

GIDRA

SUMMER 99
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M E N T A L B R E A K D O W N

ASIAN
AMERICAN
STUDIES

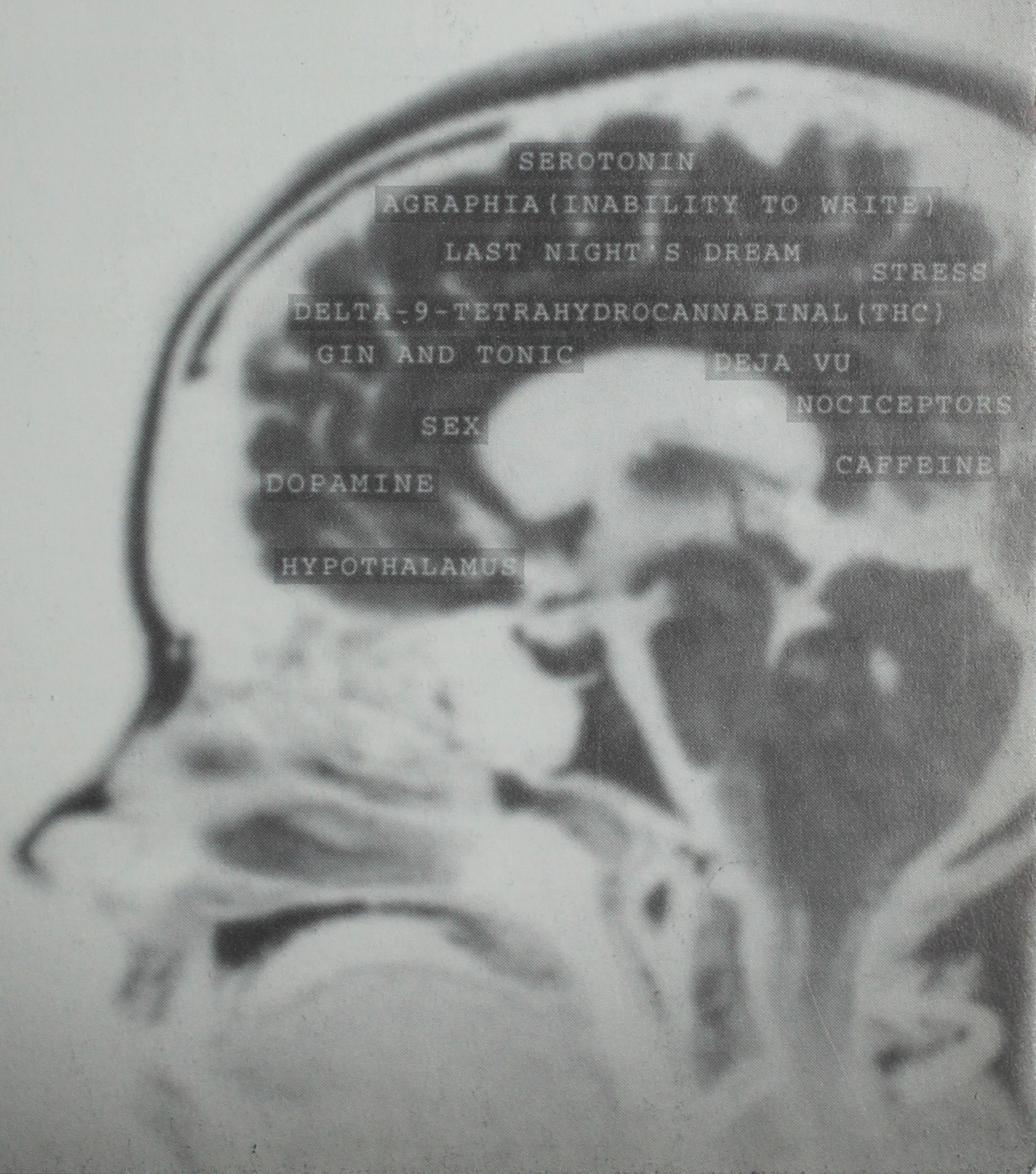
STRUGGLES
AT USC

PAN-ASIAN
WHAT?

ETHNIC
STUDIES AT
SKYLINE HIGH

CAMBODIAN
TEENAGERS IN
LONG BEACH

THE LOVE BOAT



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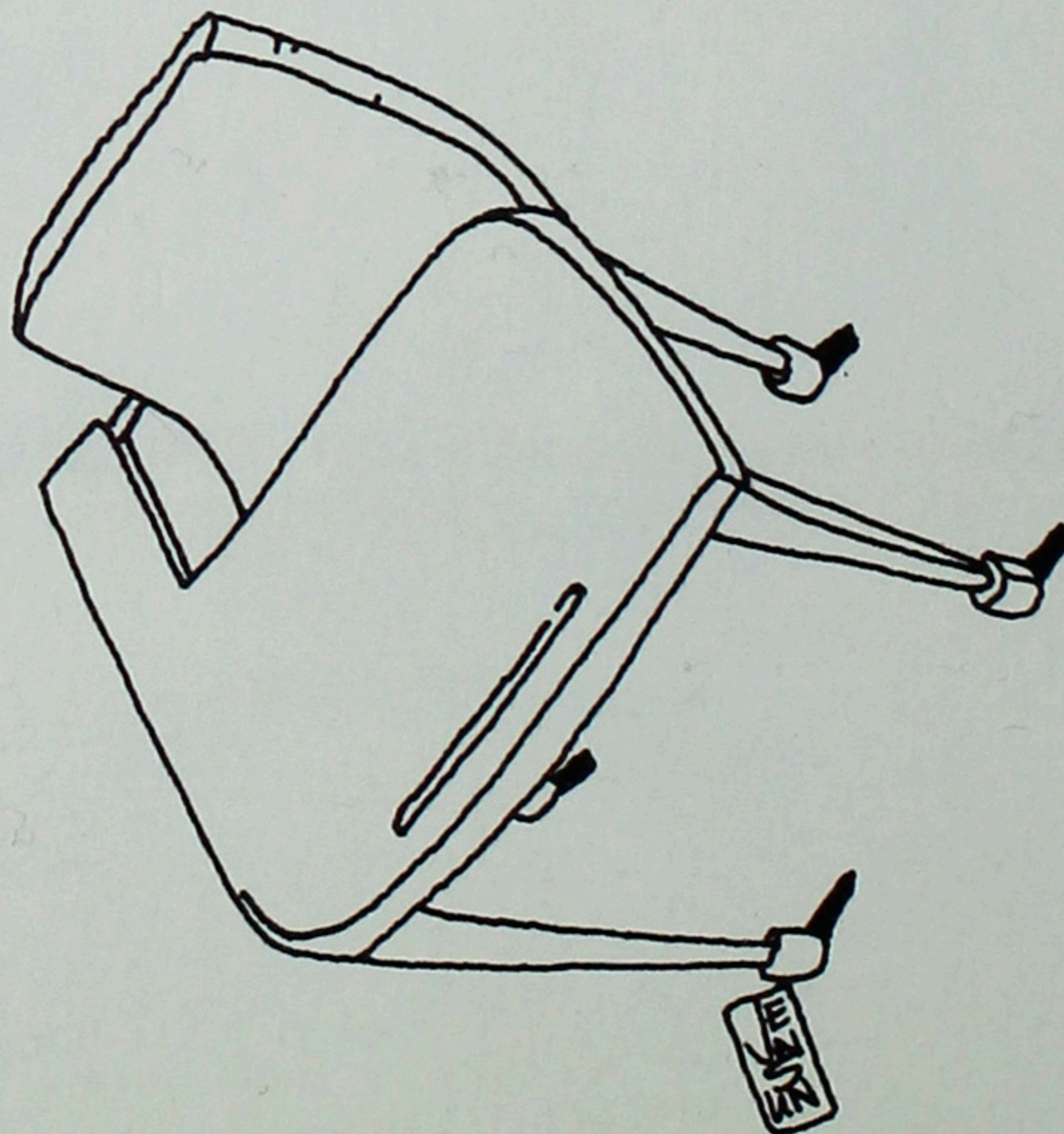
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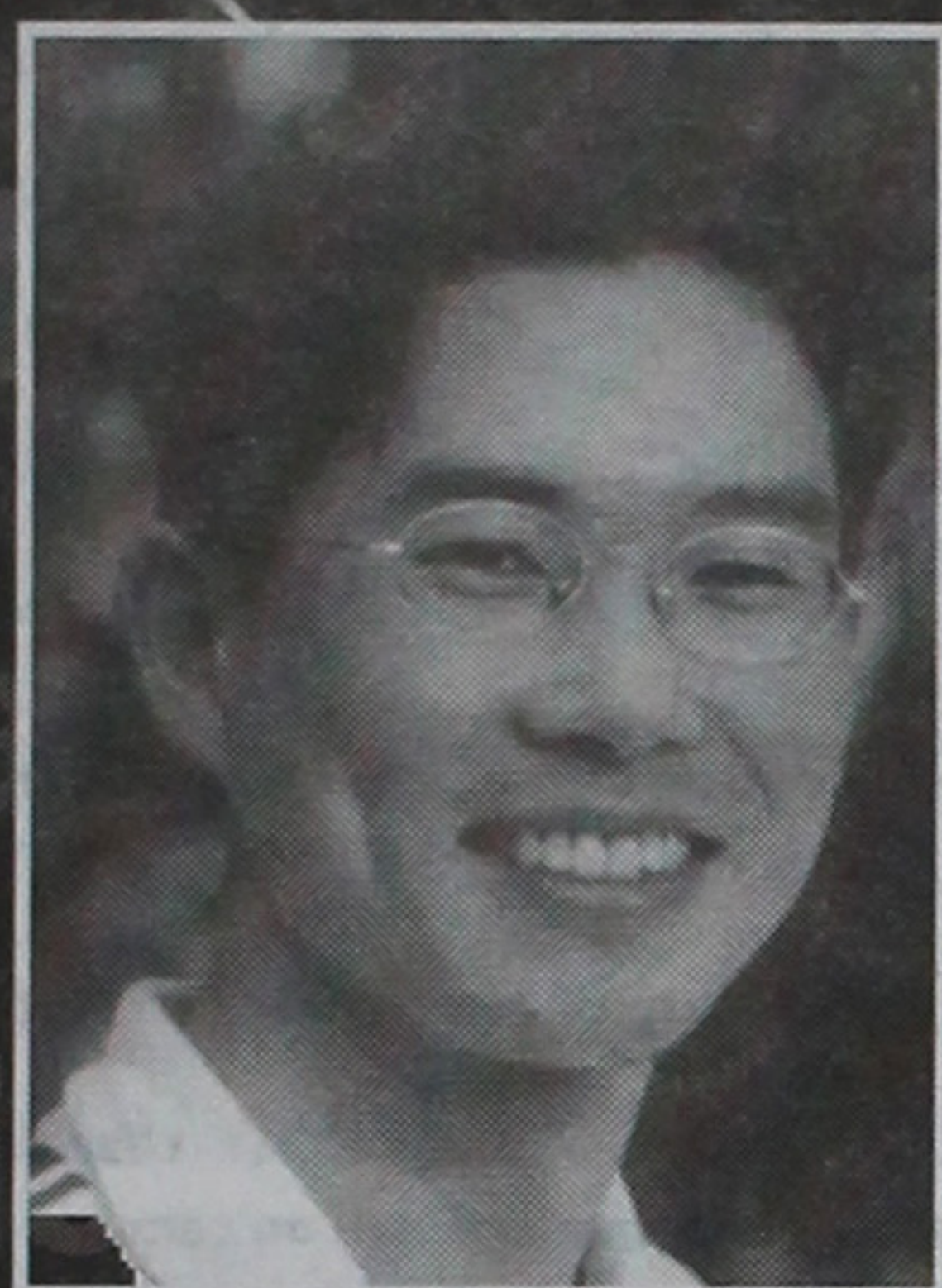
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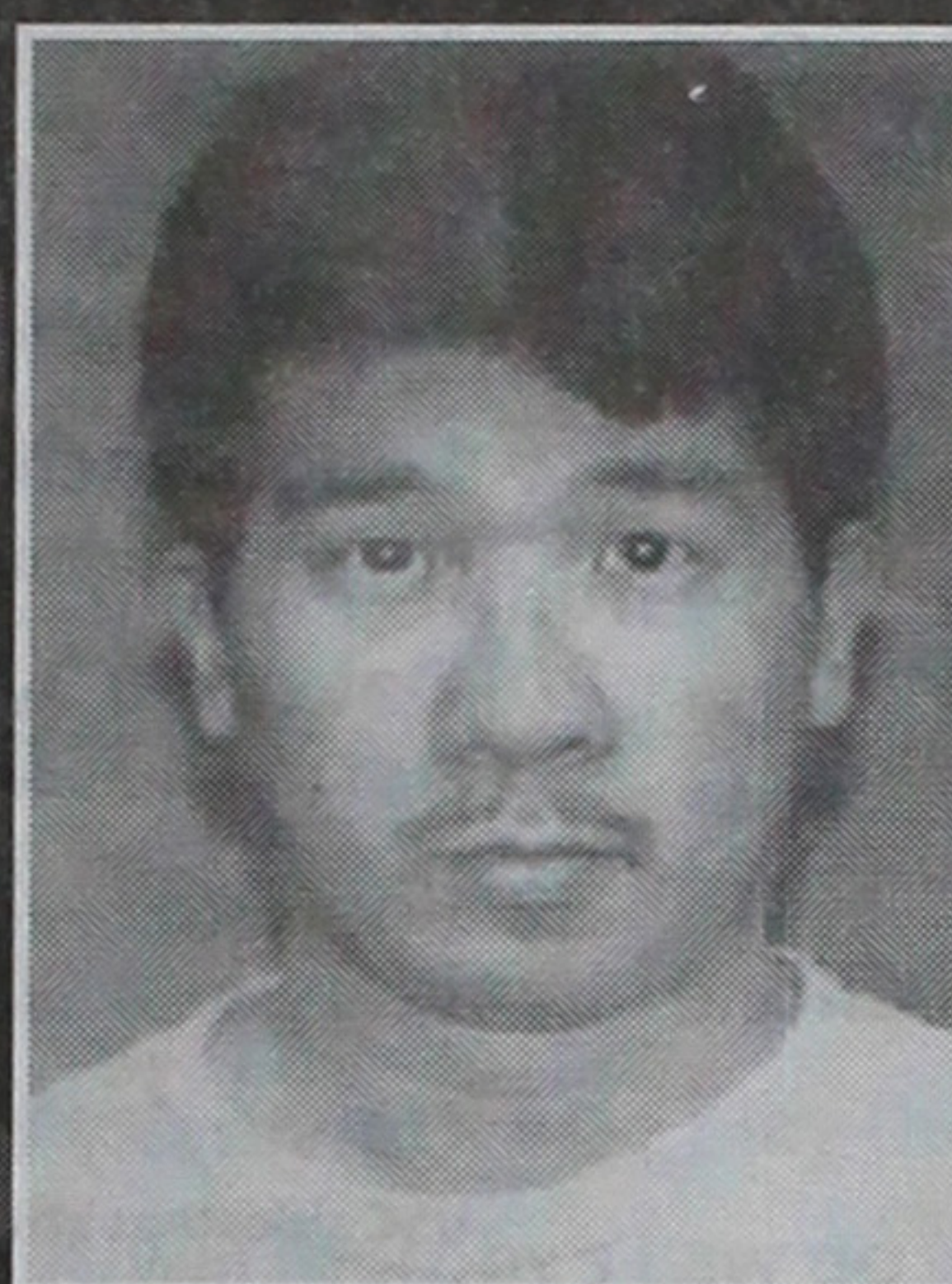
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Won-Joon Yoon



Joseph Ileto

NATION OF HATE an obituary

On July 4, as millions of Americans enjoyed a Sunday barbeque, a gunman in Chicago proceeded to have his own Independence Day celebration. Firing four rounds into a small gathering of church-goers, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith fatally wounded a 26-year-old Korean American graduate student from Indiana State University, Bloomington. This fall, Won-Joon Yoon was to have begun doctorate studies in economics.

The ambitious young killer, 21-year-old Benjamin, had been pursuing an active membership in a reputed White supremacist organization with particular disdain for African, Asian and Jew. His shooting spree body count ended at 11 casualties, two of which were fatal.

A little more than a month after, Buford Furrow, a 37-year-old, self-avowed member of another supremacist fraternal order, armed himself with an automatic weapon and sprayed the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Granada Hills, Calif. with bullets, injuring five occupants, three of whom were children. While fleeing through nearby Chatsworth, Furrow then turned his gun toward Joseph Ileto, a 39-year-old Pilipino American postal carrier, shot and killed him because of his race and association with the postal service.

These deaths were preceded by a spate of other disturbing incidents: in October, a gunman in Maryland shot and killed two South Asian employees at a Dunkin' Donuts store after making fun of their accents. In April, a gunman purportedly hunting for foreigners shot and killed Japanese American shop owner, Naoki Kamijima, of Crystal Lake, Ill.

Despite recent Department of Justice reports on waning hate crimes in America, the fact remains that people are harassed, beaten and killed based on an intolerance of their gender, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. It is important to realize these hate crimes not only affect Asian Pacific Americans, but others as well. So support stronger enforcement laws in the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and encourage civic leaders and educators to develop ways to prevent and punish those who would bring the hate.

Take a stand before the bullets strike even closer to home.



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INTRO

It's already August and what started out as a "School's Out" issue now appears to see distribution lasting well into the fall term. Just in time. 🌐 "Back to School" sales flyers from Target and Sav-On Drugs are already in mailboxes. Time to stock up on auto-pencil refills and wire-bound notebooks. 🌐 Oh yeah, don't forget the extracurricular activities: Ecstasy tabs, sixes of genuine draft, modified car engine parts, assorted halter tops, condoms (whut?) and cellie batteries. 🌐 It's interesting to see what some people feel is important as being not-as-important, or even boring, to others. 🌐 School is a good example of that. Some aspects of school are fun—like hanging out with friends—but it's safe to say that having to wake up early every morning, sitting through six hours of seemingly endless droning and then going home to do homework is a real drag. 🌐 Is school relevant anymore? Do people play their Sony Playstations and wonder, "if my Super Mario cart goes off the track and spins out, will Murphy's Law go into effect?"

Of course an education is relevant. But ask any teenager why they go to school, and a disturbing number will likely respond either "I dunno" or "so I can go to college and get a high paying job."

Why is the only incentive for getting an education to make a lot of money? Why go to school when you can just play the stock market on the Internet? Why, indeed.

An education is *supposed* to prepare individuals for life; to provide youths with a foundation of knowledge that makes them capable of independent thought. It's supposed to make you a "free-thinking individual."

While some of us may like to think that we are free-thinkers, in actuality, we make decisions based on different influences. And these could be any number of things: who we're around, how we were raised, what we ate, what we're interested in, who we're interested in, what we smoke and where our interests lie.

Basically, school should be helping us filter out all the stankness, all the garbage that inundate our lives. Instead, it's become a monstrous being, with local politics coursing through its veins, holding back both students *and* teachers.

If school is not shaping youth, then what is?

Popular culture is a dominant force. It forms our definitions of what's cool, who's hot and who's not.

And in this day and age, having class and booty is the new American fast-food order. While fresh-faced, Noxzema clear-pore-stripped boys are cruising around in their BMW's, twenty-something college graduates with business degrees are scanning the classifieds at their parent's house, desperately looking for an escape from their creditors.

School doesn't give out degrees in Life. It seems now it just prepares you for the SAT and, if you're on track, advanced placement tests.

More and more Asians in America seem to be doing well on the SAT's. Their test scores and grade point averages—often nearing the ludicrous 4.50 mark—are enabling them to get into college. For

many, they will be the first ones in their family to do so.

The pressure is on. Dollar signs teasingly float at the end of the tunnel. Mid-lecture naps invite dreams of upper-middle class success.

Despite what this nation's most outspoken leaders say, recent events have shown that minorities in America cannot just buy themselves a piece of the pie. Psycho-ass White supremacists continue to pick off innocent victims while education "experts" claim there's no discrimination anymore.

In this dawg-eat-dawg environment, it's hard to think about how to live one's own life and at the same time be concerned about the lives of others.

That's where we, as a people, have been miseducated. We've been told that money will bring us security, two-story homes with garages and instant respect. Little did we know that with financial success came English-only laws, quotas on Asian enrollment at University of California campuses and backlash by other Americans who've felt threatened by our presence.

We've also been miseducated about our identity. We all too often let what's popular rule judgments about ourselves. Funny, the same societies that thought kung-fu was a gimmick and tribal tattoos were markings of the devil now embrace both with the enthusiasm of classroom brown-nosers.

But school is not out yet. While ivory tower Asians are out for their own, going for the gold and not giving a fuck about much except the lucci, teenagers in Long Beach are fighting harassment and providing health education to other women in their community. While U.C. Regent Ward Connerly continues his battle to end ethnic studies—the history and study of people of color in the U.S.—high school kids in the Bay Area are demanding to learn not only about themselves, but also about other cultures as well.

It's encouraging to see the youth fighting for a decent and relevant education.

Gidra would like to bid *bon voyage* to our first two international correspondents, Julie Ha and Vy Nguyen. Vicious Vy will be off to Vietnam for a six-month "educational trip" which will in reality see her more tan than ever and in all inconceivable possibilities land her a husband. Julie, after tying the knot with longtime Smashing Pumpkins fan Sean Chung, will be reporting for a minute in the blue-blooded American city of Hartford, Conn. (It's like another planet, actually.)

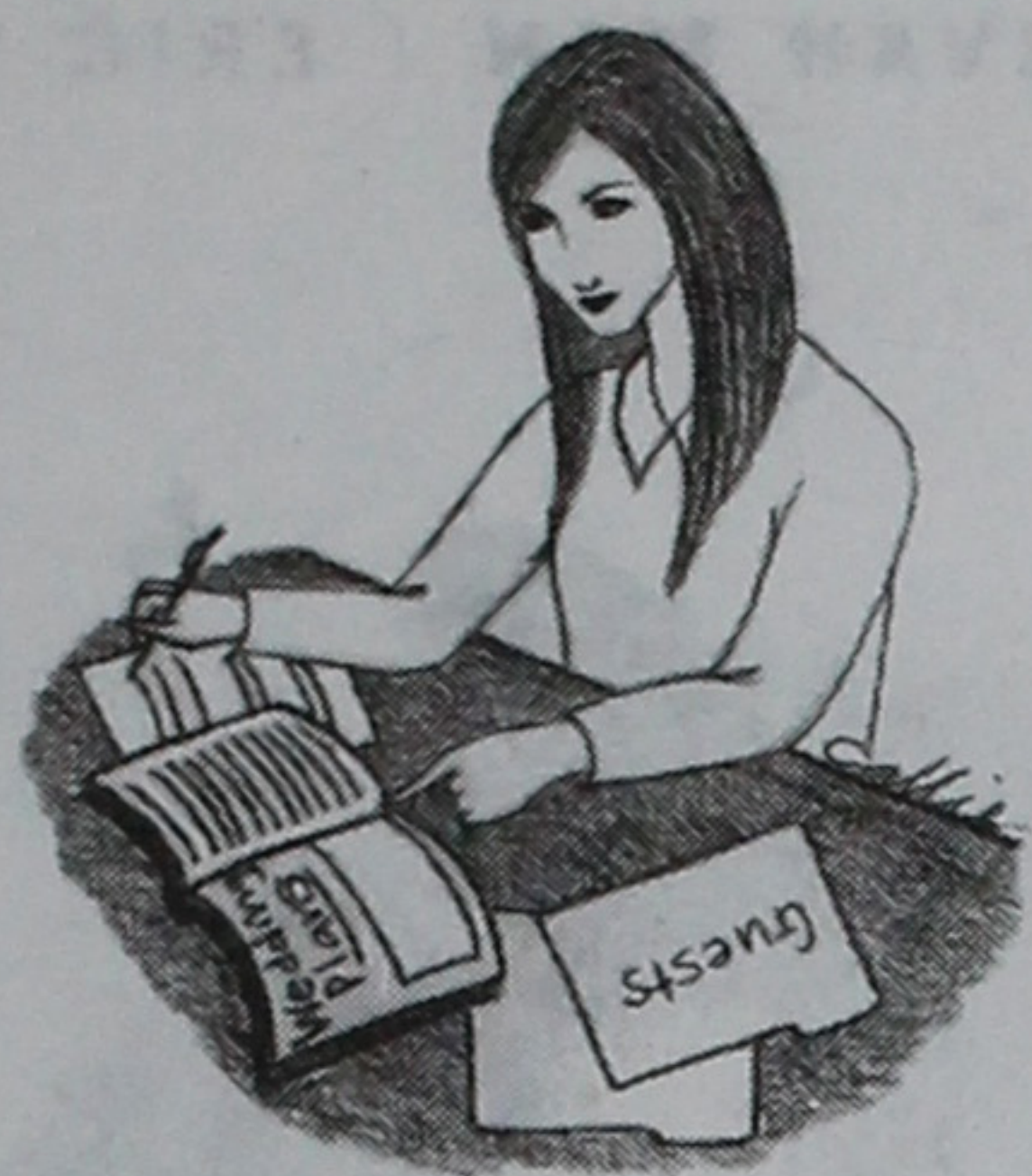


Illustrations: Callie Chung

THIS WOMAN'S WORK

Rants and reconciliation from a deeply disturbed bride-to-be

My life has become a simple formula: Julie equals work plus wedding. 🌐 Ask me how I am, and chances are the answer will reflect how well or poorly my wedding plans are advancing. Ask me specifically how my wedding planning is going, and you're liable to bear witness to some kind of teeth-gritting grimace or defeated whimper. 🌐 Whoever invented the wedding must have also invented pantyhose. Both are cruel tools with which to torture women of moderate to extreme vanity. 🌐 In the majority of cases, I would surmise, weddings are still "woman's work." And here's the trick: Even when he—bless his heart—tries to get involved, you realize you don't want him involved. Those poor XY souls just can't win.



I mean, do you really want him to select "your song" for the first dance? *Smashing Pumpkins*? *James Brown*? To choose the flowers for the ceremony and reception? *Carnations*? And what about bedsheets for your bridal registry? Solid navy blue?

So, it's all on us, girlfriends. Blame it on socialized gender roles that haven't quite fizzled out even as we stand at the edge of the 21st century or perhaps even on our own need to assert control in the post-Cinderella Complex world. Just be warned: This process will drive you to mental instability and subject you to a strange morality test. The challenge is, how reasonable, human, sane will you stay throughout it all?

Personally, I'm going down fast.

I remember a conversation my fiancé and I were having on the phone one night. He was telling me about a sick patient of his at the hospital. As he described the sad situation with this patient, a persistent thought kept creeping into my mind: Did you call the tuxedo place and the country club, or not? I grew suspicious, like, why is he telling me this sad story? Is he trying to warble his way out of the wedding planning tasks I gave him by telling me this sympathy-inducing story? Well, guess what, I'm not falling for it! I see right through you!

Luckily, I kept these thoughts to myself (until now).

It gets worse. Several months ago, I vowed to stop making friends because new friends equaled more mouths to feed at the wedding reception.

Oh, and the difference between lilac and lavender—it has become like the difference between night and day. I want lilac bridesmaid dresses, NOT LAVENDER!!!

There's also an element of schizophrenia involved because I do indeed hear voices in my head, and they're getting louder and more frequent.

They're saying: Is everything on schedule? The wedding's only two months away. I'm worried about the flowers—they may not make it to the ceremony site in Ventura County alive?! Why did you pick that place, anyway? Five bridesmaids—that's too many! How are you going to wear your hair—up or down? \$1,000 for a wedding cake—are you crazy, lady?! Did you get the invitations yet? What do you mean you don't have anyone to marry you?! The ceremony's outside?! It's going to be so hot in September, and Koreans don't like the sun! Why did you pick that place, anyway?

Some folks have told me that the wedding planning process is good for your relationship because it allows you to bond, make decisions together, learn to compromise, blah blah blah...

On the contrary, it's funny how productive I was after my fiancé took off

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lenged Mr. Wonderful.

But as the big day approaches, I'm trying to get a grip. I've been coming to a certain realization, and it has nothing to do with finding the perfect wedding hair-do or heat-resistant flowers.

It's about not sweating the "small" stuff to the extent that you lose sight of what's important.

Deep down I know, the flowers may wilt, the guests may complain of the sun exposure and distance they had to drive, my fiancé and I may never agree on "our song," but that's OK. Because, as major department store bridal registries have acknowledged, on Sept. 4, 1999, "Julie Ha & Sean Chung" will be...will just be. That's cause for celebration—and even (gulp) control-top pantyhose—in my book.

for an Asia trip. I tend to perform better when I know there's no other choice and no one left to blame. I finally sat down and input my guest list onto a spreadsheet, organized all my wedding materials into manila folder files and actually paid money for a foo-foo wedding planner, in which I recorded all relevant information in my neatest penmanship.

Yes, I started to see the advantages of planning without your other half. Taste the power: no opposition to the pink floral bedsheets, the cheesy love ballads on your reception music roster or lilac-shaded invitations.

And, really now, wouldn't you rather go shopping for overpriced items to place on your gift registry with your mom rather than your future mate? The main reason to drag out your man to Macy's and Crate & Barrel is so you can give yourself the illusion of some gender equity, not so you can watch him marvel over a guillotine-resembling bagel slicer.

Actually, to be fair, my fiancé did pick out a nice china pattern, you know, elegant but not gaudy. (I'm proud of you, honey!)

And, come to think of it, he did research readings and poems we could use in our ceremony.

He also did suggest we hire a harpist...

OK, OK, so I haven't been totally fair here, perhaps even a bit sexist.

It's the wedding planning madness!

It not only drives you to the edge, but it also distracts you from pondering more important things, like, what does it really mean to be a "spouse," to be an "in-law"? How will becoming a wife change one's priorities, perhaps even one's career ambitions? How different will all the moments after "I do" be, not only for you the couple, but for your family and your newly inherited family?

There's barely even enough time to stop and dream about how life will be with my wedding-chal-



Illustrations: Abraham Ferrer

Getting Nowhere

A brilliant, overachieving waiter/writer serves up secrets to a happy life

I was happily driving my car, listening to public radio. NPR was doing this story on how part-timers and temps are becoming more and more of today's American work force. These workers are easily exploitable and difficult to organize because they don't stay on a job long enough. Most of them don't have health insurance, and many have to have two or three jobs to piece together enough income to make ends meet every month. I was thinking to myself, "God, that's so sad. I feel so bad for these people." Then I realized: Hey, I'm one of them. 🌐 The fact that a young, college-educated and able-bodied Asian American man doesn't have a regular nine-to-five job, for many, demands an explanation. People don't ask me directly, unless they're

related to me, but sometimes I can detect people's puzzlement when they call me on the phone on a weekday morning and I pick up. "Are you okay? You're not sick, are you?" Sorry, my answering machine is not available right now. Can I take a message?

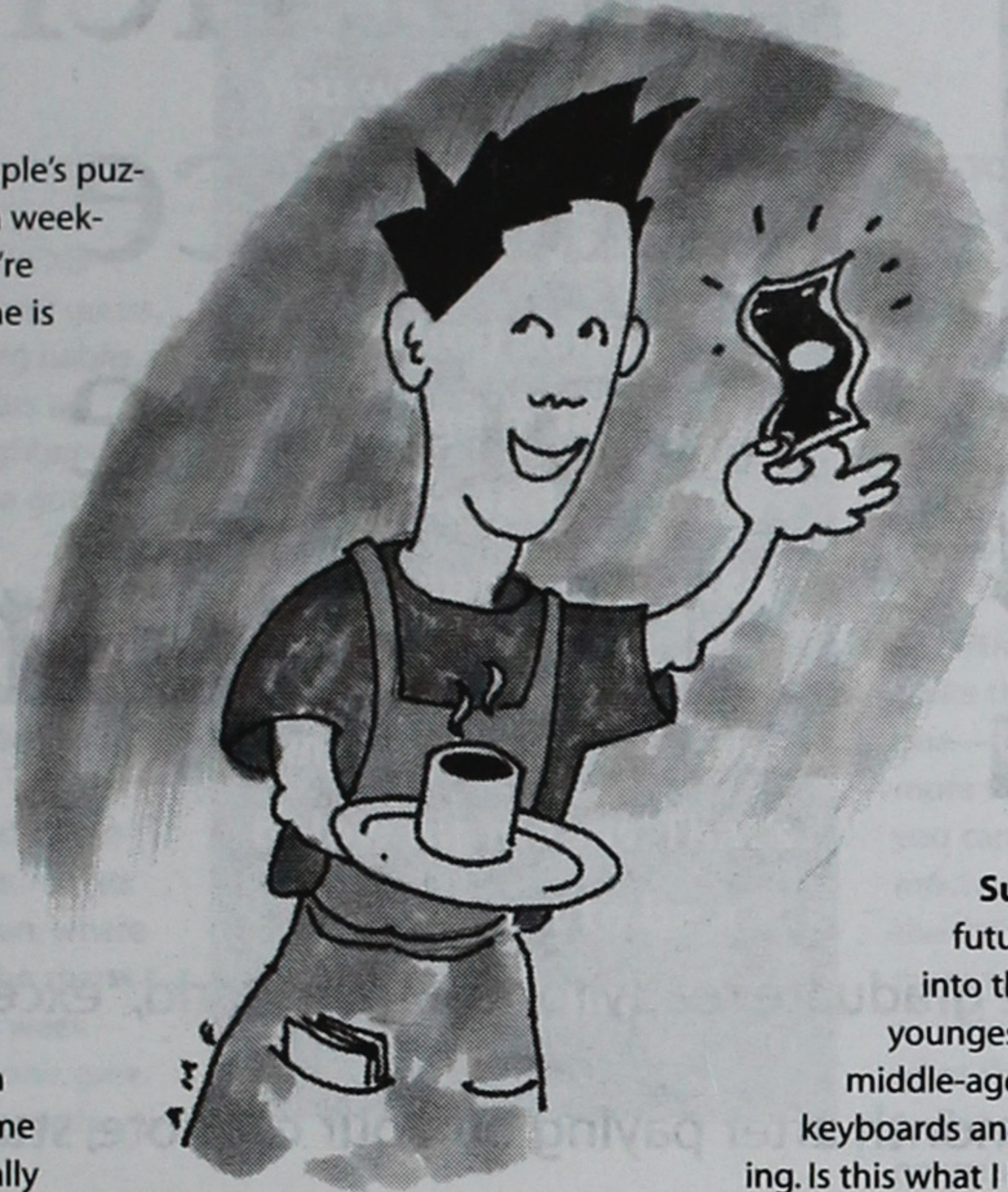
The truth is, I find myself justifying my lack of a career at the slightest provocation (like this column). When people ask me what I do, I've already gone through this conversation in my head:

First, I'm a waiter. I feel it is important to state that first. I used to list other things, like teaching a class at UCLA, before I said, "Oh, by the way, I wait tables at night, too." Then I felt really bad because my waiting ("waitering?") job put me through grad school, which was the only reason why I was even qualified to teach at UCLA or any other colleges. Besides, there is no guarantee that an itinerant Asian American studies lecturer like me would get a gig every school term. There is really no security for me in academia unless I get my Ph.D.—not a likely prospect. However, I can be pretty sure that I'll have my waiter job as long as I want it.

Then, I'd say I spend my free time freelancing—which doesn't happen all that often, but it makes me seem enterprising—and volunteering for community organizations that I really believe in. And finally, I'd tell people that I've been writing quite a bit, which is my one true passion, the one thing that I would sacrifice the stability of a career for.

Surprisingly, my parents were okay when I first told them I got a waiter job, which I did only after I secured the position. They were actually happy for me because—and here lies my first lesson—waiting tables is a good transition job. It made sense while I was putting myself through grad school. But now that I've graduated for a while—and God, I'm almost 30—I'm told that I need to find a real job. The difference between a transition job and a real job is this: If people still ask you what else you do after you've told them how you make a living, you're in a transition job. But I have always been in transition. I like transitions. Dead people don't make transitions. Or worse yet, neither do people who are confined by the circumstances of their own making. Being in transition means I'm still getting somewhere.

The truth is, I like waiting tables. I know it sounds strange. I suppose no one else, especially Asian men, seems to have a waiter fantasy. You don't really aspire to a stereotype. But being a waiter is perfect for me. The night hours leave my days free for writing, keep me away from distractions (like a relationship) and out of trouble (again, like a relationship). I love to work around food. I don't have to worry about making or buying dinners when I work. I don't have to take work home like career-people, except for sore feet that one night of decent sleep could cure. And the tips! Let me tell you, it's nice to get cash every day you work. I went to the supermarket the night I



got my first tips. I was strolling down the aisles with a wad of cash in my pocket, smiling from ear to ear so much that people must have thought I'd just escaped from bedlam. I counted out 18 one-dollar bills at the checkstand—okay, so it's not all about the benjamins with me, but all those georges add up—but I did it deliberately slow as if I were making an exchange for a hostage. It was nice to have cash. But most importantly, I'm writing more productively AND better than I ever did when I had to do it for a grade.

Sure, I do have pangs of anxieties about my future. When I first started temping, I had to go into the agency to take a battery of tests. I was the youngest in the testing room. There were all these middle-aged, White men in suits and ties sweating over keyboards and squinting at monitors. It was real depressing. Is this what I have to look forward to? If they haven't made it, what chance will I have when I'm at their age? And every time I stop for a homeless person or a panhandler, or hear Catalina, my tenant organizer friend, talk about elderly tenants in slum housing, or read news about escalating HMO fees and our failing social security system, I keep thinking: Hey, I could be them.

And making this connection has made this one of the most worthwhile transitions in my life. There was this detachment that I had felt as an activist to the injustices that I sought to correct, and I don't think I was the only one who confronted this detachment. I felt I was exempt because I would be shielded by my education and middle-class background. I had the luxury of dropping in and out. And if I wear a tie now and have an office in some downtown highrise—it could happen, I know I'm capable of it—I'd probably not be as involved in the community, if at all. When you can't afford life's little luxuries, you realize the absurdity of consumerism and the delusion of bourgeois stability. There's a lot to be said for sour grapes.

I didn't start out trying to defy the model minority stereotype. I simply wanted to spend my life doing what I love—writing—and do it well. It's not my fault that writing doesn't pay. Like the poet Wanda Coleman said, "When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. When life gives you shit, you make fertilizer." I'm not saying people should forsake their careers. Nor am I saying I'm never going back to a full-time gig. I'm just saying, if I still can't buy a house when I turn 40, that's okay.

I got a phone call last week from a billion-dollar organization who wanted to interview me for a job. They found my resume on the internet, where I had posted it a few months ago. This is my first call since, which shows me how unmarketable my skills are. It'd be nice not to have to write my own checks every month for health insurance, but I think I'll pass this time. This doesn't seem like my next transition.

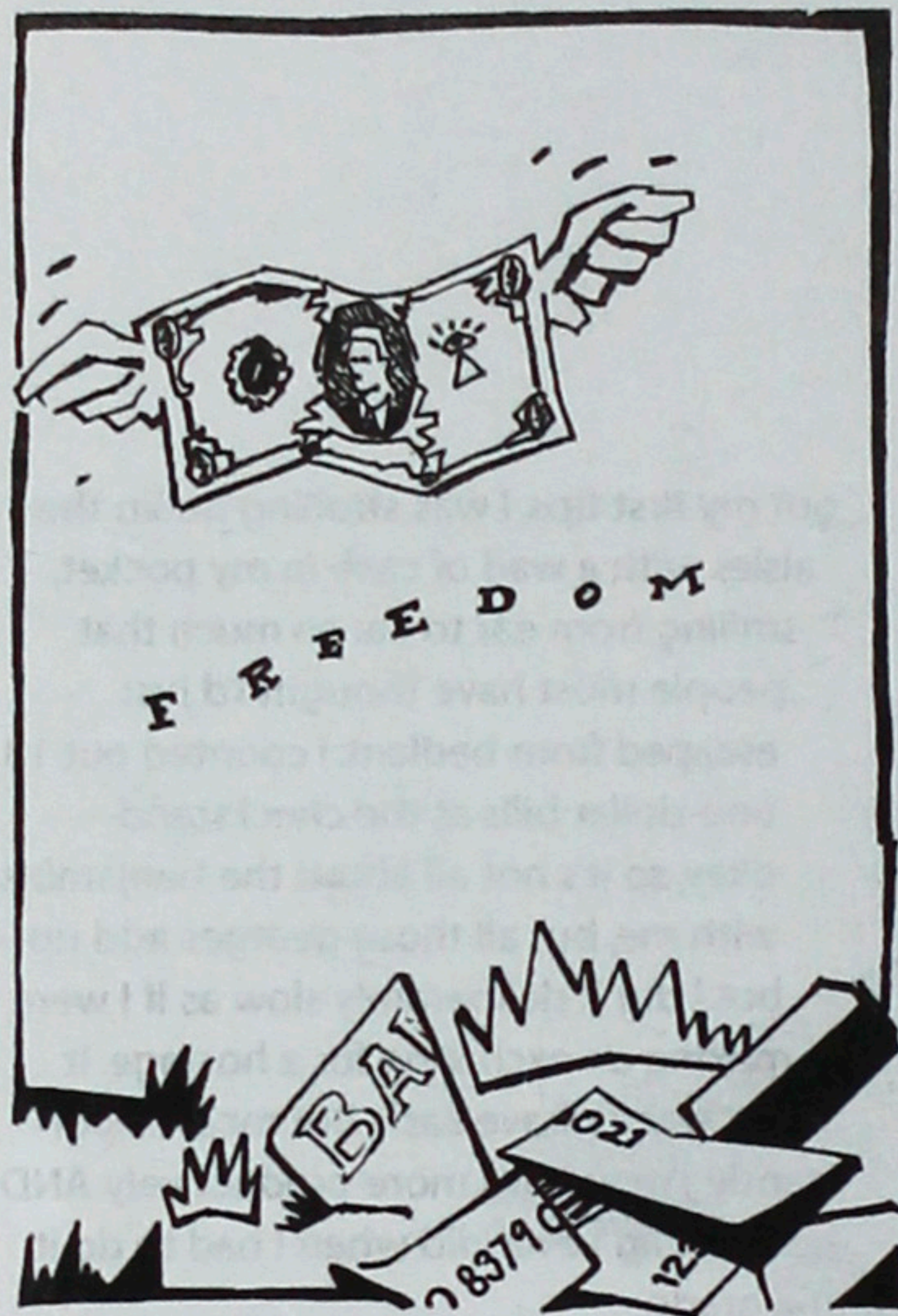


Illustration: Abraham Ferrer, from an idea by Qris Yamashita

Financial Advice for the Non-Financed

Is this you? 🌐 A college graduate ready for the “real world,” except you still live at home. You have a job, but every month after paying off your car note, student loans and credit cards, you just barely scrape by. Mom and Dad still treat you like a kid. You want to move out and get a life, but you just can’t afford it. 🌐 Flash back to college registration and orientation. Remember all those banks that set up brightly-colored booths offering fabulous deals on credit cards? “No Annual Fee! No Credit Limit! Earn 10,000 Frequent Flyer Miles!!”

Never mind that your creditors didn’t seem to care you had no income or credit history. You took action while the banks were in a good mood. You applied for a few credit cards. Subsequently, like clockwork once a week, more credit card applications came in the mail, offering even better perks. These deals were hard to pass by, especially since you had been wanting to buy that new suit for your interview or that new CD anyway. What harm could one more card be? So you applied for a few more. The nightmare started here....

Unfortunately, few colleges offer Credit Card 101, otherwise known as “How did I get 10 credit cards and \$50,000 into debt in just 4 years?” How you solve this puzzle (or don’t) is as crucial to your success and happiness as that degree you worked so hard to earn.

Credit card companies profit when you spend more than you earn and owe longer than you’re expected to live. The sooner you get into this destructive pattern, the better it is for the credit card companies. They are seductive and efficient. They’ve spent millions of dollars in research to understand how and why you spend, so they know what attitudes about money make the most income for them.

WHY ME?

First, the credit card companies thrive in an environment where money equals success. We know in our hearts that this isn’t so. We know that we love and respect our family and friends not because of what they have or how much they have to spend, but because of their values, their fairness and their thoughtfulness. We hope they think of us the same way.

It’s hard to keep that in mind when we’re besieged by advertising for the latest car or appliance or CD, and made to feel small and deprived if we don’t have cool stuff too. Credit cards make it easy to have things instantly without thinking about how you’re going to pay.

I had a chance to go to a birthday party for my daughter’s classmate. I was awed by the splendor of the affair. There was an island for sushi, an island for shrimp scampi. There was a table for kids to have their names air-brushed on T-shirts. Another table where they could have temporary tattoos painted. There was an orchestra. And that was just the cocktail reception.

Dinner followed, with entertainment, dancing, prizes and on and on. It was interesting to watch how everyone was awed like me and doing mental math about how much our hosts had spent to throw this party. Our society



You would never guess who are the real millionaires by their spending habits. The average millionaire drives a used car, wears an inexpensive watch and lives in a modest neighborhood. He lives below his means. That's how he got to be a millionaire.

gives a lot of respect and attention to those members who can spend a lot.

Guess what? As Tom Stanley documented in his book, *The Millionaire Next Door*, you would never guess who are the real millionaires by their spending habits. The average millionaire drives a used car, wears an inexpensive watch and lives in a modest neighborhood. He lives below his means. That's how he got to be a millionaire.

Many of these people are my clients and I'm always surprised when I do a financial analysis for them. One of my millionaire clients worked as a gardener all his life. He lived modestly and consistently invested what he saved.

Another millionaire client, a couple, worked in low-paying, salaried jobs. The wife had the opportunity to participate in the company's stock savings plan, where she allocated part of her salary to purchase the shares of the company's stock. She invested \$25 per week and the value of the stock grew, split two for one, grew again, split again and so on. Her stock is now worth \$800,000.

These people are wealthy not because they came into great wealth or had high-paying jobs. They became wealthy as they learned how to manage their spending. Coming into great wealth or earning it without being able to manage spending can be a curse. If you don't have a plan to manage spending, more money can become an opportunity to spend more and get into greater debt.

The second trap is the "emergency." I put "emergency" in quotes because many times they are foreseeable and are emergencies only because we make them so.

For example, that 1980 Toyota Cressida hand-me down from Mom that you've been nursing along with baling wire and gaffer's tape just turned over 200,000 on the odometer. You know that it's only a matter of time. Still, when the car finally throws a rod miles from home, it's an "emergency." You reach for the credit card.

Third, credit card companies make a lot of money because people love to shop, especially when they're feeling down. We're faced with a lot of stresses in our lives and sometimes our jobs are not that fulfilling. Being able to buy something nice for ourselves sometimes makes us feel better about unfairness and lack of appreciation at work. Here, the credit card companies get us coming and going. On top of profiting from us, it's likely they have a stake in the company that overworks and underpays. They make money when we buy things to lift our spirits that we can't afford.

How do you get out from under this crushing debt? Making the minimum payment and carrying over debt from month to month is not the answer. In fact, this is how the credit card companies make the most money from your debt. Have you noticed how, as you continue to pay the minimum and your balance decreases, the minimum decreases too? This guarantees that you will pay forever and the credit card company will receive interest forever.

SCISSORS, PLEASE First, take all your credit cards and cut them up except for one, the one with the lowest continuing interest rate. (Don't forget to read the fine print—some cards offer very low interest rates but if you look closely, the rate jumps up to 19% or so after a few months.) Use this remaining card for situations that absolutely require use of a credit card—making reservations, renting a car, etc. However, when it comes time to pay, use cash. Incur no new debt.

NO FRAPPUCCINOS Look at all your credit card debts. Make the minimum payment on all cards except for one—the one with the lowest balance. Vow to pay more than the minimum on this card—as much as you can bear (that's right, give up that daily blended mocha cappuccino). Pay this regularly and maintain the same amount even though the minimum payment required decreases. It will surprise you how quickly you can pay off this debt when you don't do what the credit card company tells you to do.

But don't go shopping to celebrate quite yet! Start on your second credit card debt. Use the amount you were paying to pay off the first card and add it to the minimum for the second card. Continue this level of payment even though the second credit card minimum payment decreases. Pay until the second card is paid off.

Use the amount that you were paying on the second card and add it to the minimum payment for the third card. Continue until all your debt is gone.

Voilà! You're free and clear of all your credit card debt! But how do you survive without a credit card?

DON'T DIAL 911 Create an Emergency Account. This is a savings account that receives a consistent, monthly transfer from your regular checking account. Make sure that you can't write checks on this account or make ATM withdrawals from it.

How do you know how much to transfer per month? Look at your "emergency" expenses from the last year: tires, clothing, taxes, gifts and so on. Didn't you pay for your vacation with your credit card? List that too.

Add all these expenses and divide by twelve. This is how much you should transfer per month. When one of these expenses comes up in the future, pay for it from this account, not from your credit card.

Now that you're free and clear of debt and armed with an Emergency Account to pay for those unexpected tire blowouts, you can go on to bigger and better things. Moving on out!

(Alan Kondo is a specialist in retirement and estate planning. He is a Certified Financial Planner and a Chartered Life Underwriter. He is associated with Transamerica Financial Resources, a Registered Investment Advisor. Write in comments and questions to gidra@apanet.org or to Gidra c/o 231 E. Third St. G104, Los Angeles, CA 90013.)

K O S O V O

c a l l i n g

KOSOVO POSTING

Now I am living in a country at war and my friends in the U.S. don't understand me. How can they understand that in the last year, being Albanian became my destiny ... that in this war I am reduced to my nationality only. Before, I thought I was defined by my education, my job, my ideas, my character and, yes, my nationality too. Being Albanian in this war makes me an orphan too, because it robbed me of the only possession I acquired in my life—my individuality. National consciousness, perhaps even nationalism, has been forced on people like an ill-fitting shirt. You might feel the sleeves are too short and the collar too tight. You might not like the color and the cloth might itch. But you wear it because there is no other.

Slavenka Drakulic

Oh so, Kosovo The U.S./NATO bombings of Yugoslavia have ended. And the tremendous human toll is becoming clear for all to see.

Thousands of Serbs and Kosovo Albanians lie dead along with the innocent, "accidental" victims at the Chinese embassy. Many times more people are now homeless and impoverished.

While we are deeply sympathetic to the plight of the Albanian refugees from Kosovo, we also look at the hospitals, markets, homes and schools the bombings have destroyed. We are still pondering the benefits....

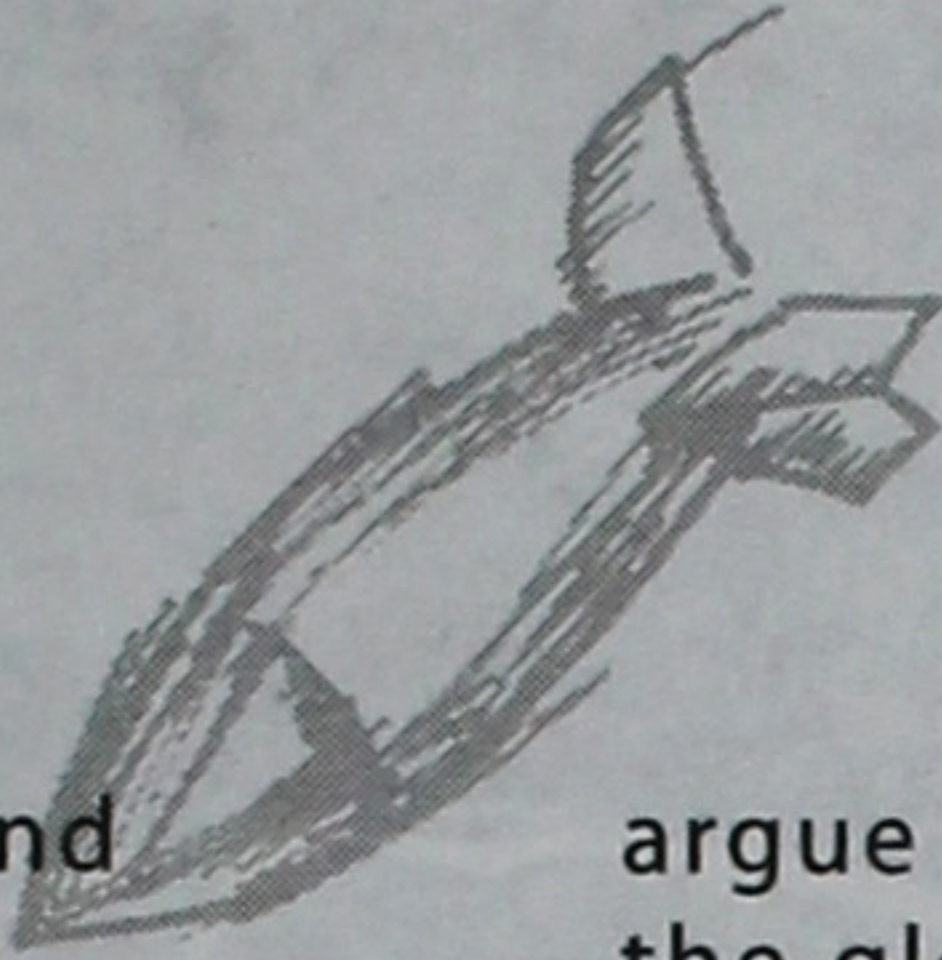
As Asian Pacific Islanders, war has been an integral aspect of our experience. We see how armed conflict has torn apart our countries and families, destroyed communities, led to the rape and murder of "comfort women" and placed our homelands in the hands of nations with military wherewithal and colonial designs. As a result, we are learning to question, pretty much, any deci-

sion the United States government makes that involves military intervention.

During World War II, U.S. humanitarian concerns meant Japanese Americans would forcibly spend the duration of the war in concentration camps. This they would do, "for their own good." For many refugees who fled war in Southeast Asia, U.S. humanitarian aid also came to be defined as resettlement in slum housing and sweatshop work as their only means of survival.

There are currently human rights struggles in Burma, Korea, Indonesia, Okinawa and Hawaii. Additionally, the people of the Philippines have campaigned against the Visiting Forces Agreement that would provide a basis on which to restore U.S. bases in the Philippines—against the wishes of millions.

In these diverse locales, we are confronted by the disturbing role of U.S. military bases, military "aid" and defense-vested or dependent multinationals who openly promote political repression, violence against



women, exploitation of child labor and abject poverty.

While millions of north Koreans are starving due to famine, the humanitarian aid from the U.S. government has trickled back and forth, contingent upon whether American political demands are being met satisfactorily. Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans died in a genocidal war while the United States viewed from the sidelines at the behest of an ally, France. In Africa, thousands of refugees die every month due to lack of water, food and medicine. Yet no emergency relief salvos have been launched. In Iraq, one-and-a-half-million people have died since 1991 due to United Nations sanctions being orchestrated and backed by United States military authority.

On humanity's behalf, the United States has reputedly objected to nuclear testing in India and Pakistan, yet has taken a globally diminishing role in clearing the land mines with which it has literally littered the map.

At the same time, repressive regimes in Indonesia, Columbia and Turkey remain in power with weaponry and political blessings from Washington. Which leads us to a private aside: the scrutiny we give one particularly efficacious human rights cause must be applied consistently to all. The ethnic cleansing of Kurds in Turkey should not be ignored because U.S. planes have been given the OK to bomb Iraq from Turkish airfields. Nor should massacres of East Timorese be given less priority because of the benefits our country reaps from Indonesian oilfields.

These are reasons to change U.S. policy on the Kurds and East Timor, not to avoid helping the Albanian Kosovars under attack. While one can argue whether the ethnic cleansing (expulsion, even) of a million Albanians from Kosovo is any business of ours in the United States, there are some among our ranks who could persuasively

argue that our forward leaning position in the global scheme of things would make us the likeliest U.N. member nation to do something about Kosovo. Now under exactly what conditions is U.S. martial law appropriate?

Activists who have protested against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, South Africa and Iraq also believe there are situations in which U.S. military action is justified. World War II presented a strong candidate for justifiable war status. Kosovo might well be another.

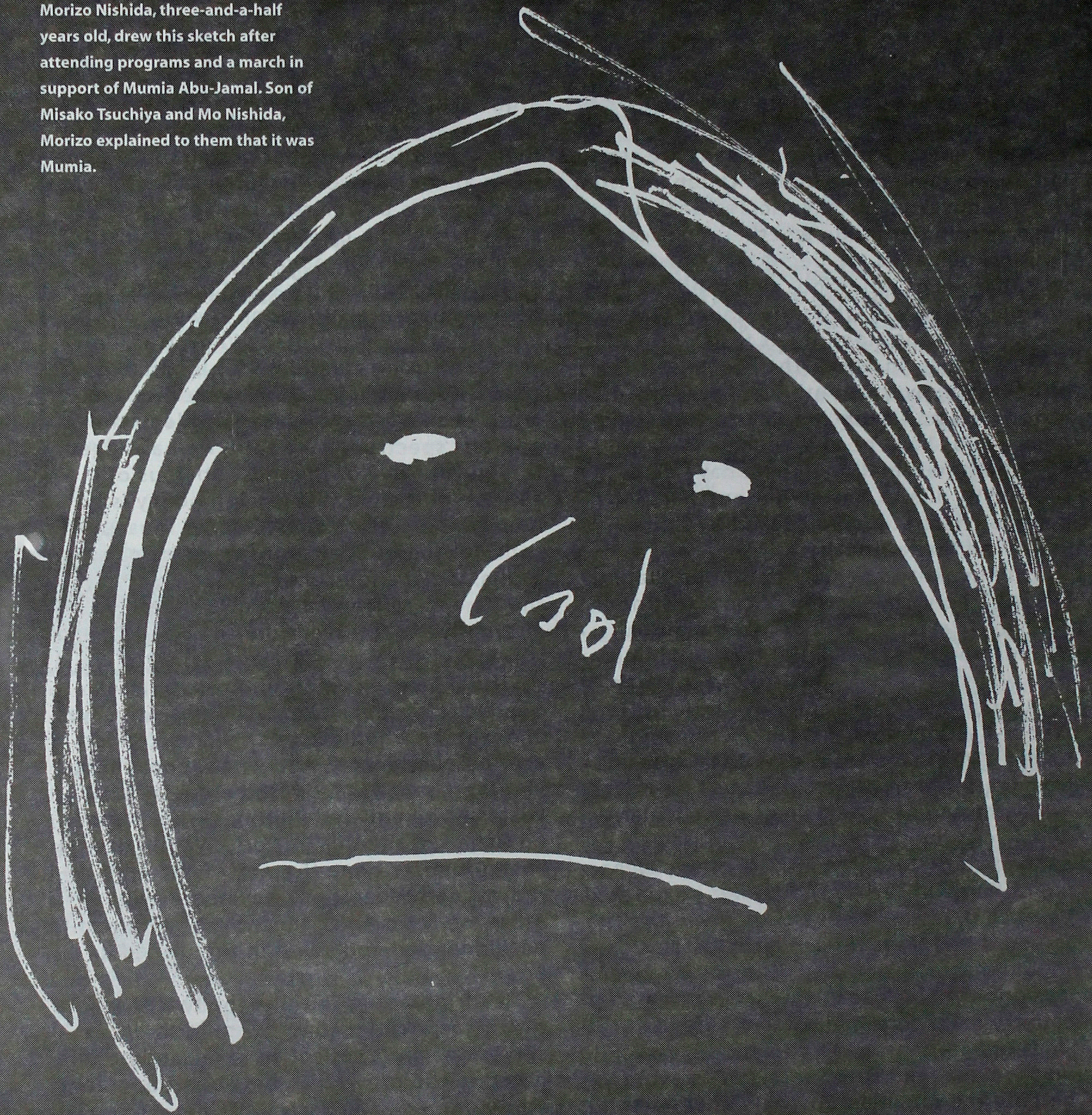
As even allies on the same side of the political spectrum have split, we have been served with one of the most obvious of indications: post-Cold War foreign policy is by no means a settled question. For those who consider themselves sponsors of human rights, social and economic justice, now is the time to arrive at a more constructive alternative to interventionism and isolationism.

The U.S. involvement in Kosovo raises questions about the other victims—the men and women who have been victimized for serving our country. And what about those veterans' benefits promised more than 50 years ago to enlisted Pilipinos who fought on behalf of the U.S. in World War II? Have such promises gone the way of the full-redress and reparations payments owed Japanese Latin Americans who were arrested, kidnapped and jailed in the United States?

It's frightening to think the twice- and thrice-sacrificed among us could so easily slip our nation's collective mind, and be relegated to the proverbial, between-the-cracks void.

That slip, we can say with some assurity, sounds like a tell-tale sign of history about to repeat itself. And shouldn't we, by now, know how nasty things can get with history that keeps repeating itself?

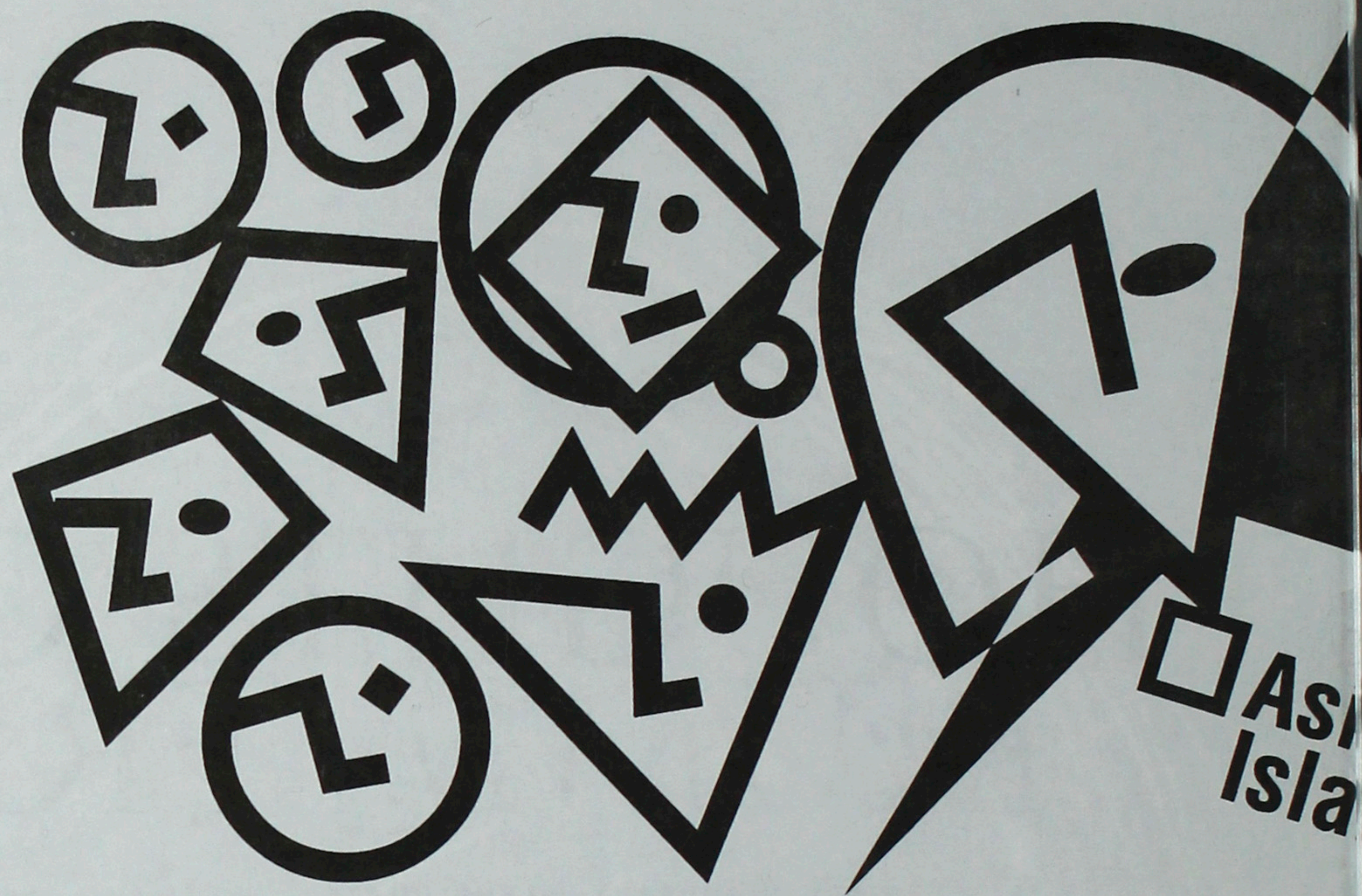
Morizo Nishida, three-and-a-half years old, drew this sketch after attending programs and a march in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Son of Misako Tsuchiya and Mo Nishida, Morizo explained to them that it was Mumia.



THOUGHTS ON MUMIA FREED

By ERNESTO J. VIGOREAUX, GLENN OMATSU, WAYNE LUM and EVELYN YOSHIMURA

For Asian Americans, Mumia is a symbol—especially a symbol of our history and our fighting spirit. Mumia is the Chinese immigrant miner confronting the injustice of the foreign miners tax and racist violence in the gold mines of California. Mumia is the Japanese American herded into World War II concentration camps, but he is also the courageous Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans fighting for redress and reparations. Mumia is the Filipino immigrant farm worker uniting with Chicanos and other workers in the common struggle for rights. Mumia is the Korean immigrant small business owner seeking to survive in today's urban frontier. Mumia is the Vietnamese refugee forced to flee from one homeland due to war only to confront a new war against racism in a new homeland. Mumia is the Samoan resident of Carson targeted for harassment by police and sheriffs. Mumia is the mail order bride, the exploited garment worker and restaurant worker, and the gang member on the streets and in jail. And Mumia is the Filipino vet fighting for equity, the garment worker demanding justice and the Asian American college student motivated to serve her community. This is the message that we—as Asian Americans—need to share with others. **Continued on page 46**



Illustrations: Qris Yamashita

Pan-Asian **WHAT?** By NAOMI IWASAKI

I guess you could say I grew up pretty sheltered in the L.A. Japanese American community.

A Yonsei, or fourth-generation Japanese American, I played basketball for a JA league and was affiliated with a church (in my case, Buddhist). I also wrote for *The Rafu Shimpō*, a JA community newspaper, went to obons (summer Buddhist temple festivals) and pounded mochi every New Year's.

Almost every other JA I met either knew my parents, was related to me, or their parents knew mine.

My L.A.-JA resume was complete.

But as I drove up the Interstate 5 to start my freshman year at Berkeley, I left this community to enter another completely culturally shocking one.

As most people know, UC's like Cal, UCLA and Irvine have become increasingly Asian-populated. The last statistic I heard about my school was Asians comprised around 40-45% of the student body. And I didn't need to know numbers to feel our presence on campus.

Yeah, I'll admit I was excited at first. My high school didn't have that many APIs, and I would finally be at a school with a large Asian community.

But, if anything, going away to college opened my eyes to all the differences between students who checked the "Asian/Pacific Islander" box on our UC applications.

Many Asian students I met at Cal were first/second generation and straight out of middle/upper class suburbs around Southern California. Almost everyone would answer the typical "where-you-from?" question with "L.A." But when I'd ask what part of L.A., I'd get answers like "Chino Hills," "Diamond Bar" or "Fountain Valley."

It was real different meeting people who received Lexuses and Beamers

for their 16th birthdays.

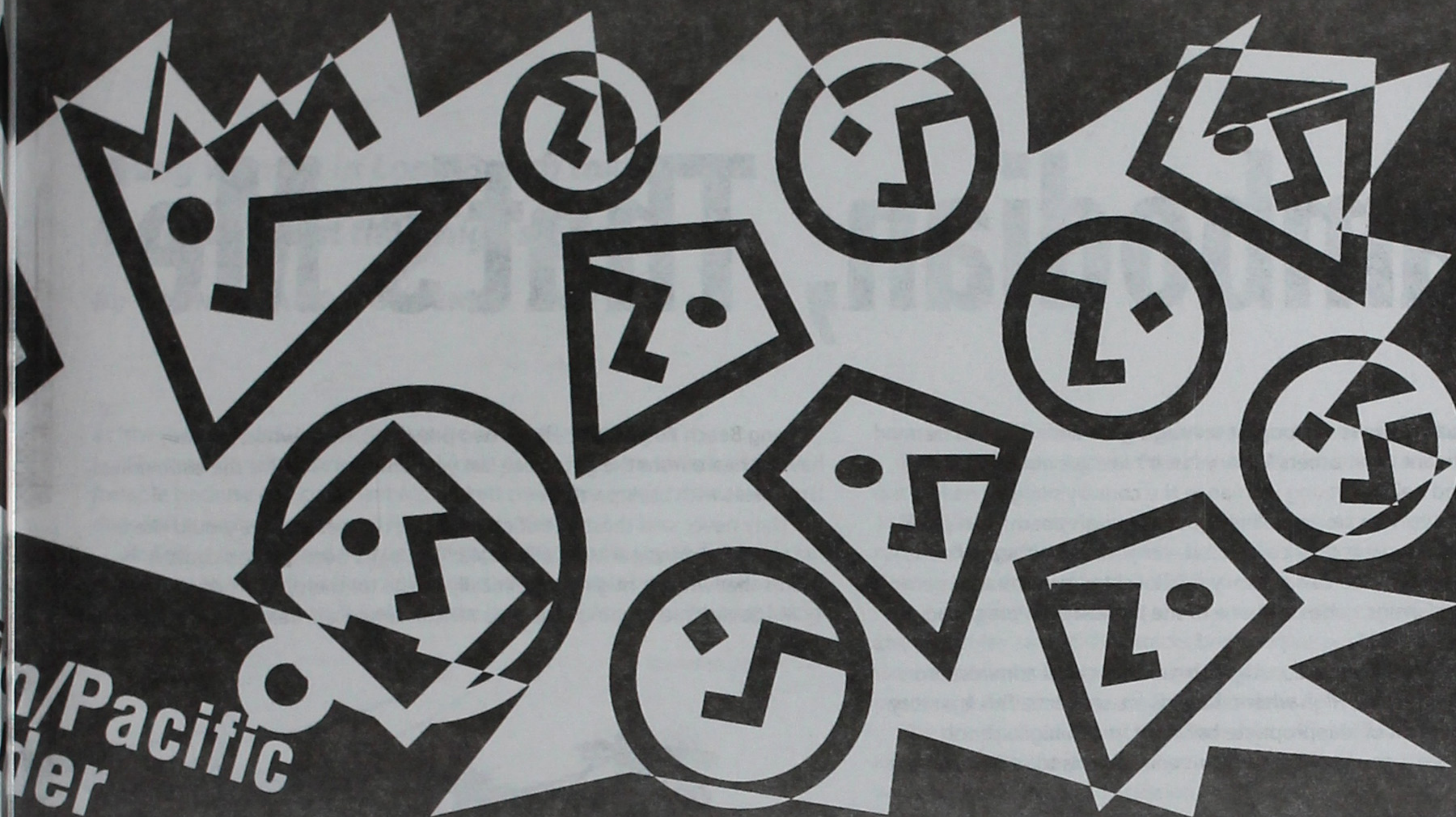
And it wasn't just class values that separated me from them. Political unawareness plagues Berkeley as a whole, but particularly among the Asian students. Most of them seemed to be solely focused on pumping up their GPA, resume or social status.

It disappointed me that on a campus where our strength could lie in numbers, Asians are so segregated in terms of priorities. Even the Asian American Studies intro class for the major is dubbed "AmScam" by students, since it's believed to be the class to enroll in if you wanna hook up with some hottie of Asian descent.

I grew up with parents who were involved in the Asian American Movement when Ethnic Studies and Asian American studies were first implemented 30 years ago at universities like Cal and UCLA. Although they never pressured me to be the Ethnic Studies major I am today, I feel fortunate that they helped me develop an awareness of the struggles APIs faced before they were almost half a UC population.

So, I couldn't help but be disgusted that a program so hard fought for by my parents' generation could be reduced to a classroom club scene. Luckily, I didn't limit my college experience to the campus and, because of that, I was exposed to yet another, very different Asian American community.

My freshman year, I started working with the overcrowded public schools and underfunded community centers in the East Bay, mainly Oakland and Richmond. Many of the students I came into contact with were Southeast Asian, some Chinese and Pacific Islander. Most of the Southeast Asian students are refugees or children of refugees. All of the students are from working class backgrounds and most are not on the college-



n/Pacific
der

bound track at their school. None of them have a BMW.

I once asked some students from Richmond High School what stereotypes there are about Asians. I had just come from my Asian American Studies class at Cal, where we hashed out the typical model minority, science or business/economics major, Honda/Banana Republic-sporting Asian.

"Everyone thinks us Asians are on welfare," one of the girls said.

"Yeah, and that we're all holdin' dank or in a gang," another chimed in.

I asked them what they thought about the stereotypes my class had brought up just a few hours earlier.

They answered my question with their own. "What's a model minority?"

You know, the hardest thing about pan-Asian solidarity is the "pan" part. It forces us all to step outside of our comfort zones, whether they are constructed by ethnicity, class, home city, identity, whatever.

The experience I've had so far working with people of different nationalities and tax brackets has been my real education in college. If I had just planned my college life around books, a bong and/or boys, my life up north would be much more sheltered.

But being exposed to these two communities of Asians up north—a small sample of vast diversity among APIs—has helped me see how one's experiences lead to different perspectives, values, and sometimes, even division.

I've often heard APIs argue against the model minority myth, but to quash the myth, they point to Southeast Asians as "those Asians who haven't made it." Although it's true that not all Asians fit the "model minority" image, is this saying that Southeast Asians are somehow the reason that

Asians really aren't as successful as perceived? This elitist mentality among Asian Americans further contributes to the division of our API communities.

This is why I touch lightly on the ethnicity of the students I work with, because although a large percentage of Southeast Asian representation is absent from higher education, but present in urban and lower income areas, it is because of class, not nationality. A Khmer refugee immigrated under different circumstances than a highly educated Taiwanese professional, both of whom came for different reasons than my Japanese great-grandparents four generations ago.

Even as I've gotten a taste of how very different the worlds of various Asian Pacific American communities can be, I also see how we are all connected. No matter what our family income or nation of origin, we are all here in America as APIs. It's not about holding hands and singing songs, it's about the very real possibilities of working across community, ethnic, class lines for the benefit of all.

I've seen it happen.

A couple months ago, the Oakland East Bay Asian Youth Center was facing the loss of city funding for its program. In response, more than 200 students and staff members from the center joined with local college students, parents and community members. We packed Oakland's City Hall; and raised loud protests. And we were heard.

It sure would be easier if I could just focus on my own life and my own income and forget about any ties to the API community. But my life is not about how much me-myself-and-I can do/make/impress. I am part of something larger, part of a community. And it's communities like this where people make change.

'Cambodian, That's Me'

In Long Beach, there is a group of teenage girls who want to be heard. They want to let others know what it's like growing up Khmer American and being a young woman in the country's largest Cambodian enclave. Their stories will tell you—through poems and prose the girls wrote, and surveys they conducted—of young Southeast Asians who deal with economic hardship, family relationships, dreams and memories, the realities of drugs, gangs and one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state.

Not likely to pay much attention, though, are the school administrators of Long Beach Polytechnic High where the girls are students. This is a story about how an incident of inappropriate behavior from a high school teacher has spurred a group of Cambodian teenage girls to self-awareness and action.

Last year, government teacher Joe Sackett confiscated the photographs some of his students were looking at during class. Mary Im, then 15, went to see Mr. Sackett to retrieve her photos, which showed members of her youth group demonstrating at a rally against Proposition 227.

As Mary heard it, Mr. Sackett began angrily denouncing bilingual education. "He was flapping the pictures around, slamming his hand on the desk," she related. During the tirade, Mr. Sackett told Mary her youth group, which had passed out condoms on campus as part of a sex education campaign, was racially exclusionary and promoted sex. "You should tell those gang whores to leave their jeans on," she remembered him saying. Mr. Sackett could not be reached for comment.

Mary was shocked and angry, but she wondered if she had done something wrong to trigger her teacher's outburst.

"I was upset because it was my first year of high school and I never expected a teacher to use such inappropriate terms," she said. "I never expected a teacher to be so mean and rude. I was scared."

Mary related the incident to other members of her group, HOPE (Health, Opportunities, Problem Solving, Empowerment) for Girls. A community-based youth project, they embarked on a year-long-and-counting struggle to hold Mr. Sackett accountable and raise awareness about harassment on campus.

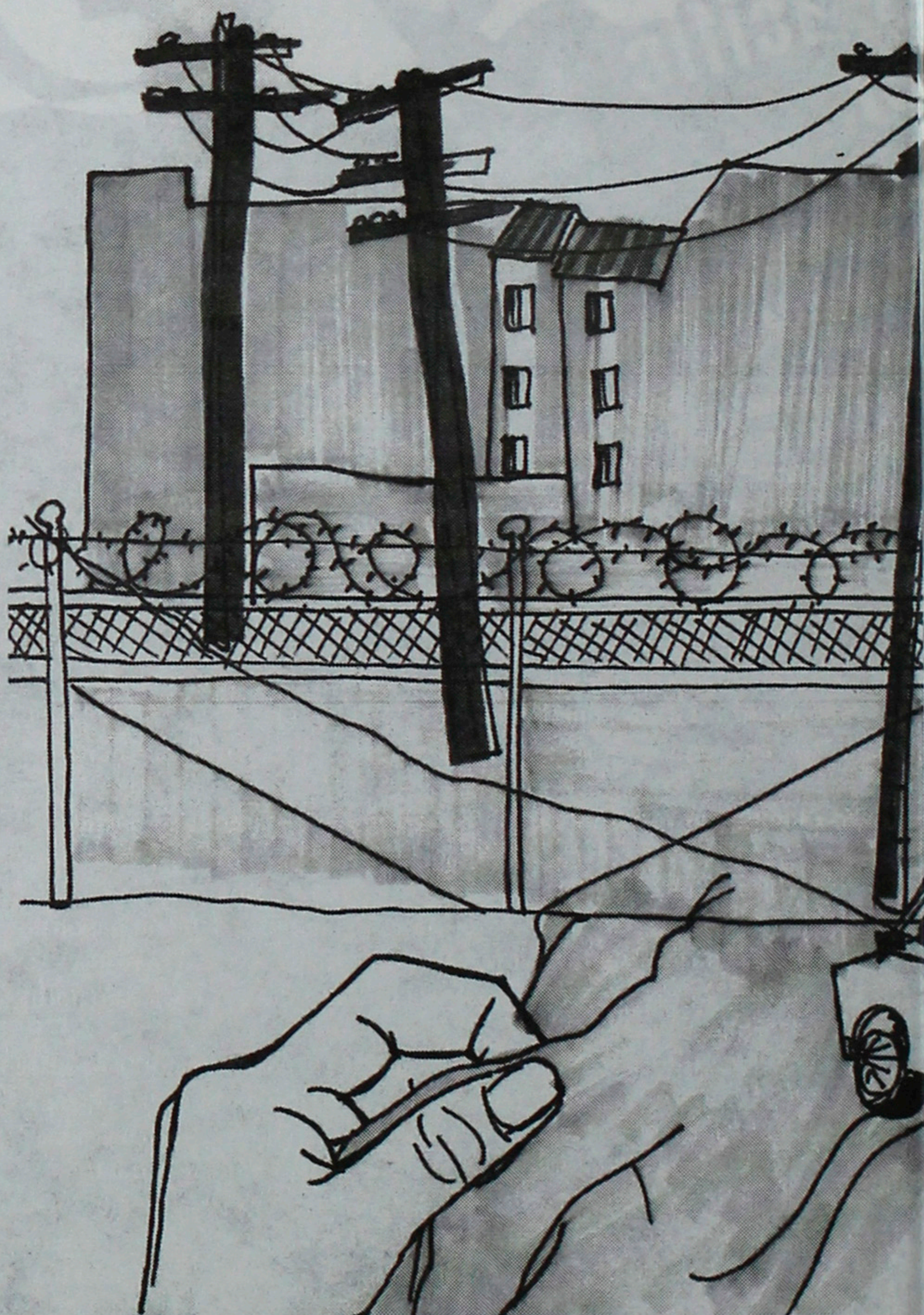
The group conducted a survey of 129 female students at their school, which found 86 percent said they've been harassed on campus because of their race, gender or group affiliation. The majority of students surveyed had never heard of a grievance procedure. With help from HOPE advisors Que Dang and Diep Tran, the girls approached the school principals and then the district assistant superintendent with a list of demands for, among other things, teacher sensitivity training and a more youth-friendly grievance policy.

Since meeting with the assistant superintendent, HOPE members said they have been frustrated to "get the run-around" on their complaint. "I want other girls if they're harassed by a teacher to do something about it, instead of thinking maybe it was their fault," Mary said.

Long Beach Polytechnic High's two principals, meanwhile, say they haven't heard from the girls since last year and can't resolve the issue unless they meet with both parties.

"They never said these specifically are the charges and we would like to file charges," principal Mel Collins said. "The ball's been in their court. It seems that when it might be politically astute for them, they bring it up."

Mr. Collins, mentioning that he is African American, described the school



Young women in Long Beach take on harassment at their high school

By TRAM QUANG NGUYEN

as "the last place you would want to be ethnically insensitive."

"The majority of those kids (at Poly) are Asian. For them to feel uncomfortable because of a comment Mr. Sackett may have made makes me wonder what is really happening. What is the motivation?"

Mr. Collins emphasized that he is willing to reschedule any of the girls who don't want to take Mr. Sackett's class next year, and that his door is open if they want to contact him. "I feel for them because if they think (they're being

Illustration: Jennifer Sun



harassed) all they have to do is let somebody know. I want to be accessible."

Principal Shawn Ashley characterized Mr. Sackett as a controversial and outspoken teacher.

"Mr. Sackett is very vocal and has these very strong right-wing views. I can see him getting all worked up," Mr. Ashley said. "He certainly has the right to be a right-wing radical if he wants to be."

In response to a question about when a teacher's behavior is inappropriate, Mr. Ashley said, "if the attacks become personal, carry over into the teaching, or carry over into his grading. But in a classroom we want to encourage debate between opposing views."

The principals said they both have met with Mr. Sackett, but employment laws protecting the privacy of personnel matters keep them from revealing what took place in the discussion.

HOPE members have found the administration more interested in protecting Mr. Sackett than advocating for the students. The principals don't, or won't, understand the girls were uncomfortable at school because of this incident, HOPE coordinator Diep Tran said.

"(The girls) were upset that Sackett used inappropriate language in front of them," she explained. "They were upset that he stated the HOPE project was racist because it focused on Cambodian girls' empowerment."

HOPE for Girls is a two-year-old project of Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health, an advocacy group that has organized young Cambodian women around issues of identity, sexuality and reproductive health.

"Our ultimate goal is to have a self-sustaining group of young Southeast Asian girls in Long Beach who mobilize the community to create change, whether it be around health issues, environmental issues, school issues," project coordinator Que Dang said. "HOPE wants to raise the voices of young women to bring power to their community."

Long Beach's 40,000-plus Cambodians are concentrated at the south end of the city, close to a strip of Khmer groceries, restaurants and jewelry stores along Anaheim Street known as Little Phnom Penh. At nearby Poly High, close to half of the student body is Cambodian.

Mary, 16, is now a sophomore at the school. Involvement in HOPE has led to more awareness of her identity as a young Cambodian American woman. Through her work with HOPE, she wants to encourage other Cambodian girls to speak their minds and help solve problems within their community.

"When I was younger I didn't want to have a thing to do with Cambodians. There was a lot of bad talk about Cambodians—dirty Cambodian girls," she said. "When I realized more about myself... Cambodian, that's me. If I'm going to be proud of myself, then I should be proud of my race. Instead of putting (my community) down, I should help it."

As for Mr. Sackett, the girls say they have not given up their campaign to raise awareness about harassment even though the case is closed as far as school officials are concerned.

"People were saying, why are you making such a big deal out of nothing?" said Cheath Monica Ching, 17. "But our motto is, if we don't do it, who will?"

The writing featured here appeared originally in a small green chapbook titled *The Way In*. Printed at a run of 255 copies, this literary booklet documents something of the lives of these young Cambodian writers and the community they live in.



Photo: Jeff Liu

Members of HOPE for Girls hold copies of their chapbook *The Way In* after their first reading in Long Beach.

In the Back of My Mind

By **SOTHAVY MEAS**

The world is full of crap. Crap women must deal with.

Asian people really eat dogs. Take on risks, they make you stronger.

Conquer your fears before they get the best of you.

Long Beach has the largest population of Cambodians, next to Cambodia. Many of them, with the help of the government, get to live in small, cramped houses and apartments on the eastside.

Don't just follow. Question Authority. Don't let a MAN rule your life.

Never let pride get in the way. HE can be right. Don't regret. Deal with it.

Men are sensitive sometimes. NEVER leave the toilet seat up.

Some girls still want to be like Barbie. Make yourself your top priority. The world revolves around you. Women are stronger.

Never wear polka dots and stripes together.

Stop growing up so quickly and enjoy everything. Go SKINNY-DIPPING.

Excess isn't good. Especially chocolate. Drive at the speed limit.

Live with your parents, not for them.

Oakland 1986, at the Age of 4

By CHEATH MONICA CHING

My parents brother and I were packed
like sardines
in our bucket
on our way to our new destination
Long Beach
Our few belongings filled the car and bed
mattresses
were tied on the roof
I wondered why we were moving
My mother and auntie our family had
always lived together
in one house
but how come I was in a car driving away
from familiarity
from the only life I've ever known

...

I remember thinking
It was all my fault
Maybe if I hadn't fought with my cousins
over dolls
or broken so many dishes
we would have never moved
After that I promised myself that I would
never
break another dish again, so we wouldn't
have to move

To the Lady That Thinks She Knows

By MARY IM

Don't try to act like you know me. Don't try to assume that you know my culture. You've never experienced what I've been through as a first generation Khmer girl. You've never experienced living up to two expectations. You've never grown up with Cambodian traditions and seen other "Americans" go to dances. You've never moped at home on a Friday night and wished you could go to the movies with your "American" friends. You've never seen Khmer people struggle to speak English. You've never tried to translate to both "Americans" and "Khmers" because you're the only one who understands both languages. You've never experienced people mimic you. You've never tried to ignore people's teasing and gawking at you. You've never experienced the abuse of "Americans." You've never tasted or smelled the sweet essence of Khmer Pa Hok, or mam, or kapeet. So don't tell me you know my culture. Don't tell me you know my race. You don't know the story of the killing fields. You don't know the life I go through; trying to be "Khmer American." So don't fucking tell me you know my culture. Don't act like you know, 'cause you don't. You don't know a damn thing.

You've never seen your grandma cry because her daughter on the other side of the world died. You've never seen your grandma sit behind a sewing machine and work her ass off to pay for shelter, food, clothing and luxury things for her grandkids on the other side of the world, living with strangers.

You were never behind a sewing machine making clothes you can't afford. You've never stressed about making the mortgage, or talked to "Americans" because your parents don't speak English. You've never seen your mom work at home. You've never seen her wake up at 4:00 a.m. and go to sleep at 1:00 a.m. You've never seen your dad in pain after a long night of making donuts. You've never, at the age of twelve, woken up at 4:00 a.m. because you needed to help sell donuts. You don't know what it is like to stay at a donut shop for twenty-four hours. You don't know and you'll never know. You'll only hear, and think you know. But really you don't know shit! So don't act like you know me, don't act like you care. 'Cause you don't know a damn thing.

FIGHT for Your RIGHT... to have ETHNIC STUDIES

By NAOMI IWASAKI

Two students, one Asian, one Black, are shooting craps on the sidewalk outside Skyline High School in Oakland. A disagreement soon escalates into a fight. Suddenly, more punching fists and kicking feet join the original pair. The brawl moves to campus, sucking in 60 to 70 students. The sides are clear: Blacks vs. Asians. After the rumble is broken up, tension stays high. One student's nose was completely smashed. Many Asian students don't come to school the next day, mostly for fear of getting beat up. In the aftermath of the fight, which took place earlier this year, the students complain about the racial tension at Skyline, and decide, among other things, they are in need of an Ethnic Studies curriculum.

"Some mediators from Youth Together (a Bay Area youth group) came a couple days later and the Blacks sat down and vented their frustration about Asians. Like about misunderstandings and racial ignorance," explained Min Lee, who will be a senior at Skyline in September. "Then the Asians vented about their issues. Then the two groups sat together and we decided that the biggest problem was no support from the administration. We decided that we could help fix this with Ethnic Studies."

With Asian Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership (AYPAL) spearheading the project, these Oakland students have made it a priority to establish classes that not only teach their history, but also other people of colors' history that is absent in the standard course load.

To work against the destructive race relations at Skyline, AYPAL students did some research to find out how to fight these problems.

They conducted a survey of fellow high school students and found that many were interested in learning the histories of other students of color in order to ease racial tension.

RJ Pragasa, 15, who will be a Skyline sophomore in September, is a part of the ES campaign. "Ethnic Studies is important for us to learn our history and be more conscious of other people," he says. "It breaks down racial tension because we learn about other people's culture."

In a school district like Oakland Unified, comprised of 90% students of color, history lessons do not always reflect student experiences.

"As minority students we felt we needed Ethnic Studies to learn about ourselves and other minorities," Lee says. "The history we learn now is so Eurocentric.

"Supposedly there are 'multicultural education' class available for fresh-

men, but that class is bogus. All we learn is geography and stuff."

Adds Pragasa, "It's not just about Ethnic Studies, but who will teach it, too. It should be up to students to pick the teachers—someone who knows about the history and can teach it."

With their goals and ideas mapped out, the students have focused on the work it takes to get to these ends.

"We've already talked to the Oakland School Board about signing a letter of support with our demands," Lee recalls. "Five out of the 12 signed, and some are helping, but others are just giving us the runaround, telling us to 'follow procedure' and go through the right process to get what we want."

"Like, we approached the school board at a rally in June, with Channel 13 coming out, and a lot of students coming out to support us. We managed to stop a proposition that would give \$6.3 million dollars to creating an Oakland School District Police Department—like we need more cops on campus! We told them that containment does not work, and got them to hear us. But still, they thought the rally was too energetic and crazy, and kept telling us, 'there is a process to follow' for all of this."

Despite discouragement from some school board members, AYPAL has, in fact, followed this bureaucratic process. Instead of trying to launch a new class, the students' strategy has been to revamp the existing "Multicultural Education" class into one that fits its title.

"We're trying to take that class and change it to what we want to learn and what the surveys say other students want to learn about," Lee explains.

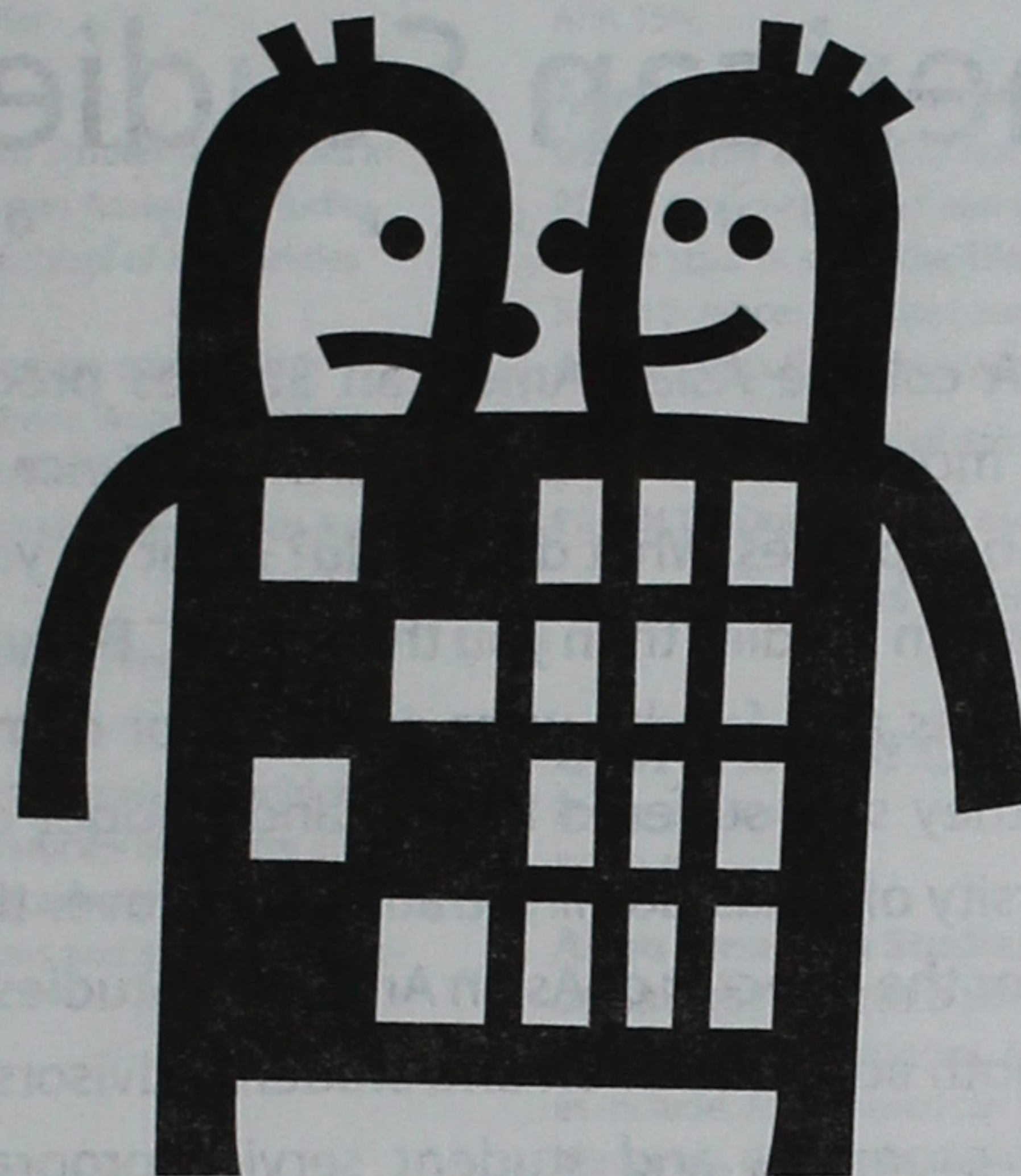
While enthusiasm for the Ethnic Studies struggle has since dwindled amongst Skyline students, particularly during the summer, AYPAL continues to work on it even though the members aren't in school now.

John Fong of Asian Community Mental Health Services (ACMHS) elaborates on how students have attended advisory meetings for next year's curriculum. "Not only are they giving their own ideas and topics on *what* is taught, like the Black Panthers, etc., but also *how* it's taught. They want teachers to be trained to be aware of students' experiences and be qualified in teaching history of people of color."

Students are adamant about this last issue. Particularly because, as Anolin emphasizes, the administration at Skyline has been mostly unsupportive and unresponsive.

"The whole administration is more concerned about the residential property around the school than the students' education," he asserts. "They can't communicate with the students or parents. Instead they throw suspensions out so they don't have to be responsible for students' behavior."

"How can a student concentrate in class if they're worried about getting beat up? The school board is so ready to spend money on more cops. That's not violence prevention, that's throwing kids in jail who don't know better. They could at least try to get in the community and find out its needs."



"How can a student concentrate in class if they're worried about getting beat up? The school board is so ready to spend money on more cops. That's not violence prevention, that's throwing kids in jail who don't know better. They could at least try to get in the community and find out its needs."

Not only have the high school students gone directly to their community—their fellow students—to figure out needs and desired change, they have also been preparing their own curriculum. By contacting some Ethnic Studies professors, TA's and the Third World Liberation Front group from UC Berkeley, they hope to get advice and support in their own Ethnic Studies campaign.

They've also been looking at other high schools, like Berkeley High and Logan High in Union City. These two schools already have established Ethnic Studies programs in their curriculum and AYPAL interviewed students from both schools to see what works and what doesn't.

Right now, it seems there will definitely be a new curriculum developing in the fall. It's just a matter of how seriously the students will be taken during preparation for the class.

And these voices have a lot to say about the quality of their education, as well as defining who they are outside of the classroom.

"All the gains minorities made in the Civil Rights Movement, and the strikes for Ethnic Studies at Cal and S.F. State, they're all slowly fading away with things like (Propositions) 187 and 209," Lee says. "And now Pete Wilson wants that (Juvenile Justice Initiative) proposition on the ballot that gives police and courts full power over youth. The prison system targets youth and minorities—jail at age 14 ends life."

While working against a system that seems to be indifferent to their needs and intent on portraying youth as a societal danger, AYPAL has gone to lengths to empower themselves with knowledge.

"I feel that an Ethnic Studies class should start off slow," says Joe Anolin, class of '99 Skyline grad. "Something that not only covers our history, but also is geared toward students researching their own heroes, fostering revolutionary thinking and getting more involved in community."

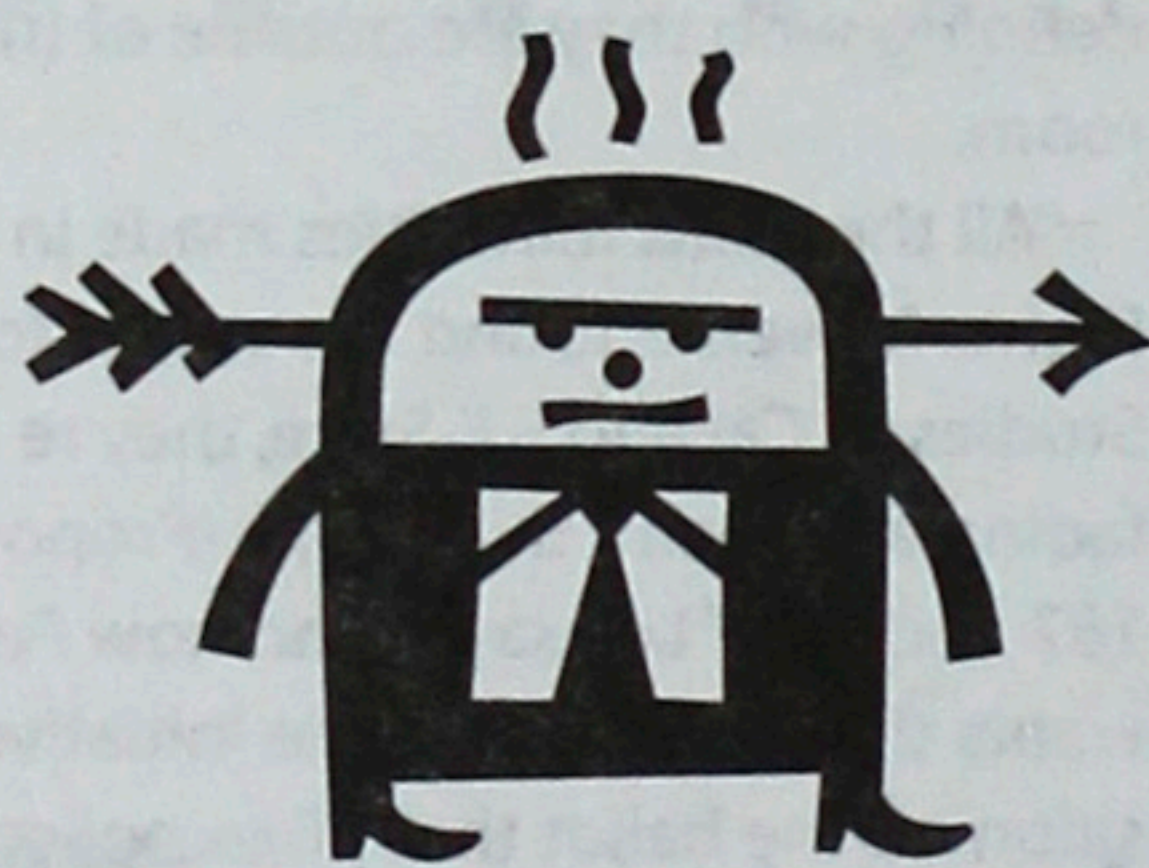
Anolin, 18, will be attending S.F. State in the fall. Despite his senior status this past spring, he was still putting in work to see that the Ethnic Studies campaign was taken seriously.

"People were asking me why I was working on it when it wouldn't affect me cause I was graduating," he recalls. "But it's about bettering things for the next generation. I don't want my kids to go through the same shit I did."

Asian American Studies

A A S Y O U L I K E I T O R A A S ' D O U T ?

Pop quiz, hotshot. A college Asian American Studies program is travelling at 8 courses per semester. There's a money bomb in the department. Once the funding goes under the survivable limit, the bomb explodes. What do you do? What do you do? 🌐 Keanu Reeves has more to do with Asian American Studies than you think. At UC Berkeley this spring, six students went on a hunger strike and 81 students and faculty were arrested for demonstrating on behalf of the Ethnic Studies department, which they said suffered faculty and budget cutbacks for years under university administration. At the University of Texas, administrative delay over the appointment of a selection committee-endorsed candidate for the director of Asian American Studies led to student protests. At USC, students of color clashed with both administration and student advisors over what they saw as the decimation of their ethnic studies programs and student service program offices (see story by Elizabeth



Sunwoo). 🌐 For this quiz, use the data provided as points of departure. It's intended to give you a cursory glimpse of the status of various regional Asian American Studies programs and departments. This is a field that, since its formation 30 years ago, has been the source of many personal and political revelations, protests, arrests, hunger strikes,



physical altercations and injuries to body and psyche. This is our history. 🌐 When assessing the state of Asian American Studies in California, keep these questions in mind: Is there structural support from university administrations? Are there adequate numbers of tenure-track faculty? Do students find the classes relevant, and the faculty and staff supportive of their organizing? How can individuals off campus interact with academic programs? And lastly, what is the purpose of ethnic studies? 🌐 The researchers' data-gathering methodology, in certain academic circles, may be considered unscientific and incomprehensive. Note the glaring absence of San Francisco State University, Stanford and several community, state and UC schools—all with Asian American studies programs worthy of interest. 🌐 Surveys were sent via e-mail to Asian American Studies programs, departments, students and faculty at colleges throughout California. Information presented does not claim to be official statements from the programs. It is rather the assessments of individual survey participants. 🌐 In drawing your conclusions, it's not surprising you should come across seeming contradictions in the data. Why do some programs thrive while others report cutbacks and administrative hostility? What does this imply for the future of AAS? Think critically.

B Y V Y N G U Y E N

Asian American Studies Programs/Departments

California State University, Fullerton

Public university

Percentage of undergraduates who are APA: 25%

Asian American Studies Program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED Minor in Asian American Studies (approved in 1996); B.A. in Ethnic Studies with an option in Asian American Studies to start Fall 1999. Independent program in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Approximately eight classes are offered per semester, some of the more popular being Filipina/o American Experience, Asian American Literature, WWII Japanese American Evacuation, Vietnamese Communities in the U.S., Korean American Experience and South Asian American Experience.

FACULTY One full-time, tenure-track AAS professor; seven full-time in other departments; six part-time.

PROGRAM STATUS Growing. Cutbacks are not currently a problem. Just received General Education status for five courses and more are in process for next year. During the next year or two, the program must increase enrollment if it is to add faculty positions and achieve departmental status.

CSU Dominguez Hills

Public university

APA % Unknown

Asian-Pacific Studies Program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED Minor

Began as an Asian Studies interdisciplinary studies program and has evolved into a combination Asian and Asian American Studies program. The program offers approximately two classes per semester.

FACULTY One full-time

PROGRAM STATUS In transition. Trying to grow, but needs a lot of support from the community and students.

CSU Northridge

Public university

APA 16%

Department of Asian American Studies

DEGREE(S) OFFERED B.A. (major, double major); minor

CSUN is one of two California State universities (the other being San Francisco State University) in the 22-campus CSU system to offer a bachelor's degree in AAS. This spring, they graduated their first regular class of Asian American Studies majors.

AAS began in 1990 as a department (not a program) offering a minor and housed in the College of Humanities. The proposal for an undergraduate major in AAS gained approval from the CSU Chancellor in late January 1999. The department today offers roughly 25-30 classes per semester.

FACULTY Five full-time; eight part-time

PROGRAM STATUS In transition (with the approval of the new major). Also in a growth stage with full-time faculty hires. Enrollment in the AAS courses is high, and as long as enrollment expectations are met, downsizing is not anticipated. Much of the success of the major will depend on dynamic leadership.

Pasadena City College

Public college

APA 35%

Asian American Studies program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED none

PCC is proud to have been continuously teaching Asian American and ethnic studies since the 1960s. The interdisciplinary program (part of Social Sciences Division) supports about four classes per semester. No degrees are offered in any ethnic studies at PCC.

CLASSES Sociology of Asian Americans; History of Asian Americans

FACULTY One full-time; two part-time

PROGRAM STATUS Healthy and steady

University of California, Santa Barbara

Public university

APA 17%

Asian American Studies program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED B.A.; minor

Interdisciplinary program. About 10 classes per semester. Popular classes include: Asian American Fiction, Asian American Performance Workshop, Gender Relations-Feminist Issues, Men's Issues, Video Making, Asian American Popular Culture, Social Movements and Visual Media.

FACULTY Five full-time; two part-time; two affiliated

PROGRAM STATUS Transitional. Growing in number of majors. Significant budget constraints and unstable faculty. Some fear of being structurally combined with the East Asian Studies department, which would limit the program's autonomy and resources.

UC Berkeley

Public university

APA 40%

Asian American Studies Program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED B.A.

The program is a major offered within the Ethnic Studies department. About 20 individual field requirement classes are offered each semester. Popular classes include: Introduction to Asian American Studies (a.k.a. "Amscam"), Asian Americans in Politics and Public Policy, Asian American Film and Video, Reading and Composition and Asian American Women's Literature.

Ethnic studies at Berkeley began in 1969, when the Third World Liberation Front strike, made up of students of color and later followed by White students and some faculty, demanded a space where students could learn through non-Eurocentric lenses.

FACULTY Seven full-time; five part-time

PROGRAM STATUS The program is facing budget cutbacks as are all other Ethnic Studies programs and departments. The number of majors in all ethnic studies are dropping each year. As a result of student protests and a hunger strike in May, the administration has agreed to support eight new FTE (Full-time Equivalent) searches in the next five years, as well as to commit university seed money for a new institute of race and gender studies.

Survey continues on page 45

GIDRA TRAVEL GETAWAY

**Trying to find that special place?
Consider these fabulous tourist destinations,
and remember always let the buyer be aware!**

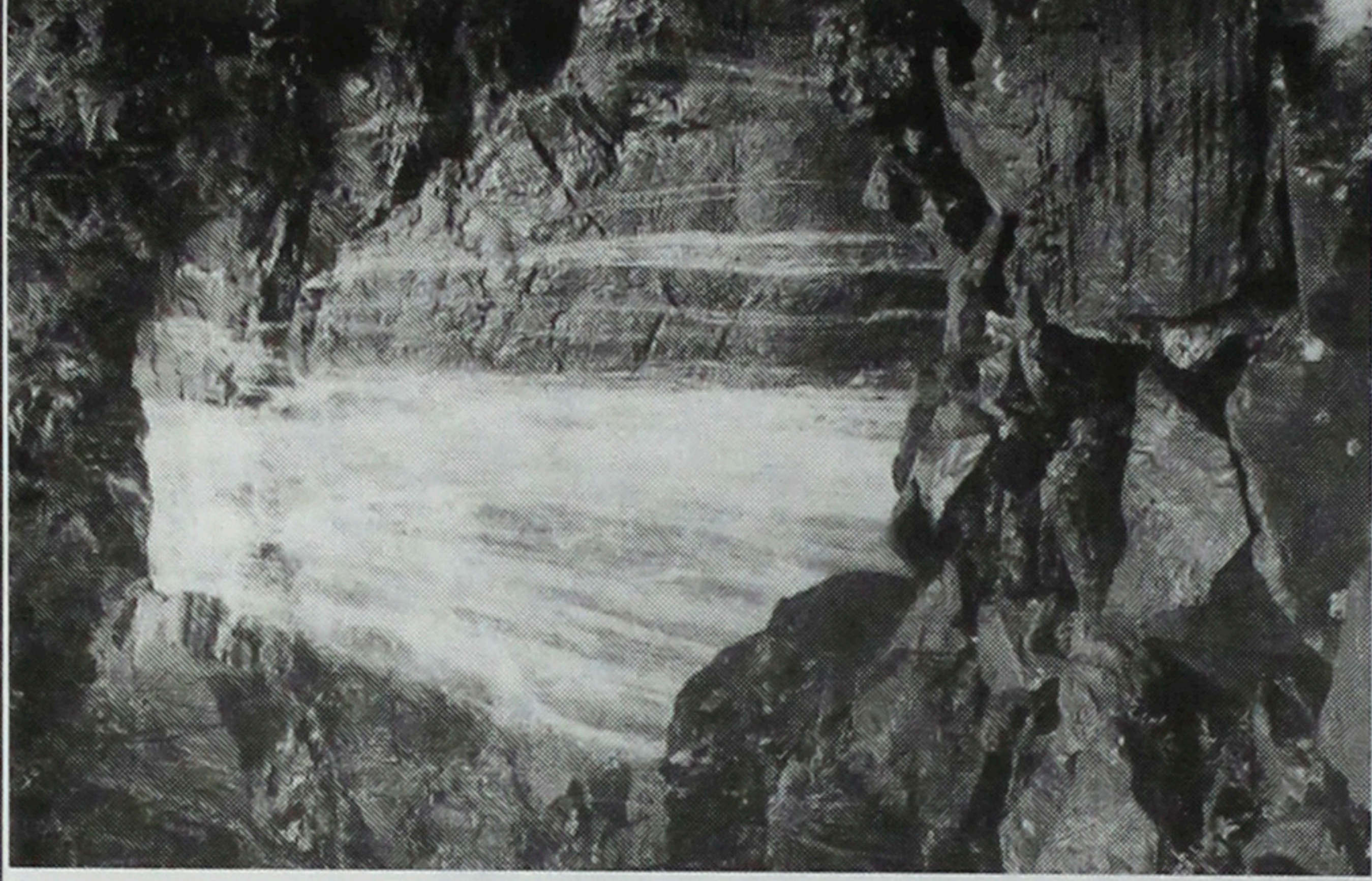
Visit one of the modern world's finest, wholesale appropriations of indigenous culture.



Everything in Hawaii Can Be Yours—since 1893, the land, the people, the culture, even the native identity has been had for one affordable price. **Enjoy a Hawaiian Holiday Today!**

It is important for visitors here to have some awareness of the history and current struggle, and to understand that Hawaii is not like other American states. To Hawaiians, daily life is neither soft nor kind. In fact, the political, economic and cultural reality for most Hawaiians is hard, ugly and cruel.

The commodification of Hawaiian culture includes marketing native values and practices on *haole* terms. These talents, in Hawaiian terms, are the hula, the youthful beauty of our men and women, the aloha—generosity and love—of our people, and the continuing allure of our lands and waters. Tourism



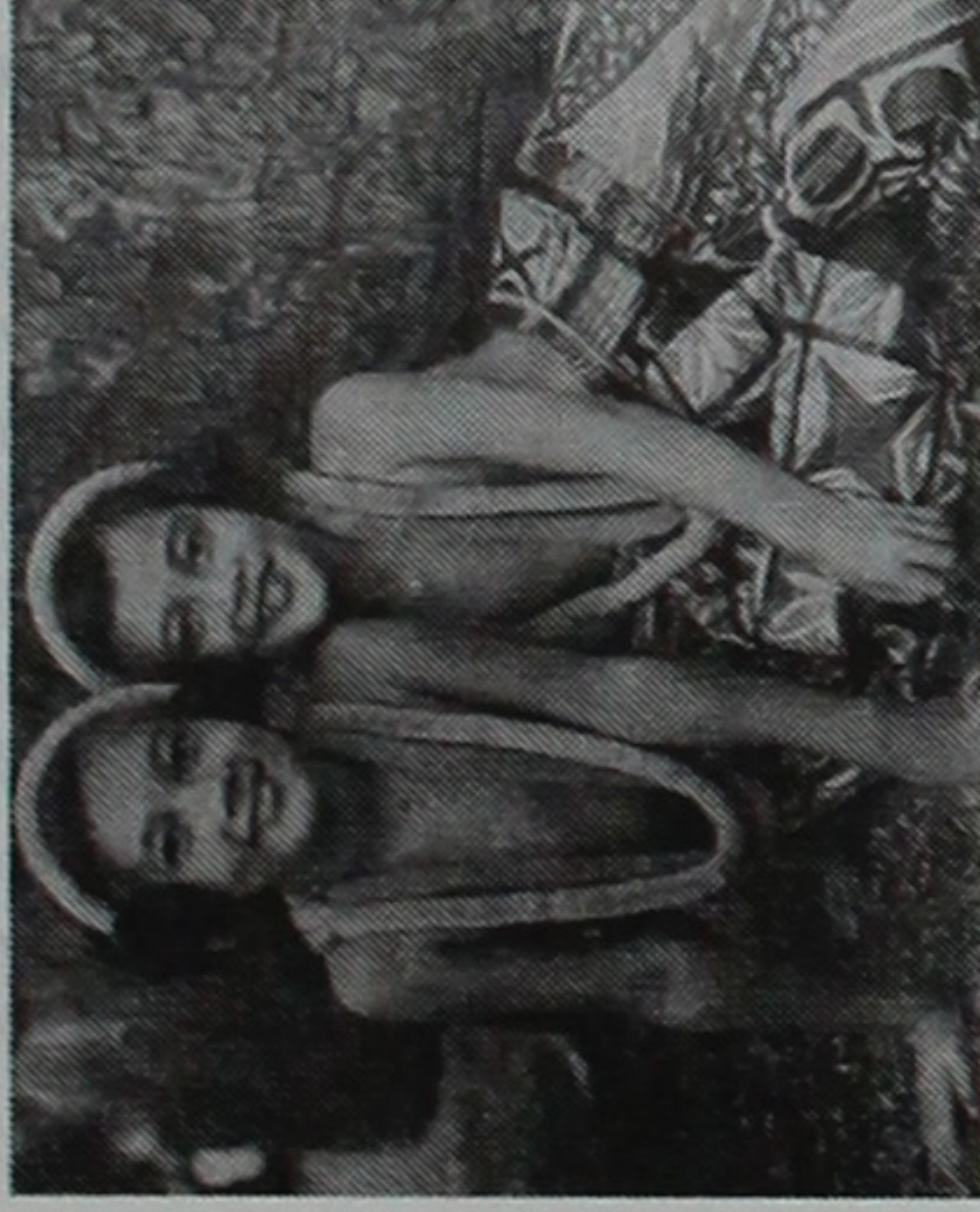
*Beautiful Islands
Friendly People*

OKINAWA

Come visit during the "Typhoons of Steel" Season—one of the unnatural wonders of the world. *Special offer for countries in search of pugilistic freedom.*

In the Cold War era, the American military bases in Okinawa played a vital role in America's strategies to contain communism in China, the Soviet Union, and other Asian countries. During the Korean and Vietnam wars, the U.S. Forces fully recognized Okinawa's strategic location, used the island as a major staging area for the dispatch of troops and aircraft. The American military bases, have thus served as a strategic linchpin in America's mili-

allure of our lands and waters. Tourism
Tourism deforms the culture so much
that many young Hawaiians grow up
thinking that ... to dance the hula is to
dance for tourists.



We are working to undo this image. Unfortunately, many of our people, and Hawaiian women in particular, don't agree that tourism prostitutes our culture. ... We can't understand our own cultural degradation because we are living

it. Decolonization has begun. But, we have a long way to go. We also need to educate others and join with them. This problem is not unique to Hawaii.

—Haunani Kay Trask

Hang in Hawaii!

(fine print terms and agreements)

Hawaii! Brought to you by violations of international law and the U.S. Constitution.

Jan. 17, 1893 Queen Lili'uokalani abdicates authority to the United States under pressure. "I, Lili'uokalani, by the grace of God and under the constitution of the Hawaiian Kingdom Queen, do hereby solemnly protest against any and all acts done against myself and the constitutional government of the Hawaiian Kingdom by certain persons claiming to have established a Provisional Government of and for this Kingdom. Now, to avoid any collision of armed forces, and perhaps the loss of life, I'd, under this protest and impelled by said forces, yield my authority until such time as the Government of the United States shall, upon the facts being presented to it, undo the action of its representative, and reinstate me in the authority which I claim as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands."—Queen Lili'uokalani, in *Hawaii's Story*.

Congress passed the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act in 1921, setting aside nearly 200,000 acres in scattered tracts across the islands. In doing so, Congress expressed some hope that the act of returning a small portion of land, taken in what a sedentary U.S. president called the unlawful federal seizure of Hawaii in 1893, would save the dying Hawaiian people. Decades after the Homes Commission Act, Native Hawaiians, who are the poorest and most ill-housed population in the state, hold just 17.5 percent of the set aside acreage. More than 60 percent of the land has been rented at bargain prices to non-natives, many belonging to the richest and most powerful families in the islands. Other land has gone to multinational corporations for quarrying and mining operations, to the U.S. military for naval headquarters, to mayors and legislators for private companies and personal estates, to prominent businessmen for tourist attractions and to investors who have turned around and subleased the property for as much as eight times what they pay in rent. In 1893, a group of American businessmen, backed by U.S. Marines, illegally overthrew the constitutional monarchy of Hawaii and installed their own oligarchy. President Cleveland condemned the act and called for the restoration of the Hawaiian monarchy. In 1898, President McKinley railroaded a joint resolution of annexation, instead of an internationally and constitutionally applicable treaty.

In 1993, the U.S. Congress and President Clinton officially apologized for the overthrow, and perhaps indirectly for the annexation, acknowledging the illegality of it all. Ever one to exhale, Clinton stopped short of recognizing the inherent sovereignty and right to self-determination of Native Hawaiians. The Native Hawaiian population has nearly been obliterated. There were a million native Hawaiians at the time of Captain Cook's arrival in 1778; now there are 1,000 full-blooded Hawaiians, and just 50,000 people with 50 percent or more Hawaiian blood (a requirement to make claims under the Homelands Act).

Hawaii became a state in 1959, which today is strongly being contested by many indigenous Hawaiians. In fact, many Hawaiians believe annexation and statehood are invalid. The anti-Vietnam War protests, the Black and Native American Indian movements, and other civil rights struggles in the United States in the 1960s spawned a greater ethnic awareness and cultural pride among indigenous Hawaiians. A political and sometimes militant grassroots movement for native Hawaiian rights emerged in the 1970s and 80s. With this movement was a creative renaissance of Hawaiian music, dance, language and culture.

"More akin to the American Indian Movement than the Black Civil Rights Movement, the Hawaiian Movement began as a battle for land rights, but would evolve by 1980, into a larger struggle for native Hawaiian autonomy. In the 1990s, major sovereignty organizations have organized around the return of lands, self-governance and independence based on the right of self-determination. A new generation of Hawaiian nationalists has formed a growing movement on behalf of Native rights and survival.

We are under siege by 6.5 million tourists annually. It's the softest kind of siege—it doesn't look like war."—Haunani-Kay Trask

tary policies in the Far East.

Located in Japan's southwesternmost prefecture, Okinawa is composed of more than 160 islands scattered across a picturesque ocean area spanning 620 miles from east to west and 250 miles from north to south. Its proximity to Southeast Asia and other Pacific nations gives Okinawa the advantage of short, convenient flights to neighboring countries—especially for flash-points such as Taiwan, the Republic of China, North Korea and the Philippines.

No RULES or RESTRICTIONS

For more than half a century, Okinawa has been occupied by the U.S. military and, although bases stateside are governed by strict environmental laws, skies the limit when it comes to Okinawa's environment. Neither the U.S. military or government is held accountable for environmental damages caused by the base presence in Okinawa. Talk about freedom!

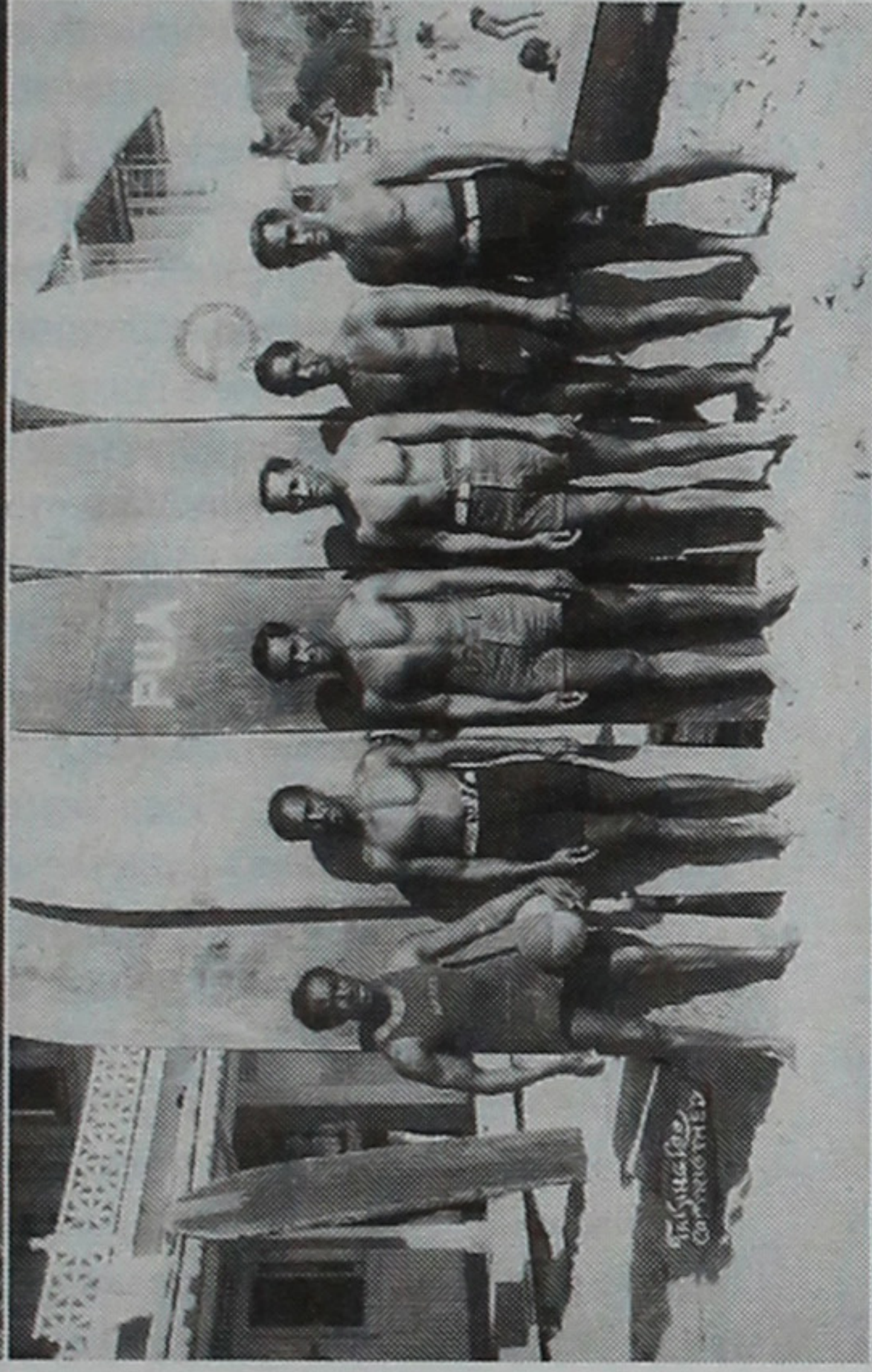
No need for luggage in Okinawa. Look at the baggage that comes with admission:

- 237 school children in the Gushikawa City coastal area contract "V" skin disease, strikingly similar to the Vietnam War Agent Orange Defoliant syndrome.
- Pesticides and herbicides used within Camp Kuwae drain into the sea. Massive fish poisoning results.
- Forest fires caused by artillery drills burn for four days on Mt. Onna.
- Frequent fires resulting from military drills occur in the Northern Training Area.
- Bullets containing depleted uranium are used in firing drills on the small island of Torishima. Sea to shining sea indeed!

The people are part of the deal.

- During World War II, at an internment camp in Chinen Village, a house is repainted and turned into a military brothel.
- Rape by U.S. military servicemen occur seemingly at will or at random. Among the victims: a 9-month-old baby girl.
- A 41-year-old U.S. Air Force officer from Torii Station causes a head-on crash with the van of a 67-year-old man when the officer veers into approaching traffic. The Okinawan man dies the next day.

Come and experience Okinawa today—as one satisfied customer country said, "Okinawa is OK!"



The Brothers Kahanamoku at Waikiki Beach, 1928 (l-r): Bill, Sam, Louis, David, Sargeant and Duke, Hawai'i's foremost emissary of goodwill and surfing.

University of Social un-Consciousness

USC students' concerns take a back seat to administration goals • By ELIZABETH SUNWOO

Despite what people might think, the world here is not perfect. 🌐 There are issues intentionally being ignored, people acting out, having tantrums and an institution taking its policies to a new level of crazy and deranged. I can say USC has taught me some important practical lessons: know history, trust my instincts and never trust "The Master." 🌐 The University of Southern California might not be the most appropriate place to describe with the phrase "institute of higher learning." Dedicated and inspiring educators are forced to leave. Students are harassed for merely voicing an opinion. Minority faculty members are diverted from teaching ethnic studies courses while others lose tenure bids. Alternative student publications are asked to submit proofs to the administration before distribution. Cultural service center offices have been combined and downsized. Surrounding small businesses have been overshadowed by creeping university-sanctioned commercialization.

The list continues.

These incidents are becoming a part of everyday life at USC and have forced students to act on what we've learned here. And that, of course, is not always in the classroom.

"The main problem between students and administration, specifically in Student Affairs, is they say they care about students, but they do very little to support them," said Kamryn S. Clark, a USC senior majoring in international relations. "Students aren't valued in administrative decisions.... What we need is always second to the money."

USC students, service workers, faculty and community members are joining forces under some of these issues, and have formed a loose-knit alliance spearheaded by the Concerned Students Coalition. CSC has taken the initiative to raise public awareness of wrongdoings by the USC administration.

Armed with USC's history of relocating Exposition Park communities in the name of development, denying workers a living wage and current struggles on and around campus, CSC launched an education and organizing campaign. Using performances, flyers, discussions and one-on-one contact, CSC awoke a political monster from within the student population.

"It's not that students are apathetic," said Tu Tran, executive director of the Asian Pacific American Student Assembly. "They have all been screwed over by the university, and it is not hard for them to see the writing on the wall. We all don't want to wait—until it is too late and our fears are confirmed—to show our strength. We need to prevent our fears from coming true."

During Black History Month, anonymous flyers titled, "Where have all the Black administrators gone?" and "Minority student retention is a joke" were distributed throughout campus. These flyers raised awareness among students and fear among administrators. The admin staff in Student Affairs began a witch hunt for anyone connected with the flyers.

Through townhall discussions sponsored by the Department of Student Affairs and its vice president, Michael L. Jackson, students tried to go through proper channels to address their concerns. They were left frustrated and upset.

"The main problem to begin with is the decision-making process," said Cass T. Gualvez, a recent graduate in political science. "It doesn't include students. When students do want to get involved, the process has already begun and we are coming late into the game. Then the university sees us as a nuisance. Then the administration creates more antagonism."

On July 6, 1999, Dr. Pamela Porter, director of the Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs (CBCSA) for nearly 20 years, was forced to leave the university. With more than five armed guards and four administrators watching, Porter cleaned her office and removed her belongings.

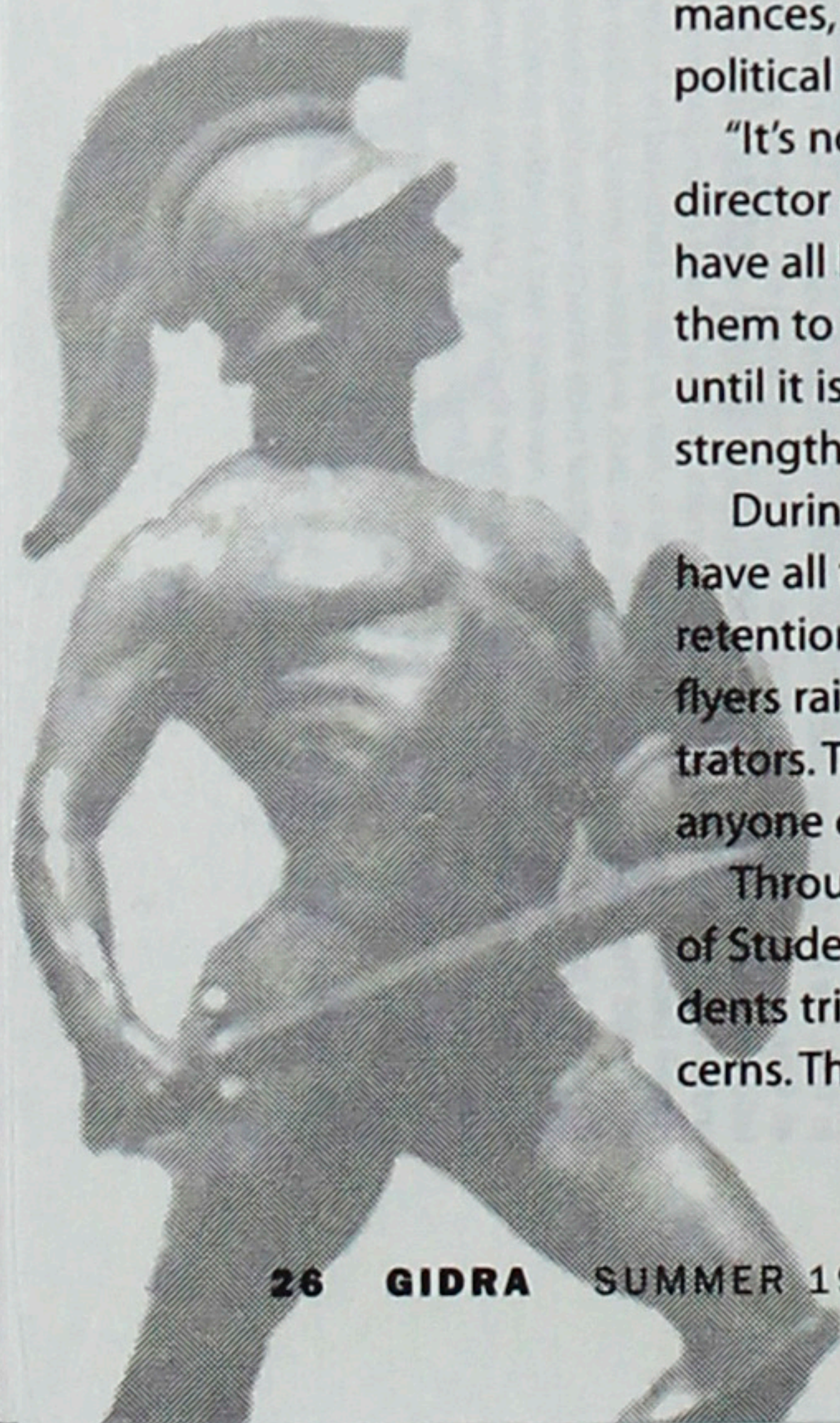
"I came to help Dr. Porter pack and these armed guards behind the door wouldn't even let me in or look in there," said Lee Versoza, a senior majoring in Asian American Studies. "How could a petite, 110-pound woman cause such a show of force by the university?"

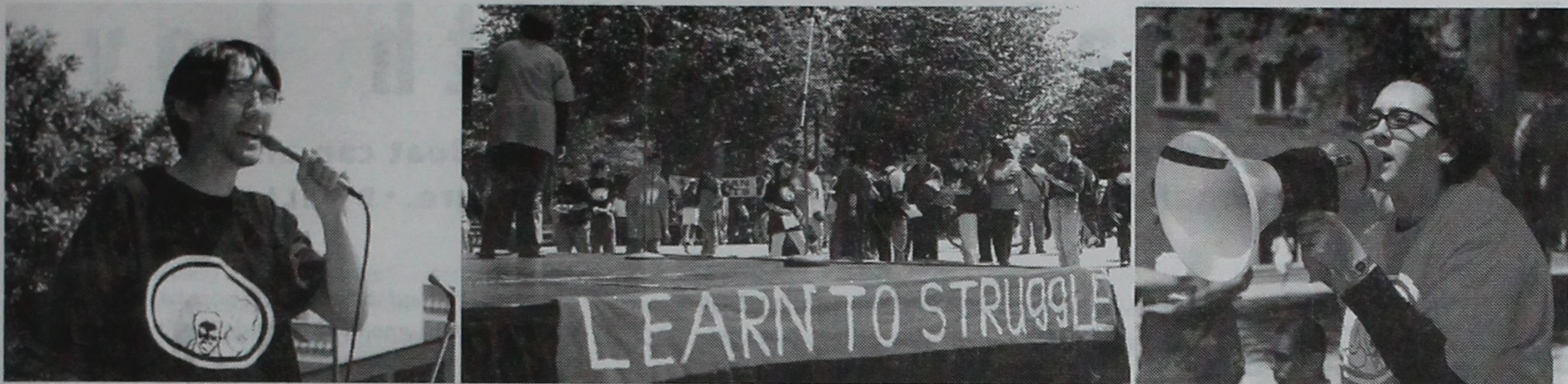
Porter was the second of the three ethnic service center directors to leave USC this year. The dubious circumstances surrounding their departures confirmed students' suspicions that a 1992 "Reorganization Plan to Create the Office of Academic and Cultural Services" was in the process of being executed.

"While a lot of administrators and faculty have kept their mouths shut about the lies the university tells, Dr. Porter was one of the few people who refused to accept the university's money and leave quietly," Clark said. "As a Pacific Islander student, I feel she created the only space for us to express our want for change and social consciousness."

In spring of 1999, USC began construction on the existing student union to create a new and larger center that had been planned for nearly four years. Students were not apprised of the construction until a CSC resolution prompted an article in the April 29 edition of the Daily Trojan. Although already in construction, Jackson said "a committee made up of faculty, staff, administration and eight students will now create a program statement to specify what services and spaces will be provided in the new center."

With the insurgence of political awareness on campus, USC has responded with the creation of committee after committee to address issues raised by CSC.





Photos courtesy of Concerned Students Coalition

Throwin' down on the man: students at USC participate in a rally protesting administrative policies towards minorities last Spring.

"I am on the student committee to advise for the student center," said Tran. "And it is ridiculous. They even went as far as to label me, 'the minority student representative.' It's too bad I'm the only minority, and that we rarely get anything accomplished in the few meetings we have had."

Students have suffered consequences for speaking out. On April 26, 1999, Clark and Gualvez were fired from the Asian Pacific American Student Services (APASS) office after participating in a noontime performance by CSC. Clark and Gualvez, both visible and accomplished Asian American leaders on campus, expressed disappointment and confusion as to why they were fired, particularly because long-time mentor Jeff Murakami, director of APASS, was behind the firing.

"The reasons I was fired are two-fold," Clark said. "One: Jeff was unhappy that students didn't consult him and Two: the firing was political. He wanted to make the university aware that he didn't agree with students taking these political actions by punishing Cass and I. It was politically motivated and had nothing to do with my work for over three years in that office."

According to the April 26 termination letter from Murakami, Clark and Gualvez were fired for "directly and intentionally providing misleading information regarding issues, programs or projects directly affecting the department.... Information that you provided to your supervisor regarding the source of [an electronic message distributed to APASS colleagues and community partners] or the nature of the concern was intentionally misleading."

Gualvez said she was fired from APASS, "basically for my involvement with CSC. There was no other legitimate reason. I've been working with APASS for over two years. I don't see how he could trust me to take care of his kids and then tell me I was untrustworthy in the office. I know it has nothing to do with my performance."

The USC administration has indicated it would not willingly allow anyone to deter them from their goal of making USC one of the top 25 universities in the nation.

With cultural initiatives in 1994 and the current Initiative 2000, USC has used communities of color on and off campus to its economic and political advantage. By disregarding students of color and students' rights to free speech and remaining indifferent to the surrounding predominantly Korean and Black community, USC has narrowly defined the future of Los Angeles.

Leaders on campus, such as USC's own student senate, have failed to stand for and with their constituents. Instead, they buy

into the divide and conquer method and form yet another committee to "handle the issue."

USC administrators have received copies of the CSC resolution but have largely failed to comment. Jackson did however make one response. It was addressed to student body president Tyler Kelley, who has little or no involvement with these issues.

CSC recently obtained Jackson's May 4 letter to Kelley. Jackson concluded with these thoughts: "The CSC members have raised good questions and have stimulated a healthy dialogue. I hope that I, in turn have provided useful perspective. I remain willing to talk with you, CSC members, or any other students, and student groups. Please do not hesitate to call me."

Just before Porter's forced exit, Jackson left for vacation. Individuals, CSC, and other student organizations have left messages in attempt to arrange a meeting with Jackson, but there has been no response.

"The administration is so caught up in procedure and bureaucracy that the concerns students are voicing are immediately referred to policies and procedures instead of being dealt with," Clark said.

The Asian American Studies program is dwindling—three professors have left and one was denied tenure this year—yet Asian American Studies faculty are the only professors teaching core American Studies and Ethnicity classes which includes African American and Chicano/Latino Studies majors and minors. Meanwhile, student leaders have scheduled a meeting with Murakami regarding the actions he took in August.

CSC is in the process of establishing a statewide meeting for organizations and individuals ready to unite for change in higher education. For information, questions, updates and links to news articles, review the CSC website at <http://members.xoom.com/studentpwr/> or email to studentpwr@xoommail.com.

As the university banks on terms like multiculturalism, diversity and inclusiveness, many students may find themselves believing in a comfortable, lovely world where trying is enough. Now isn't that perfect, dahling?

(Elizabeth Sungmin Sunwoo is a recent graduate of USC, the past director of the Asian Pacific-Islander Student Outreach, past vice-chair of the Asian American Student Assembly, past co-chair of the Student Action Coalition and was a teaching assistant for Critical Issues in Race, Class and Leadership in Education offered through APASS.)

From Taiwan, With Love

By reputation a harmless summer lark, the infamous Love Boat can also be a subtle game of international proportions. Set a course for adventure. • By ELLEN D. WU

Ellen Wu's Friendly Glossary

PRC: ^(pě'p'iz ri pub'lik uy chí'ne) People's Republic of China, a.k.a. "Mainland China"; run by the Communist party.

ROC: ^(ri pub'lik uy chí'ne) Republic of China, a.k.a. "Nationalist China" or "Free China" (which I don't like to use); run by the Nationalist Party, known as the Kuomintang (KMT) in Mandarin; located on Taiwan.

Blow jobs, dance clubs and abortion rumors—sordid details of society's underbelly, or typical summer camp escapades? Well, the latter, for our purposes at hand. These, for many young Asian Americans, describe none other than the legendary Love Boat.

Dubbed by 1996 participant Denise Yee as the "quintessential Chinese American youth experience," the Love Boat, a.k.a. Jian Tan, a.k.a. the Overseas Chinese Youth Language Training and Study Tour to the Republic of China, is an annual event for college-aged ABC's (American-Born Chinese) and their counterparts from around the globe. Each July, students gather on Taiwan soil—contrary to popular belief, it's not a cruise—to partake in nearly six weeks of hard core "educational" partying.

But is it more than just a month and a half of whirlwind romances and Taiwan Beer® hangovers? There seem to be too many factors involved to write off the Love Boat as an extended drunken orgy for spoiled Chinese Americans. A critical look reveals much about the role of U.S.-born Asians in international relations.

According to a 1995 Amerasia Journal article by UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies professor L. Ling-chi Wang, the Taiwan government has made many attempts to curry the favor of generations of overseas Chinese. The Republic of China (ROC) has been almost obsessed with "retaining the Chinese cultural identity, if not political and economic loyalty" of all Chinese in the diaspora through a complex system of ideology, theory and policy. Wang dubs it "extraterritorial domination."

After the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the Nationalists, or Kuomintang (KMT), were relegated to the tiny island while their adversaries, or Communists, loomed large on the Mainland. So the KMT fortified their efforts. Enter the Love Boat.

ANCHORS AWAY

The Study Tour is a 33 year-old Cold War baby. Sponsored and staffed by Taiwan's Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission and the China Youth Corps, the program targets college-aged overseas Chinese, serving them a smorgasbord of summer activities in hopes of "increasing their ability to use the Chinese language, to understand Chinese culture and history and to see firsthand the achievements of the Republic of China," as stated in the itinerary handbook.

It would be hard to find a more popular and well-known program among ABC co-eds. The Study Tour started in 1966 with five people (sounds like some odd lovin' going on!); the next year, there were 102. Since then, sign-ups have skyrocketed to 945 in 1989 and 1,075 in 1997.

What draws the big crowds?

When students arrive, they do indeed encounter a slew of programs designed by the ROC bigwigs "to give the students a multi-faceted and deeper understanding of their motherland, that they may experience for themselves the true meaning of the phrase 'blood is thicker than water'" (read: extraterritorial domination).

Mandarin training, Chinese cultural classes such as stick fighting and zither playing and field trips to local attractions like the National Palace Museum have all been part and parcel of the Love Boat over the past three decades. At the end of the five-week stint, the students pile on buses for the "trip down South"—the "tour" after the "study." Again, they hit the hot tourist spots—Sun Moon Lake, Hualien, Kenting's National Park—and a few tepid ones, like the Kaoshing Air Force Academy. It's part of the "master plan."

But when school's out, do "model minority" types really want to sit in classrooms practicing their *bo po mo fo's*? Come on, it's summertime.

Angela Lee, a 1995 attendee, had looked forward to the chance to beef up her linguistic capabilities and cultural know-how. She was disappointed, though, with the results and said it was the "wrong setting" that left little time for homework.

Tony Yang, a 1992 participant, said he learned "very little," not so much because of the curriculum, "but the fact that everyone on campus spoke English and we were bused everywhere in our own group, never really being forced to speak Chinese for anything."

How much more "Chinese" you become depends a lot on how much you already know. The less you know, the more you appreciate. "This program was meant for people that never had Chinese culture," said Lillian Lee, a 1996 Love Boater. "That was kind of like me, raised in Texas with no idea of what it's like to be Asian."

Others, who may have already visited Taiwan, have a "tell-me-something-I-don't-already-know" attitude. "We've seen all that before. We used to go to Chinatown every weekend when we were kids," one Southern California native said of her 1988 trip.

Attempts to celebrate and reinforce Chinese-ness involve a purposeful process of defining students' ethnic identity and homeland. The KMT exercises extraterritorial



The author (right) and friends (from left: Ming Chang, Amy Hsiao, Eugene Hsiao) in front of the Hard Rock Cafe somewhere in the middle of Taipei

domination by calling the participants "Overseas Chinese" rather than their personal preferences for "Taiwanese American," "Chinese American" or just "Asian." The Nationalists also repeatedly refer to Taiwan as the "home-," "mother-," or "fatherland."

Glenn Mar, a 1984 alumnus, disagrees with the designation. "In the program, they'd say, 'Welcome back. Welcome back to your homeland,'" said Mar. "And we all knew enough to realize, geographically, that was not our homeland, but they would say that to us. So that had to make you think, what's going on?"

The fact that participants hail from a number of places—North America, Europe, Africa, Australia, Central and South America—complicates the notions of identity and "home."

The most significant butting of heads, however, comes with the political motivations behind the Study Tour. The KMT—booted out of the United Nations in the '70s—has always been interested in rallying students to their side of the Bamboo Curtain. "We ask them if there is anything they can do diplomatically, through their own Government, to help us," an official for the ROC's San Francisco Consulate explained in a 1972 issue of the Asian American-interest *Bridge* magazine. An orientation letter to the participants' parents warned, "Pro-Communist publications and dangerous drugs are strictly prohibited." The letter was dated May 19, 1989.

Even the name and purpose of co-sponsor China Youth Corps points to the Nationalists' agenda: the literal English translation of their name is "Chinese Youth-Communism Nation Saving Organization," and their mission statement vows "to promote the concept of democracy" in Taiwan's "fight against Communism."

The administration delivers its message in obvious and not-so obvious ways on the tour. During the '70s and '80s, indoctrination methods included daily flag raisings, singings of patriotic songs, visits to military bases and Mainland refugee testimonies, all preaching a pro-Nationalist stance. Throughout the '90s, the KMT has continued its crusade with speakers and slide shows.

Schenley Chen recalled from his 1995 trip watching a film that juxtaposed the ROC and PRC's histories. The film

was "obviously propaganda," Chen said. "It's all negative negative about China, and here's positives about Taiwan."

Mar described a similar slide show in 1984: "They said, in 1952 (sic), the government of China moved to the island of Taiwan. Like that was it. Like they moved into a bigger house or something. We didn't lose a war, or anything. We didn't get our butts kicked or anything. They didn't even mention Mao."



Ellen and friend Eddy Chen pose in front of two lounging Buddhas (!) at the local Buddhist Monastery (that's them on the right)

THE LIVING IS EASY

The government also rolls out the red carpet for the students—police-escorted motorcades and air-conditioned rooms, for example—as part of its strategy to up its international status. This year the cost of the program, funded by government subsidies, is astoundingly low—\$400—considering that it covers nearly six weeks of room, board, tuition, entertainment and travel.

"Taiwan is promoting this trip at a reasonable price, in fact,

probably a bargain basement price, to give us a mindset that when we get back to America (we would) think Taiwan is great," said Chen.

An economic agenda also underlies the Study Tour, since the ROC's standing in international finance organizations is linked closely with its political status. The Nationalists have worked to encourage the flow of American capital into the ROC by including activities related to commerce and "economic progress" in the Study Tour itinerary such as visits to Taipei's World Trade Center.

In promoting itself as a bastion of capitalism, Western investment and democracy, Taiwan implies that the PRC's socialist system is inferior—an increasingly crucial point to make as the Mainland becomes more and more "liberal" and capitalistic, offering a vast, untapped market for American goods. "Consider it a long infomercial," said 1994 alumnus Garrick Yan.

The participants' class and educational backgrounds further suggest that the Study Tour is all (OK, maybe partly) about the benjamins, baby. The overwhelming majority is college students; the list reads like an Asian parent's wet dream—UCLA, Cal, Harvard, MIT, Stanford. Even the perceived status or prestige of applicants' institutions are

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<http://www.abcflash.com/extfr/msgboards.html>

from: wonguf
date: tue, may 4, 1999
3:30 p.m.

the Love boat, a.k.a. jian tan, is a taiwan government sponsored "cultural" program for overseas chinese. while it professes to be for language and cultural enrichment for overseas chinese who are not as close to their roots, it is actually one big party for young overseas chinese from all over the world. it's cheap and a lot of fun.

You better go. You might find your future wife! (or husband!)

from: ANONYMOUS
date: sat, may 22, 1999
1:13 p.m.

sounds like taiwan Love boat is a great soap opera setting. may[be] someone could write a story and make a tv serial. this would really generate some good roles for asian american actors/actresses!

from: CHUN Li
date: Sat, May 22, 1999
11:05 p.m.

oh, yeah, seriously. Here would be my story:
ALiSd = LikeS ALex
ALex = LikeS JOHN
JOHN = LikeS TAMMY

TAMMY = LikeS the UNTOUCHABLE COUNSELOR NAMED JAMES
JAMES = LikeS JANE
JANE = LikeS ALiSd

problem: they only have 6 weeks to get their man/woman! AND they're all friends, on the same floor, going out everyday...

side quest = how many can screw each other in the six weeks?

from: CHUN Li
date: Sat, May 22, 1999
11:07 p.m.

or this:
if James Likes Jane, and Jane Likes ALiSd, while ALiSd Likes Alex, at the same time while Alex Likes JOHN, and when JOHN realizes that he Likes TAMMY and TAMMY Likes James, who will screw who first? (5 pts.)

important considerations in the selections process, said 1994 camp counselor Vincent Fan.

For the KMT, selection of the crème de la crème increases the likelihood of having participants who will pursue careers that will allow them the capital to engage in transnational business practices and leisure activities to pad Taiwan's purse. They may have more access to political resources in the United States, such as influence on key figures or organizations, than the average Joe Wang or Jane Ling.

However, even if alumni sympathetic to the ROC or its people do rise to positions of prominence, public support is not guaranteed. Monterey Park Mayor Pro Temp Judy Chu, a 1970 alumna, is a case in point. Since more than half of Chu's constituents are of Chinese ancestry of varying national origins, she focuses solely on American concerns.

"As a local politician, I make a deliberate attempt to stay out of international politics, because people look at what I do," said Chu. "If I go politically on the Taiwan side, then I may alienate those who are pro-China. That's not really my purpose here."

So just how successful is the Study Tour in promoting KMT ideals? One 1973 alumna saw that "capitalism was alive and living well in Taiwan. And it didn't seem to, in my mind, benefit everybody." She returned home as a "confirmed Socialist."

There are also those who emerge as staunch supporters of the Nationalists. But most fall somewhere in between, indifferent or at best more aware of the situation. Very few, if any, though, become activists on behalf of the island's plight. Alan Tien, a 1991 alumnus, described the "exaggerated glory" of the presentations as "a little gung ho for American tastes."

There is also little discussion on the Tour of native Taiwanese independence. Ethelind Cheng, a 1996 alumna, and Jocelyn Wang, a 1997 alumna, both who identify as Taiwanese American, noted with displeasure that instructors did not teach Taiwanese language classes or acknowledge questions during lectures.

To be fair, the Study Tour is often successful in reinforcing the Chinese identities of the participants as well as fostering their interest in Chinese culture. Many return with arms full of Jacky Cheung CDs and a newfound fondness for *boba* milk tea.

But it is the social nature of the Study Tour that truly takes the *dan gao*. Note the overwhelming evidence: first and foremost, the infamous Love Boat meat-market reputation, of which kids, moms and dads are all aware. "It's no accident that your parents tell you about this," says Mar.

The most memorable excursions for students are frequently the "extracurricular activities"—midnight runs to Kiss La Boca and 2 Kinky, shopping, eating and other affairs that lead to gossip like, "I heard that five girls got pregnant last year!"

The Study Tour has resulted in countless lasting friendships that have led to a loose worldwide network of alumni, not to mention numerous personal Love Boat webpages that wax nostalgic.

"The entire experience itself is like being initiated into a club of sorts where you can readily identify with a set of experiences (clubbing, drinking, skipping class, being



At a Chinese Opera performance for the Study Tour students (from left): The author, an unidentified opera performer, and Lillian Lee

brainwashed, etc.) when you meet someone else who went on the trip," said Cheng.

The activities of alumni groups like the now-defunct CAUCUS and the current Monterey Park-based Study Tour Alumni Association (STAA) are predominantly social—picnics, parties, ski trips—again attesting to the failure of the KMT agenda.

"We try to stay away from the political. We let other people make their own decisions," said Pierre Wu, founding director of STAA.

DOMINATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Over the past 33 years, Taiwan's political circumstances have changed significantly. A growing pro-independence faction challenges the KMT's long-standing goal of a

Continued on page 46

UNDER THE TSIKO TREE

STORY & ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHELLE BANTA

1 BUTO NG TSIKO The tsiko seed

Green packages of dried mangoes, jack fruits, sour and sweet tasting sampalok and carefully wrapped bundles of *ube* candies were layered between folded imitation t-shirts marked *Guess* and *Boss*. There was something for everyone in Daddy En our grandfather's *balikbayan* box. Before Daddy En would arrive, Mom instructed us to be very appreciative of what we would receive. My older brother Rancis smiled and nodded accepting the American-Brand named-Philippine-made t-shirts, and Michi and I graciously accepted our usual box of *soen* cotton underwear. They were gifts from cousins and older uncles and aunts who we—us *Amerikanos*—had never met. But for Mom, Daddy En brought something different. ☛



"Ito ay buto ng tsiko," he said as he presented her something small, black and shiny. Mom looked at the thing in her hand. We thought, *Buto*—seed or bone in Tagalog—but we were not sure which one it was. Rancis, Michi and I just waited until she would show us.

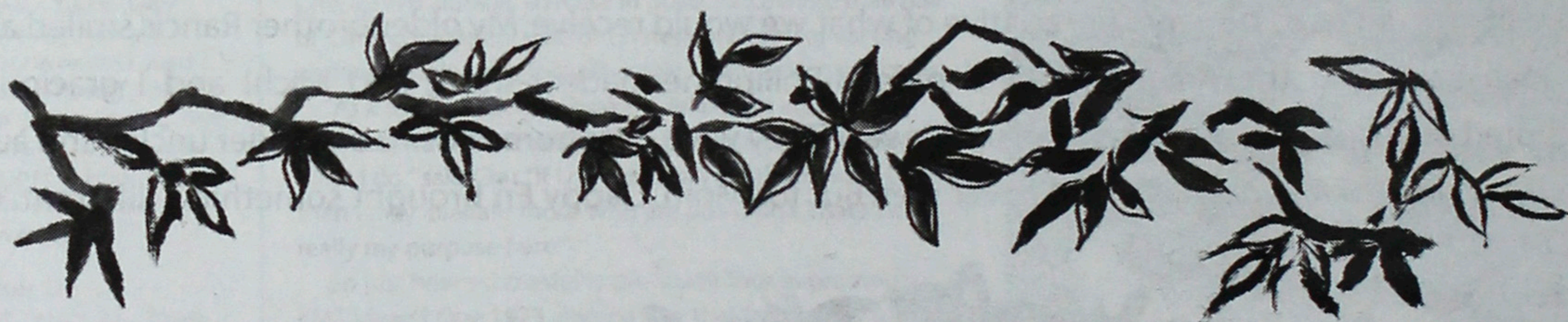
Mom cupped her hands together holding what turned out to be a shiny black stone that was shaped like an eye. "This is the tsiko seed," she said. She began describing the place from which it had come. The tsiko tree grew in her grandmother's land in Imus back home in the Philippines. Lola Imang, mom's grandmother, our great grandmother, grew *puno ng buko*, *guyabano*, *siniguelas*, *mangga*, *saging*—the tsiko gave the most shade. The branches of the tsiko, thick strong wooden vines, grew upwards and sideways. It was also the oldest tree in Lola Imang's yard, having been there even before she was born almost a hundred years ago. The earlier great-grandmothers and grandfathers built a *papag*-a bench from a plank of wood, bamboo and rope. Over the years the wood became smooth from the uncles, aunts and *bisita* who rested under the shade of the tsiko tree. It was Mom's favorite place.

"Ay naku, wala na ang tsiko. Sayang. Napaka suerte ang puno na iyan. Sayang." *No more tsiko. A waste. It was a lucky tree too. What a waste.* After Lola Imang's death, the tree had been cut along with all

the other plants. Lola Imang's house made of *pawid at kawayan*—nipa palms and bamboo, the dirt floor and a water pump had been taken apart. A new *western* looking house with white walls and tiles replaced what she knew as *home*. Cement was poured over the land. The slab of concrete prevented remaining roots from re-emerging.

Mom closed her eyes to hide her tears. We felt awkward watching her cry. We sat silently—kids on our best behavior. In her mind she revisited her childhood and reminisced of drinking warm milk taken from the kalabaw. She played with shells with the other kids. When they were hungry they would pull the tsiko fruit right from the tree. Brown, soft and smooth on the outside, they would press the fruit open with their thumbs. The brown and gold threads that made up the watery meat of the tsiko burst from the middle. Because we had never been to the Philippines, Lola Imang's trees, the taste of kalabaw milk and the tsiko fruit were all things we tried to imagine. Mom's childhood stories co-mingled with our own. From each memory she revisited, Mom would tell us about the unchanged places in her mind and the people she knew.

Mom looked at the seed and admired its eye-like shape. This tree could only grow in a place with constant rain and hot and thick air to nurture it. California is a desert.



2 NAGDIDILIG AKO I'm watering plants

"I make things grow," the eight-year-old thought to herself. Krystal, the youngest of the three, would scratch the mud that dried on her arm and between her fingernails. For Krystal, there was no point to washing

her arms and feet. Summer vacation meant growing tomatoes, zucchinis and red and green peppers. Then there were those vegetables for Pilipino foods that her grandfather Daddy En planted: the upo squash, talong—a purple watery vegetable for soup, and sile—tiny hot chili peppers. She had been too

young to help him plant those seeds. But now, with Daddy En having passed away, and having just finished the third grade, she felt old enough to take care of the *real* vegetables. "They're Daddy En's *pinoy* plants," she thought, and she gave them special attention. As for the other plants, Krystal's system of growing them came easy. First she placed the seeds in little cups with moist napkins, waited for a sprout, the stems to shoot up and finally the leaves to unfold. When the plants were large enough, she replanted them in the back yard. That was in the spring. Now the plants had grown to almost her height.

After working under the sun, Krystal found shade under the upo plant's vines. The stems twisted and coiled through the wire and wood structure Daddy En built. She had just finished watering all the plants. From her special place she could see all her hard work. Within a few more days the talong would be ready to pick. "Daddy En would be

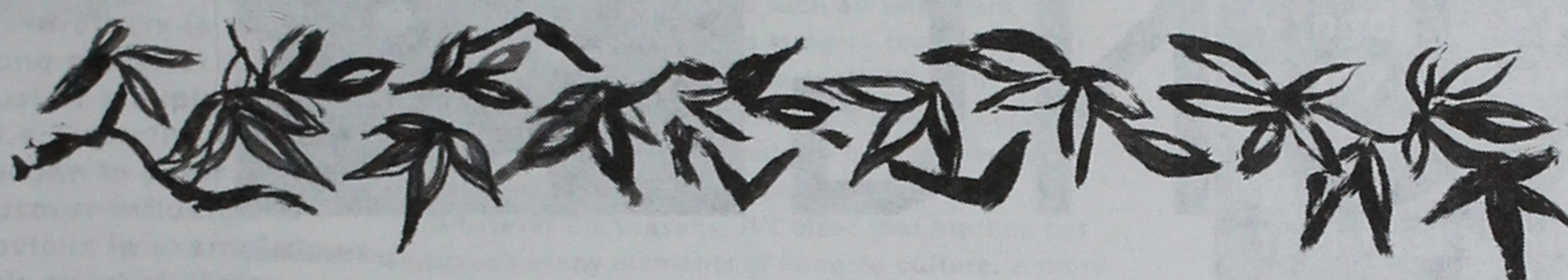
proud," she thought. In the corner of the yard, there was still an empty piece of land. Krystal wondered what to do with it. She suddenly remembered the special seed that Daddy En brought for Mom. Krystal ran into the kitchen to find it. Using the stool for height, she jumped onto the countertop and scoured the shelves. She found a small container that kept mom's things. Sure enough, the seed was there.

Krystal picked up the seed. "It's so shiny and black, maybe I shouldn't plant it," she thought to herself. But the excitement of seeing more shiny seeds and tasting its fruit convinced her to plant it. Using her school-taught methods, she nestled the seed between moist napkins in a styrofoam cup. But as soon as the seed was moistened, the seed was no longer a closed shiny eye. A small sprout pushed its way from the side of the seed and tiny roots split the seed open. Within minutes the roots pushed against the sides of the cup. Impressed with her gar-

dening skills, Krystal ran to the backyard with the cup in her hand. She placed it down, and began digging a hole in the barren corner of the yard. The seed was no longer a seed but a speedily growing sprout in need of planting. "I really make things grow!" she thought to herself. Krystal tried to dig as much as she could while the sprout uncurled. Though the hole was hardly the size of her hand deep, she placed the roots and the sprout into the ground and patted the soil with her hands. She then took the hose and watered the sprout. All the while,

the sprout continued to grow into thick stems.

"Mom! The Tsiko seed is growing!" Krystal yelled. "Mom! Come here! Mo—" Before she could finish the sentence one of its stems had grown into a trunk and its branches stretched further out. In minutes it had become a full tree, three times the size of Krystal. The branches grew in haphazard ways and leaves the shape of hands emerged from all directions. Krystal found herself under the leafy foliage, in awe and unsure of what to think.



3 BENGKONG

The leaves began to suffocate her and the air became warm and thick. She pushed the leaves away and made her way free from the lower branches. The sound of young voices speaking Tagalog startled Krystal. Behind the branches she saw other Pilipino kids her age huddled in a crowd, their attention drawn by something in the center. Sweat trickled from her forehead and into her eyes. She blinked twice and looked around. Green everywhere! Wild plants with large broad leaves and trees with fruits that she had never seen before grew altogether without order. The sweat, the thick hot air and the soft wet mud that squeezed through her toes were enough to prove that this was real.

"Sino ka?" Krystal quickly turned and jumped back as if she'd seen a ghost. A skinny brown little girl tapped her back. "Sino ka?" the girl repeated. Krystal could not answer. For what she knew, she had never known any one her age who could speak Tagalog fluently. The only people who had spoken to her in Tagalog had always been the elders. The only words she felt comfortable saying were "oo" which meant "yes" and "hindi" which meant "no." These words were always followed with "po" as a sign of respect towards the elders.

"Sino ka?" The girl asked for a third time. "Ano an problema mo?" Krystal gave a nervous smile. *Problem?* she asked herself, and sadly she thought again, *I don't know how to speak.*

The girl continued asking her questions:

"Bakit hindi ka mag salita?" *Why aren't you talking?* Krystal could not give an answer. Nor could she even make a sound. Everything seemed strange and foreign but at the same time familiar and close to her. She and the girl looked so much alike. Their shiny black hair and brown skin were the same, but the girl's words and *Krystal's words*—were different.

"Ano ang pangalan mo?" *What is your name?*

"Saan ka nakatira?" *Where do you live?* Krystal only replied with more smiles. The girl took another breath and asked her another question:

"Nawala kaba?" *Are you lost?* "Dahil hindi ka nagsasalita at ayaw

mong sumagot, tatawagin nalang kitang Bengkong!" Which meant, *because you do not speak or answer, I will call you Bengkong.* The girl explained "Ang Bengkong ay malaki ang tenga at nakausli," she said as she pointed at Krystal's large ears.

"Bengkong?" Krystal repeated.

"B-e-n-g-k-o-n-g." The little girl spoke slower this time and sounded out each letter for Krystal to understand. "Ang Bengkong ay m-a-l-a-k-i ang t-e-n-g-a at n-a-k-a-u-s-l-i." The girl said slowly and more drawn out. She pointed at Krystal's large protruding ears as she said *tenga*.

"Bengkong?" Krystal asked again.

"Bengkong." They said together. Krystal smiled as a way of showing that she would accept her new name.

"Ako ay si Mey." And she pointed to herself. "Mey," she repeated, pointing to herself again.

Mey? My Mey? My Mom Mey? Krystal realized that she had travelled back to what the tsiko seed had meant to her mother. She looked at her new special friend. This little girl would be her mother. They were both thin. The same brown color, the curve of the eyebrows, and their smile almost mirrored each other. Krystal remained silent and stared at her child-version mother. "Mag laro tayo." *Let's play,* Mey said as she took hold of Krystal's arm. Together they rushed toward the crowd of children assembling.

Everybody Was KUNNG



Fu-Schnickens

FU Fighting

Masta Killa. Ghostface Killah. The Five Deadly Venoms. Kung-fu movie titles? Or rapper names? Nowadays, it's hard to tell with more and more of the hip-hop generation grafting on identities that originate from Chinese martial arts cinema. The most obvious example is Staten Island's (aka Shaolin's) Wu-Tang Clan, who single-handedly ushered in hip-hop's kung-fu fascinations back in 1993 with the release of their "Enter the Wu Tang (36 Chambers)"—both the title of the album and their own name are taken straight from kung-fu lore.

What the Wu-Tang helped begin has spread at a fever pace. From glossy magazine ads featuring kung-fu-robed models, to the new chicness of kanji-style tattoos, to DJs who incorporate fighting sounds in their scratching sets, kung-fu is huge in the hip-hop community. In blending the cool, street-wise figure of the gangsta/hustler with the raw fighting savvy of the kung-fu expert, hip-hop has created the ultimate hero—Shaft-meets-Bruce-Lee who can handle any adversary mentally or physically.

What explains this interplay between Black, urban culture and Chinese tradition? In one of the more provocative explanations for the kung-fu/hip-hop connection, Philadelphia music writer James Spady rhetorically asks, "Could it be that the Blacks were the first to people the land mass now known as China?" In his book, "Twisted Tales in the Hip Hop Streets of Philly," Spady proceeds to run through a history of anthropological studies in the attempt to suggest that Africans were the original Chinese—an intriguing approach that fails to adequately explain what ancient diaspora has to do with modern-day youth culture.

MasterMix
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More likely a culprit is from the more recent past: the 1970s era of funk music, blaxploitation and Black Power. During this time, Black neighborhood theatres started programming kung-fu movies by people like Bruce Lee or the Shaw Brothers (a major Hong Kong studio at the time) just as blaxploitation flicks (i.e. *Superfly*, *The Mack*) began to peter out. The crossover influence is most obvious in examples like Lee's epochal "Enter the Dragon" (co-starring Black sex symbol Jim Kelly) and soul singer Carl Douglas' surprise 1974 hit, "Kung-Fu Fighting."

At the same time, Black Power advocates also saw kung-fu as a viable means of self-defense against a hostile American public and police force. Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, professor of history at the University of Connecticut, notes, "There was this growing fascination in the African American community with kung-fu. You had kung-fu classes and clubs springing all across the United States. Part of that came out of some of the paramilitary ideas that Black Power groups engaged in the early '70s."

University of Delaware film studies professor Peter Feng adds that a movie like "Enter the Dragon," "aligns kung-fu prowess with defiance of 'the Man'—as evident in Jim Kelly's harassment by police, and his statement that ghettos around the world are all the same."

During the 1980s, Chinese martial arts reached urban youth in cities like Los Angeles and New York through an entirely different means: Saturday morning kung-fu movies.

Sophia Chang is former manager of Razor Sharp Records (run by the Wu-Tang Clan's patriarch, RZA) and a student of kung-fu at the U.S.A. Shaolin Temple in Manhattan. She remembers, "We grew up watching Run Run Shaw reruns every weekend, every Saturday. You talk to any kid in New York and they'll all be like, 'Yeah, yeah,

Saturdays on Channel 5.'"

Chang also surmises that kung-fu's appeal within the urban, Black community has to do with shared mythologies and themes. "Most martial arts have central themes of loyalty, vengeance, brotherhood and the fight of a few against many. Think of how many martial arts movies start out with a family getting slaughtered and it's the protagonist's mission to get vengeance? How many African American men can you imagine that don't feel that same kind of oppression? To the extent that any of us feel that oppression, those are the things that tie us to martial arts movies...because there's something triumphant in it. It's so much about the underdog."

Another crucial point of connection is the focus on style and skill that plays such an important role in both hip-hop rhymes and kung-fu technique. You can see this connection made explicitly with the Wu-Tang's Genius, who entitled an album "Liquid Swords" in metaphoric tribute to both his own deft verbal talent and kung-fu imagery.

Whatever the reasons, it's clear that hip-hop has embraced many elements of kung-fu culture. A more utopian perspective would suggest that with Asian Americans lacking their own visible public culture, kung-fu's prominence in music and film—as evidenced by the growing popularity of Jackie Chan and Jet Li in American cinema—at least provides some level of cultural exposure. However, whether or not kung-fu's vogueness translates into any social/cultural benefits for Asian Americans is far from certain.

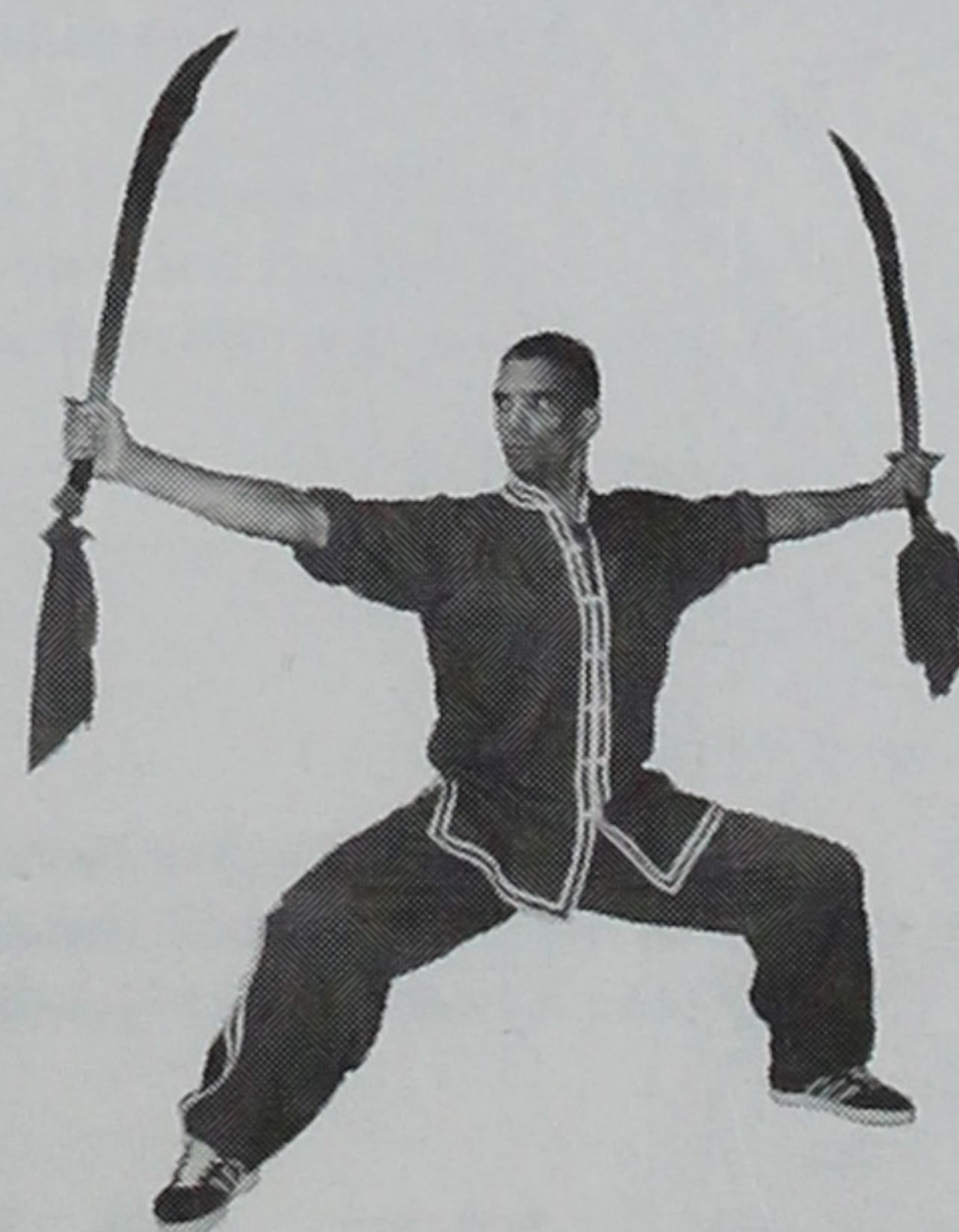
UConn's Ogbar points out that kung-fu has come into hip-hop culture mostly through the market of cultural consumption: "There is a commodification of Asian culture there. I'm not exactly sure how deep this appreciation for Asian culture, people go. Risking coming across as very cynical, I would argue that this is more of a superficial type of appreciation, nothing of real substance. I don't know if there's any evidence in hip-hop that it goes beyond just a cultural by-product of Asia and not so much about the people, history, local dynamics or so on."

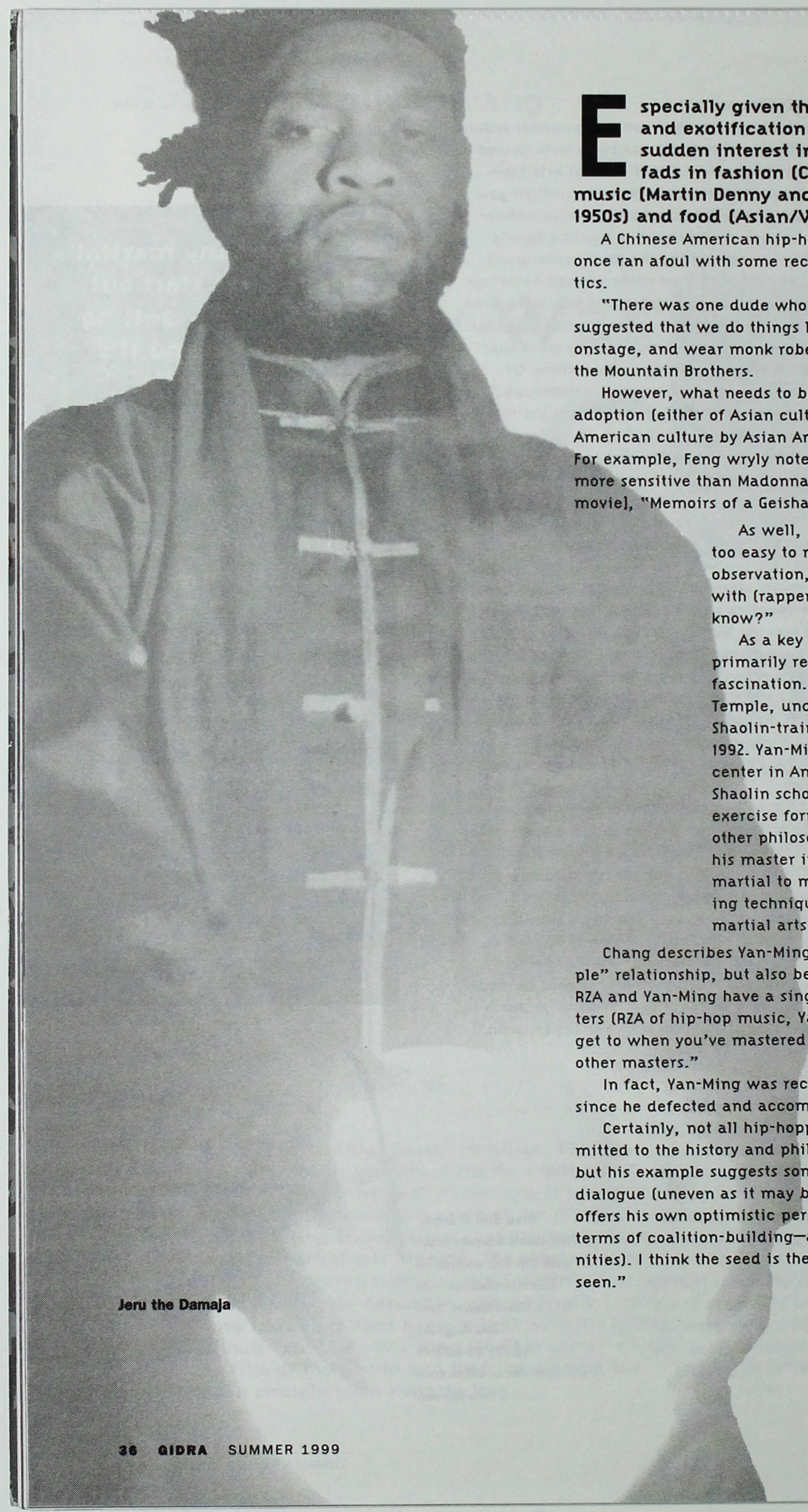
"...How many martial arts movies start out with a family getting slaughtered and it's the protagonist's mission to get vengeance? How many African American men can you imagine that don't feel that same kind of oppression? Those are the things that tie us to martial arts movies...because there's something triumphant in it. It's so much about the underdog."

Sophia Chang
Former Manager
Razor Sharp
Records

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Photo: Ernesto Vigoreaux





Especially given the history of Orientalized spectacle and exotification within American popular culture, the sudden interest in kung-fu resembles, at times, similar fads in fashion (Chinese gown-inspired formal wear), music (Martin Denny and Les Baxter's "exotica" records of the 1950s) and food (Asian/Western "fusion" cuisine).

A Chinese American hip-hop trio, Philadelphia's Mountain Brothers, once ran afoul with some record executives infatuated with kung-fu stylis-tics.

"There was one dude who was connected to a major hip-hop label who suggested that we do things like pretend we're fighting for the mic onstage, and wear monk robes and chant and hit gongs," shares Chops of the Mountain Brothers.

However, what needs to be said also is that not all examples of cultural adoption (either of Asian culture by African Americans or African American culture by Asian Americans) is necessarily blind appropriation. For example, Feng wryly notes that the kung-fu/hip-hop craze, "is clearly more sensitive than Madonna's fascination with [the book and upcoming movie], "Memoirs of a Geisha."

As well, Sophia Chang is adamant in warning that it's too easy to make snap judgments based on superficial observation, stating, "Unless you have a conversation with (rappers) about (kung-fu culture), how will you know?"

As a key example, she cites the case of RZA, who was primarily responsible for the Wu-Tang's whole kung-fu fascination. Like herself, RZA trains at the U.S.A Shaolin Temple, under the tutelage of Monk Shi Yan-Ming, a Shaolin-trained monk who defected to the United States in 1992. Yan-Ming now operates the only kung-fu training center in America based on the original principles of the Shaolin school in China and RZA studies not only a Chinese exercise form called *qi-gong* but also Chan Buddhism and other philosophies from Yan-Ming. Rza actually interviews his master in *Grand Royal Magazine* (#4). "All art is now martial to me," he writes, suggesting that not just fighting techniques, but music and poetry can be considered martial arts as well.

Chang describes Yan-Ming and RZA as having not just a "master/disciple" relationship, but also being "the best of friends. I've always believed RZA and Yan-Ming have a singular, special bond because they're both masters (RZA of hip-hop music, Yan-Ming of kung-fu). There's a level that you get to when you've mastered your art that eases your communication with other masters."

In fact, Yan-Ming was recently invited back to China for the first time since he defected and accompanying him will be RZA.

Certainly, not all hip-hoppers who play with kung-fu style are as committed to the history and philosophy behind Chinese martial arts as RZA, but his example suggests some of the potential that lies between hip-hop's dialogue (uneven as it may be) with kung-fu culture. Professor Ogbar offers his own optimistic perspective stating, "I think it offers promise in terms of coalition-building—an understanding of people (between communities). I think the seed is there—if that germinates or not remains to be seen."

Jeru the Damaja

DEATH SENTENCES:

Known as England's "foremost political pop group," the Asian Dub Foundation is a band on a mission. Not given over to abstract rhymes about revolution, ADF grounds their music in epic political struggles. Equal parts jungle propulsion, dub skank, punk edge, hip-hop rage and Qawwali uplift, their music is no liberal multicultural smoothie-blend—it's a militant, stylistic *tour de force*. ● ADF co-founders Dr. Das and Chandrasonic were once East London teachers, deeply inspired by the black and yellow noise of Michael Franti's thundering mid-80s industrial/hip-hop band, the Beatnigs (one of the first hip-hop groups to feature Blacks and Asians side by side), running music technology workshops for disadvantaged South Asian youth. Out of the workshops, the multi-generational ADF was born. ● Their 1995 debut, *Facts and Fictions*, captured the rage, ambition and power of Britain's emerging second generation of Asians. When they cut the ear-shattering "Free Satpal Ram" in 1997, they pushed the British Asian political prisoner's case into the spotlight. Ram was imprisoned for life in 1986, after defending himself against a racist attack. He has since suffered racist beatings at the hands of prison constabularies. More recently, ADF has closely followed the official inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, a Black London youth stabbed by White racists at a bus stop, and who bled to death there while the cops interrogated his friends. ● At a time when the American hip-hop community is reacting to the vicious police murder of Amadou Diallo in New York City, and rallying against Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence, ADF's righteous rage is timely and welcome. But none of the politics would matter if they weren't dope. And ADF's album, *Rafi's Revenge*, was easily one of the best albums of last year. ● Writer Jeff Chang spoke with Dr. Das about dub attitude, community building and anti-racist politics.



Q: You got started at the East End program called Community Music.

A: I first started there in 1990. (Community Music is) different to the music teaching that takes place in schools. It's a very non-elitist approach, and inclusive, to enable people with relatively little music experience to be able to perform with people with relatively more experience.

Q: Music for the masses, as it were.

A: You could put it like that.

Q: Recently, the Stephen Lawrence report seemed to ignite a national debate in Britain about what the term "racism" really means, and whether you could call the police "institutionally racist." What are your thoughts about that debate? ●

TALKING RACE WITH ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION • BY JEFF CHANG

Identify with the term ("Black") as it's used (in England) because what it means is people who have had a common colonial experience and a common experience of racism. That (idea) therefore encompasses Asian people, Asian Indian people, Afro-Caribbean people.

A: We'd actually written a song that came out of the inquiry. We were dealing with the corruption aspects of it, which seem to have been almost neglected in the report. The police have reacted as if they've got the wrong end of the stick. They're not realizing "institutional racism" means procedures, directives, racism that you are not actually aware of, practices. All of that really needs to be challenged, not just in the police force, but in the judicial system, in the prison system as well. There has still been no justice for the Stephen Lawrence family.

Q: What's the status of Satpal Ram's case?

A: It's currently being reinvestigated by a body called Criminal Cases Review Commission, which was set up by the Labor government to (examine) cases which were deemed to be miscarriages of justice. But we get the feeling that it's a kind of safety valve, serving to cool down some of the campaigns. All of these campaigns are really showing how British justice really isn't as good as it thinks it is. (With) the Satpal campaign, we've managed to draw attention to his situation internationally, and there's been people sending letters to Britain and to the Home Offices from all over. Recently a new lawyer (Gareth Pierce) has taken on Satpal's case. She was involved successfully in another very big (political case). We're really hopeful of something positive happening this year.

Q: On the song "Black or White," one thing that's interesting is the way British define the term "Black." In the U.S., there's Blacks and there's Asians, and they're racialized quite differently.

A: In fact, "Asian" in America is different to "Asian" over here.

Q: And in the UK you can be Pakistani or Bangladeshi or Indian, and also be considered "Black."

A: I identify with the term as it's used here because what it means is people who have had a common colonial experience and a common experience of racism. That (idea) therefore encompasses Asian people, Asian Indian people, Afro-Caribbean people. "Black" over here is a more political term, rather than meaning you're of African descent. I can be Asian but I can also consider myself "Black" in that sense.

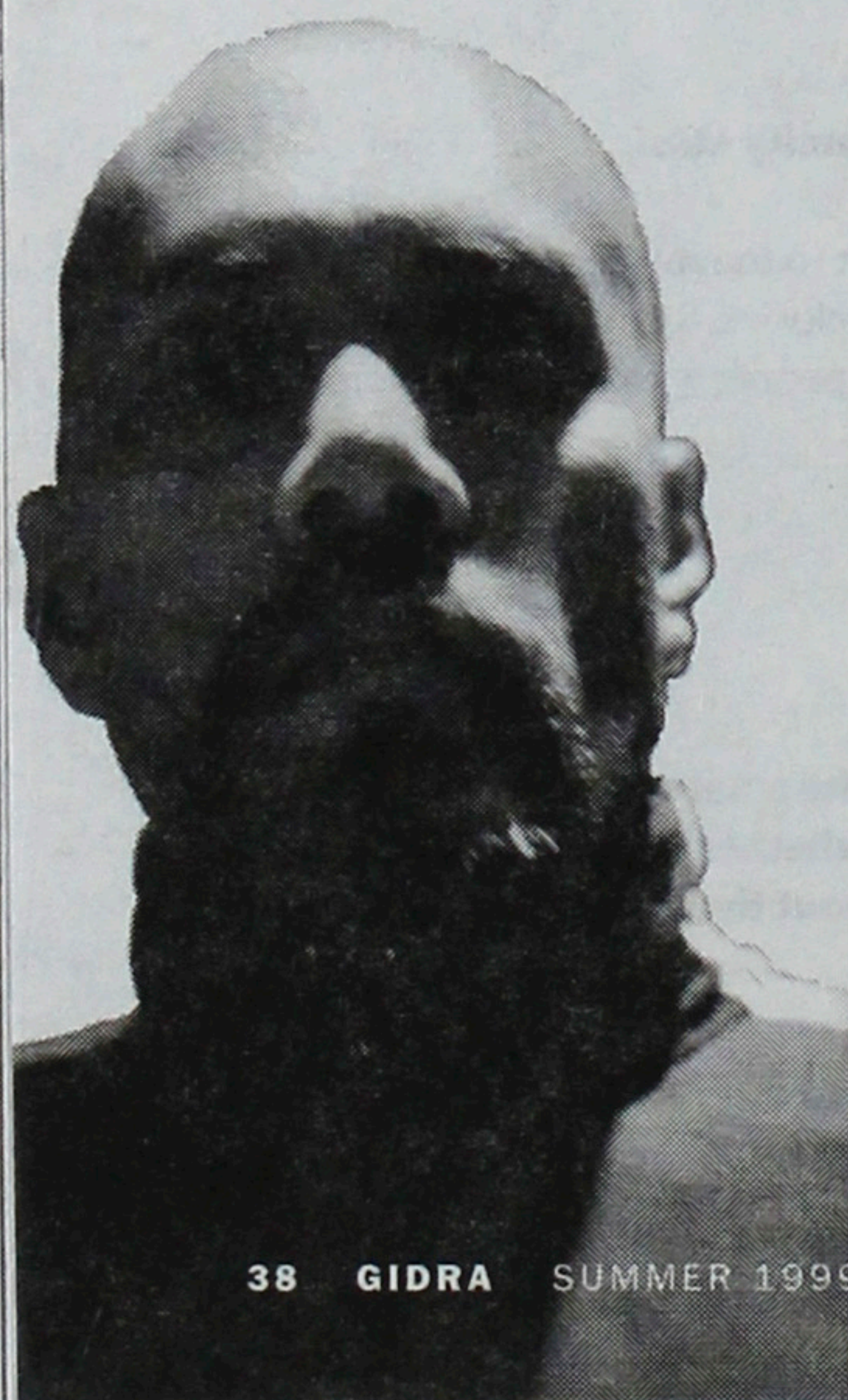
Q: One of your lyrics is "Dub is the place we come to argue and debate/It isn't just a backdrop for our herbal intake." Do you look at the music as a way of building a politicized, conscious community?

A: Yes, I guess so. We don't always analyze it like that, we just get on with it! For us, politics is everyday things that go on. The things that we're talking about are the things that are affecting us. All the things—including Satpal Ram, Stephen Lawrence—are related because what happened to Satpal could happen to any one of us. But even without the lyrics, the music is—if you want to use that word—"political."

We always felt that dub had a kind of built-in militancy to it. People often say, "Oh, your music is a fusion." But it's not. These are all the sounds that we hear in London. These are all the different communities that exist, and we're not on some kind of tourist trip. It's making a statement that all of these sounds work together and, by extension, all of those communities live in the same place and side-by-side, despite certain people trying to divide them up. We're simply looking at the things people have in common. So in that sense, the music, even without the lyrics, is making some form of a political statement.

Q: You've got 15 years between you and the youngest member, and everyone sort of comes from different backgrounds, interests and styles.

A: The education was a two-way thing. As a teacher, you've gotta be open-minded and you've gotta make the kind of music your students want to be involved with. Suddenly it clicked when I heard the reggae basslines at half-speed over these breakbeats at double-speed, and it all fitted together. I learned about Jungle from Deeder's generation and then all of this time, he's been checking out everything we've been into. We were listening to reggae and dub and all of that, and he now understands where a lot of the Jungle came from and its development between there. He's checked out the punk and stuff. The latest thing that I gave him is a CD of the Beatnigs.



Q: Michael Franti, Rono Tse and the whole crew!

A: The Beatnigs had a profound effect on me. They were experimenting with an early form of sampling. They were making mad noises. They were a Black group that were making the kind of music that Black people weren't supposed to make and expected to make.

Q: What do you mean by the digital underclass?

A: It's about using appropriate technology, that is, whatever is available to you. The technology business is always about pushing the latest gadgets. People spend all of their time trying to get the latest piece of equipment, thinking this is going to make their lives all the better. Whereas we have always, out of economic necessity, made use of whatever was available to us. And we've heard the most interesting music coming out of that kind of attitude.

We just recently started up (a program called) ADF Education, which now is running independently. It's like ADF is turning full circle. We started out as a workshop but now we've formed an organization which can carry the process on.

Q: So it's now a curriculum.

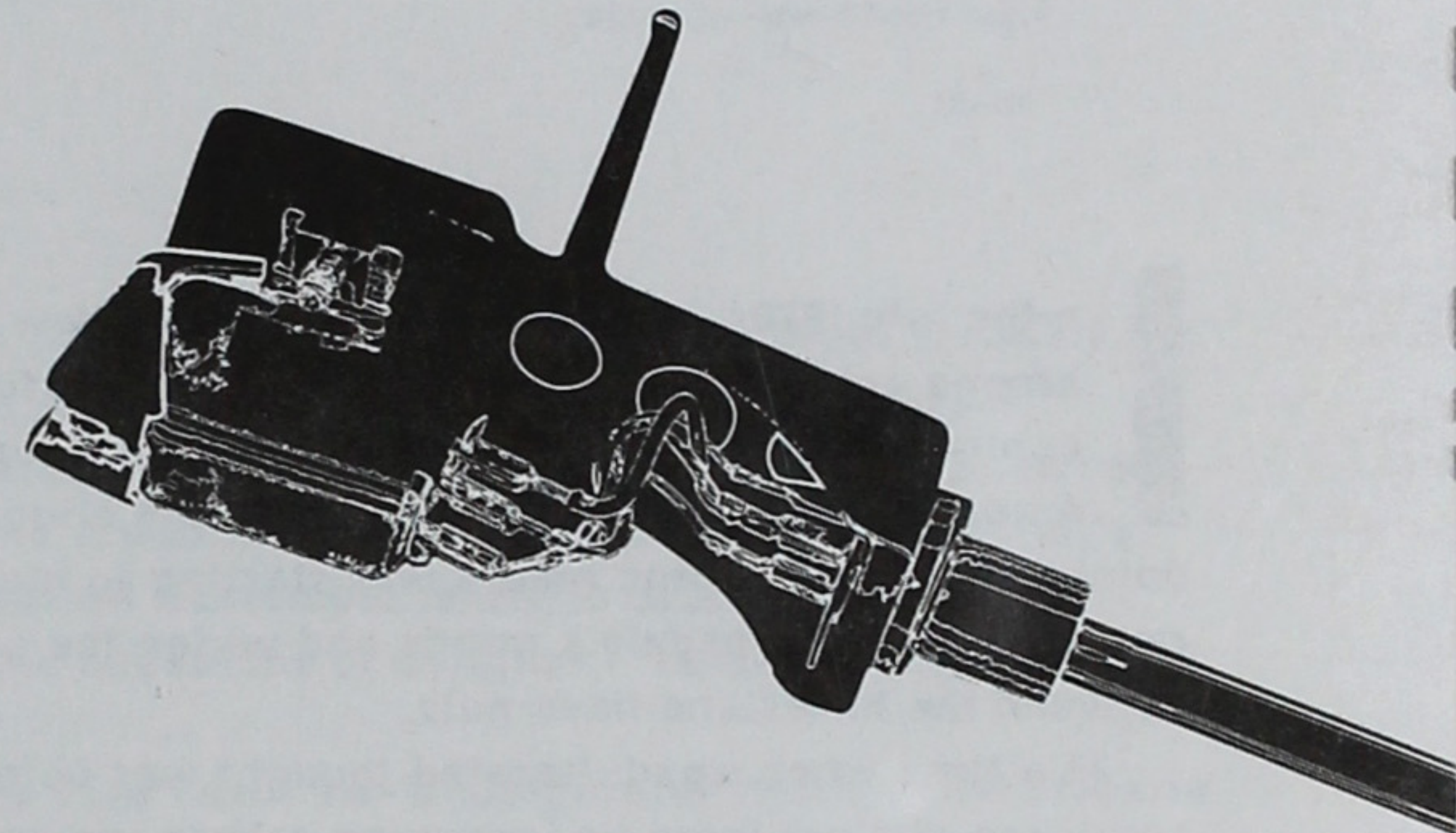
A: It's an attitude, really. It's an old Indian idea as well—appropriate technology, recycling stuff, making stuff out of what other people consider to be junk. It doesn't only relate to computers and sequencers.

We've got "dub" in our name. We listen to old-school dub. But we don't want to reproduce it as it was done 20 years ago. What's the point of that? What we're trying to do is to use the principles of dub.

Lee Perry was using gear which, even in his day, was outmoded—the little four-track! And he was packing in sounds into that four-track which people would expect that he was working on (something bigger). All of that experimentation—that kind of abusing of the studio—that's what dub means.

Q: So dub is an attitude.

A: It's an attitude. It's a set of principles to which you should feel free to add more principles.



For more information about the Satpal Ram case, see http://www.chumba.com/_justice.htm

FOUNDATION

option8

B rocks the Option
she writes like a pro and she
is one. how bout that!

J.inx

Blast

summer afternoon
not quite asian not quite zine
passes the time well

vn

ALL ASIAN NATION

one could only hope
to own a faster modem
all asian nation

vn



BAMBOO GIRL

Bamboo escrima
a weapon poised to strike words
on newsprint which bleeds

et



CHINADAAHL

boy crazee, lucci
lunacy—prose treatment. deep
like sea; NYC.

l'autre "jl"



DEAD FISH

pop pop pop culture
atomic rice meets chopstix
a zine swims, not "dead"

et

In the late 1970s, a movement emerged in New York City among activists, critics and young folks fearful of the central role network television was carving for itself in America. What they saw was a corporate oligopoly whose dominance in electronic media was starting to bland the range of issues on people's minds and widen the gap between the haves and have-nots.

At a time when unadulterated thought was being put in condition critical these underground artists and media activists decided to channel their general malaise toward a creative and provocative response by using the tools of the dominant media against itself.

These self-dubbed "Media Guerrillas" subverted technology with technology. They bought up public access space to air their views, published deconstructions of "Media-America" and threw all-night underground video screening parties. Though they didn't exactly change the world, today they can be regarded as part of a long tradition of organized resistance to the tentacles of corporate media that includes folks like 1970s pop media critic Marshall McLuhan, musician DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid and former Berkeley student Ted Kaczynski.

Adrift in a digitized world, a return to the old skool printed word is part of the allure found in the world of zines,

themselves comments on the representative failures of dominant media. Zines are photocopied glimpses into strangers' lives, private magazines which answer to individuals.

Circulation runs small, printing is done as cheaply as possible and aims are on expression rather than profit margins. Subject matter ranges as diverse as the people who do and read them; simply put, if you've never found a zine to your liking, put it on paper yourself.

This self-initiated, almost self-righteous nature of zine-making complicates any comprehensive history to be written of zines. Just as astute graffiti writers can trace their cultural expression back to hieroglyphs, cave paintings and catacombs, the spirit of zines as a visual, literate expression of identity was born with Johannes Gutenberg and ancient Chinese printing presses. It wasn't until the punk subculture of the late 1970s and early 1980s that the idea of "zines" as we know them today surfaced. Today, zines have become almost self-conscious as distinct entities from magazines, newspapers or other publications.

A self-consciously "do-it-yourself" zine scene became more of a mainstream phenomenon in the early 1990s with the commercialization of previously "alternative" music, a time when riot grrrls were in *Rolling Stone* (an erstwhile independent voice) and zine coverage made the pages of

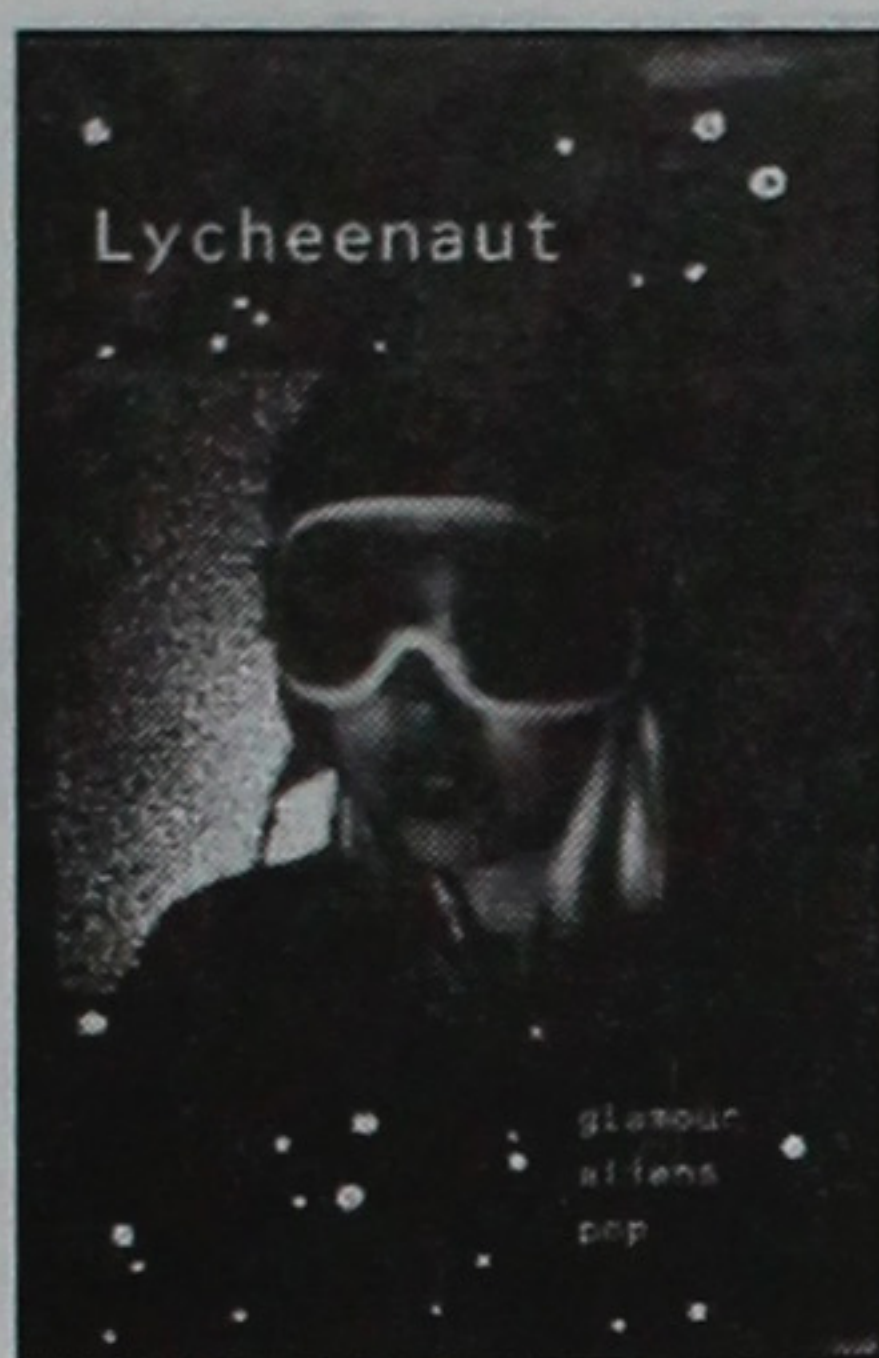
Subversive, progressive (in some cases regressive), and oftentimes just plain fun, the D



GIANT ROBOT

asian girls sex pimps
selling pop culture for fame
no shame in their game

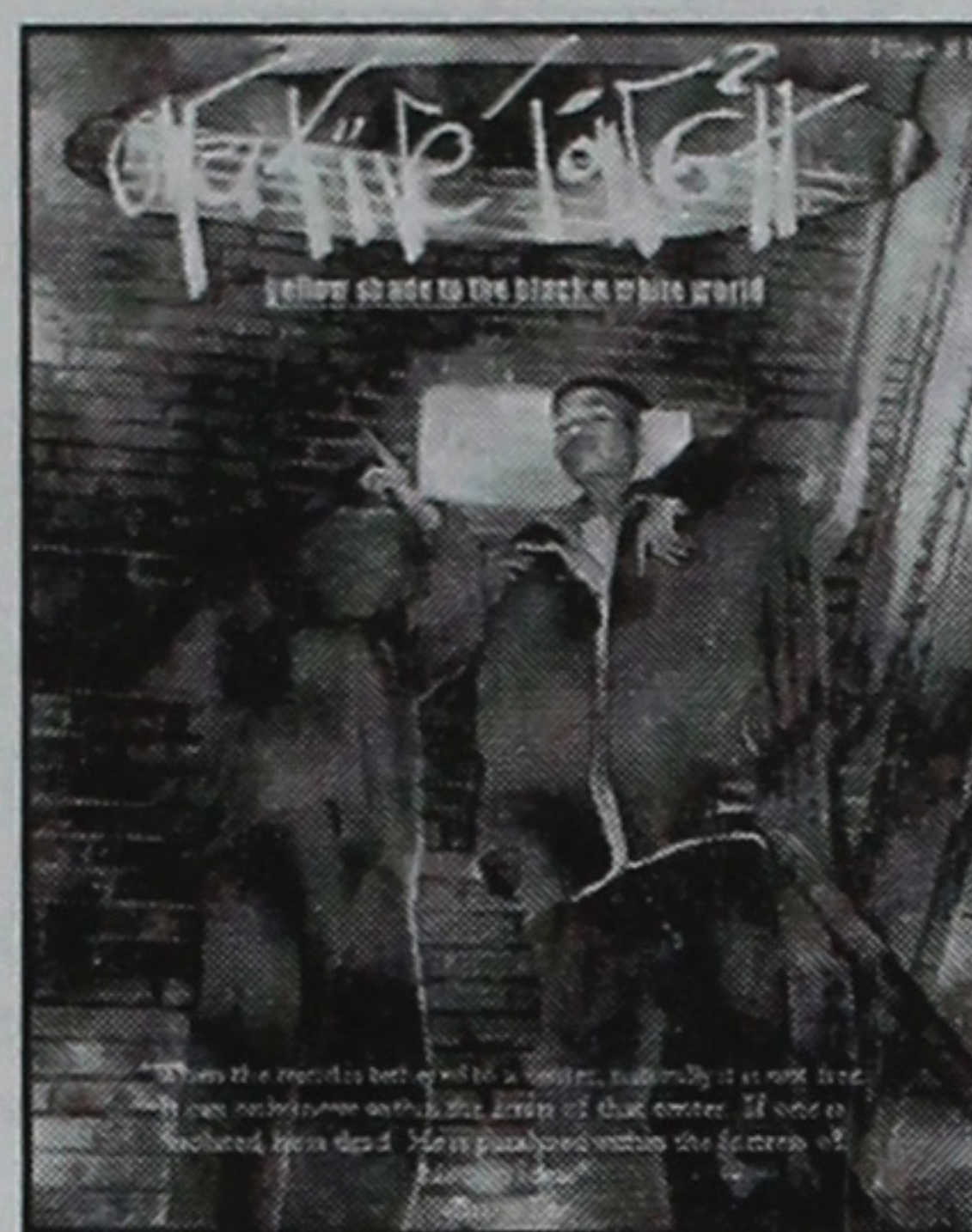
ev



LYCHEENAUT

like a mao bing-ah
tara's alien voice creeps
clean through your head, psych

jl



NATIVE TONGUE

on the hip-hop tip
Paul is pho real like fish sauce
DJ made my day.

l'autre "jl"

HELLA

hella has hist'ry
eight years of fameless toil, son.
has cool covers, though.

J.inx (Hiroshi Yamasaki)

SECRET ASIAN MAN

incognito man
love (lust), expatriate tones
and a pack of smokes

J.inx

HARDKORE

Chicago Bruce fans
not Springsteen, but jeet kune do
cult'rists—weed hard kore!

J.inx

Sassy. Sadly, it was a case where dominant media tried co-opting the forms of its counter. Among the morass of zines in existence today, it is the quality and depth of expression that usually distinguishes the stuff which floats or flounders. As is a common topic when zinesters gather 'round, you know you're dedicated if you get to issue 10.

Asian Pacific Americans have found a particular liking to this medium, with zines by and for APAs covering everything from robots to martial arts to queer politics to punk rock. There are even APA zines about college basketball. As Bernice of Chicago-based **option8** explains, "Asian American cultural production is key! Cultural production has the potential to create, foster, and kill a stereotype, upon which many social/political ideas and actions are based."

The increasing numbers of APAs doing zines can be attributed to a variety of incoherent reasons. Inadequate portrayals in dominant media, the dearth of quality APA publications, the continued growth of outlets for Asian American history and the influence of larger publications like **Giant Robot** have all contributed to the "scene's" growth.

It is literally impossible to catalogue the entire universe of Asian American zines—status is achieved through word-of-

mouth and new zines quietly arrive all the time. Probably the most noted Asian American zine ever has been the Los Angeles-based **Giant Robot**, the self-proclaimed "Magazine For You" and a publication UC Davis Asian American Studies Professor Darrell Hamamoto refers to as a "destabilizing wedge to the hegemony of dominant media" or something like that.

As is the case when any underground artist is perceived to go mainstream, a lot of haters have been targeting **Giant Robot** ever since they first went color and then recently glossy. The zine started in 1994 when friends Eric Nakamura and Martin Wong decided to use their skills for good, and bag some free shit at the same time. Their initial forays to the copy store proved successful, and what started out as 50-paged photocopied half-sheets about Jon Moritsugu and the story of Hello Kitty soon landed them broader distribution deals.

As the magazine grew, they expanded their audience base by covering topics appreciated by all types of people. In recent issues, interviews with Asian film stars, underground musicians and a feature on the 1960s Yellow Power movement have helped solidify their reputation as one of the leading voices for underground Asian American culture, or at the very least underground culture from an Asian American perspective.

Very few other zines exude the polish or experience the

Y aesthetic of 'zine publishing by Asian Americans is reaching a fever pitch • By Hua Hsu

II STIX

yin/yang find balance
and hop with glad innocence
on the clean white screen

vn

STIR

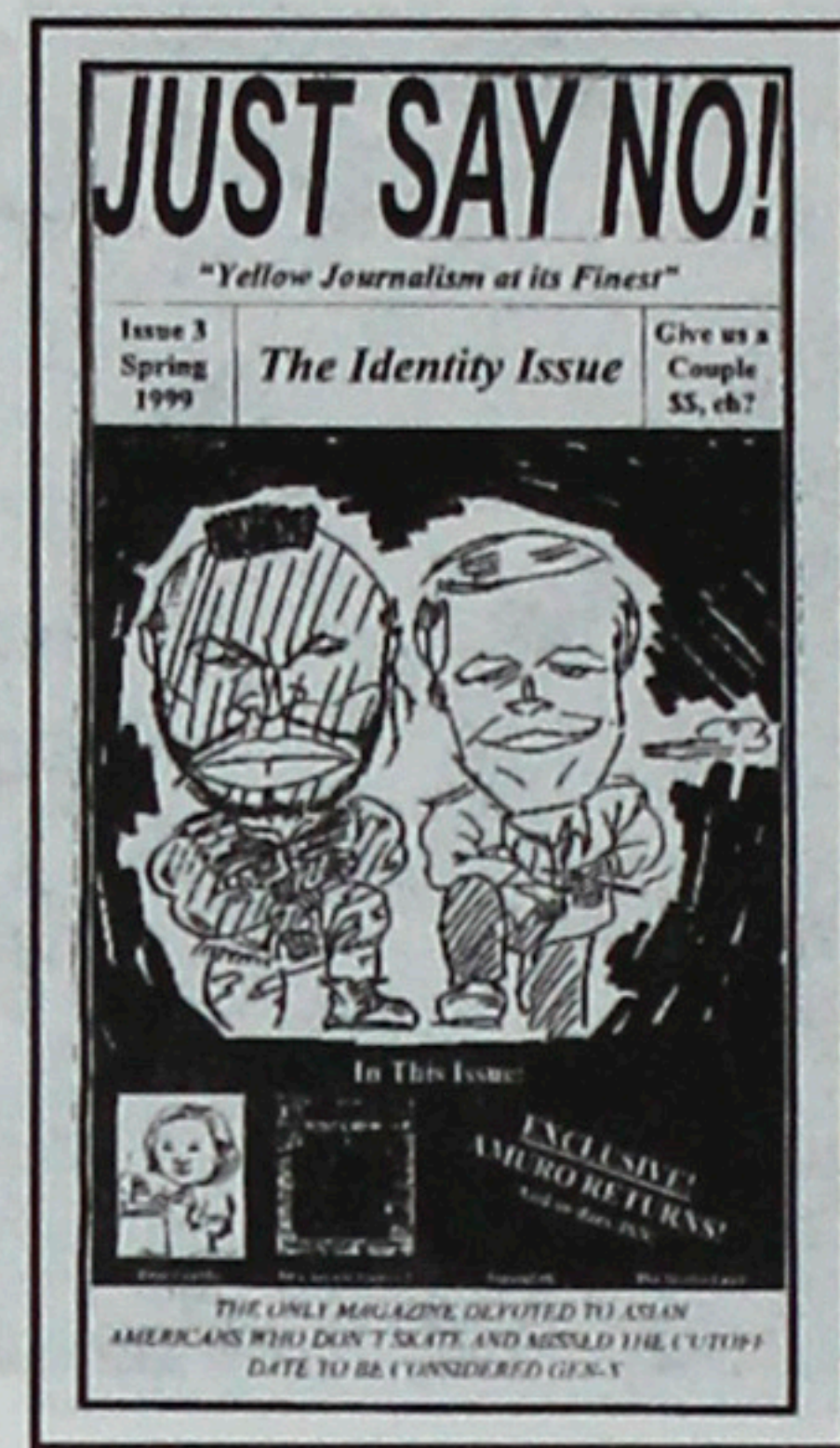
step one: mince some words
step two: stir with heavy hand
voila! serve lukewarm

vn

YOB

"yob?what does that mean?"
love, culture. can't put it down.
"yob. it's a secret."

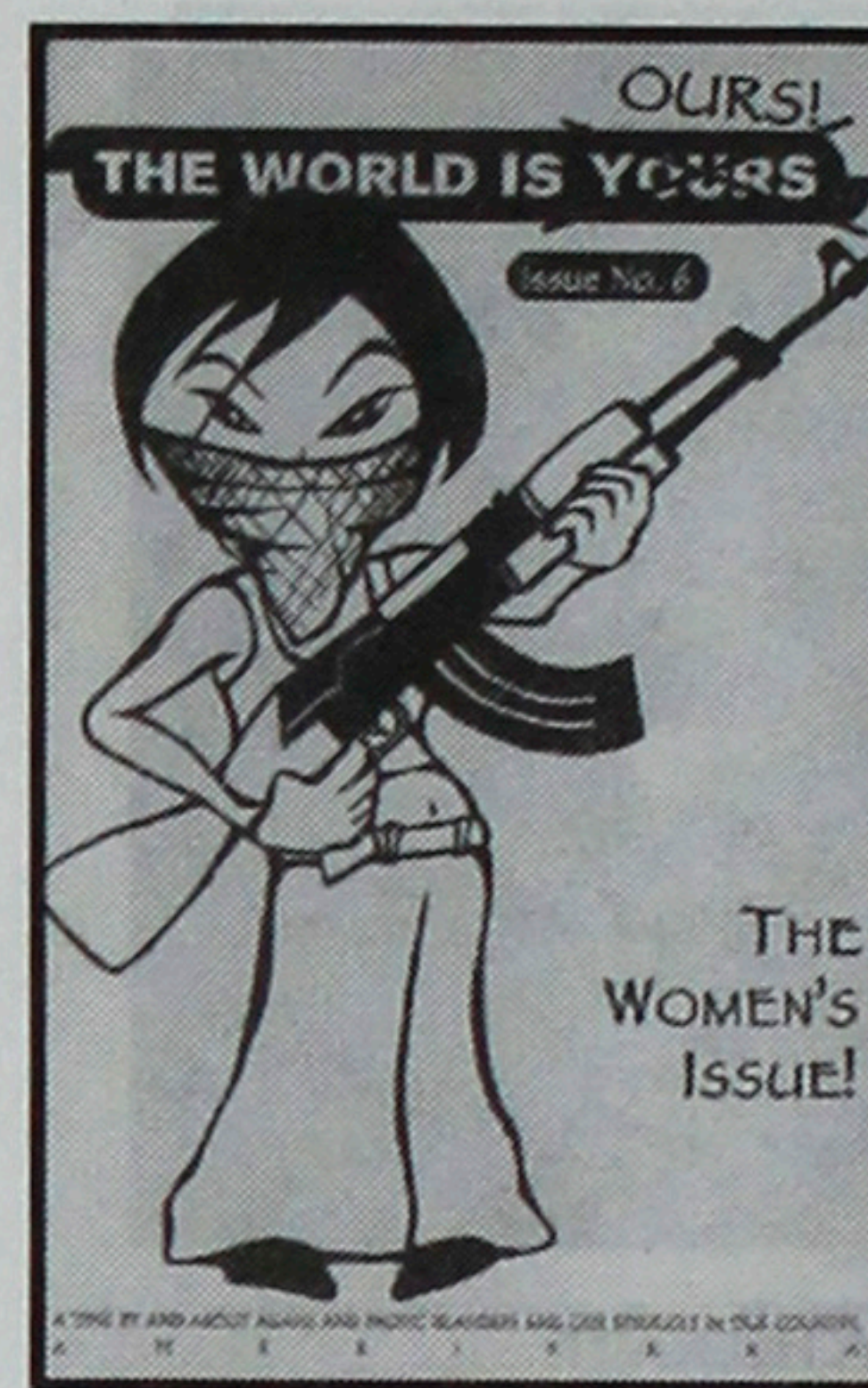
J.inx



JUST SAY NO

if Ko were Eastside
he'd say 'cholo matte, please'
the eses would snort

jl



THE WORLD IS YOURS!

gambatte freedom
fighters. poems and pics say
no, the world is ours.

l'autre "jl"



HELLO KITTY

hello *hangoon*. girl
p(ow)urrr, indie rock, asian
am fingerings, rants.

l'autre "jl"

success that **Giant Robot** has been blessed with. That doesn't stop fools from still comparing all text-based Asian American cultural production to the formidable (maga)zine, though. During Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, attendees of APA zine seminars at Davis and Berkeley were pretty bent on talking about GR rather than whatever else was going on in the community.

And who can blame them? Zines travel as far as words-of-mouth do, and in some cases don't travel farther than circles of friends. If you can sense a plug for some local zines coming up, then you are indeed brilliant, or perhaps clairvoyant. Zines like **yob**, **slant**, **hardcore**, **The World is Yours**, **hella**, **lumpen**, **Secret Asian Man**, **Bamboo Girl** and **option8** have become private terrains for Asian American folks to carve out, create and defend their own contested identities.

So maybe the lesson in all of this is to go out and make your own beautiful noise, however it is conceived and whatever form it may take. As Sulu from **hella** chimes in, "To be able to take yourself places you've never before known existed and indelibly leave paper behind for others...zines allow you to create this space within yourself and the world around you. And the free records don't hurt either!"

There is much to be said about Sulu's use of the term "paper" in describing the beauty of zines. A tactile relationship exists between the reader and the printed word, an indescribable feeling which cannot be reproduced on the Internet. In this digitized world with the "democracy" of the Internet, there is splendid appeal in the quaintness and personality of constructing binding, tweaking with black-and-white xeroxes and paper cuts.

Perhaps we are all jaded in this technologically comfortable time. The specter of the Internet haunts us all, and you can't really turn a corner without seeing someone communicating via cellular phone. But the only reason I know of the aforementioned Media Guerrillas and their forays into the then-unexplored realms of technology is actually thanks to a chance encounter with the oldest of mediums—the printed word. A book from the 1970s, tucked away in a second-hand bookshop which contained printed words that ironically outlasted the video reels of yesterday's rebels. In a relativistic, skeptical time, perhaps the only suitable rendition of the truth is your own. When even Christian apologists refer to the postmodern, you know that the simple matter of "just the facts" is in dire need of a xerox and toner re-fill. Don't be satisfied being able to read between the lines. Write your own.



THINK Before You INK

BY GILBERT AYUYAO

In 11-plus years working with youth and young adults, I have noticed an increase in tattoos more recently. A group of Pilipino girls I knew all had tattoos. With them, as well as with other young people, I would always pose the "why?" question.

It's neither commonplace nor rare for teens and adolescents to get tattoos. To the dismay of many parents, it happens. As a social worker, I question these young people about the social and legal implications, and the fact that many are underage. Thus, my fascination with tattoos began, getting my first one in 1991.

I had three fundamental questions for these youth. First, why do Pilipinas get Chinese or Japanese character tattoos? Second, did they trust the proper translation of an Asian language character by a non-Asian artist? And finally, did they trust an artist who knowingly tattooed 15 or 16-year-olds with or without parental consent? Parents' permission for minors getting tattoos is a fact of law that neither artist nor most youth I know seemed to have discussed.

The answers I received were very general. Most stated the tattoos represented a personal or character trait. Others pointed to their Chinese or Japanese family roots. Overall, the girls said that Chinese and/or Japanese characters "looked good" and besides, they had never seen a tattoo based on some aspect of Pilipino culture.

The other kinds of tattoos I often see on youth are gang tattoos—names and nicknames in Old English or stylized script writing. As with the girls, and even more so, I wanted to know if they were ready for the implications of getting these tattoos.

Parents, law enforcement officers and other gang members would be challenging them about these tattoos. At a time when looking like a gang member leads to verbal or physical harassment by both other gang members and law enforcement, these were important issues to get them to consider.

While doing research in the library for papers and other assignments for my classes at Cal State LA, I began looking up information on tattoos as well. I learned the Tahitian, Samoan and Tongan word *tatau* is the basis for the word tattoo. In fact, the Polynesian art of tattooing continues to serve as a rite of passage and signifies courage, and social and political standing within the community.

In the 1700s, European sailors exploring and exploiting the Pacific copied this form of body art, thus beginning the tradition of tattooing among sailors around the world.

Inspired to find tattoos within Pilipino culture, I drifted into the Philippines section of the library and began to randomly search the stacks. I looked for older books about the southern and northern Philippines. These were areas where the people resisted Spanish colonization the fiercest and longest.

Descriptions of Pilipino tattoos were few and fairly superficial. Pictures were even more rare. I copied most of the passages and as many pictures and sketches possible. I also broadened my search to Pilipino art and design books.

More recently, I have seen youth I know get a wider range of tattoos. It has become trendy for young Pilipinos to design tattoos using Alibata lettering. (Alibata is an ancient Pilipino tribal script.) These tribal tattoos are very popular.

More Pilipinos are incorporating traditional Pilipino ethnic patterns into tattoo designs. Articles on Alibata tattoos have recently appeared in publications such as *A Magazine*. There is even a billboard in the San Francisco Bay Area featuring a Pilipino with prominent Alibata tattoos on his forearms. And a brief news item appeared recently on a local Los Angeles morning news show on Alibata tattoos.

Eight years, four tattoos and hundreds of dollars later, I no longer ask youth the "why?" question. Everybody has their own valid reasons for choosing their tattoo designs. However, I will still ask if they are prepared for the implications of their tattoos.

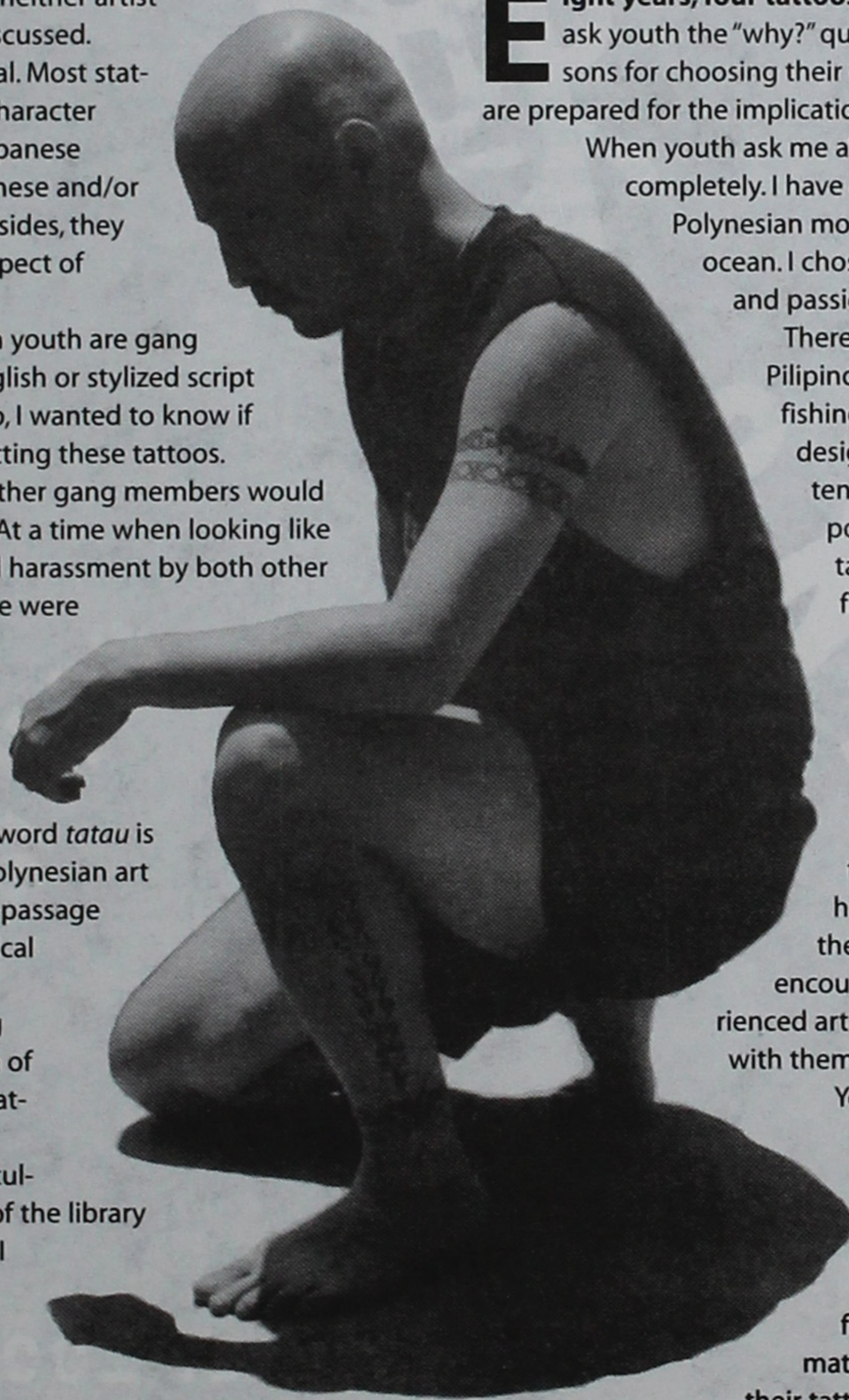
When youth ask me about my tattoos, I try to answer honestly and completely. I have chosen to blend traditional Pilipino and Polynesian motifs into designs that depict fishing and the ocean. I chose these themes because fishing is my hobby and passion, and I thoroughly enjoy the sport.

There are also many traditional designs within Pilipino and Polynesian cultures that depict fish, fishing and the ocean. This provides a range of designs from which I can choose. I have also gotten tattooed to mark important times and points of my life. For example, my most recent tattoo commemorates my engagement to my fiancée.

When the subject is discussed, I do not encourage nor discourage youth to get tattoos. First and foremost, I ask them to wait until they turn 18 years old. This provides time and maturity to aid in the process of decision-making. Second, I encourage them to find designs within their culture and that have meaning for them individually. Lastly, if they are still interested in getting a tattoo, I encourage them to search for reputable and experienced artists and first discuss the design and costs with them.

Youth and adults I know these days are investing more time into designs and research.

But there are still many people who go to a tattoo parlor and pick a design off the wall or from a sample book. I think people who do research, find something meaningful to tattoo and work with the artist will ultimately derive more pleasure and pride from their tattoos.



Gidra explores relationships in...

THE BLACK HOLE ISSUE

S
E
X
F
R
E
A
K
S

LOVE (WHUT?!)



COMMITMENT

Sucking you in

Winter 2000

Asian American Studies Programs/Departments

Survey continued from page 23

UC Irvine

Public university
APA 60%

Asian American Studies Program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED B.A. and a graduate emphasis in Asian American Studies

An interdisciplinary program, which is about to move into the School of Humanities. It might become a department after the move, but that is as yet undecided. 12 to 14 classes are offered per quarter, most of which are upper-division. Some popular classes are: Asian American Psychology, Asian American Women and Asian American Labor.

FACULTY Three full-time; two 50% (50% in another department); two core faculty in Asian American studies but their FTE is not in the program; nine affiliated

PROGRAM STATUS Growing. The current growth in the number of students means budget cutbacks are not a serious problem at this time.

UCLA

Public university
APA 40%

Asian American Studies Center

DEGREE(S) OFFERED B.A.; M.A.; Ph.D. work is done in departments and professional schools through the guidance of faculty members who are affiliated with the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Also, joint MA programs in Asian American Studies and professional fields (e.g. public health, social welfare, urban planning, law) have been approved or are being planned.

The first class in Asian American Studies was offered at UCLA in 1969 as a result of student demands. In the same year, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center was founded. Offering classes and degree programs in Asian American Studies have been a significant activity of the Center throughout its 30-year history, although it has had a broader and more multifaceted mission involving research, publications, library and archival acquisitions and community-campus collaborations.

The Center is an officially designed Organized Research Unit (ORU) of the University of California system, and its undergraduate and graduate teaching and degree activities are organized as an Interdepartmental Program (IDP) by UCLA.

POPULAR CLASSES Asian American Contemporary Issues, Asian American Theater, Asian Pacific American Leadership Development Project, Asian American Gender and Sexuality, Asian American Community Videography, Asian American Women Writers; as well as classes on the Cambodian, Chinese, Hmong, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Pacific Islander, Pilipino and Vietnamese American experiences.

FACULTY 40 full-time tenure-track professors; 15 part-time lecturers

PROGRAM STATUS Growing and vibrant

UC Riverside

Public University
APA 43%

Asian American Studies Program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED B.A.

Part of the Ethnic Studies Department, the Asian American studies program offers about 19 courses per quarter. Popular classes tend to be those which focus on a particular ethnic population (i.e. Pilipino American Experience).

FACULTY One tenured; zero on tenure track; two part-time lecturers.

PROGRAM STATUS A five-year plan has been developed that emphasizes the need to strengthen the Asian American component of the Ethnic Studies Department, including increasing the number of Asian American faculty and the number of courses. Funding for this proposal is, well, pending.

University of Redlands

Private university
APA 8%

Race and Ethnic Studies program

DEGREE(S) OFFERED Minor in Race and Ethnic Studies

Classes are mostly general race and ethnic studies courses with more of a cross-group comparative focus.

Special thanks to the students, staff and faculty who participated in the survey: Craig K. Ihara, Naomi Iwasaki, Gary Kawaguchi, Susie Ling, Amy Luu, Don Nakanishi, Cheryle L. Ocampo, Keith Osajima, Susan Lee Sills, Michi Turner, George Uba and Emilio J. Virata.



A national mobilization for Mumia drew thousands to Philadelphia on April 24, 1999, including a group of Asian Americans 250 strong.

FREE MUMIA

Continued from page 13

This September 11 Mumia Abu-Jamal is scheduled to die for the crime of killing a police officer, after a trial and conviction based on widely contested circumstances.

That the United States justice system is so intent on executing a Black man is no news to some, yet it is enough to mobilize thousands of people around the world to fight for the freedom of a man wrongly sentenced to death. Most recently, a "Millions for Mumia" march in April drew 25,000 supporters to Philadelphia to demand a new trial for this nation's most celebrated and condemned political prisoner.

Among the demonstrators was a contingent of 250 Asian Americans, mobilized by the group Asians for Mumia. Founded in 1995, the first meeting of Asians for Mumia fittingly took place in Harlem, NYC, in the 126th St. apartment of longtime human rights activist Yuri Kochiyama. At this meeting, members of the group discussed why Asians should support Mumia Abu-Jamal and other U.S. political prisoners. Subsequently, the committee decided to focus on Mumia Abu-Jamal due to the urgency of the situation. Mumia is the only U.S. political prisoner on death row.

This is neither an 'Asian issue' nor a 'Black issue'—but an issue about a sense of criminal justice that is shaped by all of us.

Mumia Abu-Jamal became an activist at the age of 15 when he was appointed the Minister of Information for the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party. He became a radio journalist and reporter for WUHY in Philadelphia, where he was also a member of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists. By 1981, Mumia had gained much recognition through his news coverage of police brutality. Since Mumia couldn't support his family on the freelance wage of a

revolutionary writer, he became a taxi driver working late into the night.

At around 4 a.m. on December 9, 1981, Mumia was driving his cab when he saw his brother, William Cook, in a physical confrontation with police officer Daniel Faulkner on the corner of 13th and Locust in downtown Philadelphia. Mumia crossed the street on foot to intervene. Several shots sounded; Faulkner and Mumia were both shot. When police arrived, they immediately attended to Faulkner and commenced to beating Mumia as he lay wounded. As he entered Jefferson Hospital, with forehead gashed and lips swollen, Mumia's face was unrecognizable. Faulkner died of his wounds.

In 1982, Mumia's case was heard by Judge Albert F. Sabo, known in Philadelphia as "The Hanging Judge" for his hard line against crime. Sabo was not only a personal friend of the prosecutor, but also a member of the Fraternal Order of Police. The jury selection process yielded individuals who believed in the death penalty and only two Black jurors in a city that is more than 40% African American. That same year, Mumia was convicted of first degree murder and has been on Pennsylvania's death row ever since.

Mumia, like most taxi drivers, carried a licensed gun. The bullets in Faulkner's body, according to a medical examiner, were shot from a .44 caliber pistol. Mumia's gun was a .38 caliber, had no fingerprints and was never checked to see if it had been fired. The police could not connect Mumia's gun to the murder.

Cynthia White, who testified she saw Mumia shoot Faulkner, claimed to be standing on the corner when the shooting occurred. Another eyewitness, however, saw her standing 1/2 to 1 block further away from the shooting. White, a prostitute, was detained and harassed by the police to "cut a deal" that would allow her to continue working her corner if she testified against Mumia. Veronica Jones told police she saw someone running from the crime scene. While held in custody by police, she testified to "not remembering having seen anything." William Singletary claimed to have seen a passenger in Mumia's brother's car get out and shoot Faulkner in the face. He then saw this person run away. Singletary's statement was torn up and, through intimidation and threats to his family, the police were able to get a different statement from him.

In 1995, Pennsylvania's governor ordered a stay of execution because of the thousands of people that demonstrated for Mumia, the same year the Philadelphia Police Department was sued by the Justice Department for police brutality, corruption, evidence tampering, poor discipline, fabrication of evidence and coercion of witnesses.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is now 45, on death row and awaiting execution. He was recently denied

his petition for a new trial and is now trying to have his case heard in the U.S. Supreme Court.

As Mumia attempts to let people know the truth about his life and pending death, the message he gives is that what happened to him affects all of us. In Los Angeles, a city with a police department which has its own checkered history of crimes against people of color, Mumia is the name that is either feared or revered. Depending on your vantage point, he represents the need for the justice system to enforce law-and-order or the failure of that system in treating every member of this society fairly.

Mumia has not received a fair trial because of the circumstances of his arrest, trial and conviction. If he is executed, how free are any of us then, living under the same justice system?

Free Mumia.

LOVE BOAT

Continued from page 30

Nationalist-dominated reunification with the PRC. In addition, many Taiwanese taxpayers seem unhappy with what they perceive as an annual plague of disrespectful ABC locusts. Considering, on top of this, the lack of U.N. protesters and other forms of Chinese American advocacy, why does the Love Boat continue to sail the open seas?

There seem to be several explanations. First, the Nationalists are far from abandoning their original mission and could be viewing the Study Tour as a far-reaching, albeit indirect, investment, the results of which may not be seen for decades to come.

Second, as Joyce Hsu, a former Study Tour counselor noted, Overseas Chinese pressure has kept the Study Tour alive. Ironically then, Chinese Americans have wrested control of the program away from the Nationalists, who had, after all, initially implemented the Tour as one facet of their "extraterritorial domination." The students now seem to dictate the logistics, appropriating the Love Boat for their own purposes. It has become such a significant part of Chinese America that Chinese Americans insist on its continuation.

The Study Tour is thus a good example of conflicts between U.S.-born Asians and their ancestral nations over constructions of identity and their roles in international politics. A look at similar programs in other communities—the Nisei kengakudan Study Tour to Japan during the 1920s and '30s and the Korean American "Love Boats"—may shed more light on these questions. The future of the Study Tour is uncertain—each year reputedly seems to be the "last"—but undoubtedly it hinges on Chinese Americans themselves.

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WOMEN IN PROVINCES HOWLING

By Irene Suico Soriano

You who wanted to be a doctor
butchered, battered, beaten
stripped, naked, centered
legs apart.

You who were waiting to be
asked to your first dance
cornered, fondled, sored
thrown across a table
mutilated.

You with children learning
their first words
picked on, kicked, slapped
by men with guns in
green uniform.

KURA! KURA! KURA!

You who were promised factory jobs
hailed in boats, shipped out to
new countries, to stations
full of men
Kizo! Hai!
No stopping
Yoneo! Hai!
No resting
Yano! Hai!
Kitano! Hai!
performing
Homma! Hai!
moaning rhythms
That go on and on and on and on and on.

Here and now
each
face,
each
green
uniform,
each
black
eye,
each
groan,
nudge,
suck
and
shiver
must come forth.
No room here for shame or decency,
there are 49 years of evidence to be prepared.

COMFORT WOMEN FACTS

- Historians estimate between 100,000 to 200,000 women and girls, as young as 12 years old, were tricked or forced from mostly Asian countries to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

- Eighty percent of the recruited "comfort women" were taken from daughters of mine workers or farmers in Korea, under Japanese occupation at the time. Thousands of others came from China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Burma, Singapore, Indonesia and the Netherlands.

- Not formally implemented until 1937, the idea of "comfort women" originated in 1915. The Japanese military introduced the system of comfort stations in order to avoid the sexual atrocities committed by Japanese troops on Russian women in Siberia and the problem of sexually transmitted diseases. Following the 1937 Nanking Massacre, the Japanese Imperial Forces implemented the military comfort women plan because of fear of venereal diseases and spying by Chinese women.

- Allegations about the comfort women were brought up as early as the 1980s, but the Japanese government denied it operated a sexual slavery system. In 1991, six women filed suit against the Japanese government, demanding redress and monetary reparations.

- After much international pressure, Japanese Prime Minister Tomiuchi Murayama apologized on July 18, 1995 to all women who served as sexual slaves. The Japanese government set up a private fund to pay compensation to former sex slaves. Many of the women that have come forward from the different Asian countries reject this offer and claim it is the government's attempt to evade responsibility. They demand that the government offer an apology and compensate them directly.

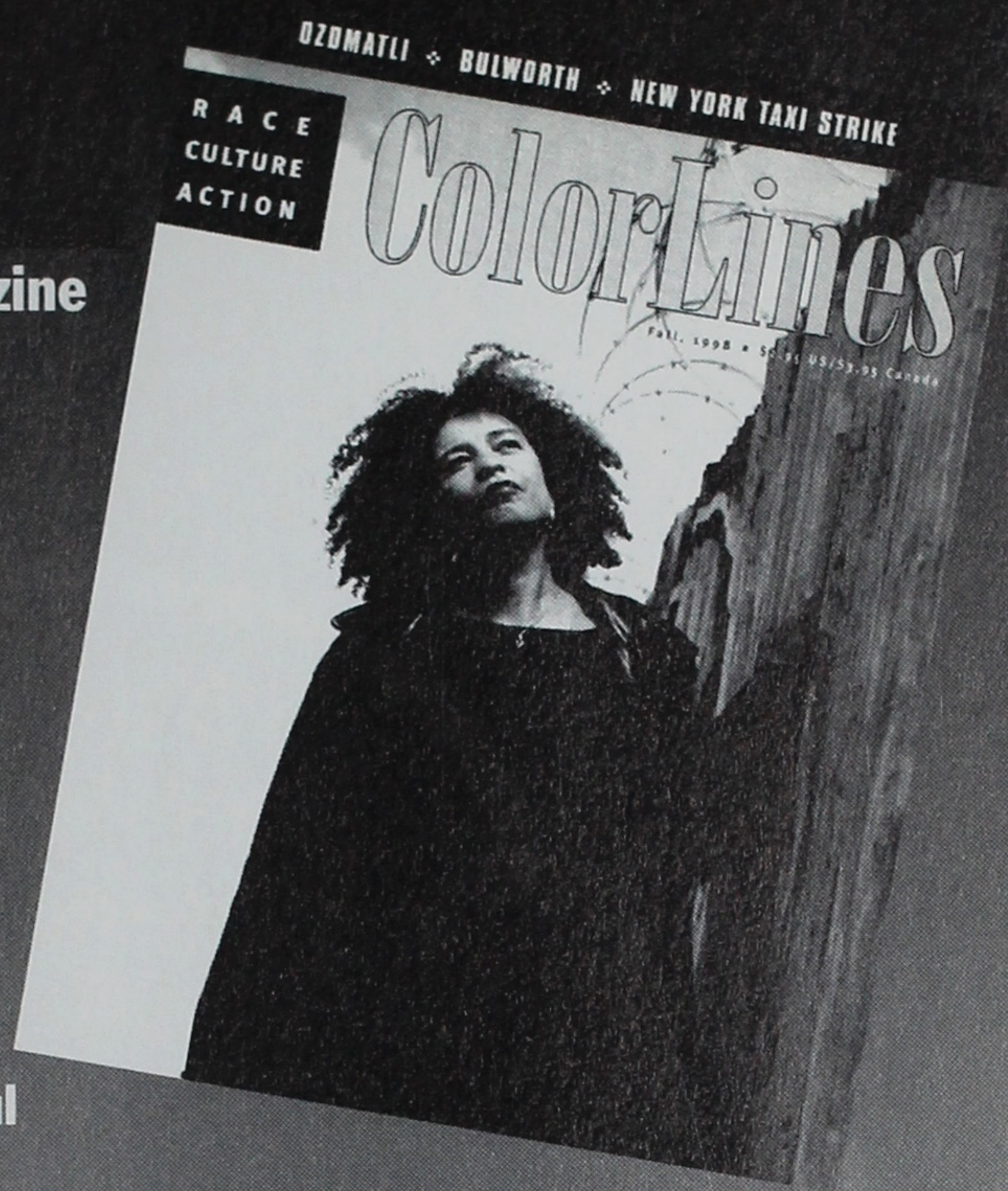
- In 1998, a Tokyo district court dismissed a lawsuit by 46 Filipina comfort women seeking individual financial compensation from the Japanese government. Originally filed in 1993, many of the original plaintiffs in their 60s and 70s have since died.

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