

MOMENTUM

A UC San Diego Publication of The Asian & Pacific Islander American Community

Asian and Pacific Islander American

January - February 1992

Vol 2 No 3



paid advertisement

Here and Now

The Contemporary and Progressive Style of a New Breed of Asian Americans

by Jen Le

I remember the first performance of Here and Now that I attended. I was a junior at UC San Diego when the name first reached my ears. It sparked an interest in me, as well as dozens of other UC San Diego students, because of its all Asian cast and its reputation as an outstanding acting troupe. Friends and associates that were familiar with the acting troupe and its performance had been raving about the show for weeks. Calendars were marked and evenings were set aside by some hundred or so UC San Diego students.

The audience was composed of about a hundred students, with a sprinkle of staff and faculty. Although the majority of the audience was Asian American, racial and ethnic diversity was visible throughout the small theatre in which Here and Now was to perform. We came in anticipation and expectation of seeing ourselves mirrored on stage by an acting troupe that came specifically to share and present stories common to many Asian Americans, amidst a sea of mainstream drama.

Needless to say, the performance was truly incredible in its ability to move and sway the audience. I left that performance feeling whole and connected, just as I had at last year's show, which was titled 'Pride of the People.' I exited the theatre feeling exactly that; proud to be American, proud to be Asian, proud to be an Asian American, proud to be me.

There are few words that can completely express the inner joy and peace found through the communication between audience and actors. Regardless of the fact that you may be Asian American, audiences of all races leave the theatre feeling touched and enlightened by the unique experience of sharing in the stories that a culture has to tell.

This year, Here and Now, once again, performed at UC San Diego. This time, 250 people filled a small lounge to watch the show, 'The Road Together.' 250 people sat side by side, stood against walls, and blocked doorways to watch Here and Now's series of vignettes. 250 people were enchanted and hypnotized by a small acting troupe brought to their school by their APSA (Asian and Pacific Islander Student Alliance).

Next year, Here and Now will be asked to perform once again at UC San Diego, as they have been invited back year after year, even seasons after season, to many college campuses across California.

Here and Now was conceived four years ago in Los Angeles by a group of Asian



American actors. They wanted to address the need, in traditional contemporary American theatre, for stories to tell and for role models that appealed to Asian Americans. The original cast started out with pieces that dealt with such subjects as the communication exchanges between different Asian American races. Although the show first started out slowly, due to the public's minimal reception of an all Asian acting troupe, the persistence of the group and the superb quality of the performance eventually provided the grounds with which Here and Now could proceed. Now, four years later, Here and Now tours high schools, colleges, and multi-ethnic/ multi-cultural conferences with its show across California, as well as a few other states.

Many people have called it an 'advo-

cacy' show because it deals with prevalent and current societal issues. The show is meant to entertain audiences while simultaneously sending forth a message. This year's cast includes a diverse range of Asian American actors from diverse educational backgrounds. The cast includes Japanese Americans: John Miyasaki (director/ actor), Jason Kakimoto (UCLA), Lani Masatsugu (UCR), and Mako Jitodai (UCLA); Korean Americans: Euijoon Kim (UCI) and Bobby Lee (UCLA); Chinese Americans: Cindy Cheung (UCLA) and Nancy Yal (Occidental College); and Vietnamese American Betty Hai (UCSD).

Each show, every year, is comprised of a series of vignettes that address relevant issues and topics that can be racial, ethnic, social, sexual, or cultural. One truly

powerful characteristic of Here and Now's vignettes is its use of the many mediums of theatre. From a diverse range of mediums such as poetry and musicals to dramas and dance, they are bound to touch the personal entertainment particular of everyone in the audience.

In addition, each show is ended with a short discussion between audience and cast in order to cross the line between stage and audience and foster the familiarity and commonality of actors and audiences. During this time, questions on vignettes are discussed as well as particular curiosities that the audience may have about the cast and their work. It is this discussion segment that singularizes Here and Now from any other performance troupe.

It is this continual emphasis on entertainment and touching people, this need to link the audience to the show, that is the beauty of Here and Now. Thus, Here and Now has proven to be one of the most sensitive and brilliant shows seen in college campuses across California. It has the true ability with its diverse and talented cast and its wide vantage of theatrical mediums and subject matter, its theatrical style of communication to understanding shared lives with the soul of each and every one of its audience members. It is with this extraordinary power that Here and Now has touched the lives of 250 students at UCSD and thousands state wide.

1993 A Images Female Calendar

Two Asian American students from the University of Southern California recently released a calendar that attempts to break the stereotypes of Asian American women.

Under the name, A Images, the team of Tommy Tam and James Lee produced the 1993 A Images Female Calendar.

"We are a new, empowered generation of Asian Americans," said Tam. "And if we want the existing atmosphere to improve, it is up to us to make things happen. It is time to stimulate change and growth in the pursuit of achieving acceptance in mainstream America, as normal, full-fledged Americans and not the antiquated misrepresentations of the past."

According to A Images, the models who participated were not selected solely on the basis of physical attributes. Intelligence, personality,

chemistry and attitude, at times, took higher precedence during the selection process.

A Images also explained that for

...A CALENDAR THAT ATTEMPTS TO BREAK THE STEREOTYPES OF ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

most of the women who participated in the project, this was their first experience ever in front of a camera.

Tam, the creator of A Images, created the calendar to dispel the stereotypical images of Asians.

"We attempted to recreate the image of the Asian American female into one of depth, sensuality and intrigue, while concurrently redesigning the traditional, generic format of a pin-up calendar," said Tam.

A Images is currently in the process of developing an Asian male calendar as well as the 1994 Asian Female Calendar.

The 1993 calendar will be available primarily through various nationwide college organizations for \$ 10. The calendar will also be available at some local Southern California bookstores and gift shops.

To order by mail, send check or money order for \$ 12.95, which includes postage and handling to A Images, P.O. Box 90635, City of Industry, CA, 91765-0635.

For more information, call (818) 572-7000 or (213) 878-7833.

Reflections For A New Year...

How do we prepare for the coming of a New Year? Pounding Mochi with family and friends? How about rejoicing in the inauguration of a new president; remembering the struggles of our forefathers; finding out who we are as ethnic individuals and as Americans?

The theme of this issue is "Reflections." It is also the name of our new section devoted to literary works of Asian and Pacific Islanders. It is here that we find a positive way of exploring ethnicity through self-expression, personal narrative, and creative literature. In particular, one writer expresses his dilemma of growing up Japanese American in an Anglo dominant America.

Other articles in this issue discover a sense of renewal in this year of presidential change. Now we have an administration with more people of color in office representing the true fabric of American culture. We reflect upon great leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the movie that tells the story.

In 1993 we must face head on the ongoing pressures of discrimination in the work place, stereotypes in the media, and hate crimes in the streets.

In the words of President Clinton it is time for a change. We'll see if our new leader and his administration will pull through in improving race relations in this country. But in the meantime, it is definitely a time to remember, preserve and develop our history, experience, and culture in these times of change.

- Joanne Tashiro

Feature

'Year of the Rooster' Brings Prosperity and Wealth 4

Mochi-Tsuki Epitomizes Japanese New Year 4



Community

Here and Now 2

1993 A Images Female Calendar 2

Opinion



Momentum Movie Review: Malcolm X 8

Voices on: Career Choices of Asian Americans 9

Editorial

Calendar an Insult to Our Intelligence 10

Clinton Era: It Is Our Time Now 11

"Benefits" of Positive Stereotyping Dubious at Best 10

Reflections

Making of a New Asian American Literature 6

Memoirs of a Banana 7

Mochi-Tsuki Tradition Epitomizes Japanese New Year

By Stuart Kimura **■ Some people make *mochi* the old-fashioned way--they pound it.**
Opinion Editor

The use of custom and ritual have long been a defining characteristic of Japanese culture. The celebration of New Year known as *O Shogatsu* in Japanese and Japanese-American families is no exception. Every December, Japanese and Japanese-American families and communities come together to celebrate the coming of the New Year by feasting on such traditional favorites as *soba* noodles, lobster, and persimmon. But perhaps what best epitomizes a New Year celebration in the Japanese tradition is *mochi*, or Japanese rice cakes. *Mochi* symbolizes wealth, prosperity, and a bountiful crop. These rice cakes are not to be confused with the popular variety consumed by people on diets (I think they're called styrofoam). *Mochi* has no western equivalent. Roughly the size of a small hockey puck, *mochi* is soft, chewy, round and, like rice, has no distinct flavor.

Just as New Year's in the western tradition is not complete without a flute of champagne and a smooch from your current lover, a Japanese New Year's meal is not complete without *mochi*. But understanding the process involved in making *mochi* is equally important as understanding the meaning behind actually

consuming it.

Those families or communities who produce their own *mochi* usually gather in mid to late December in order to have it prepared by the start of the New Year. Those who participate in the making of *mochi* contribute to a sense of togetherness, for they have been united by a common cause; to make *mochi* that will bring prosperity to all in the New Year. The same holds true for the actual process of making *mochi*.

Mochi produced in the traditional way requires rigorous physical activity. The steamed rice must be pounded by several individuals who smash it with wooden poles until it becomes a single mass of rice with relatively uniform texture. The symbolic meaning of this practice, according to Wes Mukoyama, a Japanese-American social worker who resides in the Bay Area, is the following: "When you begin, the rice kernels are all separate. The pounding of *mochi* until it gets together creates a sense of oneness. It symbolizes people coming together and becoming one."

The rice is then rolled in flour to prevent sticking and cut into smaller pieces. Then the *mochi* cakes' round shapes are

formed by hand, which then become the finished product. Sometimes an (sweet bean paste) or some other filling is folded into the middle of each *mochi*. This is the finished product.

Making *mochi* is a tradition that is still alive in the Japanese and Japanese-American celebration of the New Year. It is not only an activity that promotes good fortune in the New Year, it also preserves an ancient cultural tradition. Furthermore, the annual event brings together family members or old friends. Although it takes a great deal of time, energy, and physical effort, annual *mochi tsuki* (*tsuki* means to pound) celebrations are well worth the



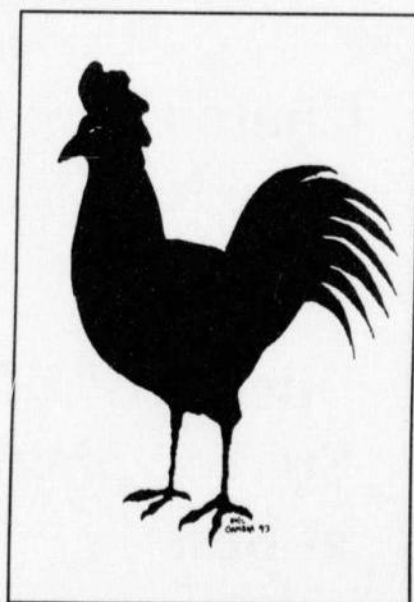
Steamed rice pound into *mochi* for the Japanese New Year. This ritual is passed down from one generation to the next

effort. In today's times of never ending technology, modernity, and change, it's nice to see that some things stay the same.

'Year of the Rooster' Brings Prosperity and Wealth

■ A traditional time for commemorating Chinese culture, family, and identity

By Sandra Chong
Feature Editor



"Gung Hay Fat Choy!" This warm greeting to family members and friends welcomes the Chinese New Year—a time for celebrating good fortune, family, health, food, and prosperity. Although I am a fourth generation Chinese-American, observance of this holiday remains important because it provides a celebration of culture through symbolic rituals, customs, and feast.

Chinese New Year is based on the lunar calendar which cycles every 12 years. Each year is represented by an animal. 4680-1993 honors the Year of the Rooster.

Traditionally in China, the Chinese New Year is the most important holiday and is commemorated for two weeks of vacation free from school and employment. In the United States, Chinese and Chinese-Americans generally celebrate the holiday on New Year's Eve, New Year Day, and the following day. Chinese New Year falls on Saturday, January 23rd.

Good luck clearly characterizes the rituals, customs, and observance of Chinese New Year. Many people wear new clothes, especially clothes with a

great deal of red (red symbolizes good luck), or get a haircut. Personal appearance is especially important on New Year's Day.

Similarly, the entire house is filled with brightness and warm spirits. Flowers decorate the home with beauty and virtue. Fruits which symbolize good luck, such as tangerines, oranges, and kumquats, are displayed as a centerpiece in the dining room. Red posters with gold Chinese writing of an ancient proverb or New Year greeting adorn the walls. In essence the house is decorated to provide an atmosphere of happiness, good fortune, and comfort.

Of course, food is critical to any Chinese celebration. My grandmother and mother would cook continuously for all three days of celebration, preparing special favorites, like chicken, fish, barbeque pork, and roast duck. One traditional Chinese dish called monk vegetable is very popular because it contains symbolic meanings: the rice noodles represent longevity and the mushrooms represent coin money. So of course, my mother always made me eat these foods for good health and good luck. Fish and tofu are also favorites in addition to bowls of steaming white rice. Many Chinese people also eat delicacies that are particular only to this holiday such as New Year's cake (a sticky, light brown dessert), Chinese donuts (balls of fried batter with meat fillings or sweet bean paste inside), red melon seeds, and dried, sugar-coated fruits. Many of these foods are significant not only because they are very tasty, but because their Chinese names sound like other Chinese words which mean luck or prosperity.

Well-wishes for future success and wealth is notoriously found in the Chinese custom of giving money in a little red pocket envelope called *lei sei*. The general rule is for adults—parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins—to give

younger persons *lei sei* as a well-wishing for future success in school and work. One can give *lei sei* for any occasion whatsoever; however, the Chinese New Year is the most popular and convenient occasion for one to become rich!

Most importantly, the Chinese New Year allows relatives and friends to visit each other, and to appreciate the importance of family. Generally speaking, the holiday provides an opportunity to engage in story-telling and traditional Chinese games such as mah jong, dice, or cards.

Perhaps the grandest spectacle of Chinese New Year is the elaborate dragon dance ceremony accompanied by drums and music. The purpose of this display is to chase the evil spirits away so the upcoming new year will bring forth prosperity and good fortune. Similarly, many people light firecrackers and burn incense to invite the good spirits into their families and homes. These festivities give rise to a prosperous new year.

As a time of happiness, celebration, and laughter, the spirit of the Chinese New Year is never forgotten in the hearts and minds of many Chinese people.

HELP WANTED

Momentum is looking for writers, photographers, artists, advertising agents, computer layout personnel, etc. If you would like to be a part of our team, look us up. No experience required. Drop by our office at the Old Student Center, second floor, cubicle #9 for sign ups and information



Come join us!

Up Coming Events...

- Feb. 3
APSA Presents
Asian American Jazz Ensemble
8:00pm, Pepper Canyon Lodge
- Feb. 5
KASA/CSA Presents
Valentine Semi-Formal
8:30-1:30am, Double Tree Hotel, Downtown
- Feb. 6
CCC Ski Trip @ Big Bear Lake
CSA Dumpling Dinner, 6:30pm @ International Center
Sangam Boat Semi-Formal
- Feb. 8
JAmS Movie Night, TBA
- Feb. 10
JAmS Movie Night, TBA
- Feb. 12
CSA/JAmS/KASA Dance, 9:00pm @ Muir Cafe
- Feb. 13
International Club Semi-Formal, 8:00pm @ International Center
- Feb. 16
CSA General Meeting, 7:00pm @ Gallery A
- Feb. 28
KASA General Meeting, TBA

Asian & Pacific Islander Student Alliance
&
International House
Presents

Asian American Jazz Ensemble
Featuring
Glenn Horiouchi* & Francis Wong*

Free!!!

Everyone is invited
8:00pm, Wednesday, February 3
Pepper Canyon Lodge

*Courtesy of Asian Improv Records

San Diego
Korean Culture Festival '93
"Korean Culture World Bound"

January 29th, 8:00pm
Korean Film "The Creation" at
Mandeville Auditorium

January 30th, 8:00pm
Korean folk music, lyric songs,
chorus at Price Center Theater

February 6th, 8:00pm
Korean modern orchestra, aria, &
pop music at Mandeville
auditorium

VÙNG ĐẤT MỚI • NEW TERRITORY
The Vietnamese Artists Project Begins
JANUARY 7 - FEBRUARY 20, 1993

- Bé Kỳ
- Hồ Minh
- Ngô Bảo
- Bùi Thái
- Phạm An
- Vân Mịch
- Võ Khanh
- Duyên-Hà
- Nguyễn Hân
- Nguyễn Việt
- Nguyễn Khai
- Nguyễn Long
- Huỳnh Tài Lộc
- Hồ Thành Đức
- Bùi Văn Hoàng
- Trần T. Kim-Trang

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO CRAFTS CENTER • GROVE GALLERY



REFLECTIONS.....

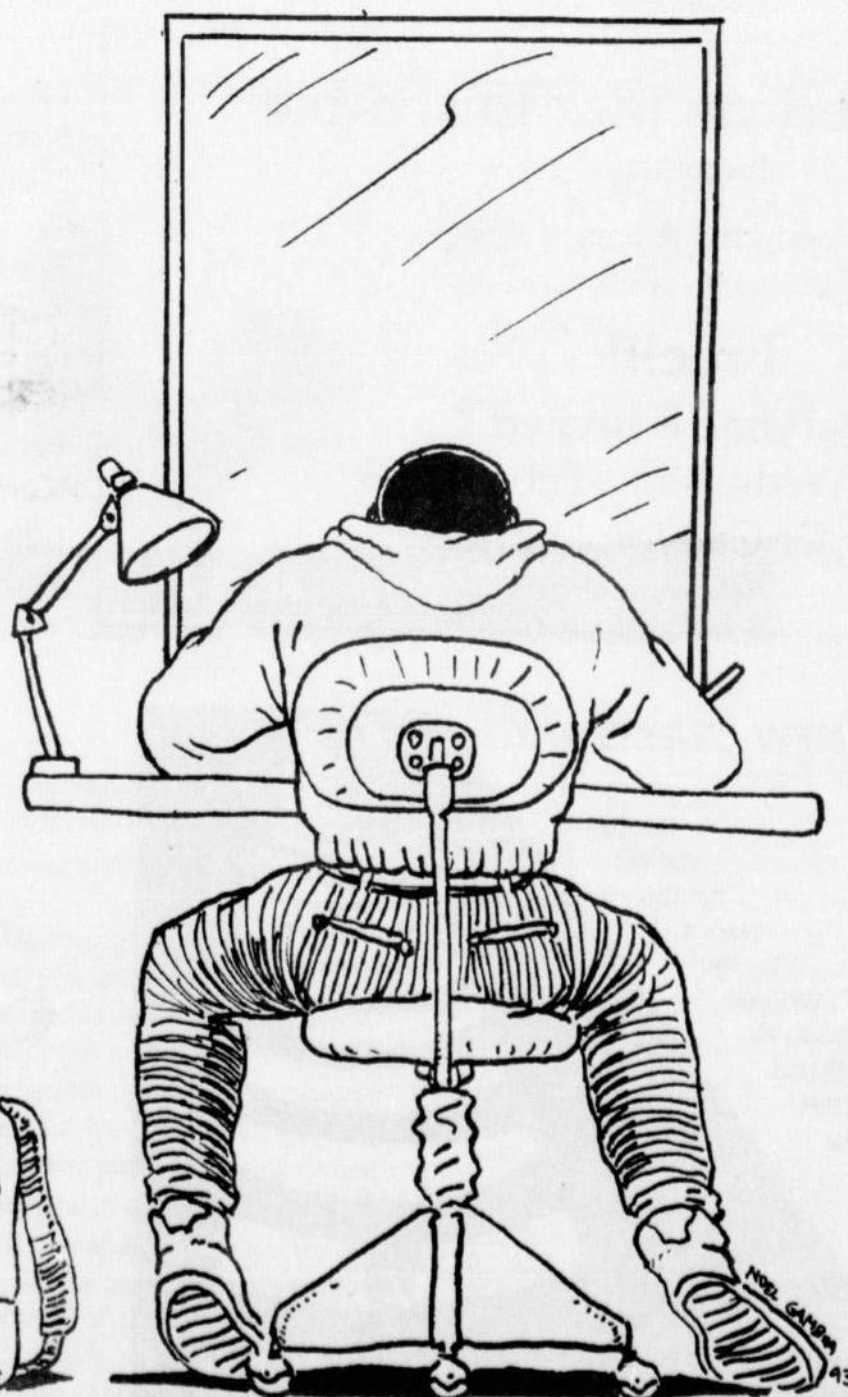
Making of a new Asian American Literature

■ New Perspective Calls For A New Genre

As a writer, my exposure to Asian American literature has been embarrassingly recent. In my early days I dreamt of becoming the next Mark Twain, or Charles Dickens, completely oblivious to the absence of Asian American writers in my list of influences. In the past few years, I have read as many Asian American writers as possible, and have found that the heritage and cultures that they represent are aspects I need to consider in my own work. However, when facing the question of where my writing fits within the context of the established Asian American literary heritage, I also ask myself if it fits at all. For at times I feel that the politics, the anger, and the experiences which Asian American writers have expressed thus far, are not all my own. Obviously, there are experiences which tie us together, but I feel that Asian American writers of my generation must find our own place in literature, and if that place is not where Asian American literature was, then we will make our own.

As a fourth generation Japanese American, I am free of the overpowering generation gaps usually associated with Asian American literature. Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston are great writers, but their writing focuses on the generational disfunctionality commonly seen in relatively recent im-

**BY
SCOTT
OKAMOTO**
Staff Writer



migrant families. Asian American literature must not be limited to these issues and stories, as they only represent part of Asian American culture. People of my generation are no longer tied to a distant homeland that is longed for or compared to the new world. We're here, and we know of no other home, and have heard very little of our native countries, other than what everyone hears on the news or reads in books. The issues and problems that writers of my generation deal with may or may not include generation gaps, but we must always deal with the question of what "American" means and what "Asian American" means for us.

My perspective is only one of many in Asian American culture, though I feel it deserves attention. I am truly in between two worlds. People in Japan would call me American, or other derogatory names for someone who should be Japanese. People here see me as Japanese, even if I don't. I have lived and succeeded in the world of the white majority, at times considering myself to be white, at times even considered white by well-meaning friends. Maybe I don't know exactly what I am, but I know I have a perspective, as do all people in similar situations. It has taken me all my life to figure out who I am, regarding ethnicity. I can trace my confusion back to my childhood. Fortunately, the humor of looking back at such a confused childhood matches the irony and tragedy. I found that the best way to deal with my search for identity is with a little bit of humor, and a great deal of introspection. I suppose the best way for me to express this perspective is to show a piece of memoir I am currently working on, called "Memoirs of a Banana."

MEMOIRS OF A BANANA



hen I was four, a boy in the pre-school playground came at me with a squirt gun and yelled, "Nip!" His face was filled with hate as he squirted water at me and laughed. I sat, frozen, in the sandbox. I was stunned, primarily, because no one ever bothered me on the playground as my next-door neighbor and best friend, Jim, was always within ear-shot during recess. Jim was two years older and was the biggest,

baddest kid on the playground. He taught me how to fight and encouraged me to do so regularly for practice. Whenever I was losing he would step in and beat the snot out of the winning kid, who usually had no idea why he was fighting. Then I would be instructed, on the spot, what I had done wrong. For this reason, namely Jim, I was generally left alone.

I was also stunned by the fact that I had never heard the word "nip" used that way before. I had seen and eaten "Cheeze Nips" and had heard the expression, "It's nippy out," commonly used by my mom, but I had never encountered the word, "nip" as a name, much less a derogatory one. I asked my mom what the word meant when she picked me up that day and her smile dropped a little and I could tell she was uncomfortable. She said we'd have a talk about it with Dad that night. And we did.

It was after dinner and my mom was feeding my one year-old brother. "Scott," my dad began as if asking me a deep, philosophical question. "You're American, just like all your friends, but you are also Japanese."

"Japanese? Why?" I asked. It seemed a logical question.

My dad thought for a moment and said, "Because your mom and I are Japanese too. And so are your grandmas and grandpas. Our ancestors are from Japan, but we are all Americans."

I'm not sure if my dad did it purposefully, but he put such an emphasis on the word "Americans," that I couldn't help but feel that being American was a whole lot better than being Japanese. This is a notion I often find myself wrestling with even today.

My brother later went through a similar experience and he had a harder time accepting the news of his ethnic origin. He was six or seven, in an all white school by this time, and when my parents told him he was Japanese, he was horrified and said, "I am? Is Scott Japanese, too?" He felt a little better when he found out that indeed our whole family was Japanese. Even our poodle. My parents weren't taking any chances.

Julie was the first friend that I can remember. She lived on the other side

of Jim. She was blond and kind of pudgy and she had an annoying habit of trying to talk like her mom. At age five, we were boyfriend and girlfriend, although we never knew what that was supposed to mean. Julie used to make me mad by putting on her Elvis records. I pretended to hate Elvis, but I think she knew I was jealous of him.

"Don't you think he's gorgeous?" she would ask me, as she held up the album for me to see...again.

To this question I would make the most horrible face possible and say with great effort, "I hate him." During it all, though, I made mental notes of the poses, the facial expressions and the style of singing for future use.

I learned my true male role in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship from old movies, where the couple only kissed at the very end. During the whole movie, the man was the strong one, holding the woman like some frail thing who couldn't possibly live without him. She would cling to him for dear life and this was the part I liked. Julie and I would go into my closet and act out all the scenes in the dark. She would pretend to be quite scared and I would be the strong, brave man, warding off monsters and evil men who intended harm on her. When the time came where we were supposed to kiss, I would end the movie,

abruptly, and we would emerge from the closet and go play something else. Kissing seemed unimportant and just plain dumb, but the parts where the frail and fair woman clung to me, scared to near-death of the villain, who I also played, were truly great scenes. Sometimes, during intense scenes where the villain, brilliantly acted out by me, was especially diabolical, I would hear my mom standing next to the closet, giggling. That would be the end of the movie. It was usually a couple of days before I could look her in the eyes again.

The funny thing about all the play-acting with Julie, was that I always pictured myself as a handsome, strong, and very white hero. As I look back, my voice always sounded very white. In later years, when I heard Eddie Murphy do his impersonation of a white person, I thought of the voice I used in the closet. The voice of the T.V. Batman also sounded similar. It was overly proper, with exaggerated emphasis and inflection, sort of like an evening news person. In the cover of the dark closet I could look like anyone I wanted to. I was Cary Grant, I was Charlton Heston. Later on I would become Luke Skywalker. I realize, now, that there weren't any Asian heroes in movies for me to be, so it wasn't all my fault that I was never a Japanese hero. My brother and I would watch some Japanese shows where the hero, teamed with a personal robot, or some other technological gadget, would conquer evil monsters and/or other robots. I guess it wasn't the same when the hero spoke real fast in Japanese and never got any women. That was simply something I didn't want to be. I loved the gadgets and robots, but at age five, I was a hopeless, white, romantic with black hair, slanted eyes and, as I would discover later, yellow skin.

WHEN I WAS FOUR, A BOY IN THE PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND CAME AT ME WITH A SQUIRT GUN AND YELLED "NIP!" HIS FACE WAS FILLED WITH HATE AS HE SQUIRTED WATER AT ME AND LAUGHED. I SAT FROZEN IN THE SANDBOX.

Momentum Movie Review: MALCOLM X

By Young Kim
Contributing Writer

Being the controversial film maker that he is, Spike Lee's latest movie no less opens with the videotaped version of Rodney King's beating that offered the first blow towards white America. The movie is itself sandwiched between such themes of racial injustice. Even Nelson Mandela shows his face at the end. But at the core is the definitive "Black man" and his motives behind his startling method of racial equality: "by any means necessary."

Unlike his more famous counterpart, Martin Luther King, whose call for non-violence met the standards of the Nobel Prize committee, Malcolm X had no time for appeasement. His sense of urgency slashed at the "integration" talks and his passion for truth forced himself to change his name and his clothes throughout his life.

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little, but then



Denzel Washington
as Malcolm X



El Hajj Malik El Shabbaz -- Malcolm X

transformed himself into the fashionably slick "Red," after being shunted away by his teachers from his wish to become a lawyer. When he adopted Islam as his calling, he became the notorious "hate-monger" Malcolm X. His subsequent disenchantment with the Nation of Islam organization results in his final name change and he is murdered as El Hajj Malik El Shabbaz. It is no wonder Lee titled the movie, "X."

Throughout these metamorphosis, one constant stabilized his life; his manhood. He may have changed his garb, but underneath it was a courageous Black man who refused to flinch his pride. In the movie, there is a dramatic illustration of this when Malcolm X rips a bully's ear off at the bar after being provoked.

The movie's plot and main character provide enough dramatic force to withstand three and a half hours of uncomfortable seating. The cast of actors deserve high praise for their portrayals. The uncanny resemblance between Malcolm X and Denzel Washington behind

those glasses enhances the legitimacy of this pseudo-documentary/drama.

Overall, the movie is well made. Fortunately for those who have read the book, Spike Lee remains roughly faithful to the autobiography despite few fabrications for the purpose of drama. But Spike Lee, being Spike Lee, pushes history into the realm of religion. At times, his obvious hagiographic portrayal reduces the power of the man as he really was. At the end of the movie when Malcolm X is praying on a red carpet in Mecca, Lee puts halos around his head with overhead lighting. This is no surprise since Lee's other movies show that he takes no enjoyment in subtleties.

Although the movie is told in the first person, it borders on pure adoration. Lee's perspective and style obscure the stark realism of a man's life. In this deification, the story is overburdened by the person who worships Malcolm X, namely the director/producer of the film. Lee's aerial camera shots, abrupt juxtaposition of images, colorful backdrops and costumes,

predictable penultimate scenes and unmistakable soulful music playing in the background direct the focus of attention away from Malcolm X's story.

Luckily, Lee did not write the book and cannot credit himself this time of overexposing himself "by any means possible." Yet there is a sense throughout the movie that he is letting the story tell itself without his usual self-indulgent reign. Spike Lee may be on the road towards maturity in his film making.

The final recommendation is to read the book by Alex Haley (watch out because there are several books out on the shelves to catch the public hype so make sure to read the autobiography). If you do not like to read, you can wait a few months and enjoy the movie at home. If you are rich enough to buy the cap, at least go see the movie. Give Malcolm X your ear before lining Spike Lee's pocket.

Young Kim is a second year graduate student at the UCSD School of Medicine.

VOICES on:

Career Choices of Asian Americans

By Tina Wu
Opinion Editor

I want to be a part of the San Diego Police Department. As a Sociology major, I will be able to learn about different people and different cultures. I realize my job involves a little danger. I believe that we need more minorities in the police force.

Major: QEDS, Sociology



Marc Abulencia



Debbie Lee

I'm looking for a career within the biotechnical field whether it be through medical school or through a biotech firm. But I'm not sure at this point. I was always interested in the biological sciences. Fortunately, my parents encourage me to do what I want to do.

Major: Biochemistry

My long term goal is to attain a Ph.D. in Psychology, which will allow me to help people at a personal level. Also, I would like to get involved with the American Cancer Society.

Major: Psychology



Trina Tu

Asian Pacific Islanders, in order to have a voice in American society, must pursue leadership positions in diverse fields of study and public services.

These are a few examples of UCSD students whose goals are to take on this challenge.



Cyrus Azares

I want to work for the government, but first I want to join the Peace Corp, maybe working as a teacher, which would be a good and valuable experience. I prefer to work in the Philippines or in areas that need the most help.

Major: Political Science

I'd like to help people with permanent physical disabilities, so they can live a more productive life. I was inspired by my uncle, who's a doctor and my mother, who's an ER nurse.

Major: Bioengineering



John Wong



Jocelyn Daus

I hope to one day go into private practice as a general practitioner. My love for music will help me balance the stress. My parents and God are my inspirations but my goals and aspirations are what motivate me because, in the end, I will have done it all for myself.

Major: Biology, Music

Calendar an Insult to Our Intelligence

Asian American 'awareness' calendar portrays women in same tired fashion

By Stuart Kimura
Opinion Editor

If taken at face value, there's nothing wrong with the 1993 female calendar of Asian women published by A-Images. Certainly it qualifies in the category of readily marketable cheap, tasteless, pin-up calendars. The amateur quality of the photos and the juvenile psychedelic layout design alone qualify the calendar for 'cheesiest of the year' honors, but it is the personality profiles which must take the lion's share of credit for undermining the quality and legitimacy of the calendar.

The press release by calendar publishers Tommy Tam and James Lee clearly stated their intent to "...dispel the notion of stereotypical Asian images." Furthermore, Tam and Lee expressed a desire to "...recreate the image of the Asian American female into one of depth, sensuality and intrigue, while concurrently redesigning the traditional, generic format of a pin-up calendar." Gentlemen, please. The finished calendar does not even remotely live up to any of these lofty goals.

The women chosen to pose for the calendar were all beautiful in their own way, but most of them were amateur models. The degree of personality they could therefore express in the photos was limited at best. Tam and Lee did not help us to understand in any greater detail their persona with their hilarious but simultaneously insulting profiles. Although I was fascinated to learn that Ms. January can be seen on reruns of "The Party Machine", that Ms. June's nickname is "Bunny", and that Ms. February has no trouble programming a VCR, I don't be-

lieve these qualities, as fascinating as they may be, effectively capture the true depth of their souls.

As for sensuality, the captions for the photos did nothing for the reader but ruin any sensual imagery the photos themselves could invoke in one's imagination. It's difficult to conjure up sensual images about a woman who Tam and Lee describe as leading "...an active and directed life that resembles an athletic shoe ad. (Ms. May)". The canned humor of the profiles does not correlate well with its stated goal of unveiling sensuality. And intrigue? The women depicted in the calendar may be intriguing people, but neither the pictures of the women nor the profiles that describe them allow for much of a sense of intrigue. In summation, while the calendar does indeed fulfill the requirements of a traditional, generic pin-up calendar, it falls short in capturing the other images.

I admit I found the calendar extremely entertaining, full of pictures of beautiful women and humorous personality profiles. Still, given the fact that it is a calendar that purportedly promotes Asian understanding and rights, I think it would have been useful for the publishers to have told us *at least* from what Asian ethnic background each of the models came from. Giving us the last names of the models might have been helpful in determining their ethnicity, and might also have portrayed them as something more than superficial playthings. In addition, when I found out that Ms. March has a fascination for



"...Nina believes in giving one's best in all aspects of life. 'Work hard and play hard,' she says, 'life is too short to be mediocre.' SHHWING!"

—Ms. February A-Images Calendar 1993

learning different languages, I think it would have been a good idea for the publishers to have given us some general idea of what those languages were. Maybe it's asking for too much. I just thought an Asian Awareness Calendar would give the reader a little more substance.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the A-Images 1993 Calendar in terms of its content so long as its sole purpose is to adorn some teeny bopper's wall. The photos are actually in relatively good taste. The models aren't 'hanging out' excessively, nor are they pictured as hood ornaments. Still, it was a little insulting to discover that the publishers were attempting to earn praise for their calendar

as a public service announcement. Because I don't believe in censorship, I realize I have no right to criticize the way Tam and Lee choose to publish their calendar. Nobody is forcing me to buy it. However, the problem with the calendar is that the publishers are trying to deceive both themselves and their consumers by trying to pass it off under the guise of being a calendar promoting Asian American understanding. There is nothing between the pages that can even remotely be considered a sincere effort to do so. Therefore, Tam and Lee, continue to publish your calendar. But don't insult the rest of us by pretending to make it seem a more noble cause than it is.

"Benefits" of Positive Stereotyping Dubious at Best

By Stuart Kimura
Opinion Editor

Last week on *Saturday Night Live* Chris Rock, an African American comic, sarcastically extolled the virtues of positive racial stereotyping. In his weekly comic commentary, he pointed out the widely held assumptions that Jewish people are good financiers, and that Asians are strong in mathematics. He went on to explain how both the Jewish and Asian communities had complained about such stereotyping. Rock dismissed the protests of these interest groups as illegitimate because they spoke out over what he thought was promoting flattering images of Asians and Asian Americans. He went on to comment wistfully that someday he hopes the African American community will be able to benefit from a "positive" racial stereotype. Up to a point his arguments made sense, but he neglected to view the whole picture. Victims of "positive" racial stereotyping try so hard to live up to high expectations that have no time to enjoy the benefits.

To me a racial stereotype in any form is derogatory to the group it is directed towards. The anger I would feel if someone verbally assaulting me with a racial slur would not be abated if they said, "That's okay. At least it was a positive one." Both "positive" and

**BE CAREFUL
WHAT YOU WISH
FOR CHRIS. IT
JUST MIGHT
COME TRUE
SOMEDAY.**

"negative" stereotypes promote unfounded expectations about people and put undue pressures on them to live up to those expectations.

The core of this problem revolves around the "Model Minority" myth that hovers over people of Asian descent in American society. Asians are touted as the group other minority groups should

emulate in order to improve their social standing. The degree to which this stereotype has taken hold varies with time and place, but it seems to have intensified over the past several decades.

People like Chris Rock repeatedly alluding to the idea on national television that the first image that comes to his mind regarding Asians are those of a good math student only seek to perpetuate the myth. People always seem to point out the positive aspects of Asian racial stereotypes as a means to justify their argument.

Yes, there are worse things Asians can be accused of than "math wizards", but the presumption that racial stereotypes are okay so long as they paint positive pictures of their victims is fallacious. There are negative implications to all racial stereotypes, regardless of type.

Raising the level of expectation of Asians above those of other minorities puts unfair pressure on Asians to excel in everything they do. Some of this pressure is applied by Asians themselves, for the Confucian ethic is proof that Asian fami-

lies have a long history of putting a premium on academic and professional success.

But when society at large adds additional pressure with a "Model Minority" expectation, it becomes extremely difficult to function normally in society. Asians must carry a "double burden." Not only must they contend with the fear of failure that all people must deal with; they must also contend with the fact that they are an Asian that failed.

Not living up to expectations (your own and someone else's) is not a very easy thing to live with. Further, while a victim of a "negative" racial stereotype who rises above expectations receives twice the notoriety for his success, an Asian that receives the benefits of a "positive" racial stereotype and who fails to live up to expectations endures twice the ridicule.

Perhaps the most frightening consequence of the "Model Minority" stereotype is the increasing amount of anti-

Cont. on pg. 11

Politics

By Cheryl Soriano
Staff Writer

"The greatest value in the world is the difference between what we are and what we could become."
Ben Herbsht

It is 1993—a new year filled with an infinite number of possibilities and opportunities. We are beginning this year with a new president and his administration. "Change" was the theme of his campaign, and change is exactly what we need to pull us out of the twelve years of the Republicans' rape and pillage of our people and this country.

Clinton delivered on his promise that his cabinet will "look like" America. An African American, Mike Espy, was nominated to the Secretary of Agriculture position, and a Latino, Henry Cisneros was nominated to Housing and Urban Development. These are key positions in the President's cabinet.

The nominations of Hazel O'Leary and Donna Shalala to the positions of Secretary of Energy and Health and Human Services, respectively, show the recognition of women's contributions to our government.

Most promising is the nomination of Zoe Baird to the position of Attorney General of the United States. This is both equally encouraging and a marker for change. If she's confirmed by the Senate, Baird will be the first woman Attorney General. The nominations of these women indicate that this has been an exceptional year for women in politics.

In addition, both Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer were elected to the United

Clinton Era: It Is Our Time Now



States Senate. This election also produced the first African American woman, Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois, to serve in the United States Senate.

We have a lot to look forward to with this administration. As President Clinton stated, "The American people have voted for a new beginning." Unfortunately, ultra-conservatives are seeing this time as the beginning of the end. I say to the Rush Limbaughs of this country, with their well-cultivated cynicism, STEP ASIDE! The new administration has the center stage, and those of us who look to the future with optimism, support their efforts to bring about the true change that is desperately needed.

Aside from these exciting changes in the political arena, 1993 is our time to focus on ourselves as people of color in this society. The beginning of a new year provides the perfect opportunity to look

inward. We can ask ourselves, "How can I grow and mature and make my life better?" Questions such as this one help us understand where we want to be and to see ways that we can improve the quality of our lives. We claim this time for us—people of color. We can examine ourselves and a very important part of our identity—our ethnicity. We can ponder what it means to be a person of color in an Anglo-Saxon-dominant culture. Maybe then we can value ourselves and realize the contributions we make—the diversity and flavor we add to this country.

Last week, I read an article in the Metro section of the Los Angeles Times. It stated, "A fear of being labeled a racist has caused Caucasians to fade into the background when it comes to asserting themselves culturally...The equality that society cries for is glaringly absent when

it comes to treatment of white minorities." Whenever I read something like this, I get very angry—the Pilipina spitfire in me surfaces. I will say it again—IT IS OUR TIME! After years of cultural, economic, and racial oppression and being made to feel inferior, or as John Metzger labels us, "surplus," it is time for our oppressors to "fade into the background." IT IS OUR TIME to shine, to learn about ourselves, and most importantly, to FINALLY be proud of the many ways we add to this country, both historically and presently. IT IS OUR TIME to realize our own self-worth and the miracle of our existence. By January of next year, will you look back with regret for not claiming 1993 as YOUR TIME to grow, or will you smile reflecting on your accomplishments, experiences, and what you have learned? CARPE DIEM!

Momentum Staff

Editor in Chief: Joanne Tashiro
Managing Editor: Vivian Noh
Community Editor: Vivian Noh
Feature Editor: Sandra Chong
Reflections Editor: Grace Machado, Joanne Tashiro
Opinion Editors: Stuart Kimura, Tina Wu, Matt Baldwin

Calendar Editor: Manny Sheu
Faculty Advisor: Professor Lisa Lowe
Graphics Consultants: Cindy Lin, Noel Gamboa
Front Cover Design: Noel Gamboa, Manny Sheu, Cheryl Soriano
Copy Editor: Elsa Tsutaoka
Staff Photographer: Cheryl Soriano, Shoon Lio
Staff Writers: Scott Okamoto, Albert Alorro, Kris Easterling
Staff Artists: Noel Gamboa, Shoon Lio

Write to: Momentum
UC San Diego
Mail Code 0077, Box D-28
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, CA 92093-0077

Momentum is a tri-quarterly publication funded by ASUCSD. Momentum does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or gender. Letters, articles, submissions are encouraged. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of Momentum or its sponsors and funding sources.
©1993ASUCSD Momentum

Correction

ON THE FRONT
COVER
OF MOMENTUM V.2 #2
THE FOLLOWING
SPELLING
CORRECTIONS
SHOULD BE NOTED:

Line 2: Carlos Bulosan
Line 9: Janice Mirikitani
Line 24: Renee Tajima

Cont pg. 10

Asian sentiment and violence that have reared their ugly heads in recent years. Asians have been the objects of resentment in recent years from society at large. The attack on Vincent Chin and on Korean shopkeepers during the L.A. riots are two of the biggest examples. Both incidents represent a degree of anger and resentment directed toward Asians for their image in mainstream society as the "Model Minority".

This "Model Minority" fallacy makes me tired. I'm tired of people telling me I should appreciate it, that it helps the Asian community. I'm tired of people telling me Asians have it so much easier than other minority groups. And I'm tired of people making light of the positive implications of these stereotypes while completely disregarding the negative ones. Asians did not choose to be labeled the "Model Minority". And they certainly do not consider the label a favor or privilege.

So for those people who do believe some stereotypes are good, why not be-

TOFU MÉLANGE

BLACK FUNGUS AND TOFU COMPRISE A SAVORY DISH THAT'S QUICK TO MAKE

INGREDIENTS:

2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
 1 container of firm tofu, drained and chopped into small cubes
 1/2 cup of dried black fungus or 8 Shiitake mushrooms
 3 Tbsp. oyster sauce
 1/2 tsp. sugar
 1 tsp. corn starch
 1 tsp. sesame oil or heated oil
 1/2 cup frozen green peas (optional)
 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
 Green onions, finely chopped

PREPARATION:

1. Soak black fungus (or mushrooms) in water for 1/2 hour.
 2. Take 1/2 cup of water used to soak mushrooms and mix in oyster sauce, sugar, soy sauce, and cornstarch. Set aside.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat frying pan and add 2 tsp. oil. Add garlic and fry till the fragrance is released. Add fungus and fry one minute. Stir in tofu until it is slightly brown.
 2. Add sauce and raise heat until boiling. When sauce thickens, lower heat.
 3. Add green peas and let simmer one minute. Keep stirring!
 4. Add sesame oil, then top with green onions. Serve on top of white rice. Enjoy!

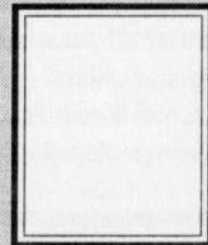


Gourmet Review:

"It's easy to make and tastes better than Ramen" -Manny Sheu

"Hmm...this is a tasty dish. It reminds me of Mom's cooking" -Vivian Noh

Momentum
University of California, San Diego
Price Center 0077, Box D-28
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, CA 92093-0077



Mail to: