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EVERYTHING  
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BUT HER EYES.  
WHAT A  
CRUEL MALE-  
DOMINATED  
CULTURE!

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AAJ: Asian American Journal, is an outlet for Asian and Asian American voices to disseminate information in order to promote activism in the community and awareness of Asian American issues.

This issue is dedicated to Women's History Month, from the serious to the cultural to the comic.

I wasn't always what one would call a feminist. Or even a woman, for that matter. I spent most of my childhood play-wrestling with my older brother and emulating my mother, who was the main breadwinner and head of our household. From then until now, I haven't - and still don't - fit the typical archetype of a woman. I never was interested in Barbies and ball gowns. I never learned how to sit with my legs closed. I never felt connected to my fellow 'girlies,' and I developed hobbies like gaming and working out. But this semester I was thrown into a suite full of women who showed me what being a woman actually meant - it has nothing to do with whether I liked high heels or halter tops, but simply called for me to love and respect who I am. So often society tries to generalize and compartmentalize - a man has to be rugged and aloof, a woman has to be soft-spoken and dainty (and don't even get me started on society's perception on the gender queer). But we're past those Victorian days of restrained identity and enforced piety - women, be proud of your sexuality, your deviance from the norm. Take in stride everything you do, and prove those stereotypes wrong. You are beautiful, powerful, unique, and loved. You are you - do what you do.

- Melani Tiongson, VP

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Cover photo by Oliver Hao Li of a cartoon by Malcolm Evans. Models were May Hao Li and Yi Zhang. Special thanks to MSA, the Muslim Student Association. Taken at West Meadow Beach, Stony Brook, NY.

AAJ welcomes electronic submissions from SBU campus community. AAJ/AA E-Zine meet Fridays during the academic year in Union 071, SBU. Check websites for times or email for info: [aajsbu@gmail.com](mailto:aajsbu@gmail.com). AAJ is also online. Some articles, with more info and photos, are on AA E-Zine.

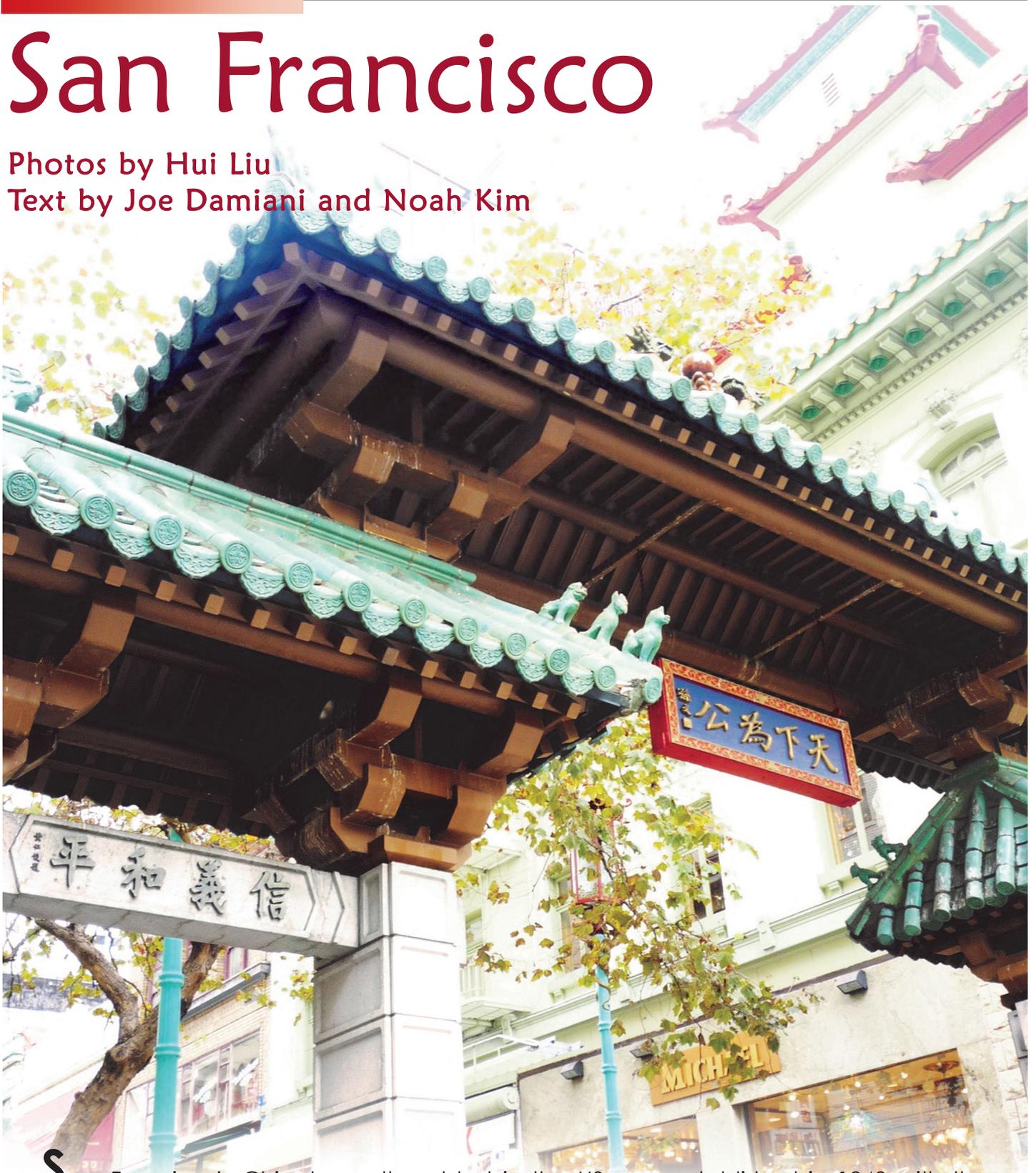
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# San Francisco

Photos by Hui Liu

Text by Joe Damiani and Noah Kim



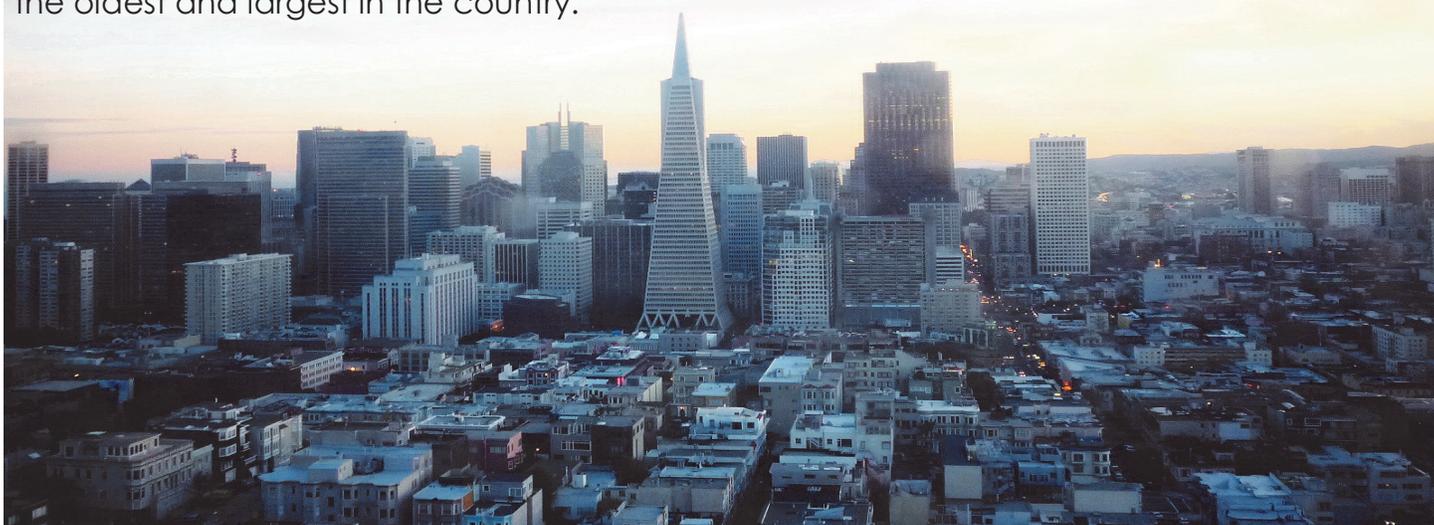
**S**an Francisco's Chinatown, the oldest in the US, was established in 1848 with the California gold rush. It is now home to the largest Chinese community in the country, including one out of every four voters, and in 2011 elected the first Chinese American mayor of a large metropolitan US city. Since Chinatown is in the heart of the historic section, some of the biggest tourist attractions in the city lie in it, including Portsmouth Square, the first public square in the city, is where the discovery of gold was announced. San Francisco's Chinatown is a pillar to Chinese immigrants worldwide.



San Francisco is known for its liberal, laid-back bohemian lifestyle. Haight-Ashbury was known as the center of the 1960's 'hippie' movement. The city is now the metro area of the famed Silicon Valley.



Three quarters of San Francisco was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire. The earthquake was estimated to have measured 7.9. Now the 13th most populous city in the US, the San Francisco Bay Area is home to museums, opera, ballet, a zoo, aquariums, gardens, sports teams, and universities. It is also home to some very eclectic architecture. The most iconic building on its skyline is the Transamerica Pyramid, designed by William Pereira in 1972. The Peace Pagoda, a gift from Osaka, Japan in 1968 and designed by Yoshiro Taniguchi, symbolizes Buddhist ideals, including unification of all races. Japantown is the oldest and largest in the country.





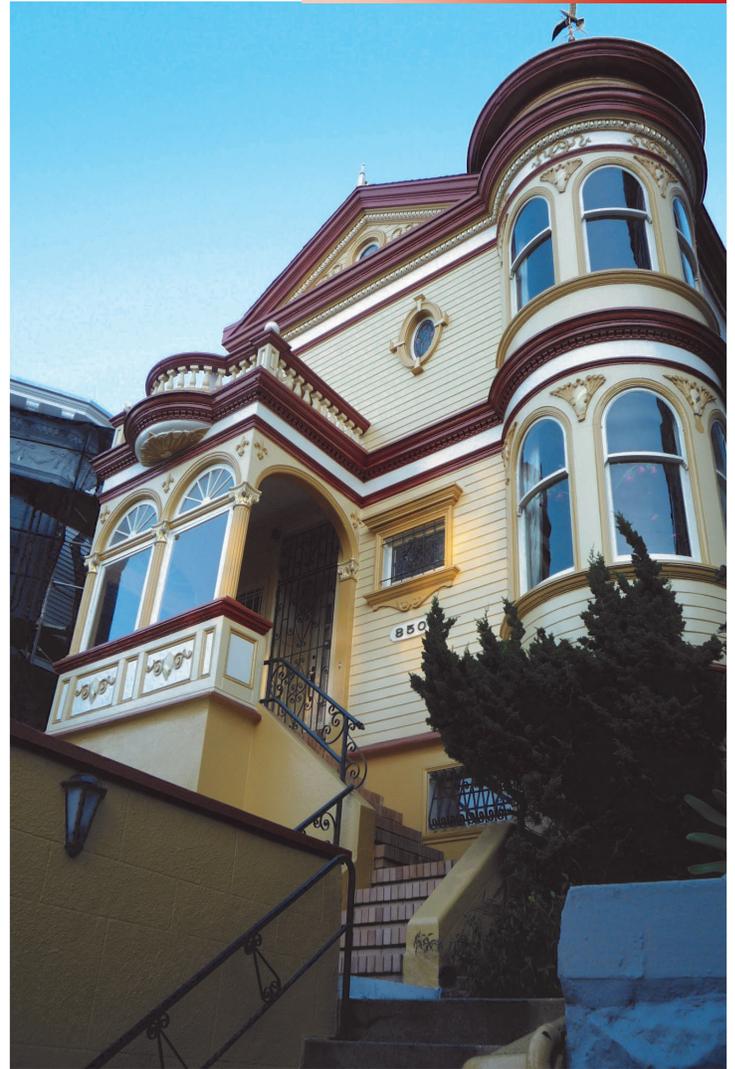
San Francisco streets can sometimes seem like a roller coaster ride. The hills give the residential areas a unique but sometimes dangerous layout. Lombard Street on Russian Hill, with eight hairpin turns, is considered the most winding street in the world.

As part of its municipal transportation system, MUNI, San Francisco uses cable cars and trolleys (also known as streetcars). They

are considered part of the "San Francisco experience". The trolleys give the city a very classic feel. They are one of the most popular tourist attractions, taking visitors down and up the hills to the water. Often visitors use them not to get to a specific destination but as a great way to get a good look at the city from top to bottom without the hassle of bumper to bumper traffic.



Another distinguishing feature of San Francisco's architecture is its spectacular abundance of Victorian and Edwardian style houses. Although the stairs can lead to tired legs, residents find the strain worth it to return to such a classic abode. Between 1849 and 1915, 48,000 of these homes were built, with most on the ones on the western and southern neighborhoods escaping the destruction of the 1906 earthquake. They are known as Painted Ladies for their bright colors. The Seven Sisters, shown below, are known to most American college students from the opening scene of one of their favorite teenage TV shows, Full House.





San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge



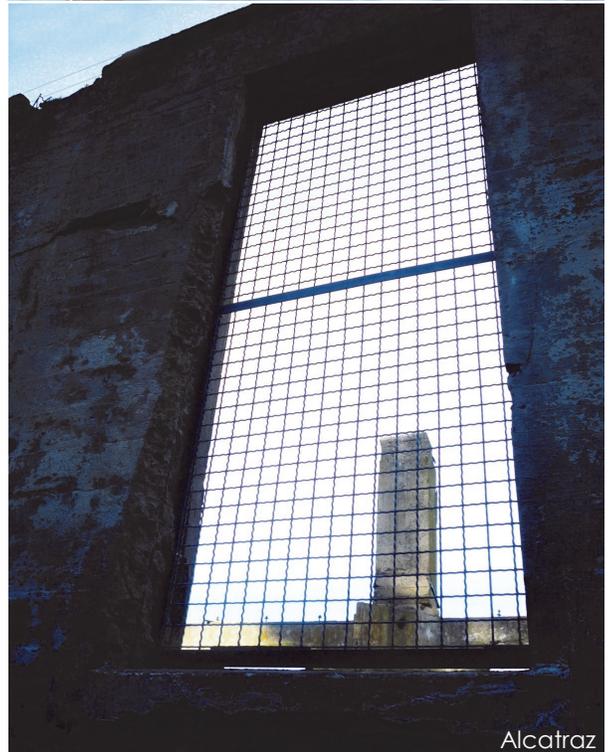
Fisherman's Wharf

Located on a peninsula and surrounded on three sides by water, the ocean, bay, beaches and bridges obviously play a large role in what the city is.

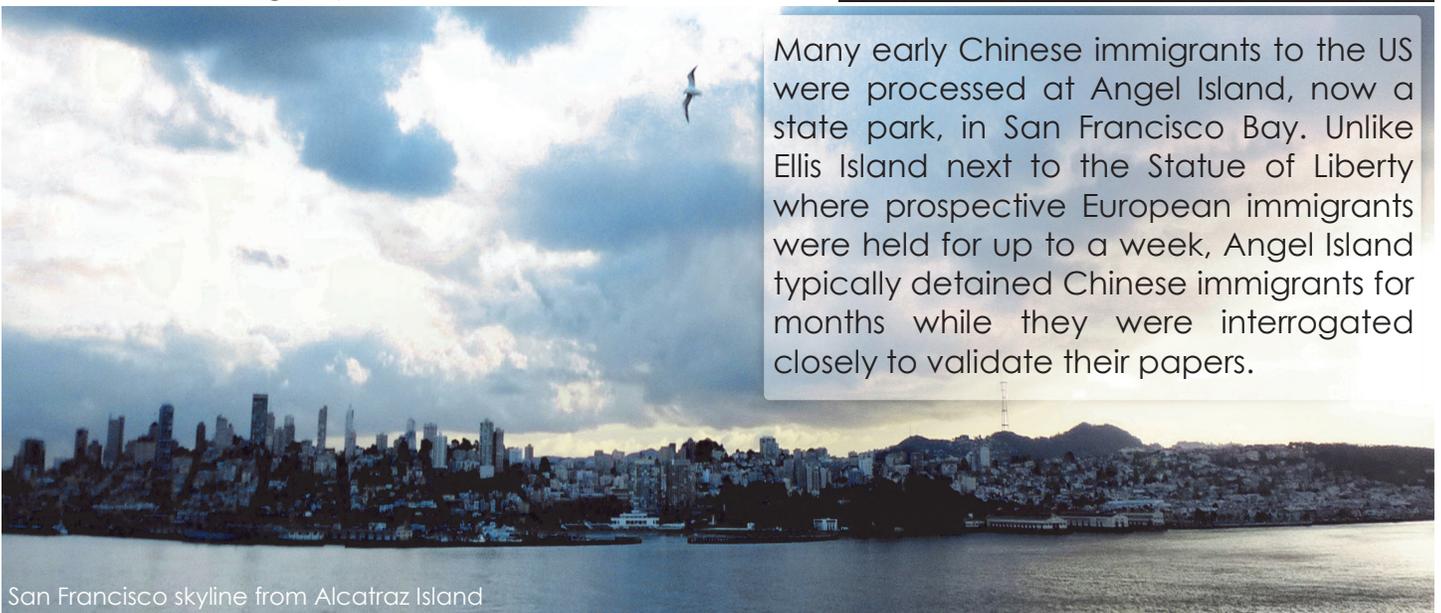
The San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge, opened in 1936, carries over 250,000 vehicles daily. For sports fans, the eastern span of the bridge is part of the NBA's Golden State Warriors logo as well.

Fisherman's Wharf is one of the biggest tourist attractions in all of the western US, filled with many popular seafood restaurants and stands serving clam chowder and crab dishes. It is also known to have one of the best views during the Fourth of July fireworks celebrations.

Alcatraz, known as "The Rock", is a small island that once contained a notorious prison. Only two prisoners ever escaped. Now a tourist attraction, it once had some notable inmates including Al Capone, a mobster brought down by Elliot Ness of the FBI's famous group "The Untouchables."



Alcatraz



San Francisco skyline from Alcatraz Island

Many early Chinese immigrants to the US were processed at Angel Island, now a state park, in San Francisco Bay. Unlike Ellis Island next to the Statue of Liberty where prospective European immigrants were held for up to a week, Angel Island typically detained Chinese immigrants for months while they were interrogated closely to validate their papers.

The Golden Gate Bridge, which connects the northern tip of the San Francisco peninsula to Marin County, is known as one of the modern Wonders of the World. Opened in 1937, its distinct red color gave it worldwide prominence. Considered one of the strongest bridges ever built, it has only closed three times due to weather.



# What Happens When Women Are Objectified and Commodified? Are You Part of the Problem? Definitely Yes!

The world's cultures historically and today are male dominant. They define women as less than equal in reality even if they hide behind words and laws claiming equality. But if in modern times women understand that yet still wear foot binding spikes and amplify and bare as much of their breasts as possible to look sexier for men, or conversely cover as much of their bodies as possible to hide their sexuality from men, then are women still allowing men to define who they are even while claiming it is their choice?

The political cartoon on this page, created by Malcolm Evans and recreated on the cover as a photo by Hao Li, showcases the cross-cultured nature of female oppression. Both women, though antipodal in their physical appearance, share similarities in their patronizing attitude towards the other. They claim to be free in comparison to their counterpart. The male influence on fashion between both cultures however, has become so innate that women do not even realize they are being manipulated.

Unfortunately the issue is not as simple as the clothes women wear. When women are defined by their bodies, the ripple effect permeates everything. On one end of the spectrum it is genital mutilation, sex trafficking where young girls are lured or kidnapped and held in virtual slavery for the sex trade, honor killings, acid burnings, bride burnings, bride buying, rape not



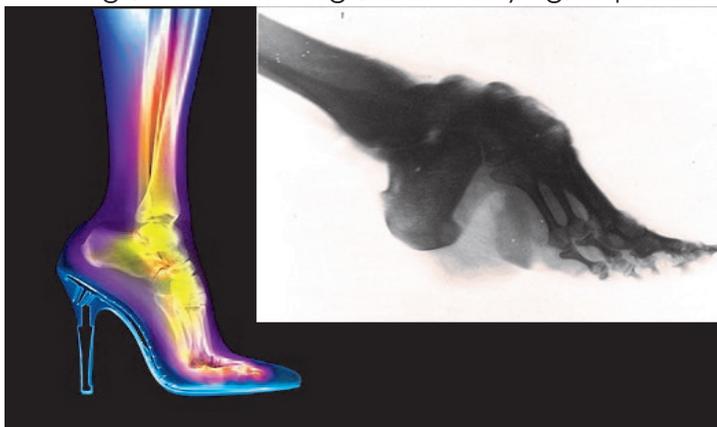
just as a symbol of dominance but a means of family, tribal or village humiliation as conquests of war, selective abortions to produce males - these are some of the tragic consequences in all societies when women are not equal to men.

While Americans tend to think of those worst case problems as existing in other countries, does prostitution know any national boundaries? Two million girls ages 5 to 15 are introduced into the commercial sex market each year, many of them in the US. The foreign sex trade in SE Asia caters to American and European men. That is just prostitution. In our interconnected world, are the other problems America's problems now too? We have always had rape and abuse. Now we have honor killings and genital mutilations.

While those problems are the worst symptoms of male dominated society - at the other end of the spectrum are the clothes we wear, less pay for equal work, the lack of women in high office or heading Fortune 100 companies, all of which allow the worst symptoms to exist because even in the educated classes, women are still objectified and commodified. American's spend over \$12 billion annually just on cosmetic surgery.

Here are a few more gruesome facts.

- At least 60 million girls who would otherwise be expected to be alive are 'missing' from various populations, mostly in Asia, as a result of sex-selective abortions, infanticide, or neglect.
- 130 million young girls have had forced female genital mutilation or cutting; 2 million are at risk annually for having this forced on them, generally between birth and puberty.
- The UN estimates 5000 females are murdered annually in honor killings. Like unreported rapes, anecdotal evidence suggests the number of victims is closer to 20,000 annually.



X-RAYS OF THE DAMAGE TO WOMEN'S BONES FROM BINDING OR HEELS.

This essay proved impossible to write for any one person in AAJ. Grappling with trying to explain someone else's religion, someone else's cultural beliefs... were we taking our own biases into account? Could we see ourselves honestly?

So rather than try to give answers, this is mostly facts, statistics, and questions. As Malcolm Evans said, "That cartoon has had more requests for permission to reproduce than any cartoon I have drawn... I am thrilled that it has struck a chord... I hope it generates debate." It is up to each reader to realize and say, "Oh, I didn't know." Oh, I do do that." "Oh, I could do that instead."

Our questions are, and your answers should be, predicated on a few simple ideas. First, that human rights are more important than cultural rights in any country. Human rights are universal, applying to both men and women equally.

Second, every person, regardless of gender, should work for change. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader said that if each of us spent just 10 minutes a day trying to solve society's problems, it would not be long before we lived in a just world. We can all afford 10 minutes.

Third, the smallest act has consequences. "Drop a pebble in the water and its ripples reach out far..." Changing the world only seems like a daunting task. As the ancient philosopher Lao Tzu said, the longest journey begins with a single step. Each day, take one step.

Here are a few questions to ponder. Some are philosophical, some simple, but even the simplest reflect on larger issues:

- Can we really say "we can't say anything or interfere in another countries customs no matter how horrific the problem"? Was it not 'foreigners', Manchurians and missionaries, who pushed for foot binding to end? Note: It is estimated that over one billion women had their feet bound.
- Mr., Mrs., Miss. If it is not important to know if a man is married by his title, why is it important to know about a woman?
- Why do US women only make 73 - 83 cents for each dollar a man makes for the same job?

**Where to start:** When SBU alumna Sawanee K. was choking and trying to flee from the falling debris of the Twin Towers, first she had to take off her heels to run. Did any man have to do that? If you are a woman, the next time you consider buying shoes that will give you foot binding like damage, buy shoes you don't need to take off.

Then there is the pornification of the media. If you subscribe to Sports Illustrated, send the



SAIRA LIAQAT, 26, WITH HER PORTRAIT. AT AGE 15 SHE WAS MARRIED TO A RELATIVE. HE ATTACKED HER WITH ACID AFTER DEMANDING SHE LIVE WITH HIM, ALTHOUGH THE FAMILIES HAD AGREED SHE WOULDN'T JOIN HIM UNTIL SHE FINISHED SCHOOL. SAIRA HAS UNDERGONE PLASTIC SURGERY 9 TIMES. PHOTO BY EMILIO MORENATTI, AP, 2008, LAHORE, PAKISTAN.

- Why do women get breast implants knowing they often cause serious health problems?
- Why are children given their father's last name? Why does it happen in countries where, legally, married woman must keep their maiden name?
- Why can't clothes we choose for comfort, ease and freedom of movement be what we wear all the time? Here's a simple example of a true story from an AAJ advisor. It's Mother's Day. A Mom, Dad, and their 4-year old pass a grassy hill with families rolling down it, laughing. Dad and daughter join the fun. Mom, in a dress, stockings and heels, can only watch. Who lost out?

swimsuit issue back with a note that you are a sports fan, not a body commodity fan. Primarily a male mag, if enough men didn't want their daughters objectified, Sports Illustrated would be about sports. If you don't subscribe, don't buy it.

Here are a few places where this article got its info. Check them out to get ideas: Amnesty International, the documentaries America The Beautiful and Miss Representation, and the UN.

# Honor Killings / Murders: The Facts and Stats

To better understand Wilson Jiang's opinion piece below, here is some basic information.

- The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates as many as 5,000 women and girls are killed yearly by one or more family members. Women's groups in the Mid East and Asia suspect the number of victims is four times greater.
- Prof. Tahira Shaid Khan, women's issues professor at Aga Khan University, notes that nothing in the Qur'an permits honor killings; blame for them is on attitudes, across classes, ethnic and religious groups, that view women as property with no rights as the motivation for honor killings and that this view results in violence against women who are seen as a commodity which can be exchanged, bought and sold.
- A study by CUNY professor Phyllis Chesler found that although Sikhs and Hindus sometimes do honor killings, globally they are mainly Muslim-on-Muslim crimes. Worldwide, 91% are committed by Muslims (84% in N. America; 96% in Europe).
- While in modernity this is primarily a Muslim crime, in ancient times it crossed all cultures and religions. Roman and Greek law permitted men to kill adulterous wives. Honor killing was 'merciful' for Roman women who had been raped.
- The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights says human rights supersede cultural rights.



Americans Noora Maleki, right, and the Said sisters, below, were killed by their fathers for acting like typical American teens.



You read that right, honor killing is prevalent here too due to immigration and cultural diffusion, although it happens in predominantly conservative immigrant families. A Canadian case this year that brought a guilty verdict was an Afghan father who, with the help of his second wife and their son, killed their three teenage daughters (youngest was only 13) as well as the husband's first (and secret) wife. According to the *Huffington Post*, the motive for this was because they had been dating, using the Internet, and not adhering to the family dress code. In the article, the writer describes how the family thought of themselves as innocent, that their children deserved to die. Fortunately wiretaps proved their guilt.

I personally despise the idea of honor killings; its purpose is killing your children because your sense of honor forbids your children from thinking for themselves. I mean, really, your daughter can't get a divorce because she didn't want to be forced into a marriage and is now with an abusive husband who beats her? So you kill her instead. Or even better, getting killed by your family because you got raped and your helplessness dishonored them. And while I do understand that families who commit these murders are following their cultural traditions, something all immigrants try to do, human rights tops cultural rights and honor killings is not something we want brought into this country.

Unfortunately, this isn't such an easy tradition to abolish as it's not a new phenomena but has been entrenched and rooted inside some cultures for centuries. The most viable solution would be to spread awareness, to make sure immigrants understand it is illegal here, and to empower the oppressed and help them get out of unsafe situations into protection. It'll take time and effort to get rid of this abominable tradition but if it were easy, then it wouldn't be a problem.

## Honor Killings

by Wilson Jiang

First of all, what is honor killing? Honor killing is the murder of a family member, generally female, because of the belief that they have dishonored you, the family or community. Honor killings are generally done by more conservative Hindu, Sikh or Muslim families. They are rarely crimes of passion. It's beyond that; it's deciding in your mind that the ties to your children are irrelevant, then plotting out their murder while harassing them physically and mentally. Now, honor killing isn't new, it has existed for quite some time, but its existence is now prevalent in the East and West.

# The Vagina Monologues

by Melani Tiongson

Have you ever thought of “reclaiming” your vagina? Probably not. It’s down *there*, it’s not going to leave, and it’s an essential component of many fundamental daily functions. It’s used to pee, to fornicate, to menstruate, and to *feel good*. But is it more than that? The Vagina Monologues asserts that yes, the VAGINA is much, much more.

It is not merely an organ used for excretion and sex, but also a symbol of beauty, pride, and womanhood that aches to be better represented and respected in society. In a series of skits, The Vagina Monologues aims to facilitate progression of the vagina – and to a greater extent, the awareness of the sexuality, abuse, self-love, self-hate, ignorance, awe-inspiring, eye-opening aspects of the vagina that are too often repressed. In a series of episodic skits based off of true stories, playwright Eve Ensler created The Vagina Monologues to showcase real stories about real women that need to reach and inform the masses. Since its opening in 1996, The Vagina Monologues has burgeoned into an international hit that is performed in various venues, countries, and languages.

Thanks to the V-Day Movement at SBU, supported by SBU Center for Prevention and Outreach (CPO), Wo/Men’s and Gender Resource Center, FSA, Alumni Association, Social Justice Alliance, and many others, students saw The Vagina Monologues performed by fellow peers who wish to make a difference.

The Vagina Monologues has been showing annually at SBU for over a decade, telling students to think, “If your vagina could talk, what would it say?” Each monologue was performed flawlessly, eliciting reactions of hilarity to awe to empathy. Some monologues, such as “The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy” (performed by Dominique Alexis), highlighted the pleasures of making women moan while others such as “Hair” (performed by Pauline Dolle), showcased the negative effects of female objectification as a man infantilizes his wife by making her shave. Each monologue presented a novel insight on the vagina; as something that is often overlooked, brutally mutilated and infringed upon without consent, underappreciated by some but exalted by others, and is a unique asset to each and every woman. It is not merely an organ or a sex object, but a vehicle for learning, growing, and living.

Through the efforts of this year’s students and staff,

The Vagina Monologues was able to celebrate yet another successful showing. The play ran for two nights in February in the SAC Auditorium, one of the biggest venues on campus, and both nights had high turnouts and excellent shows. Exhibitions in the lobby from organizations such as Planned Parenthood and CHILL Peer Educators promoted awareness of women and various goods (from shirts to edibles) were sold to support the V-Day 2012 Spotlight for the women and girls of Haiti, the Victims Information Bureau (VIBS), and SBU’s Wo/men’s and Gender Resource Center.

So while watching a play about vaginas, audience members were permitted to (literally) munch on (chocolate) vaginas sans stigmatization. And one can only hope that the raw, honest, unabashed energy evoked by The Vagina Monologues would permeate to the general body of SBU to create a more loving, informed, and non-judgmental community.

CPO intern and actress, Sophia Pierre-Antoine, expressed her sentiments regarding the night: “I want people, not only women, to stop being afraid of vaginas. I want them to remember the vagina and what it goes through such as pleasure, orgasms, childbirth, rape, genital cutting, and think about all the vaginas all around the world that are going through similar things. I want SBU women to remember they are sexual beings but to remember they are not limited to their sexuality. The show has empowering stories that talk about women’s sexual pleasure and finding strength and comfort in other women and also men but it also has stories of rape survivors as well as genital cutting survivors in the US, Yugoslavia, and Congo. This year, the spotlight was on women in post-Katrina New Orleans, war ravaged Congo, and post-Earthquake Haiti. As someone [from Haiti] who lived through the Earthquake, being able to share the story with such a large audience was one of the most empowering and emotional moments of my life and I hope that the audience was able to feel the power of the story and that even if only for five minutes, to feel connected with women around the world.”

The Vagina Monologues *is* a show about vaginas. Why shouldn’t it be? If vaginas are representative of the female condition, then a play about them was long overdue. There is nothing wrong with proclaiming truths that need to be heard – rather, we could all benefit from parting our lips with pride.



# Objectifying Men! Who Do Asian Girls Want? And Why? Asia-USA Love Scene

by May Hao Wang

In a reversal of the cover story, this looks at men without evaluating their brains, just their bods and cultural attributes.

Just as girlfriends do all over the world, when Asian girls get together, they talk about love and marriage. At Stony Brook University, it's a little more difficult to have large groups of friends like we did in high school, and I was curious to know how much East and Southeast Asian international women who are here, as well as first generation ABC's and ABK's, thought alike. So I asked them to take a survey. Just a few simple questions. They could elaborate if they wanted to. It was totally random, I didn't want just my friends to answer. I went into the Student Union and asked total strangers. After I had 34 responses, I figured that would give me a good idea of how many of us felt. Here are the results.



FEN ZHEN NIE, WHO IS CHINESE, DRESSED IN VIETNAMESE WEDDING OUTFIT TO "MARRY" HER BOYFRIEND, TUAN LE, WHO IS VIETNAMESE, AS STUDENTS AT THE GRAND OPENING OF WANG CENTER IN 2002. NOW BOTH ALUMNI, THEY LATER WENT ON TO MARRY IN REAL LIFE. – K. QUAN choose to come to America are the taller ones.)

But aside from height, Asian girls love exotic good looks – big, deep, attractive blue eyes, white skin, brown hair, high nose and hot body. Though that's the same reason white men give for liking Asian girls too - that we are as exotic to them as they are to us.

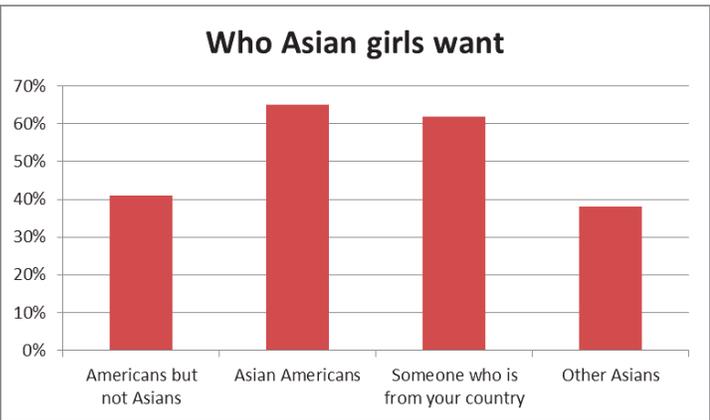
Some girls like someone who is not from their country because they enjoy the cultural differences. One of my friends said, "I love foreign guys because I can learn something new from them. Even though there is a big cultural gap, we enjoy sharing our differences."

According to the survey, 41% of Asian girls would like to date and marry an American guy. Furthermore, 18% of Asian girls' parents want a white son-in-law. They want beautiful grandchildren. Popular media has portrayed a lot of beautiful 'hapas', the Hawaiian word for mixed race people who are part Asian, and actor Keanu Reeves of The Matrix trilogy, whose father is Chinese Hawaiian, is a perfect example.

And American men are more outgoing, funnier and more open than Asian guys. A lot of Asian guys would never dare to say "I love you" to their girlfriend, even if she is someone he has arduously 'hunted' for a long time to get her to go out with him. In public, American guys joke around and appear to enjoy life so they obviously attract more attention from girls than quiet or shy Asian guys.

### Why do Asian girls prefer Asian Americans or someone who is from their own country?

From the first chart, we can see that Asian Americans are the most popular choice, even more than tall white guys. And someone who is from your own country is almost equal to Asian



### Why do some Asian girls go for non-Asian American men?

They like tall, good-looking guys. It's hard to find a 5'11", nice looking Asian guy on campus and personally, I think it's true that we do not have so many good-looking Asian men in Stony Brook, but we can find a tall Caucasian dude everywhere. I remember the Asian semi-formal party I went to last semester. Most of the girls wore heels. I'm sorry to say that most men were on the short side, even without the girl's heels. I'm 5'5", my housemate is 5'6". (Future article - I wonder what percentage of the Asian girls who

Americans. Why? A Chinese girl I interviewed said she would only marry Chinese guys because they have the same background and culture. There will not be any problems caused by language differences.

Those who chose Asian Americans said they have the benefit of both American and Asian cultures. It's not hard to communicate with them. Moreover, some mixed Asian Americans are more handsome than white people or pure Asians, so they are most popular.

41% of those interviewed said their parents didn't want them to marry foreigners because of different religions, languages, backgrounds, cultural experiences and habits. Some conservative parents would only accept native son-in-laws because they want to keep their pure blood lineage. The more educated their parents are, the less they cared about the race of their daughter's mate.

**Why don't Asian girls want to tell their parents they have a boyfriend?**

12% of the girls surveyed wouldn't tell their parents they have a boyfriend. There are many reasons for this. First, some have conservative parents who don't want their daughters to date or have sex early. It would just create problems. One SB student is 22 and just told her father she has a boyfriend. He disowned her for disobeying him. Second, some simply find it awkward to tell their parents. Some children rarely communicate with their parents to begin with. The third reason is that some girls have gossipy parents. That's my category. My Mom loves to gossip. If I have a boyfriend, she tells everybody. And the last

**Want to know how to attract an Asian woman who is not your nationality?**

Key 1: If you don't speak her language, at least learn how to say hello in it. Not only will she be happy to see a foreigner trying to speak her language, you're showing you have put in some advance effort. Not only will she like that you are trying, but that you were smart enough to find out what her nationality was first. Speaking Korean to a Chinese woman, or Chinese to a Thai, won't get you very far. If you get it right, It will show that you are interested in her!



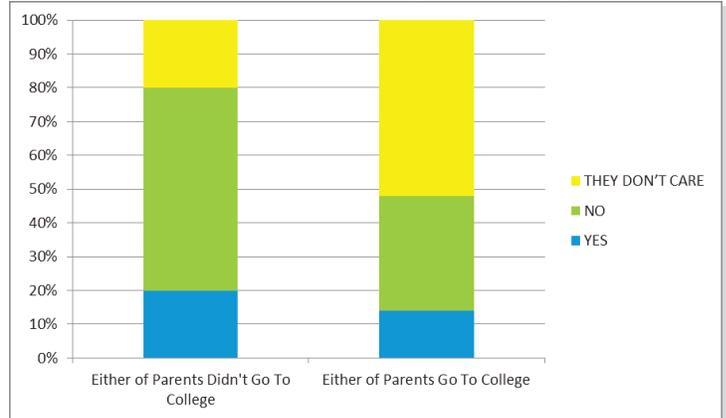
GARY NEWMAN AND XIBEI JIA, SBU COLLEGE SWEETHEARTS, MARRIED AFTER GRADUATION AND NOW HAVE AN OMG HE'S GORGEOUS KID!

Key 2: Show you are interested in her culture. Try to talk about anything related to her country - cities, food, movies, sports, history, whatever. If you know nothing, ask questions instead. Show your passion and interest in what she is talking about. Girls want a guy who seems interested in them, and who is nice, fun and charming.

Key 3: Get her contact info. It's not good to ask for her phone number the first time you meet. But you can ask her if you can Facebook friend her. That shows you want to keep in touch with her.

Key 4: Don't brag too much. Never lie. All girls, not just Asians, want someone they can trust.

**Would your parents want you to marry someone NOT from your country?**



reason, some parents don't object but they are too overprotective. Another student recently told her parents she had a boyfriend too. The next thing she knew, her father sent her tons of books from China about how to date a guy, how to keep a relationship, and even a few books about safe sex. She was so totally embarrassed. If we have any of those type of parents, it's hard to tell them we have boyfriends.

**How Many Girls Would Tell Parents They Have Boyfriends**

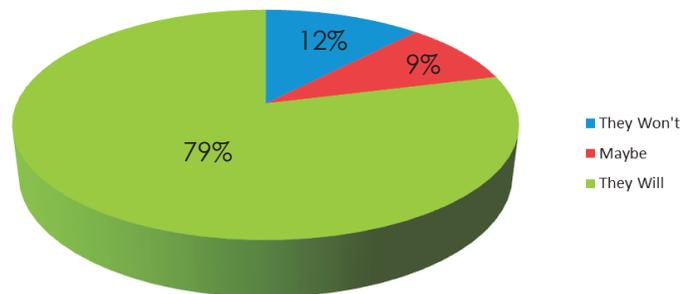


PHOTO BY OLIVER HAO LI





PHOTO BY OLIVER HAO LI

## Film Review

# When Harry Tries To Marry

by Paul Huynh

Marriage is supposed to be a sacred union between two people - or not. Prime example: the notorious Kim Kardashian marriage fell apart after 72 days due to "irreconcilable differences". It may seem normal in the world of celebrities and superstars, but for Indian Americans, it serves as another reason to reinforce their belief in arranged marriage.

In fact, Harry (Rahul Rai), the main character in the movie "When Harry Tries to Marry", forms an analytical image of marriage from his turbulent childhood. He believes that because his parents did not have an arranged marriage, they got a divorce within years. As a child, he admitted to hiding under his bed every night when his parents harangued each other with verbal threats. Unsurprisingly, he says "Why do I have to take the risk when I clearly don't have to?" So, Harry plans to get an arranged marriage after college with a girl named Nita (Freishia Bomanbehram), and live a happy life. However, his plans are complicated by Theresa (Stephanie Estes), a girl he meets in college. When their sociology professor pairs Harry with Theresa for a term paper, Harry unwittingly embarks on an incredible journey of self-discovery and love.

Harry's relationship with Theresa switches gears very quickly. At first, it is very platonic and casual; they meet near a bowling alley and joke with each other. But Harry soon finds that he is attracted to Theresa and his love for her blossoms. Harry invites her to stay over at his house and spend a day at the Holi festival together throwing colored paints at each other. They even talk about each other's family problems. The relationship gets so personal that he accidentally sleeps with Theresa the night before his arranged marriage.

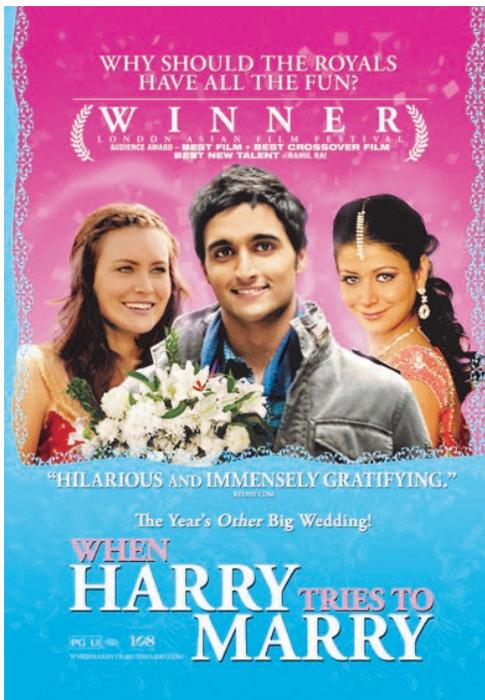
Therein lies the conflict between his plans and his desires. Harry loves Theresa very much, yet

plans to marry Nita. But Harry cannot ask either of his parents for advice; after all his father (Actor Patel) bailed out on the relationship and got another woman pregnant, and his churlish mother (Zenobia Schroff) has a gold-digger mentality. He definitely can't ask his uncle, who arranged the marriage. He is under so much stress that he faints on his wedding day.

Harry realizes his view of marriage was too narrow. He calls off the wedding, continues his relationship with Theresa and promises to explore more of life's possibilities. The movie has a light-hearted ending, with many characters leaping into the ocean and swimming in the water.

It has poignant moments of blue and slapstick humor that will give anyone some chuckles. Harry's roommate, Louis (Osvaldo Hernandez) is found in his bathroom screaming while stripping off pubic hair with duct tape. When Harry first sees Theresa naked in the bathroom, he scrambles to his bed and goes through multiple mental manipulations to get rid of his erection so she doesn't see it. And perhaps the funniest line happens the night before the wedding. Theresa interrupts Harry in the middle of his dance with Nita, and Nita's father (Micky Makhija) threatens "If you hurt my precious flower, I will ground you to the dust you came from. But, you can still call me Dad". Yep, he ends up chasing Harry for calling off the marriage, and falls into the water.

Overall, "When Harry Tries to Marry" is a fine film. The technical aspects are wonderfully done. Rahul Rai (Harry) is a very good actor, especially considering it was his first time. Some of his facial expressions were priceless, and you may even learn a thing or two from him about dating. If you are seeking a film that is not derivative, this film is for you. Sure, a person who is very conservative might say that it does not do much to dispel the bad perceptions behind arranged marriage, but that can be discerned from the trailer. You know the movie is good enough when it leaves you chuckling and laughing from the outset, and this was definitely one of them.



## Q & A with Producer Sheetal Nyas, Director Navan Padrai and Lead Actor Rahul Rai

by Paul Huynh

**PH** What inspired you to make this film?

**Nayan Padrai** I was tired of seeing films that portrayed arranged marriage from an Indian perspective. Not to say the marriages don't work. I know plenty who are happy. The question I asked was, "What if you took that view and flipped it while mixing it with modern elements?" I wanted to produce a movie that showed another way to look at love and dating.

**PH** How long did it take to make the movie?

**Producer Sheetal Vyas** We started the script in 1998, and put it down for a number of years. We completed it by 2008. In 2009, we decided to make the film. It took about six months to get funding from different groups, and we finished that in December. Then, we had to start distributing the film, and that took until April of 2011 in the United States. However, it won't be out in other countries until 2012-2013.

**PH** Has there been any critical backlash?

**Director Nayan Padrai** Yes, there has. But they are not an accurate representation of our success with the movie. We won three awards, a pay-per-view deal with Time Warner to over 100 million homes, and Rahul won Best Actor Award.

**PH** Has this movie been shown in India - and if so, what was the reaction there?

**Sheetal Vyas** We showed it at the Mumbai film festival and it was sold out. We were actually afraid that it would not be as popular because many Indians prefer English movies with American actors and actresses. The movie will be distributed in ten other countries next year.

**PH** How representative is this movie of arranged marriage in the Indian American community? Have you spoken to any of them about this film?

**Nayan Padrai** It was based off a person I knew in Elmhurst, an anesthesiologist I met at a party. He did exactly what Harry did. Went to India for 2 weeks, and got married on 9/11. I have also shown it at several universities and received positive reviews, one from a Korean boy as well. Other ethnic groups can relate to the Asian cross-cultural motif of tradition vs. modernity.

**PH** Is there a stigma with failed arranged marriages? If yes, how do you justify them?

**Nayan Padrai** There is societal pressure to keep the couple together. Partly, it is a matter of

values, and another part is the duty the couple owes to their family. I mean, is it not the same across all cultures that this is true?

**PH** Rahul, what did you feel was the most difficult part of creating the film? Also, do your parents support your pursuit of an acting?

**Rahul Rai** Distributing the film across the world was the most difficult part. I originally wanted to



PRODUCER SHEETAL NYAS, LEAD ACTOR RAHUL RAI, AND DIRECTOR NAVAN PADRAI  
PHOTO BY PAUL HUYNH

become a dentist, but now I want to pursue a career in acting. I understand some parents are against supporting an Indian kid not to be a doctor, but some are different. I am lucky.

**PH** What about you, director?

**Nayan Padrai** I thought it was difficult creating the script. At first, it had an over-the-top tone, but we lessened that. Some parts had to be cut out and remade, and it was difficult to see some my work taken apart.

**PH** Did playing Harry affect your perception of what is going on in college? What are your thoughts on arranged marriage?

**Rahul** Not really. Arranged marriages work, my sister has one and she is happy, but there is a certain way to approach it.

**PH** What other films you are working on?

**Sheetal Vyas** The first is *Billion Dollar Raj*, based on Sri Lankan American banker Raj Rajaratnam who stole billions from Wall St. Another is *Banker to the Poor* about Muhammad Yunus, a revolutionary in the banking system, making it accessible to 23 million poor people, primarily women.

Watch Harry Tries to Marry on Hulu! (free with ads)

[www.hulu.com/watch/327426/when-harry-tries-to-marry](http://www.hulu.com/watch/327426/when-harry-tries-to-marry)

BY CHELSEA XUEQIAN DONG &amp; MAY HAO WANG

# Dating Show—You Are the One

"You Are the One", a Chinese reality show about dating, is produced by Jiangsu Satellite TV and was launched on January 15, 2010. To adapt to the pace of modern life, it provides a platform for many singles to get to know each other each week. Each show has five bachelors. It broke traditional stereotypes with 24 women choosing one man. It would be similar to speed dating on the US "Bachelor" show.

Each woman has a light in front of her. If she is interested, she keeps it on. The emcee gives the bachelor a device to select the number of the woman he likes on first sight.

There are four steps for each round. The first three are 'first impression', 'judge again' and 'final decision' where the women decide if they like the bachelor. In the final step, 'Rights of the Man', if there are more than two lights on, he turns off those he is not interested in.

Most of the time, however, the bachelor has no lights on by the second or third step. When he is denied by all 24 women, music will play loudly to say 'goodbye'. If he is fortunate to have two girls standing in front of him, he has the right to ask one question to help him choose which woman. If he is really lucky, the woman he liked at first sight will stand in front of him in the end. However, the woman he chooses has to decide if she wants to go with him too! The man can say something to her to try to win her heart.

The show also has two psychologists who analyze the questions and answers. Usually only one gets his woman since the show allows the women to choose too. Only one couple has gotten married. The show has grown in popularity because people learn from it what modern women value about love and marriage. - XD

## The most handsome bald bachelor!

On June 25th, 2011, a very handsome bald guy was on. It was funny that with only three men on stage, the psychologist, host, and bachelor, all of them were bald. He was Yuezeng Li, 32, from Tianjin. He was the twelfth bald bachelor on the show and was appraised as the handsomest of all of them.

When he came out onstage he looked very

imperturbable and cool. He wore a white jacket, black vest, gray pants, and black shoes. His outfit and demeanor made him look mature, successful, fashionable, sagacious, and charming. He looked like a famous Hong Kong singing star, Dehua Liu. I was shocked that he chose #10, who was very cute and girly, to be his "dream girl". In the first video, he appears to like mature, beautiful, smart women, but his dream girl was totally not a mature looking woman.

In the end, two girls stood on stage and one was his first sight dream girl! It seemed obvious he would choose her. Then he asked the question, "How soon do you want a baby after marriage?" His dream girl wanted a baby in two years. The other wanted to get married this year and have a baby next. Neither was the answer he wanted. He said, "I don't want a baby for at least three years. My business just started. I can get married now but I don't want a baby now." He also said that while he liked his dream girl's appearance, he didn't like her character. He surprised everyone by walking offstage without choosing anyone.

He was serious, sure of what he wanted. He went hoping to find the right women but he wasn't going to settle. He appeared mature, experienced, polite, and charming - and for me it was love at first sight! - MHW



PHOTOS USED WITH PERMISSION OF CONTESTANT, QIAN CHEN, A FRIEND OF AAJ EDITOR HAO LI

# White Day: Japan's Valentine's Day Payback

## by Frank Chenjun Feng

White Day is generally regarded as a continuation of Valentine's Day and according to myth, originated in the third century AD. It is said that Roman emperor Claudius II forbade all male citizens from marrying and ordered them to join the army. A priest, Sanctus Valentinus, did not comply with this decree and continued to hold weddings until eventually he was arrested. On February 14, 270AD, Valentinus was hanged.

One month later, on March 14, lovers whose wedding he had performed, swore their love would never change until death. To honor that day, March 14 became the date of White Day. However, as moving as this story is, it has no basis in history, just as Valentine's Day has no basis. Valentine's Day and love were first linked in a poem by the English poet Chaucer in the 14th century.

White Day is popular in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other areas though its history is firmly documented as having begun in Japan as a holiday created for commercial purposes. Then more Asian countries began to celebrate this festival and nowadays an increasing number of young lovers value it as another Valentine's Day.

As is known to everyone, the color white has various meanings. It is regarded as a symbol of purity, spirituality, peace, honesty, sincerity, romance, nobleness, humility, and innocence. For White Day, white also represents aspirations and happiness, which is the blessing to lovers.

However, what few people know is that White

Day actually was initiated by the National Confectionery Industry Association in Japan. In 1977, a Fukuoka-based confectionery company, Ishimuramansendo, promoted its candy on that day by advocating that men who received gifts on Valentine's Day should present candies in return one month later. It began as Marshmallow Day and later evolved because sugar used for candy is white so as other candy makers became involved, it was changed to White Day.

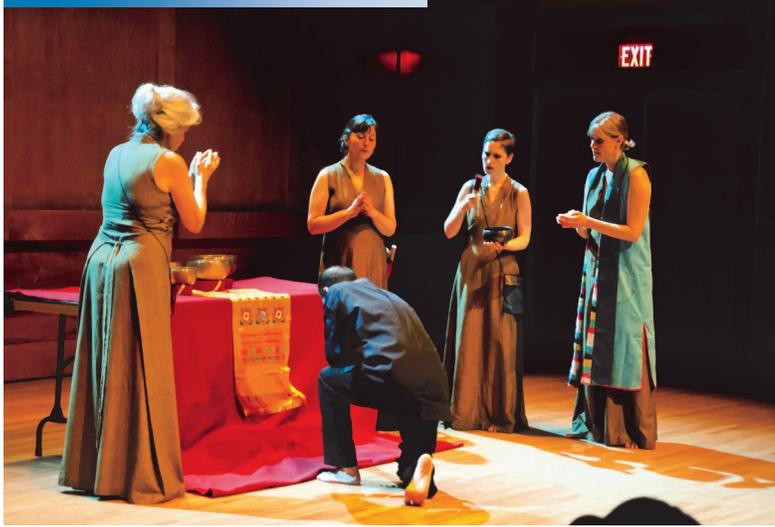
Chocolate manufactures even found that they could earn lots of profit by promoting their white chocolates. This kind of holiday, driven by commercial purposes, is called a Hallmark holiday in the U.S., named after the largest card company.

But, besides for historical reasons, why is White Day unique? That is because In

Japan, Valentine's Day is also unique. While in the rest of the world everyone gives Valentine's Day gifts to each other, and in the US men get in trouble if they forget to give something to their girlfriend, wife or lover, typically red roses or chocolates, in Japan it is primarily women who give gifts to men, and not just those they are interested in.

Women give 'giri choco', obligatory chocolate, to their male superiors and co-workers. Women in large companies often have to buy many boxes. 'Honmei choco' is for the man the woman is interested in. So White Day was established to give men who had gotten a gift on Valentine's Day the chance to give a gift in return. The





## Tapestry & Tibetan Bowls An Enchanted Evening

by Yukie Kuang

with photos by Adam Sue

Tapestry, an international touring quartet ensemble of female vocalists, presented two operatic works by Stony Brook's acclaimed professor and composer, Sheila Silver.

In the performance two different cantatas, "Song of Songs: Come into My Garden, A Portrait of Sensual and Spiritual Love" and "The White Rooster", were performed with utter perfection.

Silver's "Songs of Songs" was an interpretation of the Biblical text fusing Hebrew and Latin chants, Israeli folk songs, and percussion. Sung by vocalists Diana Brewer, Cristi Catt, Laurie Monahan, and Daniela Tosic, and joined by Shira Kammen on vielle (medieval fiddle) and Takaaki Masuko on percussion, together their interlaced sounds moved the audience in the Staller Center Recital Hall into a warp apart from reality.

"The White Rooster", commissioned by the Smithsonian and written by Silver to celebrate the 2010 exhibit "*In the Realm of the Buddha*", tells a tale of Tibetan Buddhist nuns fleeing into exile. Their finely executed performance was theatrical as well as operatic. With six Tibetan singing bowls and hand drums accompanying the vocals, spiritual layers were created by the women's vocal melodies. The Tibetan chants, integrating singing and spoken dialogue, wove a story of celebration of the power of individual acts of compassion.

In these two pieces, Silver was able convey a tapestry of peace through the women's

voices and the sounds of the rarely heard instruments.

Tapestry: [www.tapestryboston05.com/](http://www.tapestryboston05.com/)

## The White Rooster A Tale of Compassion

The operatic cantata, *The White Rooster*, was commissioned by the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington, DC to celebrate their 2010 exhibit, *In the Realm of the Buddha*. It was composed by Sheila Silver, Undergraduate Director of SBU's Department of Music. Freer and Sackler are among the preeminent Asian galleries in the United States.

Silver's compositions have been commissioned and performed by orchestras, chamber ensembles, and soloists throughout the US and Europe. She is the winner of the 2007 Sackler Prize for Music Composition in Opera for *The Wooden Sword*.

The librettist for *The White Rooster* is Prof. Stephen Kitsakos of SUNY New Paltz.

*The White Rooster* was written for the four female singing voices of Tapestry. Their percussionist is Takaaki Matsuko. It uses traditional Tibetan melodies along with chant, ensemble singing, aria, and spoken dialogue. Tibetan singing bowls and ethnic hand drums are the unique accompaniment. The bowls, tapped with hammers or rubbed on the exterior or interior, produce beautiful harmonic resonance.

*The White Rooster* tells a story within a story celebrating the power of individual acts of compassion. It is a musical interpretation of a mythic Tibetan folk story placed within a contemporary setting in the tradition of a "play



within a play." The only instruments are the six Tibetan singing bowls, which are generally played by the women, and hand drums played by the percussionist.

The basic premise of the story is of five Tibetan Buddhist nuns fleeing to India when one is shot by a soldier. They take refuge in an abandoned hut. To pass the time while nursing their wounded sister, they reenact an ancient Tibetan tale of suppression, liberation and forgiveness. In the end, help comes from a most unexpected source. Emanating a spirit of reconciliation and healing, the piece celebrates the power of individual acts of compassion.

One assumes the role of the young nomadic girl, Diki, while another becomes the White Rooster, wrapping herself in a white scarf. One day, Diki's herd of yaks disappears. Searching for them, she hears a beautiful voice singing and comes upon a white rooster who can speak. He promises to help her find them if she will come back the next day, and when she does, he begs her to marry him. In exchange he will care for her and her sisters. Realizing that he "is no ordinary bird," and out of compassion for him, she agrees and passes a pleasant year at his side.

One night, wandering outside, she follows his singing to find a "handsome young man arms stretched to the skies." She returns to the cave, sees the white rooster's skin on the floor, and realizing the young man and the rooster are the same, throws the rooster's skin into the fire hoping to release him from whatever spell enchants him.

The young man tells her she has made things worse. As a prince he rebelled against the demons and they punished him by transforming him into a rooster. He must remain in this state except for one hour each night when he could



be his true self. Without the skin he is doomed to be the slave of the demons forever. The only way to liberate him is if she wears the skin. The skin magically returns and they all begin to chant.

When the chanting grows to a heightened passion the power and mystery of it is broken by a knock on the door. It is the doctor who has heard their singing and been drawn by its power. The nuns are afraid he will report them but he convinces them to let him treat their sister. The doctor extracts the bullet as the women chant together. Asked why he has saved this life, the doctor explains that he has suffered too and wants to save her life because "every act of kindness counts."

Because the Smithsonian is a U.S. government institution, the text could not be construed as political. The word "Chinese" was never allowed to be used; so the nationality of the border guard and doctor are never identified. By instead focusing on their common humanity, the narrative becomes universal.

Silver said, "In the end, I kept the abstraction. The nun is shot by a border guard and is saved by one of the occupying doctors. It is a fact that Chinese doctors are not allowed to treat Tibetans who have been protesting or been injured while trying to leave Tibet. So his action puts him at risk. In any case, the piece is so much about compassion - there isn't an angry note in it."

"So the doctor belongs to the group of people who also shot the nun. He saves the nun. It is his individual act of compassion which is the climax of the story."

YouTube demonstration  
of Tibetan singing bowls

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bcka0wrn1ok>



## A Prayer for the Chinese National Soccer Team

Which sports team has the most fans in the world? Is it Barcelona for soccer, or Jeremy Lin's New York Knicks. or the New York Giants who just won the NFL Superbowl, or the New York Yankees for baseball? It is none of them. The sports team with the most fans is China's national male soccer team, boasting 1.2 billion supporters.

If a team has that many fans, it would only make sense that they would play well, but that's not the case. Currently, China's national soccer team's FIFA ranking is 76, just behind Burkina Faso, a small country in Africa.

So, the question can be asked: why is China's team so bad? Looking to pinpoint the problem with their team is much

like a person trying to fix his own computer, but still China tries to identify where they fall short.

They moved the team from Beijing to Shanghai, and finally Chengdu. No matter where they went, only tragic memories were left. Some criticized their coach, so they changed from a Chinese coach to a foreign coach. When that didn't work, they switched from a soccer coach to a swimming coach. After changing coaches many times, it became obvious that the coach wasn't the issue with the team's losing record.

Perhaps the problem was in the Chinese soccer league: if none of the players in the league are good, then how will the Chinese national team be good? To fix this problem, they recruited an American major league baseball manager. He tried to implement a competitive system from baseball into the Chinese soccer league. This manager constantly changed the system, and somehow the winning soccer teams in China ended up being sent down to what would be the same as the minor leagues we have here in US baseball. Wanting more tall forwards, he went so far as to change the rules of soccer in the Chinese league (1 point for kicking a goal, 2 points for headers) so the Chinese teams would train more tall players. This created a joke in Chinese soccer because short athletes, not being able to score headers as well as tall

ones, came up with unusual, even silly, scoring techniques to get valued headers.

After all these failed attempts, what then, is the true problem with the Chinese national team? Everyone knows, but no one will speak up.

In 2009, seven soccer clubs in the Chinese league went on strike, tired of all the absurd measures China put them through. They held a

press conference announcing their intention to go play in other countries. One month later, three out of the seven owners of these soccer clubs were arrested for bribery and corruption, gaining them ten years in prison. The remaining four teams quickly announced

that they would play in China again. It's not hard to see why all of this happened, but no one dares to speak up.

From my point of view, the root of the problems lies in the tight grip the Chinese government has on the national soccer association. In most of the world, soccer leagues and associations are independent and not directly controlled by their governments. Since China's national team has so many fans and makes so much money, the government keeps a tight rein. Without transparency, all capable players and coaches have no way to advance to the positions they deserve, and those who do have positions are millionaires. However, these millionaire players and coaches lack proficiency in their sport that true athletes hold. Does all of this sound familiar? Soccer in China is an image of Chinese society, it's just easier to see when it comes to soccer. Soccer is measured by scoring and winning – something we can all see. But these same issues in Chinese culture are also present, though not as apparent. Chinese soccer is profit-driven and controlled by the government, much like China itself.

Without true democracy and freedom, this system will keep these 1.2 billion fans watching those eleven Chinese national players play and be played, losing in front of the whole world.



SBU SOCCER PLAYER YIMAJIAN YAN BY LI HAO

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# Linsanity Rocks the Sports World

by Joe Damiani

Since December, Knicks fans have been wondering: "Who's that guy at the end of the bench?" You wouldn't assume the Taiwanese American 23 year-old sitting in the last bench seat at Madison Square Garden would emerge as the NBA's most electrifying young talent.

You also wouldn't assume that the same guy, scoring 109 points in his first four career starts, more than any other player in the league's history, was a graduate of Harvard University.

Jeremy Lin has become New York's newest and brightest sports star, coming out of utter obscurity and bursting onto the hardwood as one of the more decorated point guards in the league. After a brief stint last year with the Golden State Warriors and averaging just under ten minutes and 3 points per game, Lin was waived and sent to the Houston Rockets, only to be waived once again at the start of this season.

As one of the very few Asian Americans to ever play in the NBA, Lin is representing one of the smallest ethnic groups in US sports. Receiving no scholarship offers after a successful high school career at Palo Alto H.S. in California, Lin chose to attend Harvard University because he was guaranteed a spot on its basketball team. After graduating with an economics degree, Lin went undrafted in the 2009 NBA Draft. His strong summer league showing didn't lead to playing time, even after he was chosen by the Warriors.

The New York Knicks claimed Lin shortly after Christmas to be a backup for guards Toney Douglas and Mike Bibby. It seemed as though the same affair would occur in the Big Apple, as Lin received hardly any playing time, essentially being a 'benchwarmer.' But as injuries plagued the Knicks roster, with guards Baron Davis, Toney Douglas and Carmelo Anthony hurting, Lin was called upon to try to do something, anything, to revive a slumping Knicks season. Lin entered February 4<sup>th</sup>'s game against the New Jersey Nets and exploded for an unexpected 25 points, after scoring just two in the previous game.

And with that, "Linsanity" was born. His story is one of true perseverance. Lin was on the verge of being cut by his third team in three years, making a meager salary and sleeping on his



COMPUTER ENHANCED PHOTO BY TREVOR CHRISTIAN

brother or teammates couches. In a week of superstardom never before seen, Jeremy Lin had risen as a true star; after the win against the Nets, he led Knicks on a 7-game win streak, all while averaging almost 25 points, gaining the starting point guard job and being signed to an official Knicks contract and receiving a higher salary. He's now got a Trump Tower apartment, a nice upgrade from the living room couch.

Stony Brook students, fans of basketball or not, are also buying into Jeremy Lin's success. "I didn't tell anyone I was a Knicks fan, but now I'll admit it," said Trevor Christian of the SB Press.

Not just in the U.S., Lin's appeal is being felt worldwide. His number-17 jersey is the best-selling item according to NBA.com. In China and Taiwan, he's become a cultural icon and hero; even with a drastic time difference, they stay up to watch Lin electrify the league.

He's influenced his own breed of terms – "Linsanity," "Linning," "Linspiration;" countless plays on his last name are sweeping the world. Through all of that, he's also hearing the one chant he's waited to hear his whole life: "MVP."

Not your old school stuffy museum - check it out!

**MOCA has it all!**[www.mocanyc.org](http://www.mocanyc.org)

MOCA's goal is to be a model among interactive museums. Definitely not a place to just look. MOCA began in 1980 as the Chinatown History Project, a gathering of oral histories before the old-timers passed on. It finally got space on a 2nd floor of an old elementary school. Cramped and crowded, it was forced to become a different kind of museum, community focused with external programming. If you wanted to learn Chinatown history, what better way than to be guided through the real NYC Chinatown streets, stores and eateries. But obviously more was needed. In 2009, just prior to its 30th anniversary, Mayor Bloomberg painted the eyes on a lion's head and MOCA opened its doors in a large converted industrial facility.

Maya Lin, who gained fame with her controversial but now beloved design of the Vietnam Wall, renovated the space. The main hall has changing art exhibits featuring new artists as well as established ones. There are permanent collections, like a replica of an old Chinatown shop filled with antique cans of food and vials of medicine. Historical family portraits are juxtaposed with changing video displays of Chinese Americans making history now. Space for families, kids, seniors, demonstrations, lectures, after hours events like networking for Young Professionals, as well as private affairs.

The sky lit courtyard, pictured on the right, was left untouched as a reminder of the past and to evoke a Chinese courtyard house. Each year a prominent artist's installation is featured.

MOCA hopes to increase

visibility of the myriad voices that make up Chinese American history while increasing local and global dialogue. By understanding what is happening today, it strives to shape tomorrow.

Upon entering the lobby there is a bronze tile

'Journey Wall'. It reveals the breadth of the Chinese American diaspora. Tiles are etched with places of origin and where immigrants have settled in all 50 states, illustrating that they do not just live on the east and west coasts or in big cities, but have made their homes all across the country. For some families there is no 'one place' as they are spread far and wide, from California to NY.

P.H. Tuan, architect of SBU's Wang Center, led our tour. Below are the tiles for his and his wife's parents. The left tile is Gwynne's family name in Chinese, 周, Chow; her father, Hsien Hsien; mother, Bae Pao Lu; and Shanghai, China to the US. The right tile is P.H.'s family - the character for Tuan, 段; his father, Ren Deh; mother Mei Ling Yen; and also Shanghai to the US. The names are passed on to their children too - son, Han Hsien, and daughter Mei Mei. The photos to the left of the Chow and Tuan families, both taken in China in the 1940's, are typical of the historical collection.



PHOTOS COURTESY MAYA LIN STUDIO/MOCA,  
P.H. AND GWYNNE TUAN, JA YOUNG



## A MOCA Family Legacy

On December 15th, 2009, amid the classic marble columns of The Capitale in Chinatown, the loudest ovation from the 600 gathered guests was for a petite woman, Gwynne Tuan. Her name unknown outside her circle of friends and colleagues, once again she had brought NYC's Chinese American elite together to benefit their

Like Gwynne, P.H. Tuan's name is not widely known outside their circle, though it is in the world of architecture. Though no cornerstone bears his name, everyone at SBU knows his work. A stunningly beautiful building and the most sought after venue on campus, P.H. designed the Charles B. Wang Asian American Center. Its towering pagoda sculpture has become the University's iconic symbol.

Originally both from Shanghai, they would meet at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. They are part of what some teasingly call the 'Shanghai Mafia', a 'family' whose connection had been their place of privilege in China before 1949, speaking Shanghainese. They brought with them what all immigrants bring - the strength of conviction to give up everything to start anew, desire to find others like them here, and the will to make something of their family names again.

But not all at the dinner were from that city some assume will rival NYC as financial capital of the world. East and West Coast Chinatowns grew with Cantonese and Fujianese dialects. With the 1965 change to US immigration law and the 1976 reopening of China, Chinese in America now represent every corner of China and are in every corner of America. The Legacy Dinner showed that spectrum. There were well known guests like



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community. MOCA, the Museum of Chinese in America, was having its 30th Anniversary Legacy Awards Dinner. She had taken over the event planning the prior year, asked by those who knew her prodigious fundraising skills. In the midst of the worst recession since the Great Depression, she turned it into a \$1000 a plate gala people wanted to be seen at, and raised one million in donations each year.

Though Gwynne had been coaxed out of retirement, retiring for what she hoped would be the last time was truly fitting with this dinner. After a lifetime raising funds for organizations such as Asian American Federation, China Institute, even



JENNY MING, LULU CHOW, ANON, JERRY YANG, CONNIE CHUNG, JUNE CHUNG, MAJOR GENERAL JOHN FUGH, DAVID HO, SUSAN HO



MEI MEI AND GWYNNE TUAN AT THE WANG CENTER 5TH ANNIVERSARY

'Stuy' High School among her many chosen causes, Gwynne and her family had come of age with MOCA in the Big Apple. Ten days after the dinner she would celebrate her 50th Christmas together with her husband, P.H.

many of those pictured above, to name a few, but most, like Gwynne and P.H., unknown outside their circles. NYC's uptown and downtown Chinese had joined together in support to let the world see their place in the making of America - now in a museum of national stature - MOCA.

But Gwynne's retirement would not last. Her daughter, Mei Mei, was asked to co-chair the Board of Trustees with Maya Lin. This mother-daughter dynamic legacy of its own has since continued to raise millions at Legacy Dinners since, solidifying MOCA's foundation of support.

# Charles B. Wang Asian/American Center

## Architect: P.H. Tuan



PHOTOS BY JA YOUNG RECREATED AS ONE BY JEFFREY NG

The Wang Center, designed by internationally acclaimed architect P.H. Tuan, provides a dramatic entrance to the campus with its modernistic Tower to Heaven pagoda and red gates. In its exquisite interior are held professional, community and student events from conferences to weddings. The red trellised Chinese scholar's and bamboo garden around the koi and lotus pond is the most beautiful spot on campus and used for receptions, dining, meditation, and just hanging out. The state of the art lecture halls, theatre, chapel and programming areas are filled during the academic year with a wide variety of Asian and Asian American events from modern and traditional performances, films, and cultural festivals to serious talks on world affairs. The alcoves on virtually every wall were designed for art exhibits. The restaurant provides casual and fine dining. During quiet times students can be found studying at the tables surrounding the indoor pools and fountains.



**The Wang Center is a treat not to be missed. Whether as a peaceful place to hang out or a crowd filled venue, we promise you will never be disappointed!**

The most frequently asked question... what is that atop the building? The Tower to Heaven is a sculptural pagoda. Its holographic finish changes constantly with the sun. It can be any shade of gray, shimmery silver, reflective like a mirror, white, blue, pink, gold, orange, and in lightening, mint green. From inside one looks up through the tower's center to infinity - or Heaven.

The origin of the pagoda began in India and spread with Buddhism eastward. In every village and city throughout Asia there is at least one pagoda, though over time in each country their shape and style has evolved. In modern times the horizon of every city in the world is filled with modern pagodas. What is the Empire State Building but a pagoda with an elevator?

In antiquity the pagoda united the East. In modernity the pagoda in skyscraper form unites the world. Thus the pagoda is the perfect architectural form to represent what P.H. Tuan and Charles Wang hope the Wang Center will foster - a uniting of East and West. A full description of the architecture and its meaning is at

[www.aaezine.org/Wang](http://www.aaezine.org/Wang)

[www.stonybrook.edu/wang](http://www.stonybrook.edu/wang)



# IMAGINING THE WANG

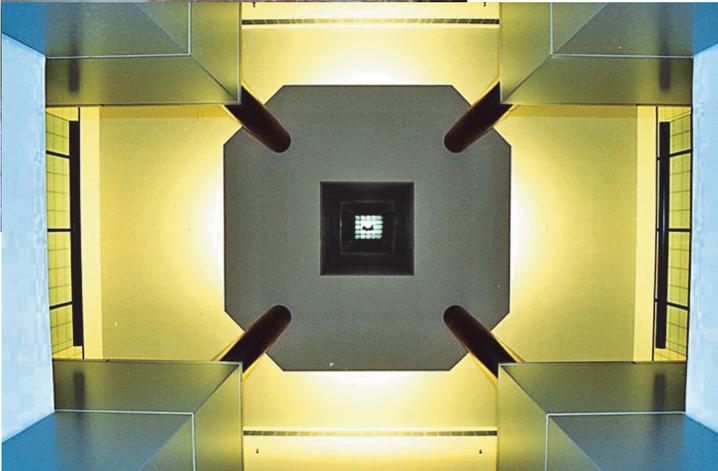
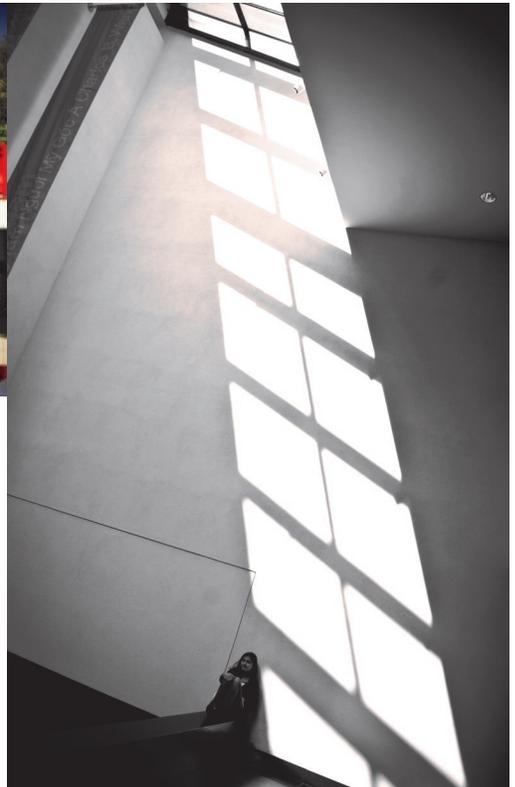
## PH Tuan Annual Charles B Wang Asian American Center Photo Contest

**10th Anniversary Celebration!**

**New: In Addition to Cash Prizes a Calendar with Contest Photos Will Be Designed to Benefit the Wang Center! Non-pros Only for Cash Prizes But Pros May Submit for Calendar Selection  
Deadline: Sunday, April 22, 2012 at Midnight to wangphotocontest@gmail.com**



**Photos here and on back cover are a few previous winners. Complete details at [www.aaezine.org/TuanWangPhotoContest](http://www.aaezine.org/TuanWangPhotoContest)**



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