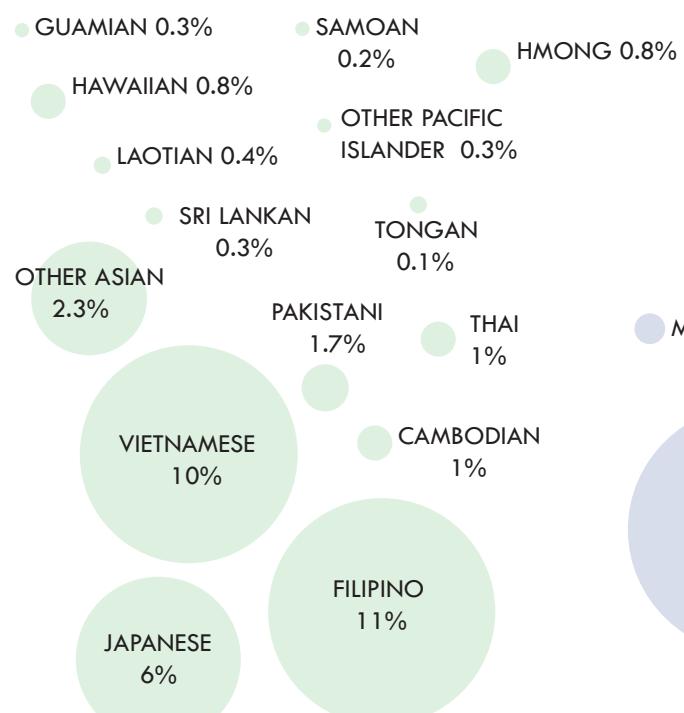
STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!

THE COUNT ME IN! CAMPAIGN RESULTS & U.S. CENSUS 2010 INFO

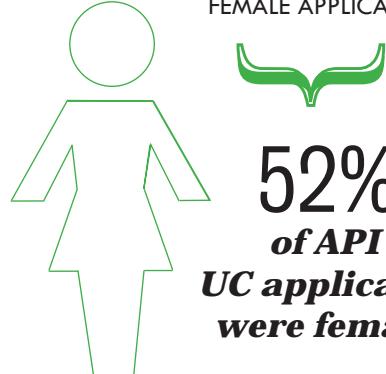
COUNT ME IN! CAMPAIGN: BACKGROUND & RESULTS

The "Count Me In" campaign started in 2006 with a handful of students from UCLA's Asian Pacific Coalition, who urged the UC to disaggregate data on API students. The campaign eventually spread to all 9 UC undergrad campuses and consisted of involvement from non-API students, faculty and administrators. Thousands of participants sent postcards to campus leaders, in an effort to help track API groups that have not been adequately studied, such as Hmong and Samoan students.

In Fall 2008, the UC responded by listing 23 different API ethnic group boxes for people to identify their ethnicities. While the number of Asian Pacific Islander students have surpassed that of white students in the UC system, current statistics and the prevailing "model minorities" myth fail to show the disparities among students in the Asian Pacific Islander student population. Many Americans assume all Asian and Pacific Islander students share the high success rates of Chinese, Korean and Japanese students, even though a UCLA study has shown that among adults 25 or older, 15 percent of Pacific Islanders have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 49 percent of Asian Americans.



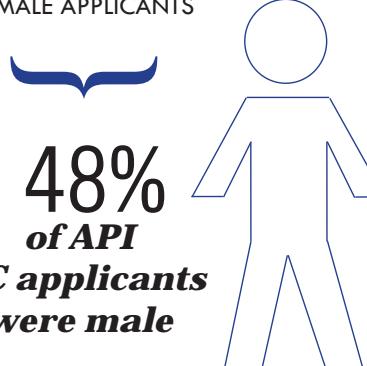
ETHNIC GROUPS WITH PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE APPLICANTS



**52%
of API
UC applicants
were female**

**65 of the API applicants
marked their
gender as "unknown"**

ETHNIC GROUPS WITH PREDOMINANTLY MALE APPLICANTS



**48%
of API
UC applicants
were male**

WHO IS APPLYING TO THE UC SYSTEM?

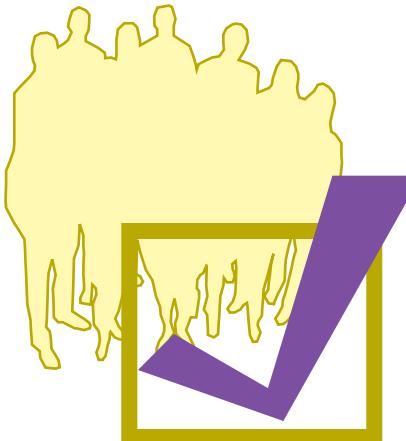
The inclusion of the additional Asian demographic classifications took place in November 2008, and pertained to API students applying for admission to UCs for the fall 2009 term. The following data provides a glance at the UC applicants who identify as one "Asian or Pacific Islander" by ethnic and gender categorization. Percentages refer to the number of students within each ethnic group in relation to the 54,367 total count of APIs for the 2009-2010 school year. The number of females applying to the UCs exceed the number of males across all ethnic groups (with the exception of eight ethnic populations as depicted above).

features

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2010



The U.S. Constitution requires a national census every decade to count the population and is used to distribute Congressional seats to states. It is also used to make decisions about what community services to provide and allocates \$300 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year. In March 2010, more than 130 million households will receive a census form; every person must be counted across all age, racial and ethnic groups and citizenship status.



IMPORTANCE OF CENSUS DATA TO THE API COMMUNITY

The census allows appropriate representation of the changing API community and determines funding for programs and institutions. Census data guide local decision-makers on where to build or improve roads, hospitals, schools, child-care centers, and more.

During the 2000 Census, California lost an estimated \$2 billion in federal funding over the last decade due to the undercount of Asians and Pacific Islanders, according to the Asian Law Caucus. Advocates serving the Southeast Asian community in Northern California gathered in Oakland to make sure their communities are counted in the 2010 Census.

Asian Pacific Islander communities are among some of the harder-to-count communities in L.A. County, which has one of the highest Census undercount numbers of any other county in the state. The Los Angeles Asian Pacific Islander 2010 Census Network is a coalition of 13 diverse local API community groups who will be working with local government, census officials and across communities to develop new methods for outreach to these communities and ensuring that they are counted.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE FOR APIs

Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) will be available to support those unable to read or understand the form. A Teletext Device for the Deaf (TDD) program will help the hearing impaired. In addition, Language Assistance Guides (LAG) will be available at all QAC locations in at least 59 languages, including:

Bengali | Chinese | Hindi | Hmong | Khmer | Japanese | Korean | Laotian | Tagalog | Thai | Urdu | Vietnamese

CENSUS DATES

- FEB. - MAR. 2010** Census forms are mailed/delivered to households
- MAR. - APR. 2010** The BE COUNTED PROGRAM will have select public sites with census forms for those who did not receive form via mail or delivery
- APR. 1, 2010** CENSUS DAY, all forms must be mailed back by the 1st of April
- MAY - JULY 2010** Census workers visit households that did not return a form by mail
- DEC. 31, 2010** Census Bureau deliver population counts to the President
- MAR. 2011** Census Bureau completes delivery of redistricting data to states

Information provided by: http://2010.census.gov/partners/pdf/factSheet_Asian_tk.pdf

FOOD BLOGGERS GALORE

by EVELINA GIANG

If you love to eat, Los Angeles is never a boring city to be in.

You can spend a lifetime simply tasting and drinking out of the roughly 24,000 restaurants and bars based in the County. Choices range from chain restaurants to fast food; from ethnic restaurants to fine dining – and all for a variety of different prices. Choosing a restaurant to eat in poses as one of the biggest predicaments for an Angeleno on a Saturday night, and it's probably beyond mind-blowing for tourists.

Fortunately, there's help, and it comes from the blogosphere.

Pacific Ties has previously reported on how weblogs have become an alternative outlet to the mainstream media for AAPI news and issues. Weblogs, more commonly known as blogs, not only provide a free forum for people to express themselves on the World Wide Web, but more importantly, it gives a voice for AAPIs. We now step into another area where AAPIs come into light: the Los Angeles food blogging scene.

In the mainstream Los Angeles food critic circle, readers can get the lowdown on only a handful of the more popular restaurants in Los Angeles.

While food critics have reviewed ethnic Asian restaurants in L.A., they provide only limited coverage on hole-in-the-wall and lesser known restaurants.

This is where the versatility of the blog comes in. Whereas the L.A. Times publishes new reviews once a week in their Food Section, food bloggers can publish every day and cover a wide range of restaurants and activities.

How the blogosphere is revamping the way we do things in this world



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY WONG

THE MICHELIN PROJECT

Moving from Yelp to the blogosphere, Holly Wong's website, The Michelin Project, documents Wong's experiences at high-end and Michelin-rated restaurants in Los Angeles and Orange County. Like those of the Michelin Star critics, Wong's reviews concentrate on what's on the plate. While Wong does not consider herself a particularly picky eater when it comes to consuming fancy food, a non-finicky palate may be an asset for a blogger attempting to introduce gourmet food to the masses.

For reviews on restaurants such as Chef Michael Mina's XIV or Bond Street at the Thompson Hotel, check out Wong's site, <http://www.michelinproject.com>



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIONA CHANDRA

GORUMETPIGS.COM

Fiona Chandra's blog, GourmetPigs.com, features reviews from the newest and most popular restaurants in Los Angeles. While Chandra's dining habits may not fit a college student's daily budget, her blog is a great guide for restaurants reserved for that special occasion.

GourmetPigs.com documents Chandra's reviews of Michelin Star restaurants, the best cocktails bars in Los Angeles and almost 200 restaurants in the Los Angeles area.





PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLINE PARILLA

OLINEONCRACK.COM

dressed up but have to go? Head on over to CarolineOnCrack.com, a comprehensive guide to opening all over L.A. "You can never get bored here, you do manage to, well then, get lazy," said Caroline in her blog. "There's a festival, a city tour, a new bar, a new restaurant store to check out." It's always been a resource she's always been a resource when it came to fun to do, so she decided to share knowledge with a wider community starting a blog in 2004. CarolineOnCrack.com features a list of the best bars, cocktails and restaurants in L.A. Friends usually turn to me when I'm not sure where to go for dinner, or on a date, (and) where to go to a birthday party. I was big on looking up stuff on CitySearch, and Metromix so I always had to be ready," Pardilla said. Those looking to conquer life by storm, Pardilla's got to Try in L.A. Before You Die is the how-to guide for the bold and the restless, which covers everything from sampling Lady Riese chocolate chip cookies to trying the classic martini at Frank.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAVENOUS COUPLE

RAVENOUSCOUPLE.BLOGSPOT.COM

Hong Pham is a doctor and Kim Dao is a dentist. By day they work on bettering other people's health but on the web, they're better known as the Ravenous Couple, satisfying people's taste buds one recipe at a time.

"Our blog is a celebration of Vietnamese food and culture," said Pham.

Ravenouscouple.blogspot.com offers authentic Vietnamese recipes for traditional dishes, such as Bun Thit Nuong (Vietnamese Grilled Pork with Vermicelli) and Com Tam Suon Bi Cha (Vietnamese Broken Rice with Pork Chops, Shredded Pork Skin and Pork Egg Custard). For those new to Vietnamese cuisine, the couple adds cultural context and detailed explanation for all their recipes, many of which are family favorites.

"I only started reading blogs in general for about 6 months and thought it would be a great way to capture frequently used [family] recipes since I was always calling my mom for hers," Pham said. "She never wrote anything down, never used measurements and only cooked from memory. Since we have started (the blog), it's been a way to chronicle both of our families' treasured recipes."



PHOTO COURTESY OF CATHY DANH

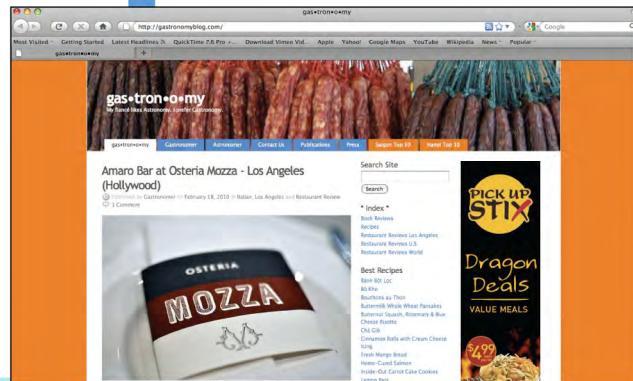
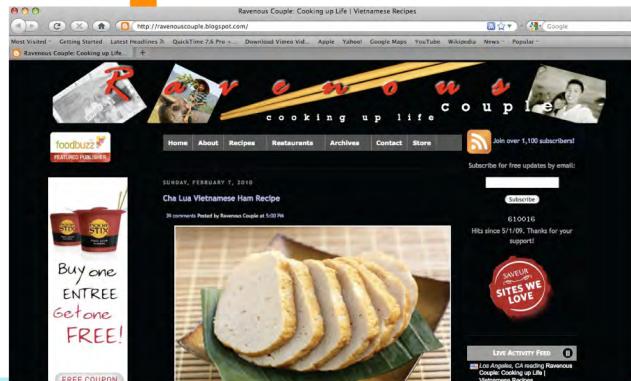
GASTRONOMYBLOG.COM

Cathy Danh's blog, GastronomyBlog.com, provides comprehensive reviews not only on eateries in Los Angeles, but in Philadelphia and Vietnam as well, where she spent a year living and pursuing her writing career. Her blog has become a resource of hidden gems and fine eats, leading to praise from high places. Travel Channel's "No Reservation" host, Anthony Bourdain, sought out Danh for details on finding a particularly good chef known as the "soup lady" in Vietnam.

"Gastronomy (has)... traveled with me everywhere I've lived and visited. I review almost all of the restaurants I eat at. I consciously seek out places with good buzz that are run by chefs and restaurateurs who are passionate about the work that they do. I don't write about restaurant experiences that aren't exciting to me," said Danh.

Her enthusiasm has paid off. Danh now resides in Pasadena and blogs daily about Los Angeles street food, hole-in-the-wall gems and fine dining establishments.

"'Gastronomy' means everything, which is great because I cover everything, from food-related [topics to] book reviews to everything that I like," Danh said.



OUR COMMUNITY TIES

a photo gallery of people and identities

By KELI ARSLANCAN

1. How do you identify yourself?
2. What are cultural practices distinct to your heritage and/or identity?
3. What are your goals for the API community?



1. Khmer American, Chinese, Asian American, Southeast Asian American, Female, Student
2. Theravada Buddhism
3. Progress, understanding, political movement



1. Javanese/Sudanese/Indonesian Muslim.
2. Eastern culture with roots in religion and traditional rules and ethics
3. I'm glad there is diversity in the Asian community (US citizens, residents, visitors/international students like me). I believe that the Asian communities here still have strong cultural roots but at the same time are assimilated with the western culture here.



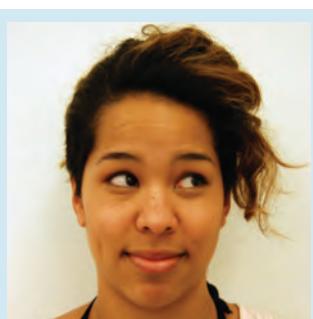
1. Asian American identity, Thai-Chinese, 1st generation college student
2. I go to both the Thai Temple in N. Hollywood and Chinese Temple in Chinatown. We usually go on New Years, Chinese New Year (February-ish), birthdays, and other special occasions.
3. To give voice to a group that is sometimes misunderstood and misrepresented. To counter stereotypes, preconceived notions, and misconceptions through my artwork.



1. I am a Pacific Islander but more specifically Tongan from the island of Tonga
2. Our *tau'olunga's* (dances) are unique but often stereotyped. We are more than dancers and entertainers. Our islands have suffered hundreds of years of oppression and militarization and still feel the effects of colonialization to this day.
3. My goal is to advocate for our community issues and expose the damages our island's have suffered to the world who still believe us to be happy and care-free people with no problems.



1. Burmese and Indonesian (plus Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese)
2. Burmese & Dutch-Indo food
3. To speak out against oppression, the lies that exist in my countries



1. Japanese, black, asexual
2. Funerals, osenko, black-eyed peas, no shoes in the house, Japanese with mom and sis, rice
3. Less stereotypes (Asians just aren't Indian, Japanese, or Chinese). Harajuku Gwen Stefani line and one race posse who are all dressed to wait on some white girl (like in Gwen Stefani's music videos) are not okay.



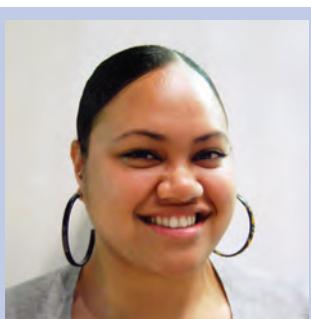
1. Hmong
2. We practice animism and have no country.
3. Helping out the Southeast Asian community through retention.



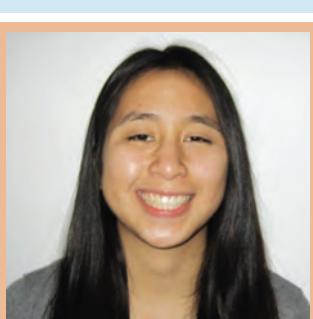
1. Vietnamese American woman
2. Cooking Vietnamese food with my mom
3. Empower the API youth to develop as leaders, bring awareness and support mental health issues



1. Chinese Vietnamese
2. Chinese New Year, Moon Festival, duty worship, ancestor reverence
3. Improve awareness of cardiovascular and cancer risk factors



1. I am Tongan. My family comes from the Tonga Islands in the South Pacific.
2. I strive to preserve my culture through dance, language, and hearing ancient historical stories from the elders in my Tongan community.
3. My goals for the Pacific Islander community is to educate them on the importance of higher education. In addition, I hope to empower my community by helping them know the history of colonization in our Pacific Islands so that they can work towards decolonizing their minds. My ultimate goal is to bring inspiration and hope to my community.



1. Lao, Southeast Asian, refugee and immigrant, fighter
2. The *su khwan* or *baci*, a blessing ceremony that is done when someone leaves or returns from a long trip, gets sick or is going through turbulent times. Their *khwan*, or spirit, is called back home and strings are tied to their wrists to make sure their *khwan* doesn't leave them.
3. Increasing access to higher education. Newly immigrated groups and those living in poverty continue to struggle to make their way into higher education.



1. I am a young lady, fourth year art major at UCLA. I am half Japanese and half German and straight.
2. When someone on my mom's side of the family (who are Japanese) die, we have a Buddhist funeral. We eat at authentic Japanese restaurants a lot.
3. To see more hapas. I feel like there are only a few and when we see each other we know it. There should be more interracial marriages because I think that's where the world is moving as we become more globalized.



1. I consider my ethnicity mixed. Culturally, I am Chinese.
2. I celebrate Chinese holidays, such as New Years and the Moon Festival. At the same time, my family celebrates Christmas and Thanksgiving in a very traditional American fashion.



1. Pilipina American
2. Focus on collectivism rather than the individual. History of people power. Constructing a self-defined identity and community in America
3. Awareness of the different issues that impact our diverse communities—dispelling the “Model Minority Myth” coupled with fair policies that recognize the disparities we face



1. Nice Japanese American boy
2. Taiko drumming, obon festivals, delicious moshi
3. For everyone to be community conscious and culturally aware but at the same time redefine what it means to be API.

LEFT TO RIGHT / TOP TO BOTTOM: (1st row)
Layhannara Tep, Rita Rachmawati, Richard Manirath,
Tevita Foulaau, Shahida Bawa (2nd row) Vivian Lee,
Chou Khang, Tiffany Tran, Jason Ngo, Vivian Lee (3rd row)
Leslie Chanthaphasouk, Kellie Langewisch, Erica
Drucker, Edward Kobayashi, Cathleen Doriquez,
Edward Kobayashi

THE ART OF TAIKO

by AZUSA TAKANO

A cultural, artistic, and musical activity among the Japanese American community that interplays with students' lives



Students practice Taiko at John Wooden Center. Taiko combines intricate hand movements and techniques.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELIARSLANCAN

The beating of drums, the clicking of wooden sticks and the enthusiasm of the musicians are characteristics of many musical performances, but Japanese Taiko drumming is more than just music. This art form is a hybrid of movements, combining rhythmic beats with the artistic choreography of Taiko players. These unique aspects of Taiko have captivated audiences for thousands of years.

The word "taiko" literally means "fat drum" in Japanese. The instrument itself, however, originated from China, bearing the shape and design of a traditional Chinese drum. Gradually, the Taiko became its own distinctive instrument and a large part of Japanese tradition.

The Taiko was initially used during wartime, where the booming drum beats were utilized to frighten and intimidate approaching enemies. Later, it was played for a more serene and cultural music scene known as *Gagaku*, a genre of Japanese classical music played especially for the imperial court. Because it was used in such circumstances, the Taiko became a representation of the gods. It was said that only holy men were allowed to play the drums, individually and rarely in doubles, and never in a group. As years passed, the Taiko became a popular instrument in villages and was frequently used in small festivals and celebrations. The rhythmic sounds of the past are now the basis for the work of modern Taiko players.

Taiko was first introduced in the U.S. in the 1960s, when acclaimed Taiko musician Seiichi Tanaka officially founded the first Taiko group in 1968 in San Francisco. Since then, a wave of Taiko groups began around California as well as in New York, gaining popularity across North America. At UCLA, two Taiko groups, Kyodo Taiko and Yukai Taiko, have attracted experienced and new Taiko players across the campus.

Kyodo Taiko, the first collegiate Taiko group in the country, was established in 1990 by Mark Honda. Kyodo Taiko per-

forms in annual culture nights for Nikkei Student Union, the Japanese American student group at UCLA, and competes against other Taiko groups in the Intercollegiate Taiko Invitational. In 2004, Yukai Taiko was established by Yuta Kato due to an increasing interest in Taiko. Kato strongly believed that Taiko should be shared with everyone, and even today, Yukai's main goal is to not only perform, but spread the love of the art form to other students.

Surprisingly, Taiko groups in North America actually have bigger and more elaborate performances in comparison to those put on by traditional Taiko groups in

Japan. Elaborate hand movements and sporadic, triumphant shouts all contribute to the energy of a performance.

"Kyodo makes Taiko look so effortless, but it takes a lot of work and energy to play," said Yoshimi Kawashima, a second-year East Asian studies major and a relatively new member of Kyodo. "The arm movements are used to emphasize certain hits and beats. Through the movements, we want to entertain the audience."

How Taiko became popular in such a short amount of time is a mystery, but the idea of hitting a giant drum seems to appeal to everyone. The memorable move-

ments and sounds of a Taiko performance grab the audience's attention from the start.

"I think Taiko is popular because it incorporates several elements of dance and rhythm," said Justin Kim, a third-year international developmental studies major and co-director of Kyodo Taiko. "People like to see groups do synchronized movements and hear big rhythms, like in *Stomp*."

Due to popular demand, Taiko recreation classes are currently being offered at the John Wooden Center at UCLA, where Kyodo Taiko teaches newcomers how to play. Many have a hard time playing initially, because the technique used to play the Taiko drum is through complex hand movements. For one to make a clear and efficient Taiko drum beat, players must stand in a sideways position, allowing their arm to strike the drum sideways rather than directly in front. As effortless as it seems, it takes more than just a simple wave of the arm to make the echoing boom.

Travis Lau, a second-year English major, started taking the recreation classes about a year ago.

"It's all about muscle memory," said Lau. "I had no problem with rhythm, but it took me a while to get used to the arm movements."

Not only does Taiko bring musical satisfaction, but it also has potential health benefits.

"I have scoliosis, and playing Taiko has helped me with that," said Lau.

Initially an instrument of order and serenity, Taiko drumming has become a musical venue of entertainment and excitement, attracting audiences of all ages.

"Kyodo makes Taiko look so effortless, but it takes a lot of work and energy to play."

- Yoshimi Kawashima



If you are interested in seeing one or both of our taiko groups, they will have a free performance on March 4th at Fowler Museum, and Yukai Taiko will be performing on March 6th at the UCLA men's basketball game.

KHATZUMOTO

A BECOMING-OF-ASIAN STORY

By KAREN LEE

Imagine learning a new foreign language at the age of 21. How difficult could it be, right? Now imagine if you were determined to master that language and have the ability to converse intellectually with a native speaker. You might take a few courses at the local community college and attempt to engage with some basic reading material, but that probably wouldn't be enough. We are well aware that taking a language class, even for a couple of years, usually does not result in fluency. At best, we can hold simple conversations consisting of "Hello, how are you?" and "Where is the restroom?"

To be truly fluent in a foreign language means going beyond that initial first step. One method of doing so is by moving to that country, in order to immerse yourself in the culture and to practice listening and speaking on a regular basis. But what would this mean for your ethnic identity? Is it possible to give yourself a different identity the moment you step foot into another country?

Identity is something that Khatzumoto, the creator of All Japanese All the Time, wrestles with constantly. All Japanese All the Time is a website that highlights Khatzumoto's own experience with learning Japanese and encourages others to do the same.

Khatzumoto was motivated to learn another language because he had been both curious about and interested in Japanese culture, and also because he had gradually become monolingual.

"I grew up trilingual but had effectively become monolingual by the time I was 21. That bugged the heck out of me," Khatzumoto said.

While Khatzumoto's decision to learn Japanese was not immediate, he felt that the language had a history that he could connect with.

"English, whatever its present economic cachet, has a history that doesn't make it ethically or emotionally neutral for me. I wanted access to a language I could feel whole in again," Khatzumoto said.

Khatzumoto's approach to learning a new language is simple: by immersing himself in anything and everything Japanese, it helped put him in the mindset of learning the language. According to his website, anyone can learn a language simply by having fun and doing the things that one enjoys, such as watching movies, playing games and reading comic books.

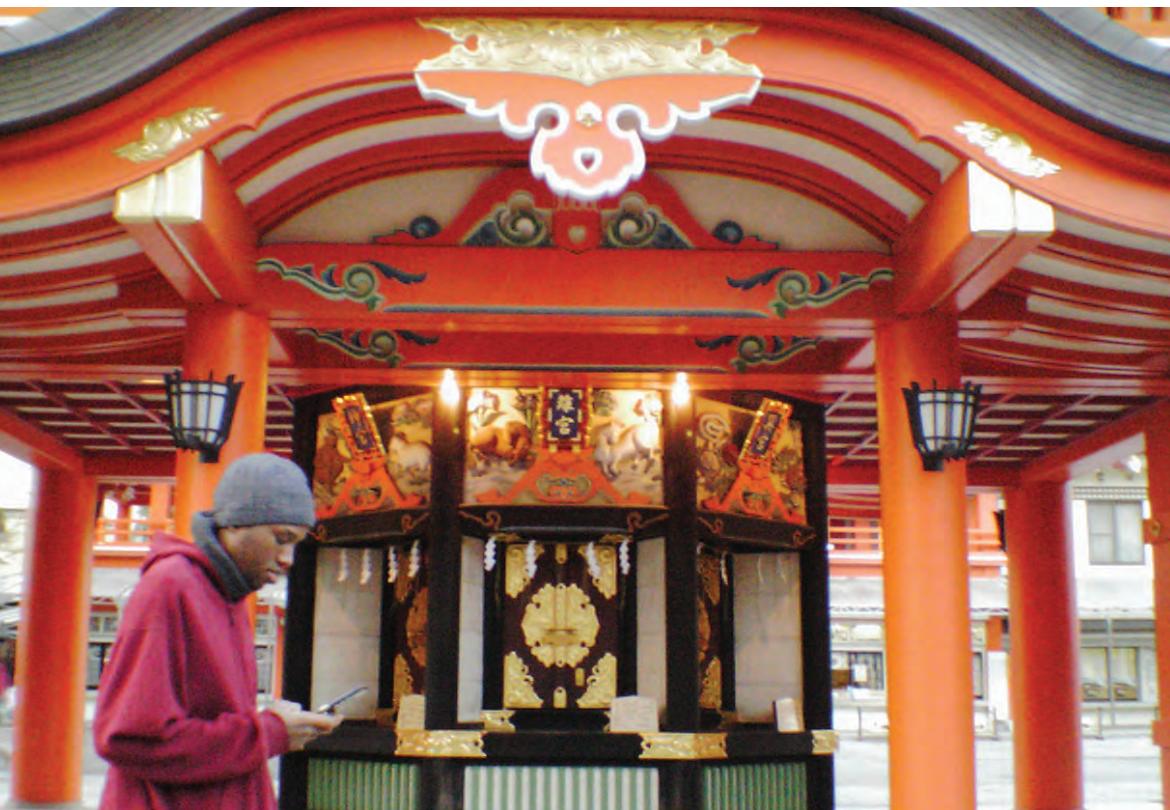
"When I look back (there were) not too many (difficulties) once I believed in myself and just started doing it," Khatzumoto said.

Khatzumoto learned Japanese in 18 months by doing just that: having fun. In June of 2004, at the age of 21, he started learning Japanese, and by September of 2005, he had learned enough to read technical material, conduct business correspondence, and conduct interviews in Japanese. He has been living in Japan for more than three years, working as a software engineer at a large company in Tokyo.

His experience has been mainly positive.

"I like almost everything. I don't particularly dislike anything about Japan, because it's a big and varied country. I find that it helps to go abroad occasionally in order to get a fresh perspective and appreciate what I have," Khatzumoto said.

Khatzumoto hopes that All Japanese All the Time will help others do the same.



Khatzumoto, creator of "All Japanese All the Time," became fluent in Japanese in less than two years.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KHATZUMOTO

"It was something useful and fun I could do for society. I wanted to destroy the fear and mystery and hero-worship surrounding this language and others like it. I wanted everyone to realize that there was nothing to be feared or worshipped," Khatzumoto said. "Languages are just habits."

While Khatzumoto is originally from Kenya, for the most part he associates himself with a Japanese identity.

"It's mostly out of habit; I was able to learn Japanese with relative speed and ease in part by convincing myself that I was Japanese and this language was my birth-right," Khatzumoto said.

the job 'done,' and identity will not let you go until that job is done," Khatzumoto said.

Khatzumoto's approach to learning a foreign language definitely influenced the amount of effort he put in.

"With foreign languages, we make these half-hearted attempts to learn them ... and we kid ourselves that we're (actually) learning," Khatzumoto said. "We act shocked when we find out that we actually suck and can't even order a McDonald's in the foreign country."

For many Asian Americans, learning their heritage language can be a difficult thing because being American dictates that they learn English first. As a result, learning or maintaining a second language no longer becomes a priority.

"Whenever (people) do get serious about (learning), they perhaps feel this sense of ownership and this can be a powerful driving force," Khatzumoto said. "Of course, at other times, the realization that they are, in fact, Americans, can tend to drive them the other way."

But Khatzumoto is living proof that developing a new ethnic identity as Japanese, while difficult, is not impossible. Because he saw himself as being Japanese, learning the language became imperative, something he wanted to master.

"With native languages we never let go and we never give up," Khatzumoto said. "It's going to take as long as it's going to take and we're going to be there every step of the way. And when we're 'done?' Well, there is no done, because we're just going to use the language for the rest of our lives, until our very last breath leaves our body."

- KHATZUMOTO

"With native languages we never let go and we never give up... because we're just going to use the language for the rest of our lives, until our very last breath leaves our body."

But being a non-native Japanese person living in Japan has its disadvantages.

"(Foreigners) can break unimportant social rules with impunity, talk to random people, make requests, and ask certain questions without fear of even being thought of as 'unhinged,'" Khatzumoto said. "(But) there are advantages to being, looking, and growing up Japanese that I will probably never have... I don't have childhood friends here, a neighborhood, or a history."

Yet for Khatzumoto, being able to identify with another culture was integral to learning a new language.

"That's how powerful identity is: identity gives us a role and we play it. Once you pick or accept an identity, the identity makes you do the things you need to do to get

THE HOT SPOTS FOR ASIAN CUISINE

By RAY LUO, SHIRLEY MAK, KAREN LEE, ALICE MONGKONGLITE and STEPANIE AGUILAR

Sick of Panda Express? Try some of these Asian joints!



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



g.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REVIEWERS

= deliciousness / 5
 = Asian-ness / 5
(authenticity)

e. Mama's Lu Dumpling House, Monterey Park

153 E Garvey Ave.
Monterey Park, CA
(626) 307-5700
<http://chowhound.chow.com/topics/636207>



Located next to the Monterey Park landmark that is a local restaurant favorite, this economical option is usually jam-packed every day of the week. Yet people come out satisfied, partly because the food portions are large for a reasonable price. Favorites such as potstickers, pork dumplings, chow fun and noodle soup are less than \$5 an order, while traditional dishes like pork chop, string beans, smoked fish and tofu skin with fish are as little as \$4. Their hot and sour soup comes with came trimmings such as tofu strips, fungi and pork. Nestled in the heart of San Gabriel Valley, it features a menu imported straight from China. -RL

a. Tofu Ya, Sawtelle

2021 Sawtelle Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025.
(310) 473-2627
<http://www.tofuyabbq.com>



A Korean restaurant located in a predominantly Japanese area may seem questionable to even the least picky of eaters, but one taste of Tofu Ya's warm and flavorful soon tofu soup will quell any doubts one might have. Located in Sawtelle, Tofu Ya boasts a friendly atmosphere with mouth-watering combinations that will give you a kimchi-laden bang for your buck. The side dishes alone are worth sitting down for (vegetarians will get a kick out of the zucchini in chili paste and the delicious fishcakes), and the soup comes with a raw egg that you crack and stir in yourself. For just \$14, you can get your choice of soup and an order of sizzling B.B.Q. pork ribs - and you don't even have to make your way to Koreatown. Because the restaurant is small, it makes for a more intimate eating experience, one that you'll definitely want to share with loved ones. -SM

c. Top Island International, Alhambra

740 East Valley Blvd.
Alhambra, CA 91801-5216
(626) 300-9898
www.yelp.com/biz/top-island-seafood-restaurant-alhambra



Located at a strip mall that also houses the Sunday Café, an Asian fusion place for hip youngsters, Top Island is near the top of restaurant row in Alhambra. You can get private rooms for formal occasions, and the service is great compared to other Chinese places. The shark's fin soup comes with more fin in it than we're accustomed to, and once you put in vinegar, the flavor is quite savory. While most of the seafood is delicious, the scallop deserves some special recognition. Perhaps the best part about their seafood is the way they cook the fish. We got a snapper with meat that came off the bone easily, laden with a special onion-blended sauce. The dishes range from \$7 to \$15. They also do dim sum in the mornings, and there's a \$1.39 special before 10 a.m. -RL

f. Gate of India, Santa Monica

115 Santa Monica Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA 90401
(310) 656-1664
<http://www.lataco.com/taco/gate-of-india-santa-monica>



On the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard, there's a petite-looking restaurant called Gate of India. There are several 6-foot gates posted up against the walls, decorated with engravings of elephants surrounded by detailed floral designs. Inside, my friend and I were greeted warmly by a waiter. The food was served in metal bowls with a small flame underneath them to keep them warm. Portions were generous, but the so-called homemade spices weren't spectacular. The tea is a bit expensive and the chicken too dry, but the restaurant's eye-catching decorations do provide a welcoming ambiance that makes everything taste just a tiny bit better. For high quality Indian food, however, it might be wise to look elsewhere. -SA

b. Daikokuya, Little Tokyo

327 E 1st Street.
Los Angeles, CA 90012.
(213) 626-1680
<http://www.daikoku-ten.com>



Daikokuya, a Japanese ramen restaurant located in the heart of Little Tokyo, boasts only one kind of ramen, yet customers keep coming back for more. Known for its specialty, the Daikoku Ramen, featuring mouth-watering pork broth and tender chashu pork (I recommend asking for kottori flavor, which is a rich flavor of soup extracted from pork back fat—yum!), Daikokuya is arguably the most popular ramen restaurant in Little Tokyo. The wait is long, even on a Tuesday evening, but the food is well worth the wait. It's an old-fashioned underground ramen joint, but service is consistently good. For those who aren't in the mood for hot soup, their Tsukemen, a variation of Daikoku Ramen, consists of cooled noodles with soup on the side as a dipping sauce. -KL

d. Sushi Mac, Sawtelle

8474 W 3rd St.
Los Angeles, CA 90048
(323) 653-3959
<http://sushimacula.com>



For students in L.A. without a car, finding good, cheap sushi can be a formidable task, especially if you're tired of frequenting the places in Westwood. Luckily, Sushi Mac, a small, hole-in-the-wall restaurant located on Sawtelle (easily reachable by taking the green Culver City 6 bus) satisfies sushi cravings with a wide selection and a convenient price. Every plate in the restaurant – whether it's unagi, sashimi, or a California roll – costs exactly \$3, and there's no limit to how much you can eat. The service is friendly, the food comes quickly, and most importantly, the sushi tastes good. For good, cheap eats, Sushi Mac is the place to go – you're just a short bus ride away. -SM

g. Santouka, Centinela

3760 S Centinela Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90066
(310) 391-1101
<http://www.santouka.co.jp>



Although its menu is simple, Santouka boasts one-of-a-kind ramen that will surely beckon you back for more. There are a total of four broth bases: salt, soy, miso and spicy miso. The salt base is, ironically, the least salty of the four. Definitely choose their special pork to go with your bowl of ramen – it's the perfect balance of lean and fat and melts in the mouth. Their broth isn't too oily and contains just the right variety of flavors. Great and filling with generous portions... who would have thought this comes from a place nestled inside a food court? Prices range from \$7 to 15, but they only accept cash. -AM

BEST ASIAN & ASIAN AMERICAN FILMS

By SHIRLEY MAK

Creating a top-five list for anything is always hard, but doing it under the category of "Best Asian Films of All Time" is especially difficult. To begin, there's the issue of what constitutes "Asian Films" in the first place. Do the Asian films that have achieved popularity in the U.S. automatically hold more weight because they have a greater international following and arguably a bigger impact? Perhaps, but some of the most memorable films in Asian film history may not be Oscar-winning, or even have a director who is well-recognized overseas.

In addition, screening films with subtitles is always problematic, although inevitable, when it comes to judging the quality of foreign films – with Hong Kong films especially, much of the films' subtlety and grace is lost in laughably bad translations. Then there is the limitation of genre films – some beautiful films may be overlooked simply because they don't fit into a specific category and therefore never make it out of the country.

The following list is by no means comprehensive, nor is it meant to reflect the accomplishments of Asian cinema over the last five or so decades. For this task, a top-100 list would be inadequate, never mind a top-five. Rather, this list is meant to name a couple of Asian films that have been recognized, internationally as well as locally, as some of the best of their time.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEIJING FILM STUDIO

Farewell My Concubine

dir. Chen Kaige, 1993

This ambitious historical picture follows the intriguing story of two opera singers who are torn apart by the arrival of the Cultural Revolution and the woman who comes between them (played seductively, as always, by Gong Li). *Farewell My Concubine* is one of the honorary films made during the Fifth Generation movement that first brought Chinese cinema international acclaim. Not only is it the only Chinese film to win the Palme d'Or prize at Cannes, but Leslie Cheung's heart-wrenching performance as a gay opium addict is enough reason to give the film a viewing.

Oldboy

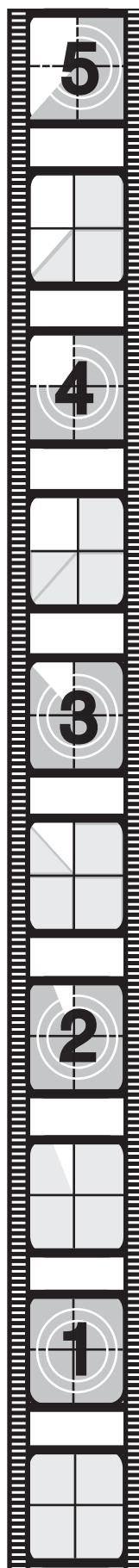
dir. Chan-wook Park, 2003

Park has fashioned a film that will stay with the viewer long after the credits have rolled and the psychopathic mastermind Woo-jeo Yin (played by a sinister and smug Ji-Tae Yu) has had his final say. The second installment of Park's Vengeance trilogy, *Oldboy* centers on the desperate journey of Oh Dae-su (played brilliantly by Choi Min-sik), a man who is stripped of his family and freedom and imprisoned in a room for 15 years without explanation. When he finally escapes, the fireworks begin. While the images on the screen are no doubt disturbing, the graphic violence and sexual perversion underline a human revelation far more haunting than anything that accompanies it.

Infernal Affairs

dir. Wai-Keung Lau and Alan Mak, 2002

So popular that it spawned a North American remake by the great Martin Scorsese, *Infernal Affairs* was the original brainchild that inspired *The Departed*. Part of a trilogy, it tells the story of good cop, bad cop, sending its two protagonists, as well as the audience, on a frenzied maze run of betrayal and doubt. Taking place in Hong Kong's claustrophobic alleyways, this cat-and-mouse crime-thriller boasts stellar performances by Hong Kong superstars Andy Lau and Tong Leung Chiu Wai. Although the crime genre is not new for Hong Kong films, *Infernal Affairs* presents new twists at every turn, until we are no longer sure who the hero is and who is the villain.

***Princess Mononoke***

dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1997

It's a little cliché to have Miyazaki on a top-five list for anything movie-related, but a film this good can't be overlooked. Japan's favorite anime director tells a morality tale about humanity versus the environment that isn't too preachy or overdone, nor is it a watered-down cartoon for children. On the contrary, everything in this film is delivered with a subtle beauty that leaves its viewers in awe, from the carefully crafted forest spirits to Joe Hisaishi's thoroughly memorable soundtrack. Miyazaki isn't just original; he invents worlds that rival the stuff of dreams. The settings are stunning, with original creatures (human, animal, and something in-between) and a forest cool enough to keep even the most jaded viewers engaged. Even the most minor of characters have rich back stories, and the epic battle scene at the end is something to see again and again.

Seven Samurai

dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1954

Arguably Akira Kurosawa's most famous film, *Seven Samurai* was made in the 1950s, now known as the golden age in Japanese cinema history. Although a black and white movie about a group of villagers being protected by samurai against ravaging bandits may not appeal to modern audiences today, the importance of *Seven Samurai*'s impact on film should not be underestimated. It is often seen as the first action movie ever made, initiating many cinematic traditions that are still seen in similar films today (for one, take a look at the grand opening scene where the bandits are gathered atop the hill, ready to plunder the village below). The starkness of the black and white images contrast with the rich storytelling techniques that Kurosawa employs. More than 50 years later, *Seven Samurai* still remains a classic.

VS.

By RAY LUO

While it's impossible to come up with a list of the five greatest Asian films, coming up with such a list for Asian-American films--in particular, films that have, interwoven within them, bits and pieces of Asian-American cultural heritage--is a considerably easier task. By no means is it trivial, however. Films like Mira Nair's *The Namesake*, Jessica Yu's *Ping Pong Playa*, and Wayne Wang's *Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart*, all get at what it means to be Asian and American, and they fall just short in this list only because of the numbers game.

What have I evaluated in formulating this list? I've considered impact. What did subsequent filmmakers and audiences take away from this film? What themes or techniques did it introduce that were incorporated by future filmmakers in their own work? I've considered longevity. Is it a film that people watch over and over again? Does it speak to audiences today as well as it did when it came out? I've considered artistic value. Does it have a coherent vision? Does it defy typical Hollywood conventions? I've considered cultural influence. Does it serve to represent our uniquely Asian American heritage? What comes to mind when we say "Asian American film?"

Joy Luck Club

dir. Wayne Wang, 1993

The story and characters are unforgettable, such as chess-playing prodigy Waverly Jong (Tamlyn Tomita) who openly upsets her protective mother and June Woo returns to China to see the lost daughters of her dead mother Suyuan. This film is full of material in direct conversation with our "Asian-American-ness," but one criticism may be that it's based on a book that tells most of the story. However, Wayne Wang's film manages to be one of the first films to address Asian American issues, and was certainly the first big-budget Hollywood vehicle to take Asian American culture seriously on the screen.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLYWOOD PICTURES

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

dir. Ang Lee, 2000

At the time, it was one of the most popular and influential martial arts films to hit the U.S. market, and it showed us why Chow Yun-Fat is such a star and Zhang Ziyi a rising gem. While the story gets carried away at times, the sentimental plot devices are balanced by moments of artistic greatness, such as the fight between Master Li Mu Bai and Jen Yu on top of the bamboo forest. Perhaps the most commercially successful film on this list, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* won four Academy awards out of ten nominations, and was the film that brought the Chinese martial arts genre firmly into American consciousness.

M. Butterfly

dir. David Cronenberg, 1993

The only film on this list directed by a non-Asian American director, this adaptation of a David Henry Hwang play addresses a theme frequently overlooked in American movies, and in particular, in Asian American cinema: alternative sexuality. While Jeremy Irons gives a strong performance as a French diplomat in love with an opera singer, Rene Gallimard, it is John Lone who gives a brilliant performance here. Lone defies the convention of portraying Asian men as the Charlie Chan type, i.e. as a service to society. He plays a conflicted transvestite with a questionable sexuality and complicated emotions, a representation much closer to the truth of what Asian Americans are. David Cronenberg is known for taking major risks with his films, and this one is no exception, featuring deceptive imagery, dramatic sexuality, and stark revelations, such as when Gallimard unmasks his 20-year lover with "You are nothing like my Butterfly." The reply: "Are you sure?"

A Great Wall

dir. Peter Wang, 1986

The only undoubtedly comedic film on this list is the first great American film shot entirely in mainland China. The story cannot be any closer to what Asian Americans were going through in the '80s and '90s. Leo Fang, a computer programmer, goes home to China for the first time in 30 years to visit his relatives after quitting his job due to what he perceives as racial problems. That's the story. That's it. But it's the little things throughout the film that hits the emotional chords, and tells us why the divide between East and West is such a Great Wall. Wang's film is not a Hollywood film, many of which don't prioritize the portrayal of an Asian-American struggle to integrate into its native society. Wang wrote the screenplay and played the main lead, an almost Orson Wellesian effort for a Chinese-American filmmaker.

Chan is Missing

dir. Wayne Wang, 1982

Perhaps an even more auteur-like effort is Wayne Wang's first feature film, which eerily parallels Orson Welles' classic *Citizen Kane*. Chinatown taxi driver Jo is searching for an ex-big-shot in China who was involved in a flag-waving incident and disappeared with \$4000. The Chan that he is searching for is (he thinks) a fresh-off-the-boat hardship-survivor from China who came to America to provide for his children. The mix of cultures is ingrained in this film, as the Virgin Mary stands in front of a Chinatown backdrop and Chinese pop plays over the American West landscape. Wang's film, more than any other on this list, shows us what it's like to live in a multi-cultural world, trying to juggle diverse heritages. Wang's first film is a tour de force feature touching on issues that Asian Americans continually grapple with and fail to understand. As Jo says, "What's not there seems to have just as much meaning as what is there." That, of course, is a Chinese saying.

FILM

WARLORD: *A tale of heroism and villainy*

By RAY LUO

There's a reason why Jet Li received \$15 million to appear in *Warlords*, Peter Chan and Wai Man Yip's newest film. For one thing, he plays one of the most conflicted individuals found in Asian cinema—General Pang Qingyun, who appears alternately to be both a rebel and a supporter of the Qing dynasty in China. For another, he successfully captures the persona of a character who is designed to be both hero and villain at the same time. *Warlords* is the study of a leader unable to exert himself amidst social and political pressures in a hypocritical society.

Li first appears in the film as the only survivor of a defeated Qing army, who is nursed back to health by Lian Sheng (Jinglei Xu), the wife of the leader of an army of bandits. Pang shows his valor while serving the bandits, and eventually forms an oath of blood and brotherhood with the leaders, Zhao Erhu (Andy Lau) and Zhang Wenxiang (Takeshi Kaneshiro). The brothers follow Pang to see his Qing empire superiors, who suggest that Pang prove their worth by taking the city of Suzhou away from the Taiping rebels. The year long siege of Suzhou ends when Zhao enters the city surreptitiously and accepts the rebel leader's surrender and suicide. Instead of freeing the rebel prisoners, as promised to Zhao, Pang orders the rebels to be executed in order to save provisions, causing a rift in his relationship with the brothers. The Qing army goes on to take Nanjing, and Pang is appointed governor by the Empress Dowager. Soon, jealousy arises in the Qing nobility, pressuring Pang to take action against Zhao.

The difficulty inherent in Li's role lies in the fact that his character is, for the most part, downright despica-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

ble. He has an affair with Lian, the wife of his own blood brother. He has members of his own army executed for attempted rape of rebel civilians in a mock attempt to restore order. Finally, he commits the ultimate betrayal when he has Zhao killed by hidden arrows. Given these circumstances, it is easy to label Pang as a one-dimensional character. Yet his immorality becomes more complex given Li's acting, which exudes self denial and self importance. Li proves that he is more than just a master of martial arts by giving an underrated portrayal of a conflicted individual. His effectiveness as both villain and hero comes in part from his ruthlessness. He behaves as a realist in an empire filled with hypocritical officials, but in the end, his practical abilities are not able to help him deal with death.

In Asia, Andy Lau is regarded as a bigger star than Jet Li. He usually plays the "good guy" roles, and his character Zhao Erhu is no exception. The scene where he duels the rebel leader in Suzhou before seeing the rebel fall onto his own sword is indicative of his unaltered idealist vision throughout this film. It's an easier role to play than Li's, but part of the effectiveness of *Warlords* comes from portraying the figures around Pang as one-dimensional, thereby highlighting Pang's unique conscience.

Japanese and Taiwan-based actor Takeshi Kaneshiro,

who played the genius tactician Zhuge Liang in the *Red Cliff* films, reprises a similar role in *Warlord* as Zhang Wenxiang. His most powerful scene occurs when he kills Lian Sheng for the sake of saving the relationship between Pang and Zhao. Zhang gets a taste of the conflict of interest that besets Pang when, after killing Lian, he realizes that Pang had already issued the order to have Zhao killed, making the killing obsolete. Rendered powerless after the climactic scene, Zhang learns that the workings of the world rules over the ambitions of men, leaving its inhabitants powerless in its grasp.

Some of the best moments in *Warlords* involve the historical battles and venues it depicts. The battle for Suzhou features strong characterizations of trench warfare, including a scene where Pang is chasing after Lian during her visit. The Nanjing scenes are a tour-de-force sequence involving a quick progression of siege to warfare to division of spoils. Pang's promotion by the Empress Dowager takes place at the enormous Forbidden City, and is visually stunning. The hints of decadence and eventual decline can be seen in the Dowager's manner of speaking, the posture of the out-of-touch advisors, as well as the manner of the trusting General Pang, who ends up ascending the governing throne on a rainy day.

The claustrophobia present in *Warlords* mimics the inevitability conveyed by the film's focus on a general who ends up being used by the court nobility, turning an idealist into a realist consumed by the world around him.

Warlords will be released in the U.S. in April 2010.

LITERATURE

THE QUINTESSENTIAL LIST

Everything you need for your Asian American literature crash course

By SHIRLEY MAK

Chang-Rae Lee | NATIVE SPEAKER

A tale of cultural alienation, *Native Speaker* follows Henry Park, a Korean American spy who's never quite sure what side he's on, both in terms of his ethnic identity and his professional versus private ambitions. While *Native Speaker* is primarily a spy novel, focusing on Park's experience trailing a prominent Korean American politician, the undercurrent of the story deals closely with Asian American identity, namely how to reconcile growing up in a foreign country that you want desperately to feel at home in.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COFFEEHOUSE PRESS

Gene Luen Yang | AMERICAN BORN CHINESE

A finalist for the National Book Award in 2006, *American Born Chinese* is a tour de force graphic novel that intertwines three stories about the age old paradox of assimilation into the U.S. while staying true to one's roots. The novel consists of three tales – the first following the adventures of the famous Chinese folk hero, the Monkey King, the second of a second generation Chinese immigrant and the third of a boy named Danny, who represents the ultimate Chinese stereotype.

Maxine Hong Kingston | THE WOMAN WARRIOR

Best described as creative non-fiction, *The Woman Warrior* is Kingston's own autobiography blended with tidbits of different Chinese folktales. The stories focus on five women—Kingston's long-dead aunt, "No-Name Woman"; a mythical female warrior, Fa Mu Lan; Kingston's mother, Brave Orchid; Kingston's aunt, Moon Orchid and finally Kingston herself—told in five chapters. Taught in universities across the U.S. and named one of Time's top non-fiction books of the 1970s, *The Woman Warrior* captures an authentic Chinese American experience that will still be relevant for years to come.

Karen Yamashita | TROPIC OF ORANGE

Fans of magical realism will appreciate Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*, a story centered on the poor and often wacky characters of urban Los Angeles. Filled with references to the father of magical realism himself, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Tropic of Orange* unconventionally intertwines the lives of several different characters – a single mom raising her young son in the humidity of Mexico, her offbeat landlord Gabriel, a reporter trying to fight social injustice, Emi, an outspoken Japanese American and the omnipresent Archangel, who carries a mysterious suitcase that, like Yamashita's novel, is filled with fascinating surprises.

Jhumpa Lahiri | INTERPRETER OF MALADIES

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 2009, Lahiri's debut collection of short stories, chronicling the lives of different generations of both Indians and Indian Americans, is the very definition of poignant. While each story has its individual moments of breathtaking clarity, Lahiri's talent for depicting genuine loss and emotional disconnect – whether it concerns a significant other, a marriage or a country – is particularly apparent in "A Temporary Matter," a story about a deteriorating relationship that reaches its climax in the midst of a blackout, and "Mrs. Sen's," whose protagonist's pangs of homesickness for her native country are far too memorable, a vivid representation of the Asian American diaspora.

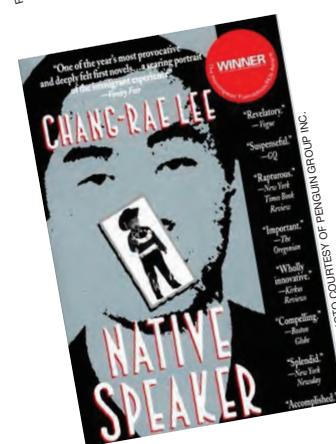


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GLOBAL AFFAIRS ABROAD IN ASIA

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CHINA

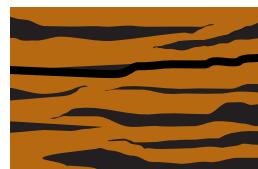
China has unearthed the fossil of a two-legged carnivorous dinosaur that lived 160 million years ago and which researchers have identified as the earliest known member of a long lineage that includes birds. Named *Haplocheirus sollers*, the species were known predators that belong to the family of *Alvarezsauridae*--a bizarre group of bird-like dinosaurs.

INDIA

India plans to base six surface-to-air Akash missile squadrons in the North-East to counter the threat posed by Chinese fighters, helicopters and drones in the region. Although India does not consider itself a "war-mongering country" by any means, the long-pending border dispute with China is still trying to be resolved in talks between New Delhi and Beijing. China is upgrading as many as 14 airfields in Tibet, of which at least half are now fully operational.

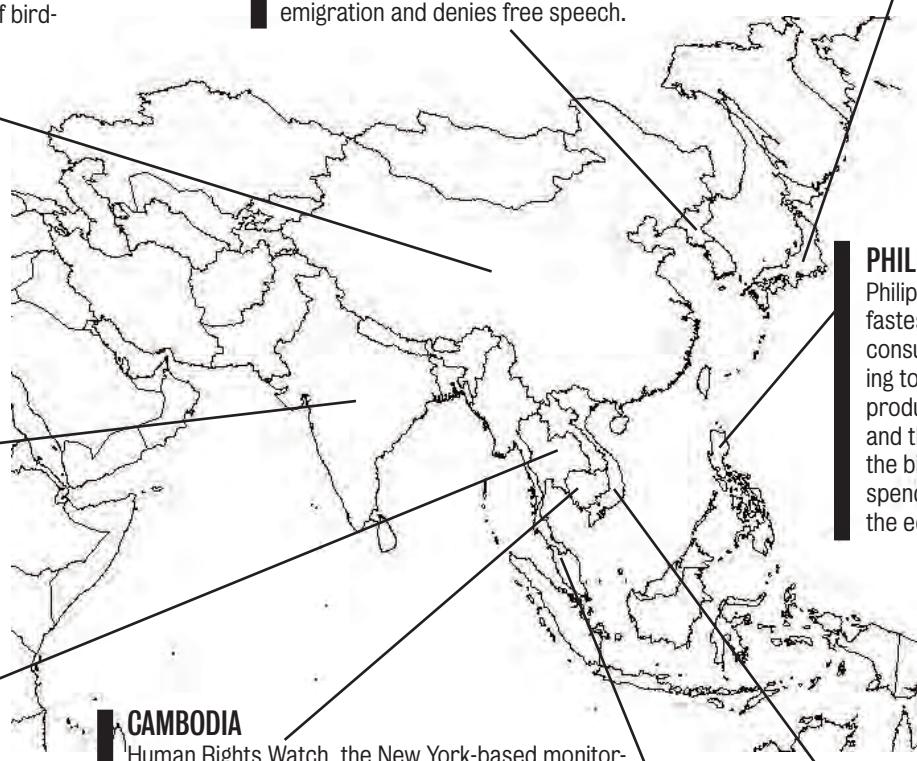
THAILAND

Last winter, despite opposition from the United Nations, the U.S. government and international human rights groups, more than 4,000 remaining Hmong were forcibly repatriated from Thailand to communist Laos. The U.S. is partly responsible, after recruiting thousands of Laotian natives to fight communism during the Secret War and then abandoning them in 1975 after they could no longer afford the war. There are approximately 5,000 to 8,000 Hmong who are reportedly still hiding in the jungles of Laos and have been there ever since 1975.



NORTH KOREA

North Korea has recently increased punishments and toughened laws for those trying to leave the state, according to reports made by the U.S., the United Nations and the testimonies of defectors. Its prisons currently houses 100,000 to 200,000 North Koreans, many of which are subject to forced labor, torture and abuse. Besides perpetrating public executions, random killings and kidnappings, the government controls all media outlets, prohibits emigration and denies free speech.



CAMBODIA

Human Rights Watch, the New York-based monitoring group, is concerned with the abuse that occurs in drug treatment centers in Cambodia, many of which house drug users involuntarily. In a report last month, Human Rights Watch described in detail abuses in 11 government-run centers that included electric shocks, beatings, rape, forced labor and forced donations of blood. Government figures for drug use in Cambodia are unreliable and range from about 6,000 to 20,000.

INDONESIA

Environmental activists are appalled by Indonesia's tiger adopting proposal, which offers rare Sumatran tigers (of which there are only around 400 left in the country) up for adoption by wealthy Indonesian citizens. Tiger "renters" must allow visits at three-month intervals by a team of vets, animal welfare officers and ministerial staff, although the tigers and any cubs they produce will remain properties of the state.

THE WHITE SKIN PHENOMENON

"Local companies in Asia were among the first to tap into the whitening segment of the skin care market in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But multinational companies quickly got on the bandwagon when they saw the dizzying double-digit sales growth enjoyed by the companies that went ahead. "

-Tina Arceo-Dumlao, "A Whiter Shade of Pale: Skin Whitening Products in Asia"

How many women in Asia use skin-whitening products?
Top four nations which use the most products to whiten their skin pigments:

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JAPAN

The traditionally feminine art of flower arranging, or *ikebana*, is attracting more and more Japanese men, who find the activity soothing and a way to reduce stress from the workplace. Japan's infamous work ethic has ties to an increased risk in depression and one of the highest suicide rates in the world. About 15 million male enthusiasts are flocking to *ikebana*, or the "way of the flowers," for its therapeutic effects.



PHILIPPINES

Philippine economic growth accelerated to the fastest pace in a year in the fourth quarter as consumers and the government spent more, adding to signs of a regional recovery. Gross domestic product increased 1.8 percent from a year earlier, and the benchmark stock index rose 1.4 percent, the biggest advance since Dec. 1. Consumer spending, which accounts for about 70 percent of the economy, rose 5.1 percent last quarter.

Vietnam

According to the first-ever survey on incomes in Saigon, workers' minimum and maximum wages differ by a factor of almost seven. Government statistics show that some 80,000 people in Saigon live under the poverty line, which is set at \$650. Vinh Nguyen, a senior researcher at the Saigon Institute for Development Studies, said that urbanization has forced the poor to the outskirts and less developed areas.

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QUICK 'N EASY RECIPES FOR THE SOUL

CHICKEN & MUSHROOM SOUP

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:
4 oz. raw chicken breast
2 oz. mushrooms
3 oz. canned bamboo shoots
3 3/4 cups of chicken stock
Pinch of salt

1. Cut the chicken into small haricot bean-sized pieces.
2. Slice the mushrooms and the bamboo shoots. Keep all three separate.
3. Bring the stock to the boil.
4. Drop the chicken into the stock and cook for 4 minutes.
5. Add mushrooms and cook for 1/2 minute, then add bamboo shoots and cook together for a further 1/2 minute.
6. Add seasonings and serve.

Labor Summer Internship Program

Criteria: UC graduate and undergraduate students
Deadline: March 1, 9 a.m.
Contact: 510.643.7048 / zenaida@berkeley.edu / <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/laborsummer/index.shtml>

2010 AAJA Convention News Project

Criteria: Applicants must be enrolled as a full-time college student or recent graduate with a serious interest in pursuing journalism as a career. Must be available from August 2-8, 2010 to be in Los Angeles.
Deadline: March 15, 2010
Contact: http://www.ajja.org/programs/for_students/journalism_trainings/newsproject/

Fisher Communications Inc. Scholarships for Minorities

Criteria: Applicants must be sophomore level or above, enrolled in a broadcast oriented curriculum (radio, television, marketing, or broadcast technology) and a full-time college student of color
Minimum 2.5 GPA
Deadline: April 30, 2010
Contact: <http://www.fsci.com/scholarship.html>

Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) Internships

Criteria: Applicants should be high school or undergraduate students who possess strong written and oral communication skills. Bilingual skills in an Asian language preferred, but not required.
Deadline: Rolling
Contact: lynne.chiao@dc.gov / 202.727.3120

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GRILLED RICE BALLS YAKI ONIGIRI

Prep time: 6 minutes
Cooking time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:
1 cup of cooked Japanese rice

Soy Sauce Mix:
2 teaspoon soy sauce
2 teaspoon mirin
2 teaspoon oil
1 teaspoon roasted sesame seeds

- To prepare the Soy Sauce Mixture, combine soy sauce, mirin, oil and sesame seeds in a small bowl and set aside.
- Wet your hands to prevent the rice from sticking to them. Shape the rice into 4 equal balls. Press gently down on each to flatten slightly, and place onto a lightly greased baking tray.
- Pre-heat a barbecue grill or grill pan over high heat, brush the top of each rice ball with the Soy Mixture taking care not to wet the rice too much or it will fall apart.
- Place each rice ball sauce side down on the grill, cooking until golden brown and lightly toasted. Brush other side with Soy Mixture just before turning over to cook. Serve immediately with soy sauce as a dipping sauce, if desired.

CALENDAR



Date	What	Details
FEB. 23	Killing the Buddha <i>Glorya Kaufman Hall Phoenix Conference Room 160 Free and open to the public</i>	Part of the Chew On This! Noontime lecture series; artistic presentation by Michael Sakamoto, and other speakers.
FEB. 25	Domestic Violence Against Women in Cambodia <i>10383 Bunche Hall Free and open to the public</i>	Presentation by Dr. Sothy Engto discuss the problems of domestic violence amongst Cambodian women
FEB. 27 9 am - 12:30 pm	Law School Admissions for People of Color <i>UCLA</i>	Overview of law admissions process with personal statement workshop; RSVP required: http://forpeopleofcolor.org/events.html
FEB. 27 10 am-10 pm FEB. 28 12 pm - 4 pm	Nite N' Day Festival <i>Chinatown Central Plaza</i>	Performances such as taiko, lion dance, and soul bands will entertain the public, along with food and game booths.
FEB. 28 12 pm - 5 pm	Art, Activism, Access: 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA <i>Fowler Museum Free and open to the public</i>	UCLA Ethnic Studies Center showcases decades of campus activism, campaigns, and demonstrations through art, film, and photography.
MAR. 2 & 3rd 7 pm - 10 pm	ORL & LCC Theatre Co.: Inglorious Coyotes <i>Northwest Auditorium Free and open to the public</i>	The show will feature three different original skits written and produced by LCC members, packed with elements of comedy, drama, and improv.
MAR. 4 6 pm - 7 pm	Fowler Out Loud: An Evening of Taiko <i>Fowler Museum Free and open to the public</i>	Kyodo Taiko and Yukai Taiko come together and put on a performance, blending modern and traditional Japanese drumming.
MAR. 4 7:30 pm	Screening of "Mother" <i>James Bridges Theater at UCLA Melnitz 1409 Free and open to the public</i>	Bong Joon-ho's ("The Host") latest award-winning thriller featuring a mother who must prove the innocence of her mentally handicapped son
MAR. 6 7 pm	Kollaboration 2010 <i>Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles \$15</i>	Entertaining and talented stars of Asian Pacific Island heritage come together to compete and perform.
MAR. 14 1 pm - 4 pm	Kids in the Courtyard: Little Boxes, None the Same <i>Fowler Museum Free and open to the public</i>	Inspired by Fowler in Focus: X-Voto—The Retablo-Inspired Art of David Mecalco; creature miniature worlds of boxes and tin materials
MAY 24 6:30 pm - 8 pm	On the Cusp Lecture Series <i>Perloff Hall, Room 1302 Free and open to the public</i>	Presented by the UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design; main speaker Sou Fujimoto of Sou Fujimoto Architecture

Leadership in Action Internship 2010 Summer Internship

Criteria: API undergraduates
Deadline: March 10
Contact: 485.1422 ext. 4102 / rmacaranas@leap.org

Tokyopop Inc. Internship

Criteria: Must be an undergraduate student at a university that offers course credit for internships. Knowledge of Japanese language is desired, but not mandatory. Knowledge of American and Japanese/Asian pop culture and entertainment desired.
Deadline: March 29, 2010
Contact: Send resume and cover letter to internships (at) tokyopop.com
The subject line should say "Editorial Internship – [your name]"

Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership Scholarships

Criteria: Demonstrated commitment to public service, including service to the Asian Pacific American community; GPA of 3.0 or higher
Deadline: March 14, 2010
Contact: scholarships@capal.org / <http://www.capal.org/ee/pages/index.php?/Programs/index>

Los Angeles Pacific Film Festival Internship

Criteria: Applicants must be an undergraduate at a 4-year university, CA community college or accredited culinary arts/trade school and in good academic standing.
Deadline: Rolling
Contact: shinae@vconline.org

THE SCHOLARSHIP + INTERNSHIP CORNER

BACKPAGE AROUND TOWN

REFUGEE NATION

On Monday, February 1st, over 300 UCLA students, staff, faculty and community members gathered together in Ackerman Grand Ballroom for a night of storytelling. The Laotian American Organization joined forces with artists Leilani Chan and Ova Saopeng to present Refugee Nation, a national theater project based on the oral histories of Laotian refugees and their descendants. Despite the performance being very "Lao-centric," the characters reverberated with audience members, many of whom came from refugee or immigrant communities and who deal with inter generational conflict. Audience members agreed that the event was a unique opportunity to learn more about the Laotian American experience, and many left the performance feeling "Lao'd and Proud."

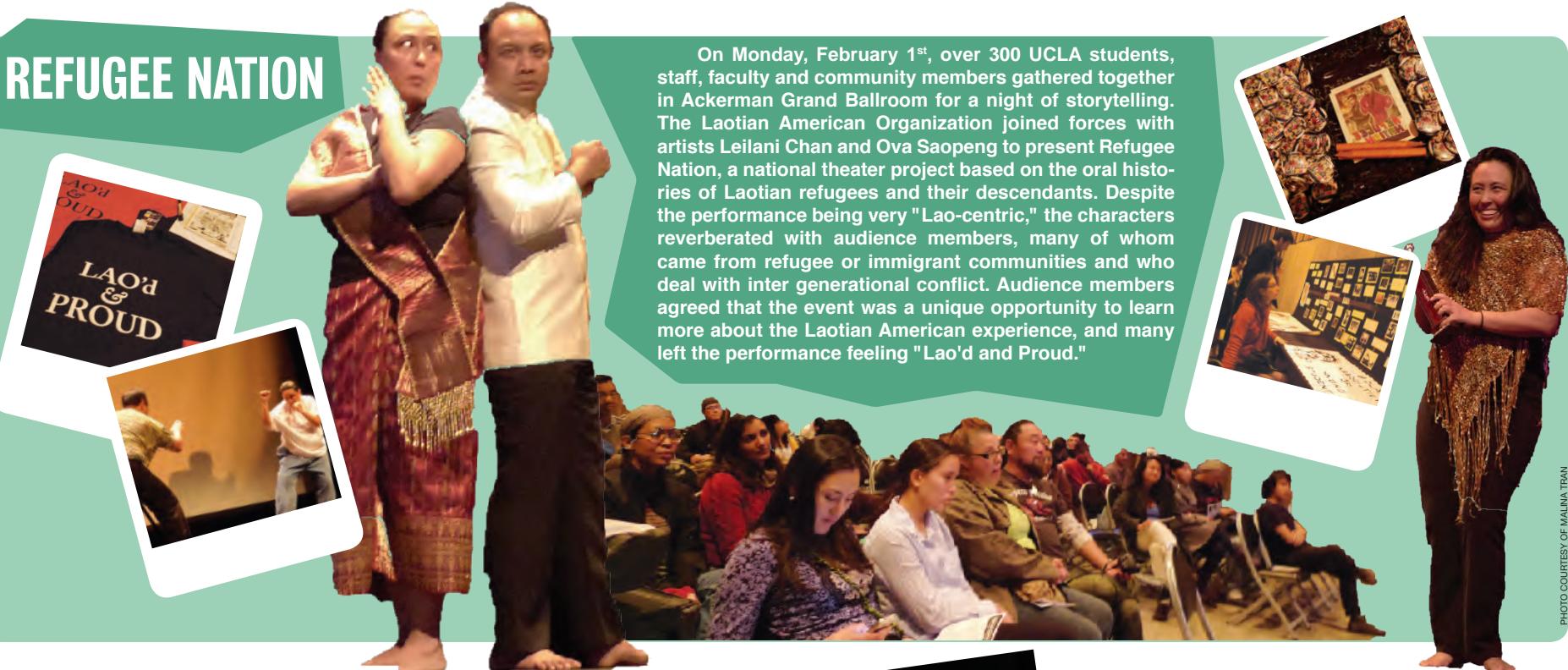


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VIETNAMESE CULTURE NIGHT

On January 18th, the Vietnamese Student Union (VSU) at UCLA presented the 30th Annual Vietnamese Culture Night "Labor of Love: Lòng Mẹ" in Royce Hall, attracting 1,800 students, faculty, family members, and members of the off-campus community. In conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, VCN donated proceeds to the Haiti relief efforts and held a community fair (with organizations such as Vietnamese Community Health, Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches, etc.). This year, VCN highlighted the Vietnamese American community through the lenses of current issues: education, employment, social pressure, and health in an economic crisis. The narrative journeys through the mother's life in Vietnam before the war, to her family's struggles in present-day America. "Lòng Mẹ"—literally translated as "mother's love"—represents the loving heart of a mother, as the show is a hopeful story of history, hardships, and household heroes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN LE



CELEBRATION OF APA WOMYN

Presented by Berkeley's Asian American Public Leaders (AAPL) and Asian Pacific American Student Development (APASD) on Sunday, February 7th, the Celebration of Asian Pacific American Womyn (CAPAW) event was one of empowerment, celebration, and artistic talent. Guests were able to view panels of art on display outside the ballroom and listened to activists, musicians, dancers, singers, rappers, poets share their work on stage. Among them were Jamaica, Joyce Kwon, Fuifuiupe Niumeitolu, Fifth Element, Phyier, Annie Fukushima, and Skim. True to the event's namesake, the diversity of performances along with the history, solidarity, and celebration together showcased the Asian Pacific American Woman as the complex and interesting mosaic that she truly is.

('Womyn' is the alternative spelling of 'women,' which derives from feminist concepts of dissipating patriarchal and misogynist structures in society.)

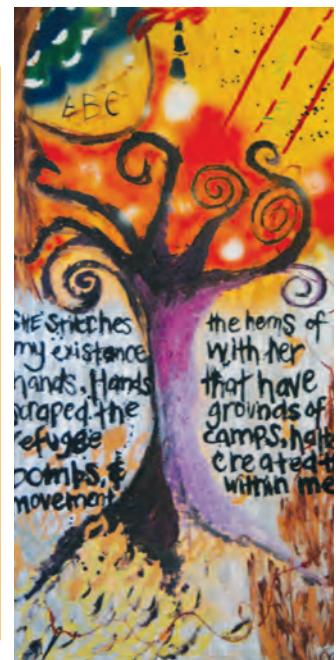


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