

Welcome to the third installment of VISIONS, a newsletter for the Asian American community at Brown University. For those of you who are new to Brown, we would like to take a moment to say hello and offer a few words about what we hope this newsletter can accomplish. Although the VISIONS staff and contributors are all affiliated in some ways to Brown University, we are a diverse group. In our diversity, we reflect the different communities that now make up Asian America as a whole. We hope this newsletter will serve as a forum to offer visions of what that diversity means, what it can become. We hope that some of you will also join us as contributors. We encourage feedback: responses to articles, ideas for future topics, and so forth. Finally, we hope that this newsletter, in its own modest way, can help all of us gain clarity: to see each other, to see ourselves- to offer Visions of Asian America.

Kisa Takesue and the Visions Staff
Assistant Dean of Student Life

Neither Here Nor There

Melody Chartier

I am Korean adoptee. Saying this is akin in some ways to “coming out” as a gay or lesbian person. Within Asian Pacific American circles, people assume that I am culturally Korean in the same ways that straight people assume most people are heterosexual. There are second, third, even fourth generation Koreans in this country, and while they may share my brand of American-made culture, they still have ties to Korea through their immediate and extended family. My ties to Korean culture are all self-initiated and intentional. In some ways, being a Korean adoptee in this country is really being neither here nor there, not being part of the majority culture here and yet not being culturally Korean either. It’s been a strange, challenging, enlightening, and at times humorous journey for me as a Korean adoptee. I don’t like Korean food at all (especially kimchee!) and yet I’ve been told that my pronunciation of Korean words is flawless because I came to this country when I was almost three and was already verbal. I’ve met people who think I’ve married someone with an American name and when they find out I’m adopted, they rush over the information and don’t want to know more. I don’t know if this experience is indicative of adoption stigma or whether because I’m not culturally Asian, people really don’t know how to deal with me.

When I was a senior in college I participated in the Holt Motherland Tour. I was adopted through Holt International, which is now a major and mainstream adoption agency for inter-country adoptions. Through this tour I got to see my “homeland” of Korea for the second time, although it felt like the first time to me. At the end of the tour, each participant was assigned an infant to bring back to the United States for adoption. I escorted a four-month old baby girl to her new adoptive parents. It was a very moving experience and for me, at that moment, my Korean and American heritages came together and life had come full circle.

I am a Korean adoptee and as such will probably in some way always feel neither here nor there. I’m fine with that at this point in my life because through the experience of going “home” to Korea, I did indeed find more of myself and really appreciate the intentionality of my parents bringing me to this country as their daughter. Besides, I love the look on some people’s faces when they meet “Melody Chartier” and see a Korean face instead of a white one.

Melody Chartier is the Director of Affinity & Multicultural Programs in Alumni Relations. Her interests include volleyball, hiking, and almost every scent of Yankee Candle.

Thai Student Association

Rosalyn Hongsaranagon '02

Although the Thai community has existed at Brown for quite some time, TSA was officially founded in 1996 by a group of active Thai-American students. At the time, the club had only 10 members who coordinated all of the club's cultural activities. At the moment, TSA has more than 30 members, comprising of Thai American, Native Thai students, and Thai governmental scholars. TSA's mission as a cultural organization is to promote Thai and other Southeast Asian cultures through various social activities, and to educate the greater Brown and Providence communities about the diversity of the culture. Although TSA is small in size, our members have been actively participating in several Southeast Asian functions. Our largest and the most visible contribution to Brown community is through the show "Legends of the SEA"—in which our club cooperates with other Southeast Asian groups and host an annual cultural exhibition of Southeast Asian cultures. In addition to the annual event, we also host other activities such as Thai dancing session and Thai cooking lesson. We hope that our presence will help Brown community to learn more about different aspects of Asian cultures and to encourage other students to participate and enjoy the diversity that Brown offers.

some yummy Thai recipes~

Chicken Basil (Gai Pad Gra Pow)

2 Servings

| | | |
|-----|-------------|---------------------------|
| 2 | tablespoons | vegetable oil |
| 4-7 | | Thai Chili pepper, minced |
| 1 | tablespoon | sugar |
| 1-2 | packages | holy basil |
| ½ | lb | ground chicken |
| 1 | tablespoon | garlic, minced |
| 3 | tablespoons | fish sauce |

Mince garlic and chili pepper together. Clean and pick gra-pow leaves from their stem. It may appear like a lot of leaves, but the leaves will shrink when cooked and this dish's flavor comes from the leaves. Fry the garlic and chili pepper in oil over high heat. When garlic starts to turn brown, drop the ground chicken in. Stir constantly. The juice will start to come out. Keep stirring until all the juice is gone. It might take a couple of minutes. Add sugar and fish sauce. Then add Thai basil. Quickly turn it over a few times to mix the leaves with the meat and then remove from the fire and put the *gai pad gra pow* in the serving plate or dishes. Serve hot with rice.

Eggs Salad – Thai style (Yum Kai Dao)

| | | |
|-------|------------|---------------------|
| 4 | | fried crispy eggs |
| 1 | teaspoon | sugar |
| ¼ | | onion |
| 1-2 | | limes |
| 1 | tablespoon | fish sauce |
| 10-15 | sprigs | cilantro (optional) |
| 2-4 | | Thai chili pepper |
| ¼ | | tomato |

Fry the eggs until it crisps. Cut the fried eggs into bite size. Slice the onion as thin as you can. Mince cilantro and Thai Chili into pieces. Set aside a few sprigs of cilantro for a garnish. Put the onion, cilantro, chili, fish sauce, peppers, meat and sugar in a bowl. Add ¾ of the lime and taste. Depending on how sour and how juicy your lime is, you might not need another one. If you need it, add just a little. This dish should taste a little hot, and well-balanced between the lime and the fish sauce.

Roz Hongsaranagon is a junior, concentrating in Political Science and Economics. She likes snow days. Many of them.

The Falun Gong

Kevin Chew '02

In recent months, the relationship between the Falun Gong and China's Communist Party have intensified. Considered an "evil cult" and a threat to social stability by the CCP, the Falun Gong movement, which combines Taoism and Buddhism with traditional Chinese exercise, was introduced to the public in 1992 by Li Hongzhi. Falun Gong came to the world's notice on April 25, 1999 when 10,000 followers peacefully surrounded the former royal palace in an attempt to have their movement officially recognized. They were quickly labeled a "massive threat" and were even accused of trying to overthrow the government. Since the Falun Gong movement was outlawed in July of 1999, members have protested almost daily in Tianamen Square. Human rights groups say more than 100 Falun Gong followers have died of police beatings and other abuse, while the sect says tens of thousands of its mainland members have been sent to labor camps without trial. Human rights in China has always been an issue which has gained world-wide concern. The Falun Gong began as a peaceful movement of health-conscious peoples, but because of the CCP's insecurity, events involving the Falun Gong have taken a violent turn.

Kevin is a junior concentrating in East Asian Studies. He used to play varisty tennis. Now he just plays Mario Tennis.

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

Cynthia Pong '04

Spotlight on: Ang Lee

Born in Taiwan in 1954, director Ang Lee graduated from the National Taiwan College of Arts in 1975. In 1978, he immigrated to the United States to study; he got his B.F.A. from University of Illinois and his M.F.A. from New York University. He currently lives in the New York area with his wife and two sons. He made his first feature-length film in 1992, called "Pushing Hands," and did numerous Mandarin-language movies afterwards. In 1994, his first big hit, "Eat Drink Man Woman," was nominated for Academy and Golden Globe Awards, along with "The Wedding Banquet." He also directed "Sense and Sensibility," "Ice Storm," and "Ride with the Devil."

But "Crouching Tiger" (his first Mandarin-language movie since "Eat Drink Man Woman") has by far surpassed his previous achievements. At the Golden Globes, Lee won best director while "Crouching Tiger" won best foreign language film. The film swept the Golden Horse Awards (Taiwan's Oscars), and won awards in Los Angeles, England, Toronto, and was widely acclaimed at the Cannes Film Festival. "Crouching Tiger" got ten Oscar nominations – including best director and best foreign language film – second only to the twelve nominations "Gladiator" got. (This is only the third time in Oscar history that one film has been nominated for both best film and best foreign language film.) "Crouching Tiger" has had immense international success. Surprisingly, this was Lee's first Chinese martial arts film.

When asked about the growing American market for foreign and Asian films, Lee responded, "When I was a film student [at NYU], it never occurred to me that I could make movies here [i.e., in America]. I had never seen any Chinese film released here other than in Chinatown, not even in an art house...I find the world has become more embracing. It's progressing." He is now considering directing "The Berlin Diaries," a based-on-a-true-story film that takes place during WWII, and "Hulk," based on the Marvel comic.

This is Cynthia's second article. She's a Visions Junkie.

For My Mother

Sharon Luk '01.5

when i left
angry i
said you will never know me

and she said
gno hai nai ge mama
nai deim yeung gong m'sic nai ah?
gno hai nai

I am you

and now I say
no mom
I am you

I carry in me your secrets
of old men who mistakingly thought
you were sealed
in the bag had
an exchange of property

blind-eyed tight-lipped and open-legged
too small to fight
too young to know better
too mute to say *no*

I am the letters you still write home
clandestine
saying you would not be sold
but blood told you to never forget
or let people totally disappear
and every year I know
you wait for response
haunted by silence but you never stop
trying

because losing that love
is motherhood dying

I am your resistance
my mind architects the
subtext of your borders
unmarks the lines of your negation
carried over in migration and redrawn
on your tongue your story
revoked and still
you spoke the loudest
announced yourself without sorrow
sifting through tomorrow when you knew
I too would learn how to scream

step off me
filthy guai hands best not touch me
contaminate our lives with your sadist
wet dreams
that conceives of countless ways to
violate

we are all our mothers' children
and I my mother's daughter
she in me
and in all my sisters the same

who taught me how to fight
who taught me to be fierce
who taught me to be woman

Sharon is a senior concentrating in Ethnic Studies and Comparative Literature. She likes to sing in the rain.

Interview with Sokoeurn Som

Providence Area Youths

Michele Wan '01

Michele Wan tutors Sokoeurn Som, a 15 year-old student at Textron/Chamber Public Charter High School in Providence. Michele conducted an interview with Sokoeurn in an attempt to see what issues face a Providence area high school student.

Q: What's your ethnicity?

A: Cambodian. I was born in Providence. My parents are from Cambodia. My dad's side of the family passed away during the war, because of illness and the Khmer Rouge. My mom still has relatives in Cambodia, though. I have three sisters and three brothers.

Q: How has being Cambodian played a role in your life?

A: People crack on us. They say we eat dogs. But you gotta not take it to heart. Sometimes Cambodian teens end up in gangs for protection.

Q: So do you know a lot of people in Providence who are in gangs?

A: Almost every teen.

Q: Are there a lot of other Cambodians in your neighborhood?

A: Yeah. There are 2-3 families in every block. There are also African-Americans, Spanish people. We're all lower-middle-class people.

Q: Do you find that it's hard being Cambodian in your school?

A: No, we all get along. It's like Dr. King said – it's not the color of your skin, but your attitudes, that matter.

Q: What do you think are the issues that have the greatest impact on Southeast Asian people your age?

A: How people are treating you, looking at you. How they judge you on what clothes you wear, where you hang out, what you do. All they do is judge you by what they see on the news or on the street.

Q: Do you think they treat you differently because of your age or because you're Cambodian, or both?

A: Both, and I think a lot of other races have the same thing happen to them too. Like African-Americans.

For more information about Textron/Chamber High School, check out www.chamberschool.com.

Michele is a senior from New Jersey concentrating in Psychology and Ethnic Studies and looking for a job. She loves liberals, novels, dogs and singing to herself.

Aleta Bok Johnson

Demystifying the Couch

"Where should I sit?" It is virtually always the first question students ask when entering my office for the first time. There is a chair, and yes, there is a couch. My clinical orientation has never been psychoanalysis, and even if it were, the five session limit we must adhere to at Psychological Services is not particularly conducive to laying on the sofa ad infinitum. Still, it seems to be a tough choice for most students—where to plant themselves once they've made it through the door. Perhaps this speaks to the general ambivalence and uncertainty most people feel when they finally decide to enter psychotherapy. They want treatment to help, but they're just not sure that it will.

"Where should I begin?" This is usually the second query. There may be a vast epic to tell. There may be many symptoms to describe. There may be interpersonal intricacies to explore, patterns to uncover, and always, a unique personal and family history to share. What parts of this history, of the current situation or dilemma, of a myriad of feelings and symptoms, will prove the most pertinent to feeling better? It's not easy to compress the complexity of one's distress into the confines of an hour-long session. This is reflected in the moment of uncertainty about where to start the story, and what about it to include.

While many people feel ambivalently about seeking the help of a psychotherapist, it can be especially difficult for Asian-American students to seek treatment. Strong cultural values to keep personal issues private, and to handle emotional problems within the family and with stoicism, may make APA students reticent about counseling. This is a cultural value that may be woven into the very identity of a student. It doesn't preclude treatment from being helpful though; ambivalence can coexist with counseling at times, and often does. Yet as therapy unfolds, there are lots of ways, ultimately, that it can prove helpful. Psychotherapists have at their disposal a wealth of strategies to deal with nearly every type of emotional distress, and symptom relief is possible. Making sense of one's life or one's conflicts is often made much easier with an objective expert on human behavior there to help. We really do know a lot about depression, anxiety, eating problems, sleep difficulties, cultural identity, relationships, academic problems, and more. Therapy isn't magic, and it's not for everyone, but it can help relieve emotional distress. Visits to Psychological Services are free, and confidential, and you don't have to lie down on the couch.

Aleta is a 2nd generation Korean-American, she has been practicing psychotherapy for 15 years. Her areas of specialty include anxiety disorders and cultural issues.

Visions

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If you would like to contribute to
VISIONS, have suggestions or
comments or know someone who
would like to receive this publication,
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Internship Resources

OCA SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)

2001

Purpose: To cultivate future leadership by providing opportunities
for young Asian Americans to participate in the political process.

Details: summer / 10 weeks, in Washington D.C., \$2000 full time

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite #601

Washington, DC 20036 1001

Tel: (202) 223-5500

Web: www.oceanatl.org

E-mail: oca@oceanatl.org

Application deadline: March 25, 2001

Movement Activist Apprenticeship Program, (MAAP) Center for Third World Organizing

MAAP is for movement activists of color committed to learning the
theory and practice of building social justice movements through
community and labor organizing. Interns are placed at one of
several partner organizations throughout the US and work
full-time under close supervision on an organizing campaign at a
community organization or labor union.

Details: June 13-July 31, 2001, \$200 per week stipend for 6 weeks

MAAP Application,

1218 East 21st Street, Oakland, CA 94606.

tel: (510) 533-7583 fax:(510) 533-0923

web: http://www.ctwo.org/maap_info.html

email: training@ctwo.org

Application deadline: April 15, 2001

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Leadership In Action (LIA) is a summer internship program that
develops emerging leadership by providing college students with
opportunities to gain hands-on experience working in selected
Southern California Asian Pacific American non-profit organiza-
tions. LIA is a rigorous eight-week summer program. Interns work
at selected community-based organizations, attend leadership
seminars, and work on community projects.

Details: June23-Aug18,2001 in Los Angeles, CA, \$2000 stipend

327 East Second Street, Suite 226 Los Angeles, CA 90012

tel: 213.485.1422 ext 4109 fax: 213.485.0050

web: www.leap.org

email: iveewong@leap.org (contact Ivey Wong)

application deadline: March 30, 2001

NBA Imports...

A Chinese basketball player could make history when the 2002 NBA season begins. His name is Yao Ming. This 20 year-old is 7'6" tall and many insiders predict he will be the first choice in the 2001 NBA draft this summer. He will not be the first-ever Chinese player drafted, but he could be the first to play. In 1991, his olympic teammate, Wang Zhi-Zhi was drafted by the Dallas Mavericks but not allowed to leave his Red Army team. Many wonder if Yao will even be permitted by Chinese authorities to play in America. This notion is quickly dispelled once one talks to Li Yao-Ming, the owner of the team Yao plays for professionally in China. "We hope that Yao Ming will go to the NBA," Li says. "It will be good for him to play against the best players in the world. And it will help basketball in Shanghai." Yao does not face the same problems as Wang did two years ago because his team is privately owned, as opposed to Wang's government-controlled Red Army team. So, if he does get to leave China, can he play in the NBA? He has already been named ESPN Magazine's Next Athlete 2001. He has already proved he can defend against the NBA's best after stuffing Vince Carter and Gary Payton during the Sydney Olympics. In less than a year, basketball fans may see the future of the NBA.

- Kevin Chew '02

Asian Arts Festival



Annual Asian/Asian American Students, Faculty and Staff Picnic

May 3rd

5:00 - 6:30pm

location TBA