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Asian American voices to
disseminate information in order
to promote activism in the
community and awareness of
Asian American issues.

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After watching many of our staff from previous years graduate, I was a little worried. But every semester we welcome new faces and this year was no exception. Our new editors have offered AAJ fresh ideas that were implemented immediately, resulting in new ways of looking at Asia from a new perspective.

Not only have we changed our cover this year and various other aspects of the layout, but this issue also sees the introduction of an International section. After all, many on the campus are international students (like me) and it's just as important for us to represent them, and provide a place for them to voice their thoughts.

New contributors are always welcome! If you are interested in writing, taking photos, designing pages, or just hanging out, come stop by our meetings during the academic year.

- Allen Lee

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How To Survive on \$2 USD a Day

by Raymond Lee '15

In recent times, allegations have escalated that universal health care (otherwise known as the Affordable Care Act or sometimes dubbed “Obamacare”) may not be the best decision for our country. It often finds itself at the forefront of political rhetoric; in the last election’s presidential debate, Mitt Romney, amongst other promises, pledged to start working on repealing Obamacare from “day one.”

However, even as universal health care passed as law in this country amidst a shroud of criticism and controversy, less wealthy countries in Asia seem determined to bring affordable health insurance to their citizens. In China, the government has increased the percentage of constituents covered under its plan by almost 95% in little under a decade. The Filipino government has increased its coverage by a lesser, but still substantial, margin - up to 85% from 60%.

Perhaps the most ambitious, Indonesia plans to expand its health care system to cover all 250 million of its citizens by the start of 2014, and to extend the benefits to cover pensions and other forms of insurance by July 2015. In the bill that recently passed in the Southeast Asian country, the Indonesian government states that it will achieve all this through a single-payer system; one federal entity will by handling both fee collection and payment for treatment through one entity and in doing so, will be implementing the largest system of its kind ever (*The Economist*).

In the United States, the actual efficacy of a single-payer system is still something that is debated though various studies have shown that the future success of President Obama’s plan for health insurance may not necessarily be something to cry about. For example, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), one of the most vocal representatives of modern federal reforms, published a paper in the *American Journal of Medicine* several years ago in which a survey revealed that amongst bankruptcies in 2007, 60 per cent were caused by the inability to pay for medical expenses even though 75 per cent of those in that set actually had health insurance.

It was also discovered that the majority of these debtors were not those who were poor; instead,

according to statistical analyses conducted by the study’s authors, debtors, more often than not, were married, college-educated homeowners. Most debtors were said to be in the middle class.

Another reason that cries for a single-payer health care system in the United States have grown louder in recent years is because many medical institutions have become decentralized, mismanaged, and profit-driven. But there has been slow progress. Amongst other institutions, the Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle and the University of Michigan have gone to great lengths to standardize many of their logistical procedures in attempts to create more efficient ways of treating their patients, sometimes releasing patients up to two weeks earlier than other similar facilities (Gawande). Other clinics and hospitals across the country have since followed suit.

In addition to increased coverage paid for by the government, this is similar to what Indonesia is planning for its health care system, as what it currently has is widely acknowledged as being flawed. In 2009, *Integrated Regional Information Networks* (IRIN), a publication distributed by the United Nations, reported that the situation of health care in Indonesia was bad enough that those who could afford it would fly abroad in order to receive treatment elsewhere while those who could not suffered from a nationally mismanaged system. Following the online publication of one patient’s complaints about her treatment at a hospital in Indonesia, she was sued for criminal defamation. The court ruled that her complaints were “constructive criticism for public interest.”

Like any country with sizable income disparity, there is a lot of dispute in Indonesia over the passing of universal health care as law. In a country where more than a third of its citizens subsist on less than the equivalent of \$2 USD a day, there’s definitely going to be a lot of outrage concerning the system’s suggested unconditional magnanimity. However, universal health care as a concept seems to me less like forced altruism than humanitarianism; in a world where the wealthy already hold so much, good health definitely should not be something available exclusively to those who can afford it.

Norwegian Wood

by Tracy Wong

Norwegian Wood is a novel by Haruki Murakami that deals with life, death, love, and coming of age. Set in late 1960's Japan, a period of marked political as well as cultural turmoil, the novel follows the point of view of Toru Watanabe, a college student searching for his own identity in relation to his environment and those he comes to love around him.

Norwegian Wood exemplifies the saying "If a writer falls in love with you, you can never die". The novel plays like Toru's diary, the overarching frame being an undertaking between Toru and Naoko, his childhood friend as he promises to never forget her. To never forget her, he puts down in writing his story with her. It is his story dealing with love, the death of his best friend Kizuki, and sex. Murakami's portrayal of sex in the novel isn't raw, cutting and primal but soft, winding and beautiful while remaining incredibly sensual and intimate.

Murakami approaches love in the same conscientious manner he approached sex with. Love is portrayed from the varying perspectives of Toru, Naoko and Midori. Through Toru he delves into the notion of separating the physical gratification of sex from what love is. Is love being patient and waiting for someone who may never be ready? Or is love maybe just about buying a roll cake in the middle of the night and throwing that same cake away at the slightest whim of the one you love?

The novel follows Toru's own personal writings as he falls in love with the incredibly emotionally dependent Naoko. Murakami takes the flaws of each of these characters and manipulates it to make it their shining feature—the pinnacle of their appeal. Beyond her emotional turmoil she is quiet, contemplative and beautiful. But it's her eyes that Toru loves the most. Within her eyes Toru sees a deeper beyond, the mysterious workings of Naoko's mind that are privy to her and her alone. Waiting for Naoko, writing letters for Naoko, and saving his love for Naoko—Toru's thoughts of her consume him.

As preoccupied as he is with Naoko's existence,

something about Midori imposes her presence into his life. Contrary to Naoko, Midori is filled with endless chatter—a constant and warm comforting hum to fill the quietness. The unadulterated honesty in her words coupled with the clear transparency of her emotions displayed on her face give Toru an open window to her thoughts—and they are ever changing and enthralling.

Beneath the frame of the love story, there is the coming of age struggle with death. It is a slow struggle with his own self to accept that every year Toru ages a year farther from Kizuki who will remain forever 17 years old. Toru deals with the death in a way that all humans are prone to do, he runs. He runs to Tokyo, and Murakami sets the story during Japan's Golden 60s. In the midst of the student activism period in Tokyo, Toru's apathetic inattention is remarkably honest. If anything, he looks past the movement itself and sees the core of it being lackadaisical and infantile.

The film adaptation of Murakami's novel is directed by Tran Anh Hung. Although it's visually appealing and well done, like all film adaptations of novels it comes to naught in doing the original literature justice. Murakami's carefully wrought side characters are the casualties, in particular Nagasawa and Storm trooper. Nagasawa is stripped of his literary wit and charm as he is reduced to a mere play boy plebian, and the fondness one develops for Toru's roommate, Storm trooper, never comes into fruition as his character is inadequately developed in the film due to a lack of lines and appearances. But one should still see the film because there is the enjoyment of hearing what Kenichi Matsuyama as Toru has to say in Japanese, the language the novel was originally transcribed in. There is also the incentive of seeing actresses Rinko Kikuchi and Kiko Mizuhara portray Naoko and Midori, respectively. Kikuchi channels Naoko's mannerisms in her concise, withdrawn and polite manner of speaking as Mizuhara is effortlessly charming and vivacious maintaining the persona of Midori. Overall, the film accurately captures the emotion of the novel in visual form.



The New Look

by Raymond Lee '15

In May of 2012, Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami showed the film he had been working on at the annual Cannes Film Festival. The movie, titled “Like Someone in Love,” was shot over the course of however many weeks in Japan. Most peculiarly, so was everything else; amongst the factors of productions, from the cast to the crew, Kiarostami himself was the only person who wasn’t Japanese. When asked by the Huffington Post’s Karin Badt why he had chosen to shoot a movie in Japan with Japanese dialogue using Japanese staff, Kiarostami explained that via an anecdote:

“When the movie was finished, I told the set decorator I was sorry to not have been able to show his work extensively. His response: ‘I did not expect you to show it.’ He opened the kitchen cupboard and took a coffee box from it. ‘See this coffee,’ he said. ‘You cannot find this coffee in Tokyo anywhere. I am sure the professor would be the kind of man who would buy this coffee.’ It came from Kyoto, and yet we never see this coffee. It stays in the box.”

In recent years, inefficiently intense attention to detail has become a trademark for the Japanese. Bear Pond, a coffee shop in Japan, refuses to let its baristas make espressos until after they’ve trained for more than a year, and the owner himself stops making them after a certain time early in the day, because the fluctuations on the power grid after that time affect the voltage required for “optimal pressure.”

My friend recently purchased a vest that cost him the equivalent of cheap camera but actually retails for several times that. From the outside it doesn’t look any different from the kinds of vests that were available to military men decades ago, but that was the point. Buzz Rickson’s, a Japanese brand with a terribly American name, does reproductions of apparel worn decades ago, from flight jackets to sheepskin coats, with quality now unimaginable at prices almost unbearable.

Some of their most faithful reproductions attempt to mimic the original piece inch for inch, from the number of stitches along the collar to the size of the pockets to the placement of and font on the inner labels. Their less accurate renditions offer a variety of the same pieces in a slimmer cut, but with the same incomparable quality. But how do they do it?

Two years after the second World War, Levi’s, the American denim company, released a new version of their famous 501 jean. Three years earlier, before the end of the war, Levi’s had had to cut back on some of the resources available to make their products and so many details, like crotch rivets and the cinch, were removed in order to save metal and fabric. The dye was also diluted, resulting in a jean that displayed a weaker shade of blue.

After the war however, Levi’s released what is now known as the famous 1947 501, named for the year that it was first produced. It featured a button fly, rivets hidden under the fabric at points of stress in the top corners of the back pockets, a tighter, more meticulously woven denim called “selvedge”, and other minute details of stitching that the average consumer couldn’t possibly have cared about at the time but reflected the company’s pursuit of high-quality, functional clothes. In 1947, Levi’s jeans were all still made in the United States.

However, as the world progressed towards the 21st century, Levi’s, along with most of the brands around the world, began to produce their products at higher quantities of lower quality, boosting their revenue with the newly available and ever evolving technology and lower labor costs abroad.

It wasn’t so much that the mindset of skimping spread throughout the company; it was becoming increasingly apparent that the average customer, the customer who bought jeans to go to school and to go to work and maybe to bum around at home on

weekends, didn't care whether or not there were copper nipples under the seams of their back pockets protecting it from ripping off. To the average customer, a bar tack achieved the same thing for the customers and costs Levi's less. (On most jeans, at the top corners of the pockets, you can see that the stitching is a little heavier. This is the bar tack.) It turns out that the average customer also didn't really care about the quality of the denim, and so Levi's also forewent usage of their selvedge looms, opting instead for a more diluted indigo color on weaker denim fabric.

Towards the end of the 20th century, starting from the late 80s, several brands emerged. One was the French brand A.P.C., an acronym for "atelier de production et de création," which roughly translates to "workshop of production and creation." Their unembellished name reflected an ethos also evident in their design; for many years, and even now, A.P.C. was, and is, famous for their denim. Their jeans are hopelessly rigid, but the more wear they get the softer they become.

A.P.C. suggests that you don't wash your jeans for at least six months, so that the indigo can fade away at the places that receive the most abrasion; the goal is to come away after several months with a jean whose fade marks more or less reflect the life you've led. For jeans like those available from A.P.C., the fades tell just as much of a story as the stains.

(A couple of years ago, the "raw" denim became

popular again, partially in thanks to A.P.C. Thus, there were more people than ever walking around in jeans that they had worn every single day for the past however many months without washing them once and that raised some valid health issues: if you're rolling around in the grass and sitting on subways without washing your jeans, don't your jeans just become cesspools of bacteria? The University of Alberta conducted a test on some jeans that had been

worn fifteen months in a row without a wash. Unwashed jeans pose no significant health risks.)

In the final decades of the 20th century, Levi's stopped the production of their high-quality jeans altogether, offering only ones made of thin, flimsy denim rendered in tacky artificial washes. Up until 1999, when Levi's Vintage Clothing was created in order to appeal to a more discerning audience at a higher price point, the only firms still offering rigid, selvedge denim with rich, unadulterated indigo dye were those that were popular with small, insignificant pockets of the jean-wearing demographic. One was



Photo by Adam Sue

A.P.C., but by far the one putting out the most impressive product is Japan.

One of Buzz Rickson's related brands does for denim what Buzz Rickson's does for wartime jackets. Toyo Enterprises, the mother company of Buzz Rickson's, also encompasses a denim company named Sugar Cane, a brand that many denim enthusiasts claim does a better job of reproducing

Levi's denim from eras past than Levi's itself. Many details that Levi's misses, from the way the hem of the legs are stitched to the size of the back pockets, are faithfully present on Sugar Cane's versions of the product.

Nor is Sugar Cane alone. Many of the machines and techniques that America used in decades past in order to produce the very best denim were purchased or copied by Japanese firms, forfeited by the Americans because of their high costs of production and inefficiency; after all, the goal was to produce more, not less, and in that way the Japanese denim market had it slightly backwards.

But with the global financial crisis in 2008, less became more. Consumer interests began a gradual shift from the cheaply produced products of Forever 21's ilk available at questionably low prices to products of higher quality. Runways featured not the trendiest designs, but styles that harked back to an age of dress that was more classic, less easily dated, more durable, both in taste and in construction.

In the midst of this massive overhaul in consumer goals were blogs like *A Continuous Lean*, and books like *Take Ivy*, that to whatever extent put forth the idea that classic meant America in the 1950s, inspiring in millions a feeling of pseudo-nostalgia for a time in the United States of America where everything was dandy for one particular subset of the population and not so much for anybody else.

But while the rest of the world was only just creeping up on this veritable trend, Japan had been aware of it for more than a decade.

In the busy district of Aoyama in Tokyo are the offices of *Free & Easy* magazine. First published in 1992, *Free & Easy* puts out one issue monthly, and the contents within often feature a lifestyle that is at once totally American but also very Japanese. From extensive write-ups about American brands and icons to pages and pages featuring distinctly Western clothes, from brogues to corduroy sports coats to old photographs of Steve McQueen, *Free & Easy* represents not just the pseudo-nostalgia that emerged later across the sea, but a very Japanese obsession and re-appropriation of a culture foreign in origin.

Several hours from Tokyo at the other end of Honshu is the Wakayama prefecture, home to the remnants of the infamous Tokugawa and some of Japan's best fruits. It's also the location of the factories of Loopwheeler, a Japanese band dedicated almost solely to producing things out of sweatshirt fabric. But what's particular about Loopwheeler is that literally nobody else in the world produces it in the same way they do; since 1999, Loopwheeler has been making fabric using special "loop wheel" machines. In the 1920s, sweatshirt manufacturers produced their products on machines called "loop wheels" that knit fabric at the speed of about a meter per hour.

Swaying Seasons

by Penelope K. Park

Calibrating, moving closer
 Around earth's cloudy countenance we crane
 To see and find and seek what we are missing
 The marvel of man, and its deadly downfall
 Our standing monument suddenly marred
 But yet, our pride refuses to pander
 Faithful to our fathers but fearless and forward
 For the sun is setting and soon it shall rise



Photo by Max Wei

Taking a Stand for Women's Education in Pakistan

by Sandy Liu

On October 9th, 15-year-old education activist named Malala Yousufzai was shot in the head and neck by a Taliban member when she was on her way home from school in Swat Valley, Pakistan. Two other classmates were shot and hospitalized. This murder attempt has received global attention, making her an instant hero. In fact, Yousufzai has been a respected figure in Pakistan since 2009. At the age of 11, she gave public speeches about the importance of female education and the brutality that the Taliban committed to prevent females from learning. Her bravery was commended and Pakistan awarded her the National Youth Peace Prize.

The Taliban has been restricting women's education ever since they seized control over Swat Valley, a region located north of the city of Peshawar. Violence descended upon 180 schools, which resulted in the closing of hundreds of schools. About 125,000 women weren't able to attend school and many abandoned education once they've realized that there was no hope in matriculating. Few women continued school in fear because the Taliban made an announcement that prohibited all girls from attending school. There are many cases in which the Taliban terrorize schoolgirls by throwing acid at them. They reject the idea of females receiving a Western education. Since Yousufzai's ideals are against those of the Taliban's, they had pledged to kill Yousufzai for promoting "Western Thinking," to which Yousufzai responded, "I think of it often and imagine the scene clearly. Even if they come to kill me, I will tell them what they are trying to do is wrong, that education is our basic right."

Education is a basic right that everyone is entitled to have. In America, receiving an education is a privilege that many may take for granted. Education gives a people a sense of pride and accomplishment, something that everyone should have the right to achieve. It is also an outlet for improvement and advancement. It promotes participation in a community. If women were deprived of it, they would remain powerless and in the dark. Since women in Pakistan do not have many rights, education is their only hope for something better.

Granting the right of education to women everywhere in the world has many advantages. For example, women will become more active in politics and the economy. A variety of jobs will open up to them, which can improve family incomes and lessen the burden of men. According to NY Times, inflation has risen from 1.4 percent to 12.7 percent in Pakistan between the years of 2003 to 2010. Therefore, a family can no longer depend on the income of just the men in the household. Since Pakistan is a third world country with many of its citizens living in poverty, women's contribution in the workforce can increase the



income of its nation and possibly create a middle class. In addition, awareness of diseases can improve the health and well-being of adults and infants. Many diseases that are prevalent in Pakistan are acquired through contact with animals and bacteria from food and water. Through education, these diseases can be prevented and reduced. Most importantly, there will be less inequality between men and women, which reduces conflict.

Recently, it was discovered that two boys were accomplices in the attack. One boy distracted the bus driver while the other one asked someone to identify Yousufzai. It should be a cause for concern that the younger generations have been influenced to take part in such an inhumane act. The two boys are still not identified so punishment cannot be carried out. However, the Pakistani government is currently searching for the spokesperson of the Taliban and the driver of the school bus. The authorities demonstrated their defiance to the Taliban and support for Malala by naming a college after her on October 26th, and awarding the two injured schoolmates medals in honor for their bravery. Pakistanis also incited protests to condemn the actions of the Taliban. Yousufzai is currently receiving treatment in Great Britain and making progress. Yousufzai's father has stated that he will take her back to Pakistan when her condition improves. Despite the dangers of going back home, her father believes that they shouldn't submit to the Taliban's threats.

Malala has become an inspiration to all girls. Her hospitalized classmate, Ahmad, says "Girls will be attracted to an education because of Malala. Many are saying, 'If Malala can do what she did, why can't we do something similar?'" Because of Malala, these girls will stand up for what they believe in no matter what the consequences will be. Malala has given them hope and that alone is enough to prove that her sacrifice was not in vain.

Rejection of the Rohingya People in Burma

by Sandy Liu



Houses were destroyed, causing many villagers to flee.

Photo Credit: Bernard Jaspers-Fajer EU/ECHO

Many people may not know of the violence that currently plagues western Burma. Ethnic and religious clashes have erupted between the Rohingya Muslims and the Rakhine Buddhists. As Muslim minorities living in Rakhine State, located in western Burma, the Rohingya people have been terrorized for decades by the Rakhine Buddhists, an ethnic group that forms the majority of the population in Rakhine State. Despite the many atrocities committed, this state of affairs has not garnered much media attention, and the horrors experienced by Muslims of the region remain largely unknown.

Violence struck this past June when a Rakhine woman was raped and killed by three Muslim men. The Rakhine Buddhists retaliated by attacking the Muslims, resulting in 78 deaths. Later on October 23rd, 89 Muslims were found dead and more than 28,000 were forced to leave their homes. Thousands of homes were destroyed,

including mosques and monasteries. Men, women, and children fled their towns, leaving them with only an eerie emptiness. These refugees escaped their villages by boat and sought safety in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State. Even after paying bribes to the navy that amounts to 1.6 million kyats (USD equivalent: \$1,888), only a few of the refugees were able to land in Sittwe by boat. As a consequence, many sought refuge in Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh is persistent in refusing the entrance of Rohingya Muslims since they lacked citizenship. Bangladeshi patrol guards remain vigilant and will turn down boats that harbor refugees. Their refusal has caused devastation to Muslim families who believe that they would be killed if they were sent back home. Amidst this chaos, local Hindus have resorted to using bindis (a piece of jewelry worn on the center of the forehead) to differentiate themselves from the Muslims.

Many Muslims were reported missing. Dead bodies were spotted in the Bay of Bengal and it is suspected that those who are missing may have died. One refugee boat, carrying 130 Rohingyas, sank while traveling to Malaysia. Families and friends were separated during their journey, a cause of concern for many. The situation in refugee camps is not much better. The refugees endured heavy rain in crowded tents and received limited distribution of food and access to medical care. Children are becoming sick and malnourished.



Photo Credit: Bernard Jaspers-Fajer EU/ECHO

Though their homes are destroyed, the Muslims long to return

Over 7,000 Rohingya Muslims found shelter in camps located outside of Sittwe.

to their villages. The villages are now empty and the change in the community is apparent. Since the working class is largely composed of Rohingyas, those who worked in local areas as drivers and porters are nowhere to be found.

The conflict between the two groups has been rooted in history for decades, or even centuries. Some believe that it began during WWII when Buddhists supported the Japanese and the Muslims supported the British. Muslims began their migration to Burma in the beginning of the 20th century when Burma was still under British rule. As a result, many Indian Muslims enjoyed greater statuses and held jobs in clerical work and businesses. In the eyes of the Buddhists, they were considered foreigners who took jobs away from the Burmese. Once Burma gained independence, ethnic and religious discrimination against the Muslims increased. Subsequently, they were banned from building mosques, traveling, and becoming Burmese citizens. Since they do not have citizenship in Burma, their rights are also denied. Basic provisions such as food, shelter, and education are not assessable to them.

Racism may play a role in their denied citizenship. Those who have darker skin and speak a Bengali dialect are greatly discriminated against due to their resemblance

to Muslim Bangladeshis. Instead of referring to the Muslims as “Rohingya,” the former military government and state-run media would call them “Bengali Muslims.” As a result, the Rohingya people face neglect by the government and the people. Even when Muslims see a safe haven in Bangladesh, like the Burmese, the Bangladeshis also see them as illegal immigrants and reject them from entering their nation.

Burma has recently considered granting citizenship to the Rohingya Muslims as a solution to alleviate their tension with the Rakhine Buddhists. The genocide of Muslims has caught the Burmese government’s attention, which demands a “win-win” solution for both groups. Despite the government’s efforts in searching for a solution that will satisfy both parties, the reality is that the hatred between the two groups will continue to linger in years to come. Aung San SuuKyi, a respected Burmese opposition leader, has faced criticism on her refusal to talk about the persecution of the Rohingya Muslims. When asked about her thoughts on granting citizenship to the Muslims, she simply replied “I don’t know.” Citizenship can be a big step in improving the lives of the Rohingyas and possibly cease this treacherous massacre. However, will the Rakhine Buddhists be able to accept them as fellow Burmese and live with them in peace?

Foreign Beliefs 101: Eastern Faiths

by Dennis Lao

In the beginning, there was chaos. From this chaos emerged an egg. And this was no ordinary egg—it was one which embodied the miracle of balance and harmony. Out hatched the hairy and horned giant named P'an Ku, who then took out his axe and, with one swing, chopped the universe into two halves. Next, he stood between the earth and the sky and proceeded to push the two apart, growing taller in the process. On the 18,000th year, P'an Ku finished his work and rested forever, his flesh and bones becoming the world as we know it.

And thus concludes the myth of P'an Ku, a creation myth that is one of the most well-known in Chinese mythology. Its origins stem not from Buddhism, Confucianism or Taoism, but from Chinese Mythology.

There are many different philosophies and schools of thought in the East that are deeply ingrained into the collective Asian culture and history. Although they have all been frequently lumped together under the category of Eastern faith, they are actually diverse and nuanced. Yet, it is through this diversity that you can get holistic view of not just Eastern beliefs, but also Eastern culture and values. And finally, taking a glance at many different Eastern beliefs and their backgrounds makes it easier to notice major differences between Eastern and Western faith.

On the surface, the faiths of the East appear to be not that different from their Western counterpart. Taking Christianity to be the prime example of the West, one can see similarities across cultural barriers. Practicing believers usually enter a spiritual state. They usually have a designated place to practice their beliefs, and they usually partake in a ritual in order to connect with the supernatural. This is usually done at

regular intervals. Lastly, more often than not, a faith would involve key texts, from which the faith is built upon, and from which the believers recite and construct their philosophy and worldview.

Underneath, there are major differences between faiths of the East and Western Christianity, down to the core. Historically, the concept of monotheism (one God, rather than many) had never appeared in Eastern religion. In beliefs that involve at least one god, most notably Chinese folk religion and Japanese Shinto, worship and service are usually directed at one or more gods out of a group. These are the type of beliefs that are roughly a cross between animism and the Greek Pantheon. In the East, the concept of "gods" and "spirits" are interchangeable. It is also not uncommon for supernatural beings to have faults. Occasionally, people even have to fend for themselves against malicious spirits, whether it is through charms and symbols of luck, common motifs in Eastern culture, or ritual purification and exorcism, practiced in Shinto. From this, another missing element in Eastern faith is the concept of an all-knowing and omnipresent mind, or the existence of a ruler of the universe. It's no mistake to describe Eastern beliefs as generally anarchist. However, there may be one counterexample to this. Chinese Legalism, developed during the Warring States Period, was created to consolidate the power of the ruling classes. Its principles are simple: follow the law. Only then would a perfectly harmonious society be achieved.

Although there is no concept of a greater mind, some beliefs are centered around a powerful world-shaping force, or forces. In Buddhism, there are actually five known forces: Karma being the force behind cause and effect, Utu behind the seasons, Bija behind seeding and fruition, Chitta behind consciousness and the mind, and Dharma behind the trajectory of nature. These forces are what give rise to the Buddhist concept of reincarnation, where a soul lives on after death, in one of six different planes of existence. And phenomenon characteristic to



Photo by Dennis Lao

International Buddhist Temple, Richmond, BC

Buddhism is the concept of Nirvana, the highest level of consciousness and existence in Buddhism.

The concept of "Tao" is another world-shaping force appearing in Eastern faith, this one coming from the school of thought known as Taoism. It is translated as the "Way" or "Path," and its teachings are based on a text called *Tao Te Ching*, a collection of 81 short poems. The text is notorious for being ambiguous and inconsistent, and places responsibility entirely on the personal interpretation of its followers. The first lines of the text explicitly states that the Tao is not unchanging and cannot be represented in language. Despite all this ambiguity, one main principle of Taoism is the concept of *Wu Wei*, or "Non-Action," where the path to harmony lies in mental passiveness.

One striking aspect of Buddhism and Taoism is that emphasis is not on morality. Their teachings advocate a specific lifestyle or philosophy, rather than making a clear-cut distinction between good and bad. Chinese Legalism was one of the very few Eastern beliefs where morality is emphasized (indirectly, through the law), the other being Confucianism, which taught humaneness, righteousness, and etiquette. Both schools of thought had hardly any spirituality associated with them, and were developed for utilitarian purposes. Since they had already been

at their peak when Buddhism and Taoism were on the rise, the rise of spiritual beliefs took place in an environment where morals were already preached.

With regards to faith, East Asia had been largely pluralistic throughout most of its long history, and interactions were common between

followers of different faiths. This was a different story in Europe, which was predominantly Christian for much of the last two millennia. While there had always been one perpetual truth as far as Western society is concerned, there had long been multiple "approaches" in the East. Faiths readily borrowed from one another and developed out of those that already existed. In the past, Taoists have assimilated followers of folk religions, with no conflicting beliefs. When Buddhism was integrated into local communities, figures from folk religion influenced the local perception of Buddhist bodhisattvas, or Enlightened Ones. With morals already established by Legalism and Confucianism, faiths such as Buddhism, Taoism, and folk religion attempted to expand on the knowledge of the world and provided different paths for the faithful, who bear in mind the notion that perhaps not one single faith is the "best" or the "correct" one. While the concept of surrendering is emphasized in Christianity, the burden of choice is the focus of the East. It is under this burden that certain kinds of questions emerge:

What does Nirvana mean to you? Are you sure this will lead you to enlightenment? Which god do you think can help you the most? How would you interpret any of the sections in the *Tao Te Ching*? Which faith should you follow in the first place? How about inventing your own?

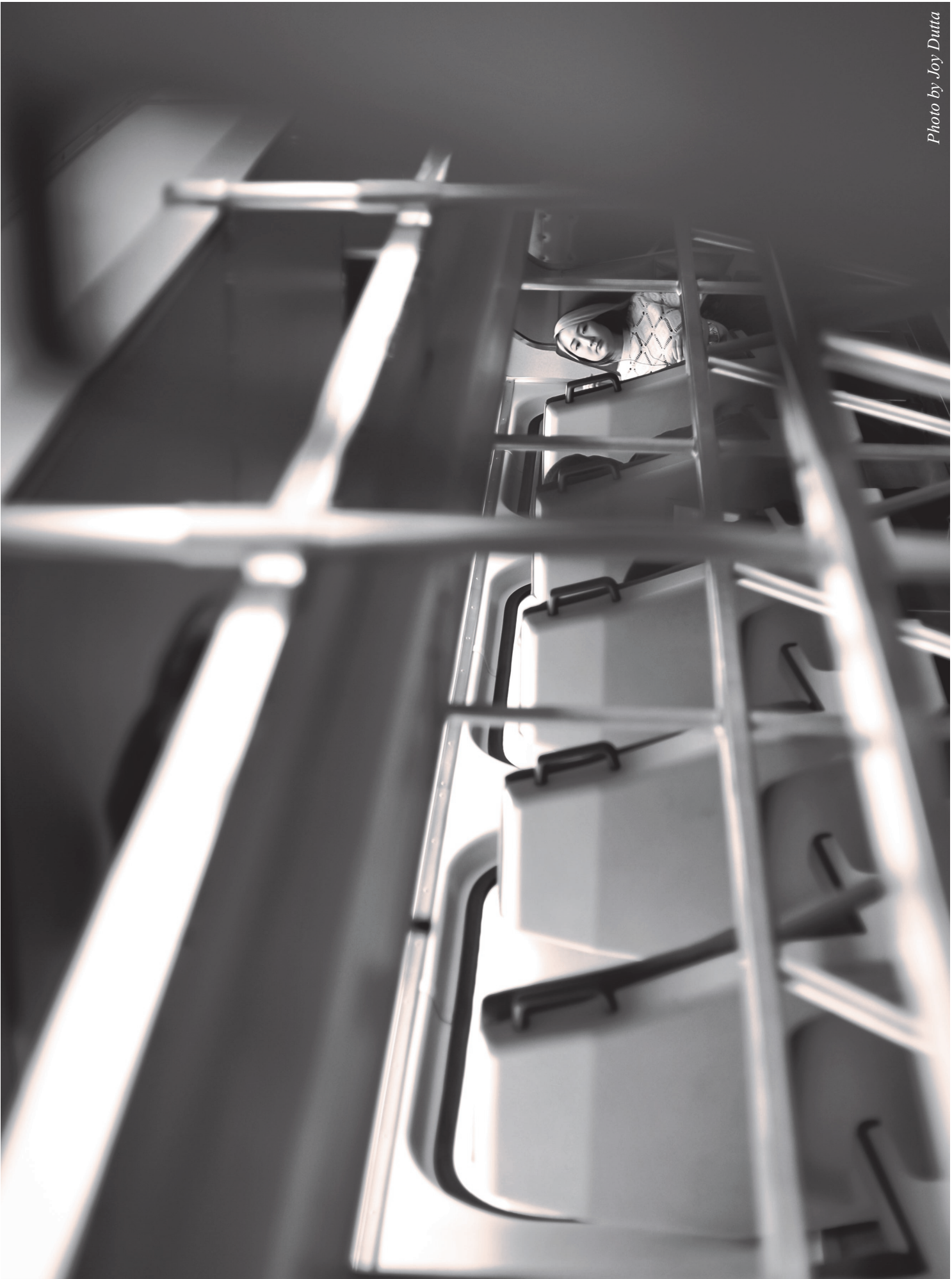


Photo by Joy Dutta



Photo by Max Wei

Strange Foods in Asia

by Sandy Liu

What is the strangest food *you* 've ever eaten? In Asia, there are many unusual foods that may not seem appetizing but is actually a delicacy for many. Although the dishes may seem odd, some are actually good for your health.

Bird's Nest Soup

Bird's Nest Soup is considered an expensive delicacy in China and its largest importers are Hong Kong and the US. A bowl of this soup can cost up to \$30 and a single kilogram of nest can range from \$2,000 to \$10,000. These nests are expensive because they are not easy to obtain. The broth is made from the nests of the Swiftlet bird. However, the nest is not any ordinary nest - it is made from the bird's solidified saliva. Yes, it is actually a soup full of saliva. The nest is made by the male swiftlet and takes 35 days to complete, its size usually no bigger than that of a human hand. The soup actually has many health benefits - improving complexion and the immune system. The nests can be purchased in white, yellow/red and black. White is the purest, while the other nests gain their color from different minerals consumed by the bird.



One Hundred Year Old Egg

Also known as the Century Egg, or Thousand Year Old Egg, it is a popular Chinese cuisine ingredient often used in congee for its salty taste. It is duck, chicken, or quail eggs that have been preserved for several weeks to several months. The eggs are placed in a mixture of clay and salt. During this process, the egg yolk will turn dark green and gooey and the egg white will turn dark brown and jelly-like. In the curing process, the egg will emit an odor that some may associate as the scent of sulfur or ammonia, and the pH will rise to about 9-12. As you can see, it is nowhere along the lines of the regular eggs that we know and love.



Takoyaki

Takoyaki is a fried delicacy in Japan that is often served in festivals and by street vendors. Its popularity has risen and families enjoy making this dish together. "Tako" stands for octopus and "yaki" stands for something that is fried or grilled. It is shaped like a ball and filled with minced octopus, ginger, and green onions. Fun fact: it actually contains octopus testicles.



Balut

Balut, meaning “wrapped” in Filipino and Malay, is a duck egg. Well, the exact description would be a duck egg with a fetus inside. To be more precise, the fetus of the perfect balut must be 16 to 20 days old. The appearance of the inside is just as one would expect, if anyone were interested enough to venture a guess. When the shell is removed, you can see the duck’s feathers, beak, and bones. If you don’t see them, don’t worry - you may soon encounter them after you start eating. Despite this outlandish description, balut is a popular snack that is often sold by street vendors in the Philippines. So what makes it so popular? Balut is cheap and high in protein which is the perfect energy boost for a long day. Much like any egg, balut are also high in cholesterol.



Kimchi

Kimchi is a popular dish in Korea that can be served during every meal. It is cabbage that has been fermented for a long period of time. The finished product is usually mixed with garlic, salt, vinegar, peppers, and other spices. Despite the fact that the cabbage is “rotten” due to the fermentation period, kimchi has many beneficial properties. It is high in fiber and low in fat which is important in preventing obesity. In addition, it contains vitamin A, B, C, and benign the bacteria called lactobacilli. This bacterium is found in fermented foods and helps with digestion and yeast infections.



Durian

Durian is known as the “King of Fruits” in Southeast Asia. This is probably a suitable name due to its spiky exterior and its richness in nutrients. Durian is full of B-complex vitamins, dietary fiber, vitamin C, potassium, essential amino acid, copper, iron, and magnesium. Although very nutritious, it is one of the smelliest fruits in the world and is often compared to the smell of raw sewage. Its pungent smell has caused various public places to ban the presence of this fruit. As a result, it isn’t a surprise to see “No Durian” signs on the streets of Southeast Asia. It is a love or hate fruit with a creamy taste that is a good ingredient for desserts.



Credits: Illegal to sell balut in NY, photo from internet. Dorian on display in Qingdao, China, photo by Peng Peng Wang. Kimchi, takoyaki, 1000 year old eggs, and ingredients for ‘pseudo’ birds nest soup purchased from Oriental Grocery in Stony Brook and prepared and photographed by Mengxing He and May Hao Wang.

BLの魅力とは

by Naomi Arima

日本の一部の若い女性の間で、BLと呼ばれるジャンルが人気を呼んでいる。BLとは”Boys Love”という和製英語の頭文字をとったもので、1990年代から使われ始めた。他にもやおいなどの別称もあるが、いずれも同性愛者、特に男性同性愛者を扱った漫画・アニメ・小説作品等を指す。BLを特に好む女性は自らを「腐女子(ふじょし)」と呼んでそうでない女性と区別しており、「腐」という漢字からもわかるように世間一般よりも劣った存在としてあまり自らが腐女子であることを公言する女性は多くない。ところが、書店に行くとそういった「女性向け」のコーナーが設置されていることが多いことや2009年の日本国内での売り上げは213億円*に上るなどのデータからしても、その人気ぶりがうかがえる。今回はその人気の秘密について、ある腐女子の意見を参考にひも解いていくことにしよう。

彼女によれば、BL作品はどちらか片方または両方が元々同性愛者でない場合が多く、性的対象としてではなく人間性に惹かれて恋愛対象へと変わっていく描写がストレートのカップルを描いたものよりも多いのだという。女性特有の腹黒さも排除されているために純粋に恋愛を楽しむことができるのだそう。また、社会的マイノリティとしての当人たちの葛藤はBL最大の見せ場であり、それを受け入れカップルが成立した時点で完結してしまう作品がほとんどなのだとか。「カップルになる」というわかりやすいゴールがはじめから設定されていること、さらに性的描写が豊富なことも彼女たちを惹きつける要因だ。中には男性の体の構造など現実ではありえないようなことが暗黙の了承として受け入れられているものもあり、実在の同性愛者たちとは異なるものとして確立している。「ゲイとBLは違う」と彼女は少し興奮気味に話していた。近年はBLの中でも分野が細分化しており、読者のニーズも多様化している。

BLを扱う上で無視できないのが同人誌の存在

だ。同人誌とは特定の作品を好む者同士のことを指すが、最近では既にある作品や実在の人物・団体から一部あるいはすべての設定や登場人物を借りてきて別のエピソードを作り出す分野という認識が強く、その性質から二次創作とも呼ばれる。著作権の問題もあり取り締まりも厳しくなりつつあるものの、売り上げは年々上昇傾向にあり衰えることを知らない。同人市場の中でBLは大きな割合を占めており、その多くは元の作品がBLでないものだ。さらには、人間ではないものを人間として見立てるいわゆる「擬人化」も腐女子の得意分野のひとつ。動物だけにとどまらず、国や文房具までが作品の中で人間の姿かたちを与えられ、意思を持って動き出す。彼女たちにしてみれば、この世に存在するすべてのものが想像のタネとなるのだろう。このようにして、何らかの存在をいわば美化・理想化した物語がBLであり、その現実との距離感が彼女たちを楽しませているのだろう。



Photo by Nozomi Aoki

BL Attract Girls

by Naomi Arima

BL is recently popular among young girls in Japan. BL stands for “Boys Love”, which started to be used from 1990’s. This genre has some other names like *yaoi*, but all of those names refer to works of art such as manga, anime, or novels which treat homosexuals, especially gays. The girls who like BL call themselves *fujoshi*, meaning rotten girl. They distinguish themselves differently from the girls who do not like BLs, and as they use the word “rotten”, they think themselves as worse than the girls who are not *fujoshi* and tend to hide their taste. In many bookstores in Japan, however, there is a shelf that only displays BL mangas. Also, the total sale of BL related works in Japan in 2009 was 21,300,000,000 yen (approximately \$215,000,000)*. Let us go inside why BL is popular, with an opinion one *fujoshi* gave me.

According to her, either one or both of the guys in the story is a straight in BL works, that causes the guys are attracted to each other not because they are their sexual interested but because they are them as a human beings. The spitefulness that many girls have was also cut off and *fujoshi* can enjoy the pureness of love itself. The conflict within their heart as a social minority is the most attractive part that BL has, that is why the majority of BL mangas end when they finally accept them as gays and become a couple. As well as the goal to become a couple is set from the beginning, another point which attracts *fujoshi* is they have enough pornographic descriptions. “Yet BL is different from the real gays”, she said a little excitedly, “for it has unrealistic body parts to describe a beautiful bodies as an unwritten rule.” These years the BL is subdivided in many types as the needs of the readers have been diverse.

The existence of *dojin-shi* (a magazine of fans) cannot be ignored when we treat BL as a topic. *Dojin* means the fans of any particular works, but these days that tends to refer to activities to borrow characters or

settings from existing works or even real humans such as idols, and create another episode with them. With that characteristic, *dojin* is also called derivative works. Although the regulation has been becoming stricter because of the problems of copyrights, the sales amount is getting higher. BL occupies noticeable rate of *dojin* market, and many of the original works they borrow from are not BL. Moreover, to make an object to a human, or prosopopoeia, is the field that *fujoshi* are good at. Not only treating animals, but also countries or stationaries would be moving as a human with concious. For *fujoshi*, everything that exists in the world can be a material for their creation. Thus, the story with beautified or idealized existence is BL. The gap between that story and the reality entertains *fujoshi* a lot.



Chinese Mothers Provide Best Guidance

By Elizabeth Eunsong K. Yang

In the article, "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior," Amy Chua, born of parents who had emigrated from China to America, emphasizes that Chinese mothers raise their children more successfully than Western parents. Chua's article appeals to various audiences, including parents, students and educators. She presents statistical information that suggests significant differences of Western and Chinese parents' nurturing.



Photo by Max Wei

Chua stresses three major differences: First, Western parents are concerned about children's self-esteem while Chinese parents are not. Second, Chinese parents believe that children must compensate parents for their devotion and dedication to their children. In contrast, Western parents consider it the parents' responsibility and duty to serve their children. Third, Chinese parents mold their children according to their own tastes and desires. They believe that parents can provide the best material for their children's future. On the other hand, Western parents are more sensitive about their children and are careful not to hurt their feelings (Chua 217-222). Do you think Chinese mothers are too hard on their children? Although Chinese mothers may seem overprotective and strict, I believe that they also provide the best guidance for their children.

Chinese mothers strongly believe that they can provide the most suitable path for their children. Most Chinese mothers think that they have far better judgment than their children because they have already survived similar experiences. In other words, experience enlightens Chinese mothers to educate their children more effectively. For instance, my mother consistently demanded me to practice my instruments: piano, flute

and oboe. Unlike my other friends, I did not receive any tutoring. In fact, my mother strongly encouraged me to be independent by acquiring the skills by myself. Since I was entirely on my own, she intensely pressured me to exceed my friends who received lessons from their private teachers. I tried to reason with my mother by explaining and demonstrating how much I disliked playing my instruments. However, all of my efforts were unsuccessful; my mother even sat with me during my whole practice which lasted about five hours every day. As I think of it now, I am not only thankful for my mother's teaching style, but also glad that she was harsh with me. With my mother's unconditional support, I can stand proud in front of friends and family with my musical skills. Thanks to my mother's Chinese parenting style, I swept almost every prize in recitals.

Although Chinese mothers do not compliment their children often, they still admire their children. Actually, Asian mothers with Chinese parenting skills do not overuse flattering remarks on their children. For example, in Korea a renowned figure skater named Yuna Kim was raised by a Chinese mother. Kim's mother forced her daughter to start figure skating. Kim's family was not affluent enough to hire a coach, so Kim's

mother, who was a figure skater before, taught Yuna how to figure skate. In addition, to support Yuna, Kim's mother quit her own painting lessons and applied all of her family resources in making Yuna a figure skating star. After many years of training, Yuna Kim became the number one figure skater at the Vancouver Olympic games by setting a world record with nearly perfect performances.

When an interviewer asked Kim about her mother, she said that her mother complimented her a total of five times in her life. However, Kim added that she appreciates and admires her mother; her mother's teaching style taught her to be humble and never give up. Yuna Kim concluded that though her mother barely complimented her, she could still feel her mother's love and caring through her unconditional devotion and support. In addition, because of her mother's disciplinary characteristics, Yuna Kim claimed that her personality had changed to bold and strong from a shy and timid girl. At the end of the interview, Kim dedicated her gold medal to her mother because the

However, I disagree with Chua's critics. Although the children may not seem confident, they eventually assimilate their mothers' bold and adamant traits. For example, my aunt always followed my cousin, MJ, around and decided what was best for him all by herself. My aunt is the kind of person who is decisive and can withstand any possible circumstances. I could never imagine MJ doing his own work independently. Since my cousin hardly made any choices of his own, he was always indecisive. When MJ was sent to America for a few years to learn English, all of my family worried that he would not overcome any predicaments, because he was too dependent on his mother. Shockingly however, he survived through many difficulties; he made numerous friends in the United States and became fluent in English.

I personally believe that MJ's independence and bold characteristics came from my aunt. Since MJ was raised looking at his mother's adamant but strong traits, MJ applied his mother's examples to survive through difficult situations. However, if my aunt was weak and timid, he might be a dependent person for the rest of his life because he would not have any courageous person as a mentor. Therefore, I disagree with the idea that the children who were raised under Chinese parenting style have low self-esteem. The children eventually become like their mothers and enlighten themselves to subdue plights.

Although I cannot determine that Chinese parenting is the most commodious way to educate children, personally, when I someday have children of my own, I will definitely raise them as I was raised with the Chinese style of parenting. Since children tend to be immature and indecisive, I believe that children need a proper leader who can lead and guide them through the most suitable way.

In conclusion, I want to call Chinese parenting a bitter love. In other words, although it is not as sweet as candy or most wanted, the parents are providing the best for their children out of love and care. The parenting style is just different from others. Chinese mothers love their children just as much as other mothers love their children. Therefore, I support Amy Chua's argument that Chinese parenting style is superior.



Photo by Max Wei

figure skater, Yuna Kim, could not be the gold medalist of today without her mother's guidance.

However, others who disagree with Amy Chua's claim argue that children who are raised with Chinese parenting style may have low self-esteem. Since mothers with Chinese parenting style tend to determine most of the children's schedules, it seems reasonable to oppose Amy Chua's point of view.

Professor Kam-ling Wong

Alumni and Students from AA E-Zine, CASB and China Blue Bid Fond Farewell To Favorite Professor and Adviser

“Oh man, Professor Wong’s da bomb!” said Josh Winslow after going to the first few lectures of her Chinese 111 Intro class. Her students all felt the same way. Although she was hard and strict (she is a Chinese mother after all), they loved her classes because she was fun and she was fair. She could not hide her obvious affection for students beneath her proper demeanor. Which is also why she ended up being the faculty adviser to most of the East/Southeast Asian clubs. Not just the Chinese clubs like CASB and China Blue, she was even adviser to KSA, the Korean Students, and VSA, the Vietnamese Students.

Although Prof. Wong is leaving SBU, she is not giving up teaching. Instead, students at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) will get to enjoy what students at SBU will miss.

Rather than write about her, we’re letting the former E-Board members of AA E-Zine, CASB and China Blue say it in their own words.

Professor Wong is a compassionate instructor whom I did not take a formal class with, but who offered me several opportunities to work on various cultural enrichment projects here at Stony Brook University. Through her, I was able to mentor Chinese international students in conversational English for one semester and wholeheartedly dedicate yet another semester to serving as the Editor



Impromptu farewell speech by Prof. Wong when China Blue gave her a surprise farewell. Photo by Samantha Chan

in Chief of the Asian American E-Zine. As I reminisce on my college career at SBU, I can still clearly recall all the opportunities for my growth as a student and as an Asian American which would have been impossible for me had I not received such guiding mentoring from Professor Wong. Undoubtedly, Professor Wong will be missed at SBU; however, I do not doubt that her legacy will continue through the lives of all the students she has impacted throughout her career.

- Melani Tionson,
AA E-Zine Editor

Professor Kam-ling Wong will truly be missed. With her great dedication to Asian American Studies, exhibited through her involvement as a professor and faculty advisor to several Asian clubs on campus (especially CASB), she has been a pivotal part in furthering Chinese culture and awareness. Professor Wong was always open to learn about upcoming CASB events, and also led clubs out of crises with her great mentoring skills. It is unfortunate that future generations will be unable to learn and work with her directly. However, I know that her influence throughout the many years she's devoted at Stony Brook will continue to carry on in the lives that she has already touched. I wish her a happy and smooth transition into the next stage of her life!

- Stephanie Long, CASB President

I've had the pleasure of having Kam-ling Wong as both a professor as well as a club adviser. She's been nothing but uplifting for both circumstances. She stands out in particular among other professors to me personally because I always found myself inadvertently divulging personal anecdotes as if I were conversing with an old friend whenever I would walk out of the library with her after class. It's strange to find myself so comfortable around a professor who upon an initial impression may come off as terrifying.

- David Chen, CASB President

I had the pleasure of having been both a student and advisee of Professor Wong during my junior and senior year at Stony Brook University. Through her teachings I've gained a better understanding of Asian and Asian American culture as well as their significance throughout history and modern society. As an advisor to CASB, Prof. Wong inspired our organization to serve as a beacon in generating and representing Chinese and Chinese American awareness on campus. Because of this, her teaching extended even further to other students who were unable to gain from her classes. Prof. Wong's integral role in Asian and Asian American studies has benefited an often overlooked culture, one that is still struggling to be recognized today. Much of what I've learned about my own identity stems from her teachings and I carry them with me today. Thank you Prof. Wong! You've done so much for us! Have a happy new life in Hong Kong!

- Derrick Tan, CASB President

Professor Kam-ling Wong has certainly left and indelible mark on our lives. While it may seem cliché to describe her presence as motherly, to me her legacy has left every right to be celebrated in such a way. As one of her previous students, her educational guidance and care has enlightened me in ways that are rare for educators today. Whether it is Chinese culture or language, her messages still resonate with me and are certainly not forgotten. As an undergraduate leader, she kept a protective eye on my actions to make sure that the underlying motive is always present: to promote and maintain Asian culture. While we may not have agreed on every point, it was ultimately her respect towards fostering such enthusiasm, accountability, and originality that should make each and every one of us hold her in

high regard. It is upsetting that prospective students may not have the chance to develop a meaningful relationship with Prof. Wong, but all good things must eventually come to an end. As the next stage of her life will soon begin, I would like for her to know that her dedication to her students and her craft will never go unnoticed. She nurtured our ideas, cultivated our aspirations, and promoted all of her students to become complete individuals in society, going above and beyond all expectations from her position. She deserves our sincerest gratitude and our unyielding respect. Thank you, Prof. Kam-ling Wong, as it was my honor to be one of your students.

- Norman Lee, China Blue VP

Even with her busy schedule, Professor Wong continued to be the advisor of China Blue throughout the time I served as president of this (amazing) student organization. I've also had the opportunity to be her student and her teaching assistant during my undergraduate experience. I found that I was able to learn from Prof. Wong in all of these roles whenever I worked with her, which allowed me to be a better leader, student and TA. I wish her the very best for a happy new life in Hong Kong and I hope she enjoys it to the fullest! Thank you, Prof. Wong, for your continued support. You will be missed!

- Thomas Su, China Blue President



PH Tuan, architect of the Charles B. Wang Asian American Center, with Prof. Kam-ling Wong, at the [AA]² Asian and Asian American Student Leaders Awards Ceremony, SBU graduation 2009

Prof. Wong was our club adviser (China Blue) and encouraged us to collaborate with other clubs on campus. This led to a highly organized Chinese New Year event, and the cooperative efforts to host cultural events on campus has strengthened throughout the years since. She is kind and always willing to offer time to address students' concerns. She is also knowledgeable and dedicated to her work. It was truly a pleasure working with her (and being a student in her Chinese language class).

- Ken-Wing Lee, China Blue President



Prof. Kam-ling Wong and Prof. Teng-fong Wong with their son, Ian, at Harvard

Professor Wong was an incredible mentor who taught me elementary Chinese as well as supervised my independent research. The resulting research paper was over 25 pages long and a big accomplishment in my life. In addition, I'm now able to relatively understand Mandarin Chinese because of her teaching. Furthermore, she served as a valuable adviser to China Blue, a club that often looked for her valuable insight and wisdom on new ideas. It's unfortunate that she is leaving Stony Brook, as she is a very warm person who can always brighten up your day. The AAS department won't be the same without her.

- Brian Loo, AA E-Zine & China Blue,
Treasurer & Photographer

In Spring 2011, I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Wong when I became involved in China Blue, a Chinese radio show on WUSB at Stony Brook University. When I became president in Fall 2012, I visited Prof. Wong for any ideas or advice she had for upcoming China Blue events and general body

meetings. Regardless of her busy schedule, she has consistently supported China Blue and is always present for each event on campus. Prof. Wong has been a huge backbone for China Blue, and China Blue will not find a faculty club advisor who has had as much insight and knowledge about the Asian community and clubs on campus as her. Under Prof. Wong's effort, dedication, and guidance, China Blue has grown to be a successful club with many hardworking members and fantastic events. She has also supported me when I won the Shimming Hu / Eli

Seifman Memorial Student Leadership Award from the Department of Asian & Asian American Studies in 2012. Truthfully, it is difficult for me to describe my appreciation for her in words: I hope China Blue's continued success in Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 after I graduated has been representative enough. I wish Prof. Wong good health and good luck!

- Crystal Lee,
China Blue President

Professor Kam-ling Wong was not only an influential and integral member of the Asian and Asian American Studies Department, but she was also an active supporter of the Asian student community at Stony Brook University. As the club advisor for the Chinese Association at Stony Brook (CASB), she has helped us numerous times providing her opinion, feedback, and suggestions to further educate and implement the Chinese culture into our events. In addition to being a professor and club advisor, Prof. Wong also served as a mentor for many students, offering her advice on both personal and professional issues. She was known for going above and beyond and making a positive impact that has touched us all. Although we have graduated, we have done our best to instill what we have learned from her to future generations in hopes that her lessons and legacy will continue to shine. We appreciate everything that she has done for us and we only wish her the best! Have a happy new life in Hong Kong, Professor Wong!

- Jenny, Winnie, and Denny Mai

Professor Teng-fong Wong

Louis Néel Medal Winner, a.k.a. the Nobel for Geologists,
Gets the Offer of a Lifetime to Help Transform a University



Prof. Teng-fong Wong in his SBU office, his Louis Néel Medal, among others, behind him. Photo: Ngoc Vu, 2010

In 2012, while giving a lecture at Chinese University of Hong Kong, more commonly known as CUHK and where Nobel Laureate CN Yang holds a position, Geology Professor Teng-fong Wong was offered the opportunity of a lifetime. Come back to the land of your birth and create something new. Not just a Geosciences department, but more. Envision an academic program that connects the whole of the physical earth as it should be connected to provide cutting edge academics and research.

And so this past January Prof. Wong left to be Director of what is now the Earth System Science (ESSC) Programme. As its new website boldly states, “Studying how our planet Earth works as a system provides the intellectual core of the programme and the knowledge base for understanding and solving important contemporary issues such as climate change, carbon emission, loss

of biodiversity, sustainability, and environmental impacts that could lead to natural and human-made disasters. With the increasing awareness and recognition that human activities are exerting numerous influences on Earth, our programme provides an ideal opportunity for young minds to acquire the knowledge and skills for understanding the technical aspects of the Earth system, making informed decisions and scientific judgments, and preparing themselves for engaging in tackling some of the most pressing problems of the 21st century.”

And why was Prof Wong chosen? The article on the next page, written for www.aaezine.org in 2010 when he won the Louis Néel Medal, will give you some idea. But CUHK’s gain is our loss. Hopefully when his leave of absence is up, Prof. Wong will return to his second home where he spent 30 years making a name for himself, Stony Brook University.

This summer we had the pleasure of interviewing Stony Brook's very own Professor Teng-fong Wong. Wong has been teaching in SBU's Department of Geosciences since 1982 and has an impressive list of accomplishments under his belt. He obtained a BS in Applied Math at Brown University, an MS in Applied Mechanics at Harvard, and his PhD in Geophysics at MIT. In addition, he has published over 100 scientific articles and has penned several textbooks in the U.S and China. He even has his own patent and this year he can add winner of the Louis Néel Medal of the European Geosciences Union to the list.

So what's all this fuss about? Louis Néel... what? Louis Néel (1903-2000) was a French Physicist who won a Nobel Prize in Physics for his work in 1970 regarding antiferromagnetism. Anti-ferromagnetism... that's a mouthful, but the important thing is that his work was the basis that allowed us to understand the Earth's magnetic field. The Louis Néel Medal was established to honor his work and is awarded to "individuals in recognition of outstanding achievements in rock magnetism and rock physics & geomaterials." Teng-fong Wong is the 7th person to win this award and the 1st, but hopefully not the last, Asian/Asian American to win. After a slew of nominations he received a bulky letter in the mail stating he was the one chosen, and Prof. Wong was delightedly surprised to find that he was a recipient of the most prestigious award in his field.

During the interview Professor Wong was charming and easy-going as he discussed his work in Geology. He explained some of the jargon that stumped us while preparing for the interview such as the meaning of ductile and brittle in regards to the earth. Ductile stone flexes when pressure is applied whereas brittle stone breaks; these terms can be applied to many other materials too. It turns out his research is vitally important in understanding earthquakes. One topic of hot debate is the question of whether or not humans are inducing earthquakes. Wong noted that since the Aswan Dam was built in Egypt (construction began in 1960 and ended in 1970), there have been increases in the number of earthquakes there. He also mentioned that people are arguing that impoundment of dams has led to increased earthquakes in China, but scientific data has

been unclear and very controversial. Regardless, though it may seem that earthquake devastation may be increasing, Professor Wong states that generally, the average number of earthquakes per year remains unchanged. The bigger problem, however, is the heightened concentration of people living in hazardous areas, thus increasing the likelihood of casualties and infrastructural destruction of cities.

Professor Wong also shared his thoughts on environmental preservation. Keenly aware of global climate change, he noted the problem of dealing with excess CO₂. He mentioned the prospect of CO₂ sequestration in which CO₂ can be pumped into empty oil wells and aquifers. One problem related to oil and gas removal is that "weak spots" can be made in the earth. Oil and gas wells naturally exert upward

pressure on the earth but when the oil/gas is removed this upward pressure is diminished and the ground is destabilized. Pumping CO₂ into these empty wells could restore this upward pressure and stability.

And while some of the technical explanations of the Earth's mechanics may not pique the interests of everyone,

Professor Wong and his research communicate a very relatable and comprehensible philosophy: balance and stability. Whether it is trying to balance pressure via CO₂ sequestration or equalizing ratios of salt and fresh waters in certain areas, Wong's studies take stabilization very seriously. And like his work, Professor Wong too incorporates balance in his life. During the interview, he recounted jovially his son's recent graduation from Harvard Medical School's post doc program in medicine and engineering, the first time he met many of his esteemed colleagues and associates in Europe, and his excitement over the finale of the FIFA World Cup.

As we were exchanging goodbyes, we noticed amongst his medals and published books a photo of his wife and son. Smiling, we thought to ourselves, this is the epitome of a man who really loves everything he's done.

Congratulations again to Dr. Teng-feng Wong for his great success! We wish you prosperous, earth-shaking luck in the future.

- Melani Tiongson, Ngoc Vu, Kenneth Yu
Note: their closing line certainly proved to be true! JY





The Hsu-nami Band - photo by Brian Loo



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