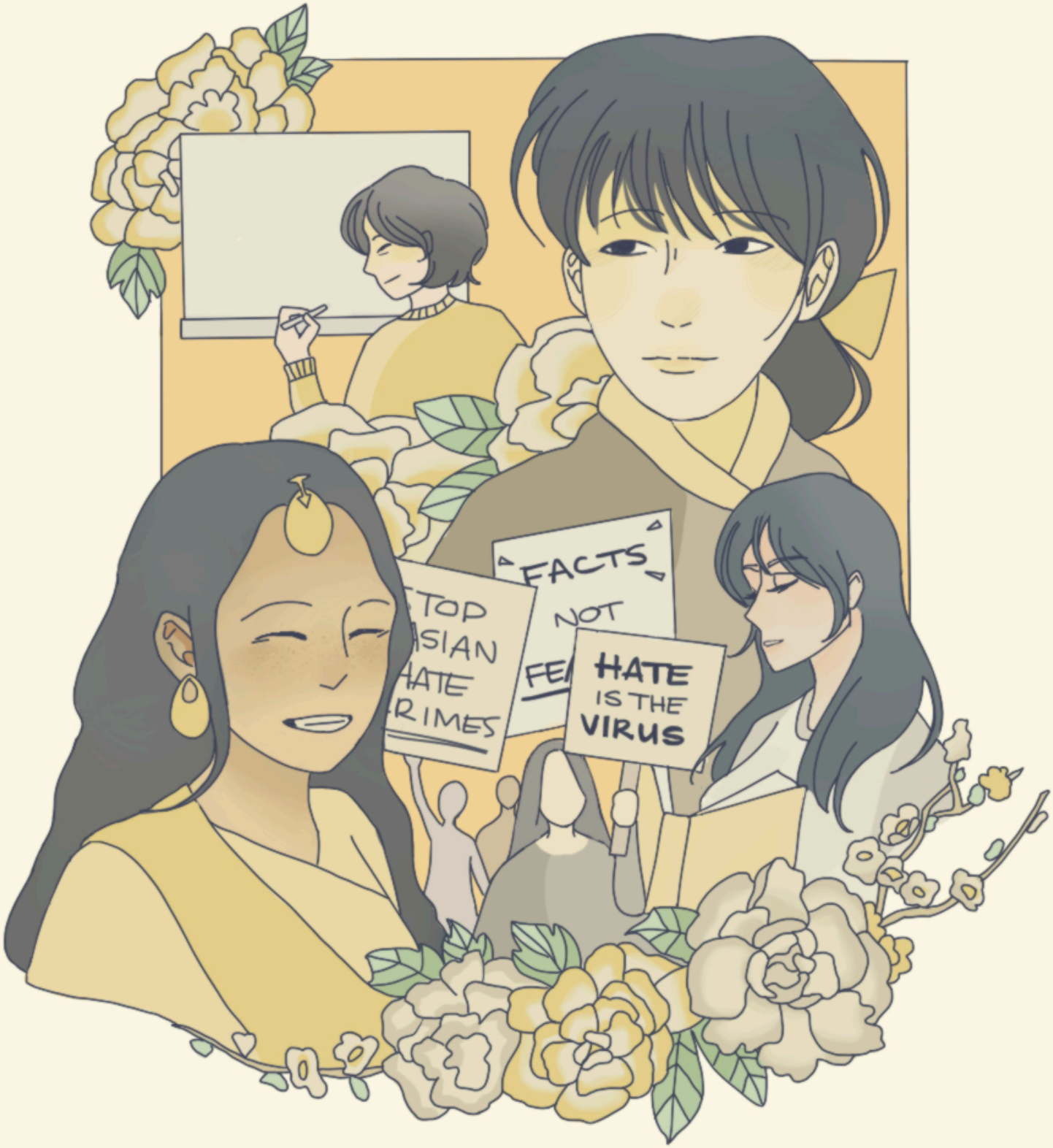
March 2021 Issue 3

WHAT WE EXPERIENCE | HELD WITHIN



Artist Reflection:
Gabriella Ignacio

"Because March is women's history month, this issue focuses on the stories of Asian-American women. I wanted to encompass this theme by showing a variety of Asian women's cultures, achievements, and hardships. I incorporated flowers onto the cover design because they are commonly associated with women and they also symbolize growth, strength and ambition."

Letter from the Founders

Dear reader,

Thank you for taking valuable time out of your day to read our magazine! We are so grateful for all your support and engagement.

If you are new to our magazine, our names are Jeenah Gwak and Hope Yu, and we are two high school juniors in the greater Seattle area. Our project began as one of our many ideas. As Asian adolescents living in American society, we have witnessed countless instances of discrimination, xenophobia, and social injustice against people of Asian descent within our communities. Despite living in a relatively Asian-dense region, we have been exposed to various forms of social injustice against Asian Americans, such as the lack of Asian representation in academic curricula and recent COVID-19 related events. These occurrences galvanized us to take action.

Taking into consideration our abilities, we decided that promoting awareness through written works would be the most appropriate for our course of action. Through our magazine, we seek to share the untold stories of Asian-American experiences surrounding racism and societal pressures that are often overlooked in society. We hope to educate and inspire you to take action.

Our magazine, What We Experience, is released on a quarterly basis covering the experiences of various Asian identities. This third issue focuses on the experiences of Asian-American women. We titled this issue "Held Within" to represent the history of repressed women in society. Though women of all races have been subjects of gender inequality, Asian-American women have been underrepresented in various areas, such as government, education, and the workforce. This issue is dedicated to the intelligent, talented, and powerful Asian-American women in all of our lives.

That being said, thank you for supporting us in our journey to advocate for the Asian-American community. We hope you enjoy our magazine and feel inspired to share it with others.

Sincerely,
Jeenah Gwak and Hope Yu

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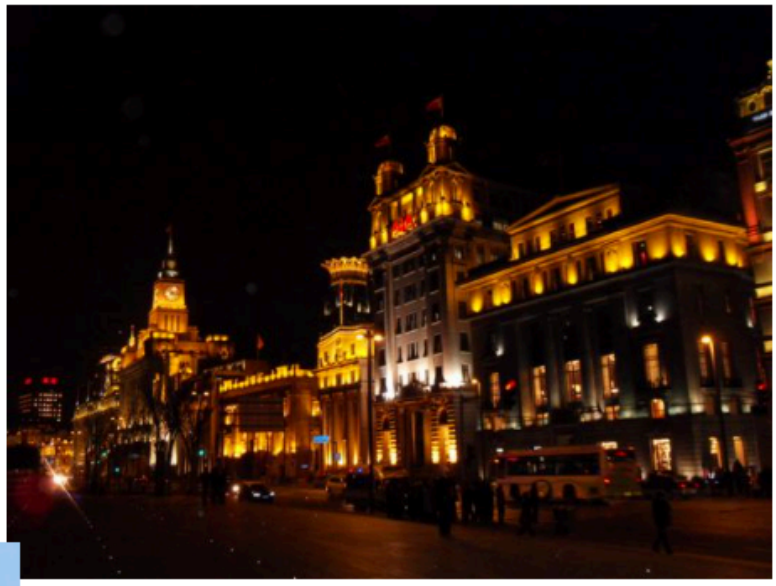

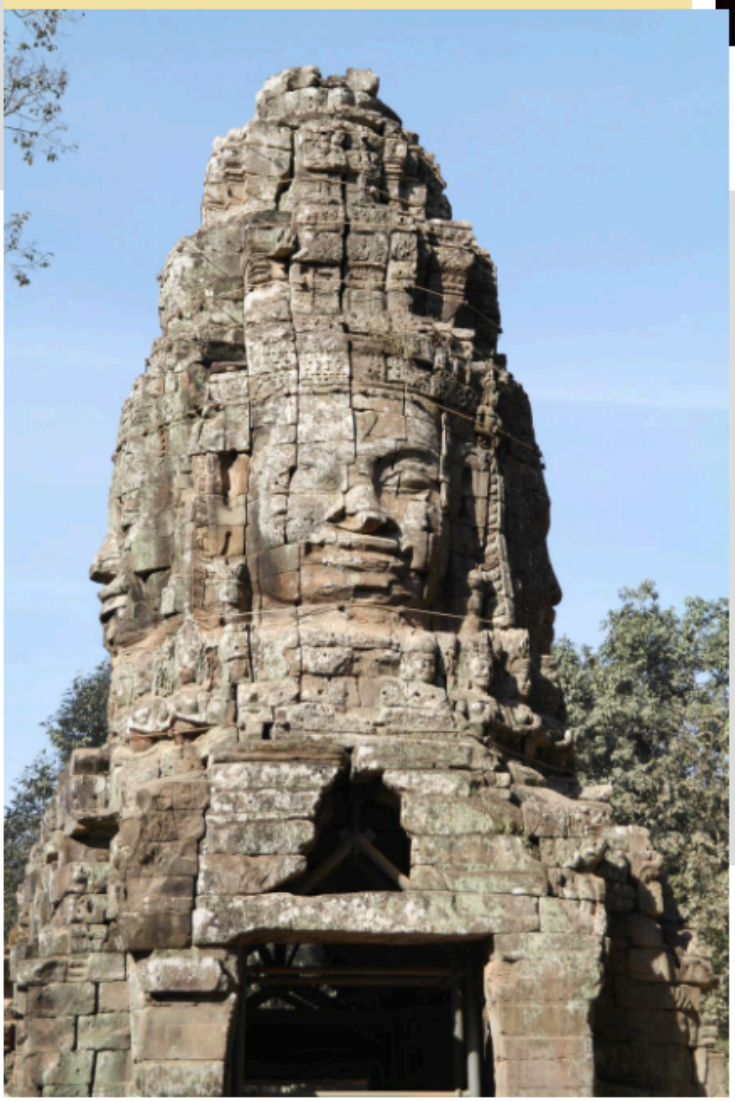

Photo courtesy of Mazie Hirono

Rising Voices

How have Asian women shaped politics?

By Gabriella Ignacio

With a population of over 5 million, Asian Americans are one of the most prevalent ethnic groups in the United States. As this number continues to grow, representation of Asian voices is a necessity, especially in areas such as politics and governance. Throughout the past several decades, over 40 Asians have been appointed to US offices – a step forward from our white, male-dominated political scene. That being said, our government would not be the same without the numerous women who fought for a change. So, to celebrate Women's History Month, here are the stories of two Asian American women who have made a significant impact on our country.

Born in Hawaii in 1927, Japanese-American Patsy Takemoto experienced racial discrimination from an early age. Despite this, she was able to become both president and valedictorian of her class and pursue further education at universities like the University of Hawaii and the University of Nebraska. Though she was faced with many challenges during this time, she consistently sought to overcome them, and lobbied against many racist segregation policies at school.

Eventually, she decided to attend law school, where she met her husband, John Francis Mink, and graduated in 1951. In order to practice law, Mink needed to pass her bar examination, and upon applying, she was denied the right to take the exam. This was due to a territorial law called the Cable Act, which removed Mink's Hawaiian residency when she married her husband. At the time, this law applied strictly to married women, and it was only when Mink challenged the law as sexist that she was finally allowed to take the test.

Photo by Ralph Crane

Though she did pass, discrimination persisted, causing her to establish her own private firm where she built her practice. She began involving herself in politics, and served in both the territorial House of Representatives and Senate of Hawaii.

A few years later, in 1965, Mink campaigned for and won a seat in the United States House of Representatives. She was the first woman of color to be elected to this position, and served in Congress for 24 years total. One of her most notable achievements during this time was the co-creation of Title IX Amendment of the Higher Education Act, which prohibited gender discrimination in educational institutions and allowed women to have more employment and educational opportunities.

Throughout her career, she advocated for many other important issues, such as poverty, social security, and health care.

"We have to build things that we want to see accomplished.. To make sure that others do not have to suffer the same discrimination."
- Patsy Mink

Despite her passing in 2002, Mink's legacy lives on. She has been awarded posthumously with honors such as an induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame (2003) and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2014). Patsy Mink is remembered as someone who dedicated her career to fight for women, children, and minorities, and paved the way for many women of color today.

Mink with the National Organization for Women at a protest and rally in Washington D.C / Photo by Joe Marquette

Mazie Hirono is another political figure that continues to represent our country today. Her family immigrated from Fukushima, Japan to Hawaii at a young age and despite the toughness of starting a new life in America, she was able to take advantage of her opportunities. Similar to Mink, Hirono gained post-high school education at the University of Hawaii, where she began her work in advocacy. By participating in student protests, volunteer organizations, and mental health facilities, she built a passion for public service, and eventually decided to go into law. With a concentration on public interest, she attended Georgetown University Law Center and worked for the Hawaii attorney general soon after graduation.

Photo by David Crawford

In 1980, Hirono ran for and won a seat in the Hawaii House of Representatives, where she led as the chair of the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee. 14 years later, in 1994, she was elected lieutenant governor of Hawaii and served next to the first Filipino-American governor, Benjamin Cayetano. She focused on workers' compensation laws, early childhood education programs, and visa reform, in addition to many other issues.

Hirono was elected to Congress in 2006, where she represented the seat once held by Patsy Mink, who she describes as "a dear friend [whose] legacy lives on in schools and universities across the country". She was the first woman senator from Hawaii, and even today, she continues to fight for civil rights and issues that she is passionate about. As a politician, Mazie Hirono strives to protect education, support workers, and overall aims to advocate for the voice of the public. As she continues her work in the US Senate, she says that "With [her] background and experiences, [she] never forgets where [she] came from or who [she] fights for and why."

Though our government is becoming increasingly more inclusive, it is important to celebrate historical figures that have made change possible. Both Patsy Mink and Mazie Hirono have worked to make a difference in our society, and without them, many pieces of legislation may not have been possible. As women's history month comes to a close, we should acknowledge the integral role of women in our society and anticipate what the future holds for Asian women in politics.

Gabriella Ignacio is a sophomore at Newport High School in Bellevue, Washington. Her interests include visual arts, such as drawing, and reading. She is passionate about this cause because Asian heritage is a big part of her identity.

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A History of Asian American Women in Early Hollywood & Film


Photo Courtesy of the Associated Press

By Kaila Karns

When we think of Asian-American women in the entertainment industry today, we know that there are still many things that need to be worked on as far as having appropriate and accurate Asian representation. But how was it back in the early days, if Hollywood is still struggling to cast Asian women appropriately? And can the past explain how present-day Hollywood still refuses to cast roles when it comes to Asian-American women?

While the first Asian Americans in media were looked at as an actual joke in 1882, the first Asian-American woman to be a "movie star," of her time was Taiwanese-American actress Anna May Wong. She was also the first Asian American to become an international film star in China. Born in Los Angeles as a third-generation Asian American, Wong was in love with film and began acting at an early age. During the Silent Film era, she acted in "The Toll Of The Sea," which was one of the first films to ever be filmed in color, as well as in Douglas Fairbanks' film, "The Thief of Bagdad" in 1924. Wong became a fashion icon and had achieved international stardom in 1924, against her father's wishes.


Photo Courtesy of Netflix

Top right: Miyoshi Umeki
Bottom right: Anna May Wong

However, the large majority of Wong's castings were, unfortunately, harmful Asian stereotypes. Frustrated by Hollywood's obsession with dehumanizing Asians, Anna ended up traveling to Europe to pursue more work as an actress. It was in Europe that she found a newfound freedom to deepen her acting prowess, outside the constraints of the Hollywood elite. One such film was that of "Piccadilly"in 1929, and others like "Daughter of the Dragon" (1931), "Daughter of Shanghai" (1937), and co-starred alongside Marlene Dietrich in Josef von Sternberg's "Shanghai Express" (1932). She was also rumored to have been bisexual, as many believe that she had dated Marlene as well during this time. In 1935, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer refused to consider her for the leading role of the Chinese character O-Lan in the film version of Pearl S. Buck's film, "The Good Earth." MGM instead cast a white actress to play the leading role in yellowface, due to the Hays Code anti-miscegenation rule requiring the wife of a white actor, who was Paul Muni while he was ironically playing a Chinese character in yellowface, to be played by a white actress. MGM offered Wong the supporting role of Lotus, the seductress, but she refused on principle after the devastatingly racist blow to her career and ethnicity as an Asian American woman. She then spent the following year in China, returning to her family's ancestral village to enrich herself into the Chinese culture she hadn't seen in a positive light back home in America. By the late 1930s, she held the leading role in a string of movies made for paramount pictures, doing her best to showcase Chinese and Chinese-Americans in a positive light on the screen. After the war in 1951, Wong made history by starring in "The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong," the first U.S. television show to have an Asian-American series lead. She had been planning to return to major motion pictures in the production of "Flower Drum Song," but she died before this could happen in 1961, at the age of 56 from a heart attack. For decades after her death, Anna May Wong was only remembered for the stereotypical "Dragon Lady" and demure "Butterfly" roles that she was forced to play early on in her career, which were racially harmful roles to play. Her life and influence were re-evaluated by the end of the 1900s, and she has since become a Hollywood film legend for her work in opening the space up for Asian American women, and representation on the silver screen. Oftentimes under the shadow of Wong, people forget to remember that there was also another prominent Asian actress in the early American cinematic landscape. Estelle Merle O'Brien Thompson was born in Bombay, British India, on February 19, 1911. For most of her life, Thompson protected herself from racial discrimination by concealing the truth about her parentage, claiming that she had been born in Tasmania, Australia and that her birth records had been destroyed in a fire. From 1914 to 1916, she lived an impoverished life in shabby flats, as her father died in battle on the Western Front. In 1917, she and her mother & half-sister moved to Kolkata, India, where she began attending school for the first time. However, as she was constantly taunted for her ethnic mixed heritage, she quit school and learned from home. During this homeschooling, Oberon first found the Kolkata Amateur Dramatic Society, and later had her first performance as an actress there.

Merle Oberon. Photo Courtesy of the Press

Photo Courtesy of John Kobal Foundation

She was completely enamored with films, and before the outset of her career won an acting contest at Firpo's Restaurant. While working at that restaurant in 1929, Merle met a former actor, Colonel Ben Finney, and dated him for a short while. This ended once he realized Oberon was of mixed ancestry, as he saw her sister Charlotte (who was far more Asian passing). Oberon arrived in England for the first time in 1928, at the age of 17 where initially she only played in minor and unbilled roles in various films. In an interview with Film Weekly in 1939, she stated how she "couldn't dance or sing or write or paint. The only possible opening seemed to be in some line in which I could use my face. This was, in fact, no better than a hundred other faces, but it did possess a fortunately photogenic quality." Her film career received a major boost when the director Alexander Korda took an interest and gave her a small but prominent role, as Anne Boleyn in "The Private Life of Henry VIII" (1933). The film became a major success and she was then given leading roles, such as Lady Blakeney in "The Scarlet Pimpernel." Oberon's career skyrocketed thanks to this interest Korda had of her work, and the two also later married. By this time Oberon moved to Los Angeles to star in films in Hollywood as well - where she later would become a citizen, and later earned her sole Academy Award for Best Actress nomination for "The Dark Angel" (1935). This made her the very first Asian, and first Asian woman to ever be nominated for an Academy Award, though is never remembered for it due to how guarded she was of her ethnic heritage.

She went on to appear as Cathy in the highly acclaimed film "Wuthering Heights" in 1939, as George Sand in "A Song to Remember" in 1945, and as the Empress Josephine in "Désirée" in1954. Oberon continued to act until 1973, with her last role in the film "Interval." She then moved to Malibu, California where she lived until her eventual passing in 1979 at age 68 from a stroke. Her legacy has carried on as well, even despite being partially overshadowed by Anna May Wong with more recent callbacks to Asian Americans in film. She now has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her contributions to Motion Pictures, and Michael Korda, the nephew of Alexander Korda, wrote a roman à clef about Oberon after her death titled Queenie. This was later adapted into a television miniseries starring Mia Sara. Additionally, F. Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished novel "The Last Tycoon" was made into the television series, with Jennifer Beals playing Margo Taft, a character created for the tv series who was based on Oberon.

The last actress who made a significant impact on the Hollywood film scene as an Asian American woman was that of Miyoshi Umeki, a Japanese American film star and singer. She was born in Hokkaido, Japan and initially began her career as a nightclub singer there under the name Nancy Umeki. Her sound of music was stylised by the influence of traditional kabuki theater as well as American Pop music. While in Japan, she recorded for RCA Victor Japan from 1950–1954 and appeared in the film Seishun Jazu Musume. She recorded mostly American jazz standards, which she sang in both Japanese and English. Some of the songs she sang during this period were "It Isn't Fair", "Sentimental Me", and "My Foolish Heart." She then immigrated to the U.S. as what was referred to as a "shin Issei," or post-1945 immigrant from Japan as she went there in 1955. After an appearance on the Arthur

Godfrey Talent Scouts where she was a series regular for a season, she ended up signing with Mercury Records and released several singles and two albums. Thanks to the show she was seen so regularly on, director Joshua Logan noticed her, and cast her in the film, "Sayonara." Umeki went on to win an Academy award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in Sayonara. This made her the first full Asian & first Asian American woman to win an Academy Award for acting. Following this incredible win, in 1958 she was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Leading Actress in a Musical for her performance in the Broadway production of the musical Flower Drum Song (which was originally set to star Anna May Wong before her passing) where she played Mei-Li. A Time cover story once wrote about how "the warmth of her art works a kind of tranquil magic" Umeki later went on to appear in the film adaptation of the musical as well, which was released to great acclaim. She was then nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Flower Drum Song, which she did not win (but was also the first Asian American woman to be nominated for a Golden Globe Award). While she remained a staple guest on many television talk shows throughout the rest of her career, she only starred in 3 more films after this, which were "Cry For Happy," in 1961, "The Horizontal Lieutenant" in 1962, and "A Girl Named Tamiko" in 1963. After this she went on to star in "The Courtship of Eddie's Father," from 1969–1972, a television show where she played Mrs. Livingston, the housekeeper, for which

Photo Courtesy of Plenty of Nothing

Miyoshi (2006) CD

she was again nominated for another Golden Globe Award. Following the end of the series she retired from acting and lived in Sherman Oaks for a number of years before moving to Licking, Missouri, to be near her son and his family, which included three grandchildren. She died at the age of 78 from cancer complications on August 28, 2007. She too, like Merle Oberole has a Hollywood Star on the walk of fame in Los Angeles, and is credited as another early pioneer in the film world for Asian American actors and actresses.

As sad as it is to say, it wouldn't be until the 2000s that any more changes came for Asian American women in film, with Karen O of the "Yeah Yeah Yeahs," an American rock band being the most recent Asian American women to break another record being the first Asian American woman to be nominated for the Best Song in a film category of any American major film ceremony. Not much has changed for Asian Americans in the film scene, as women are still routinely replaced with white actresses (whitewashing) to play distinctly Asian roles. An example of this is of "Ghost In The Shell," from 2017 in which Scarlett Johanssen was cast to play the role of a Japanese woman. This can also be

seen in the yellow facing that still goes on in the film "Cloud Atlas," in 2012 where prosthetics and makeup are used to make white characters look distinctly Asian to avoid casting an Asian actor. On top of these continually recurring problems, the last time any Asian American woman had ever won an Oscar was all the way back in 1958, when it was the very first win for any of them ever. How that makes sense in a time where there are more roles available and yet no awards to be given to them is a question many have, and many feel is rooted in the continual issue of racism within the country. There is still much to be done. But hopefully in knowing the history of a time that was long ago still matches how things are for Asians in Hollywood today, people can be more aware that there needs to be a greater push for better representation in films for Asian American women, and to not let history continue to repeat itself as we continue to remember these trailblazing women, and many others not mentioned.

Kaila Karns is a Welsh-Korean American fashion model and video content creator from Orange County, CA. She is currently working on a degree in communications, and she loves to work on music, write, dance around her room, and rollerskate.

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EDITORS' COMMENTARY: Minor Feelings

Cathy Park Hong's novel, "Minor Feelings," simply put, is a compilation of essays on her experiences growing up as an Asian-American female in America. Born in August 1976 as a daughter of Korean immigrants in Los Angeles, California, Hong encountered racism in varied forms and put these experiences into essays. However, these essays aren't traditional works of literature; rather, she exposes the truth of racialized consciousness in America, bringing together memoir, history, and cultural criticism to paint a raw picture of her life along with the lives of other Asian-American individuals (she addresses that she isn't speaking for people who are from Pacific Islander communities, as East Asian ethnic groups have vastly differing experiences from other Asian ethnic groups). She credits the term "minor feelings" to theorist Sianne Ngai, whose work focused on "the affective qualities of ugly feelings, negative emotions" present in society today (Hong 56). Hong writes that minor feelings, like ugly feelings, are long-lasting, repressive states of emotion that are perceived as "overreactions"; she adds that these feelings occur "when American optimism is enforced upon you, which contradicts your own racialized reality, thereby creating a static of cognitive dissonance" (56).

"It's a unique condition that's distinctly Asian, in that some of us are economically doing better than any other minority group but we barely exist anywhere in the public eye. Although it's now slowly changing, we have been mostly nonexistent in politics, entertainment, and the media, and barely represented in the arts. Hollywood is still so racist against Asians that when there's a rare Asian extra in film, I tense up for the chinky joke and relax when there isn't one." (19)

Hong brings up a valid point that displaces a claim I hear often. Many people justify hatred for Asian Americans by mentioning that Asian Americans are the wealthiest minority in this country; they also point out that Asian Americans steal jobs of White people. However, the huge wealth disparity between the wealthiest Asians and the poorest Asians disproves these claims. In fact, Asians have the largest wealth disparity of all minority groups. While it may stand true that some Asians are economically very well off, these people worked tirelessly with all odds against them, as it isn't uncommon for Asians to get rejected from a job offer because of their race. Despite these success stories, we are rarely represented in any form of media. Does it hurt America's ego to feature us?

"Literature supposedly bridges cultural divides, an axiom that rang false once I understood the inequities of the publishing industry... As the writer Matthew Salesses elaborated in a 2015 essay in Lit Hub, the industry instituted the single story in two ways: (1) the publisher had a quota that allowed them to publish only one Chinese American writer, and (2) even if there were multiple writers of Chinese descent, they had to replicate the same market-tested story about the Chinese American experience." (47)

I was flabbergasted upon reading this excerpt of the novel. While I was unconsciously aware of this limitation, I had never encountered it directly addressed. This section also made me reflect on novels I've read, which made me realize that Asians aren't the only race that has one market-tested story. Many people stereotype African Americans about their land and culture; authors, more often than not, cast white settlers and missionaries as "heroes" that "humanize" the African natives. In response, and perhaps to combat this stereotype, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe published the novel Things Fall Apart to portray African culture and land in a true light. In the same sense, Cathy Park Hong has done the same; she has painted a raw picture of the lives of Asian Americans to advocate for us.

"At my sister's, when we were already drunk, they proposed a drinking game and I suggested we play "Never Have I Ever." This is a game where people take turns declaring an act they've never done before, and anyone who has done it has to drink. It's a game that often starts with the mildly embarrassing ("Never have I ever peed in the shower," for instance) before it drops off the precipice into the frank and sexual. I thought I would begin with a silly question so they would get the hang of it, before one of the musicians, the one who called himself Fish, with a hipster mid-aughts mullet and black plugs in his earlobes, announced that he'd start. He raised his shot glass of soju.

"I have never tried to kill myself," he declared, and downed his glass.

The other musicians clinked their glasses and also downed their drinks. There was nowhere to go after that, so we stopped playing." (194)

Hong had gone to a bar in Seoul to celebrate her birthday with friends. Though not the main point of the book by a long shot, this scene stood out to me. There's something about the drinking, the statement made by the man, and

the plain way he said it. Korea, and many other countries around the world, have a history of intense alcohol consumption, which doesn't go well with high suicide rates (don't get high and might, remember that America has it's own problems). Though I don't want to spend ages discussing history, this was an incredibly simple and profound way for her to express such characteristics, without just stating some facts in a random paragraph. The way Hong writes that the man 'declared' it, adds this level of humor or irony into the scene for me. Additionally, the last line in which Hong states that they stopped, shows both the severity of the situation, but also how they all just sat and accepted it. On a bigger scale, the fact that this phrase by the musician was the first thing that came to mind when introduced to the game. shows the lack of weight that statement has in this social context; it seems to me that it is both humorous, as well as dead serious and the other people are well aware of that as well.

"Writing about race is a polemic, in that we must confront the white capitalist infrastructure that has erased us, but also a lyric, in that our inner consciousness is knotted with contradictions."

I found this specific line really interesting. First, polemic is a weird word and it means, in this context, that writing about race is an attack or an argument on a very controversial topic. Secondly, while the first line is important, the second is what stood out to me. The first line addresses the fact that even though we try to come up with ideas that are our own, the White people who invaded our countries were the ones to plant seeds of these ideas in our ancestors brains and now it's difficult to distinguish which thought is ours and which thought comes from those who erased us. Now, the second line discusses the contradictions that happen in our thoughts. Everytime I try to write something or I come up with an idea regarding something of a racial matter, I worry that I'm legitimately a walking contradiction and thus why should I speak on this matter. Furthermore, in connection with the first sentence, I wonder as I say my ideas, whether or not they actually come from me or if they come from the influence of White people. At this point, is it even possible to discern a difference? I'm not sure. I think like this whenever I come up with an opinion of my own, not necessarily doubting the legitimacy of a personal idea but constantly wondering which part of my world influenced such a thought.

For us, this is the type of book the world needs. A book with such specific scenarios and incidents that are ever so personal and yet universal.

Cathy Hong Park (Cold Tea Collective)

Jeenah Gwak is a junior at Newport High School in Bellevue, WA. In her free time, she enjoys playing piano, reading, and spending time with her loved ones.

Hope Yu is a junior at Garfield High School in Seattle, WA. She enjoys reading swimming, and painting in her free time.

Representation of "Asians" vs. "Women" in STEM

By Ashley Chen

"Asian American women occupy a paradoxical space within the context of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, simultaneously overrepresented as Asian Americans and underrepresented as women."
Athena Castro, PhD

When I was in sixth grade, I did a photography summer camp that was located two bus stops away from my dad's office, Microsoft. From my earliest childhood memories, Microsoft was a fun place to go to, not because there were Xboxes lying around or rooms full of ping pong and pool tables, but rather it was that sitting in an isolated cubicle with a sliding door and memorizing where the cafe was located was fun. It was a disturbingly quiet place. Every time I tried to go to the bathroom, I would have to step outside on an ever so creaky floor, scared to disturb the silence. Upon entering the women's bathroom, if I ever heard another toilet flushing or heard the faucet pour water out, I would almost be appalled. It was the very rare occurrence of encountering another woman at Microsoft.

There's a Halloween party every year at Microsoft, and I only attended because most employees would put candy outside their cubicles and my dad would introduce me and my sister to his coworkers. Upon traveling up the stairs to the second floor and looking down at the masses of people enjoying Halloween, I remember the stark realization of how the floor was heavily overpopulated with men. If I thought about it a bit more, I would also recognize that my dad would have introduced me to 10 male coworkers and 1 female, a ratio that was hard to ignore. Women in general are underrepresented in STEM, not just Asian-American women. But there's something about being Asian American in that field and also being a woman that's worth exploring.

Many Asian Americans have been cast under a category: the "model minority," which is a negative and often harmful stereotype placed upon Asian Americans, and used by the racial majority to separate them from other people of color. Many often think that to be the "model minority" is to be high-achieving, and in doing this don't realize the

negative aspects of it, but that it means to be obedient and invisible (Castro). Asian Americans also overrepresent the workers in STEM, but in spite of that there aren't actually as many women in the STEM field. Despite being 55.4% of the doctorates awarded in life sciences, there are only 24.7% in math and computer science combined. The reason cited for such a low number of women with doctorate degrees is social and institutional barriers at a young age that prevent further steps in their education (Castro). Though I'm not quite sure what social and institutional barriers Castro refers to, I have been in a couple math club meetings and an APCS class where the membership is predominantly male. The environment is full of loud conversations about video games, swimming, math, and other things that I would never talk about with my friends. If I wanted to be a member of this club, I would have to speak over a hurdle of asynchronous deep-toned voices only semi-related to the topic on the board.

According to Castro, we have to take a critical lens when looking at barriers that prevent Asian-American women in STEM. "Asian American women in STEM in the lab with 'White Men Named John' " goes on to talk about the intersectionality of racial and gender identity in the context of higher education. To perfect the so-called "scientific identity," one must achieve competence, performance, and recognition, which are key components of receiving recognition from others. The model minority myth compounded with the fact they are women means that Asian-American women do not conform to the stereotype of "scientific identity" (typically white and male). Women are thought to be more fragile, weak, and less intelligent. Given all these different factors, it makes it hard for women to overcome the barriers of competence, performance, and recognition to achieve the "scientific identity." For Asian-American women, the barriers to STEM lie within the ongoing history of racial stereotypes (Castro). Women in the 21st century should no longer be regarded as less capable than men, given how this notion should be broken already by countless movements against sexism and racism. The problem lies in an unspoken expectation that all men can meet, but very few women can. Women in STEM shouldn't have to be movement builders or activists alongside being a full-time programmer. They don't have the time to promote other women when they have to work to prove themselves worthy of the "scientific identity." In the end, many women in STEM have to work harder to gain recognition, while fewer and fewer Asian-American women will pursue STEM because they won't get the recognition they deserve.

However, these barriers didn't stop Reshma Saujani, the founder and CEO of Girls Who Code, a nonprofit organization that seeks to achieve equity in the tech industry. Women make up about 22% of the tech industry, up from 18% eight years ago, but down 37% from 1995. Girls Who Code seeks to change the attitudes of CEOs and IT professionals towards women (Girls Who Code). Before the 20th century, programming was more regarded as an easy job. Men would be outside trying to prove their masculinity and prowess while women would stay in a chair and program. This all changed when software became widespread and became a lucrative career choice. Men started displacing women in programming gigs, attempting to prove that men are truly the breadwinners of the family.

Girls Who Code makes it to the SuperBowl (Courtesy of Girls Who Code)

Saujani said that there's resistance against the idea of discrimination in the tech industry. In a survey developed by the Center for WorkLife Law, both Asian American men and women reported that they had to "prove themselves" or excel versus their colleagues. Asian-American women in STEM must be perfect, or else the company might just throw them away. Otherwise, she's required to "command respect." Instead of being a normal employee that does her work day by day, she must deal with the disrespect coming from her colleagues yet command respect from them. But Asian-American women feel pressure to act more feminine. She doesn't want to be seen as the "dragon lady," a threatening existence to "boy geniuses" (Williams). The "dragon lady" refers to how Asian women were portrayed as deceitful and mesmerizing in popular media. In the workplace, she would bring unwanted eyes staring down at her every movement, preventing her from gaining even just a sheer bit of confidence to perform at her best.

Saujani also said that men should join the cause in promoting women. In a talk to the Women in Technology group at the Rochester Institute of Science, there were men in the audience. Those men were there to serve as allies of women in technology (Combs). Men who are able to stand up against injustices against women are important. Not only do they establish to other coworkers that this woman isn't there to check the "representation" box, they create future possibilities of women working alongside men on issues that require countless perspectives. Recognizing they have an ally, women become empowered to work as a member of the team instead of trying to charge full throttle forward while barely being able to make progress.

Having more women in STEM drives innovation as it counteracts the predominant male stereotype while driving innovation as newer and fresher ideas come from the interactions with people with different perspectives. However, Asian-American women face the same problem as being "overrepresented as Asians while being underrepresented as women" (Tharpe). Nowadays, there are women from IT specialists to founders of companies, from associate professors to product engineers, and stereotypes don't stop them. Their love and passion for STEM allowed them to strive and pull through previously established stereotypes. Acknowledging the achievements of these women in STEM would inspire more Asian-American women to walk past cubicle after cubicle of men and not be bothered because of the encouragement of other women that have pulled through, eventually demolishing the "scientific identity" to not be just the white men named John.

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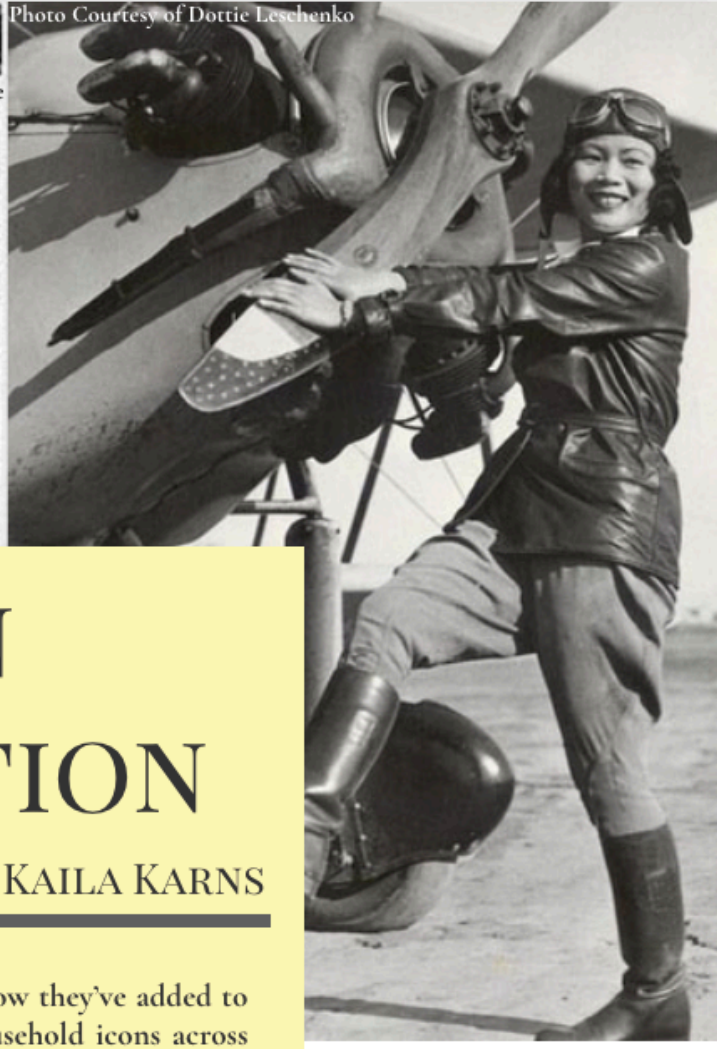

Photo Courtesy of Dottie Leschenko

Asian American Women in Aviation

BY KAILA KARNS

When one thinks of the history of Asian-American women and how they've added to this country, we often struggle to think of one in the way of household icons across other races. There are so many that go undetected in history in spite of their contributions in pushing our society forward. This being said, the history of Asian-American women in the airspace and the contributions they have made as pilots in the United States are important to recognize.

We start our first story with that of Katherine Sui Fun Cheung, who was one of the first-ever Chinese-Americans to earn a pilot's license in 1932, and one of the only Asian- American pilots in the country pre-World War II (the other being Leah Hing, who had received her license first but didn't receive the same notoriety as Cheung, despite Katherine becoming a US Citizen after receiving her license). They were also one of the only women in the world to hold a pilot's license, as at that time, only 1% of pilots globally were women. Katherine flew aerobatics demonstrations with an open cockpit fleet and frequently entered competitive air races. By 1937, she had plans to return to China to open a flight school, but unfortunately, a male friend of hers was killed while flying her airplane. Her once supportive father who was then on his deathbed made Katherine swear off on flying after this, as he couldn't bear the thought of losing his daughter, and she obliged for his sake. It was also for this reason that she ended up not volunteering for the war.

Now entering the World War II era, two more Asian American women were known as prominent pilots at this point in time. Their names were Margaret "Maggie" Gee: a third-generation Chinese American, and Hazel Ah Ying Lee: a 2nd generation Chinese American, and they both served as WASP pilots in the war. WASP was the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, an elite team of original fly girls trained to fill the roles of male pilots, as there was a shortage of combat pilots overseas and the government needed to send more military over without losing the forces they had on hand at home. Although

Pictured above: *Katherine Sui Fun Cheung*

Pictured below: *Leah Hing*

Photo Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society, OrHi 58757

few in number, these first Chinese-American aviators, in their attempt to participate in a daring sport, broke the stereotype of the passive Chinese women and demonstrated the ability of Chinese-American women to compete in a male-dominated field." Both of these women were looked at very fondly by their fellow Asian-American communities.

Hazel Ah Ying Lee was trained and brought onto the WASP team after the US entered World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. After an exhausting training program, Lee became the very first Asian-American woman to fly as a pilot for the United States military. However, during her time as a WASP pilot, she faced heavy racial discrimination. She also was often given some of the worst jobs available while working as a WASP pilot, on the basis that she was below other races and didn't have the right to choose otherwise. In spite of these moments, however, Hazel was a favorite with her fellow pilots, known for her sly nature and great humor. Lee would often use her lipstick to inscribe Chinese characters on the tail of her plane and the planes of her fellow pilots, as a means to carry her heritage with her with pride while protecting her country. Fellow WASP pilot Sylvia Clayton once stated that "Hazel provided me with an opportunity to learn about a different culture at a time when I did not know anything else. She expanded my world and my outlook on life." By 1944, Hazel was one of 134 female pilots who would be trained to fly "Pursuits," which were faster, higher-powered fighter jets of their time, and Lee's personal favorite to fly was the P-51 Mustang. Due to this training upgrade, Lee also became the first Asian-American woman to pilot a fighter jet for the US military.

Unfortunately, on November 25, 1944, Hazel was badly injured as a direct result of a midair collision with another aircraft while approaching an airbase to supply Soviet allies with planes. She was pulled from the wreckage, still alive, but she later passed from her injuries in the hospital. A mere three days after learning of her passing, Hazel's family was informed that her brother Victor, who was serving overseas, had been killed in combat in France.

When her parents found a place for her to be laid to rest in Portland, Oregon, the cemetery refused to allow this burial, citing cemetery policy that did not allow Asians to be buried "in the White section." However, after a lengthy battle that the Lees ended up winning, Hazel and her brother were laid to rest side-by-side. She, alongside all other WASP members, were not given military honors until 1977 due to gender inequality. In 2004 Hazel was inducted into Oregon's Aviation Hall of Honor, for her legacy of bravery, inclusion, and service. Following this, in 2009, all WASP members were granted the Congressional Gold Medal for their hard work and service to the country as well.

Maggie Gee on the other hand was born Gee Mei Gue on August 5, 1923, in Berkeley, California. In the year after Gee was born, the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924, better known as the Chinese Exclusion Act. By this time in history, the animosity towards Chinese Americans was at an all-time high and this often carried over into Gee's childhood. Her early life was that of a busy working-class family, with not much time to spare, but on Sundays, the family would sit on the beach and watch airshows. She once was quoted by Marissa Moss, a children's book author that wrote a book about Gee in "Sky High: The True Story of Maggie Gee" (2009) that on those days she, "loved how the vibrations echoed in my bones, just being there, being part of it all, made me feel big and powerful." She recalled searching the skies for Amelia Earhart, who she claimed once waved at her from above. In 1941, Maggie enrolled in the University of California, Berkeley, as a physics major, but she dropped out a few months later when the United States entered World War II.

Katherine Sui Fun Cheung is in the middle. Via the *Aviatrix: The Katherine Sui Fun Cheung Story*

She began working with her mother at a Naval Shipyard, before eventually traveling to Texas to train as a member of WASP, one of only two Asian-American women to do so (alongside Hazel Ah Ying Lee). Due to this, she was frequently mistaken as the Japanese enemy, and once spoke about the time, saying, "I felt like an exhibit at the country fair, a two-headed cow, the amazing Chinese-American WASP." When the program was disbanded on Dec. 20, 1944, in anticipation of the end of the war, most pilots fell into the expected role of women in the 1950s, one of raising children and being housewives that stayed home. Maggie Gee was a unique exception to this status quo, as she ended up returning to UC Berkeley where she earned her degree in physics, then later ended up working on weapons systems at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. One of her professors at UC Berkeley spoke of her fondly, as "she was in that generation of Chinese-American women who broke out of the confines of isolation in the community." She lived till she was 89, and passed away peacefully on February 1st, 2013.

Maggie Gee. Photo Courtesy of Transportation History


Kalpana Chawla with her fellow crewmembers. Photo Courtesy of NASA

Following this, it took quite a while for the next Asian-American woman to make a mark on history the same way these three had. In 1988, pilot Kalpana Chawla began working at NASA as a researcher. By 1991, she had applied for NASA's Astronaut Corps and joined in 1995, with her first selection of flight to space by 1996. Come 1997, she was one of six astronauts aboard the crew of the Columbia STS-87, making her the first Indian woman – as well as the first Asian-American woman – to go to space. While taking her first flight, she was recorded saying, "In space, you are just your intelligence." In 2001, Chawla was selected again for another space flight mission, as a member of the crew for STS-107. By January 16th, 2003, Chawla once again returned to space on the Space Shuttle Columbia. Unfortunately, this trip would end in tragedy. During the launch of STS-107, which had been the ship Columbia's 28th mission, some foam insulation broke off from the Space Shuttle and it hit the left-wing of the orbiter. When the Columbia came back down to Earth's atmosphere, the damage had let hot atmospheric gases in to come inside and destroy the internal wing structure, which created instability for the aircraft, causing it to break apart upon reentry. As a result, Kalpana Chawla died on February 1st, 2003 alongside her six crew members. In accordance with what her request for if anything happened, her cremated remains were left to scatter in Zion National Park in Utah. She has since been recognized with high regard for her work with NASA, with various institutions and countries like India and the United States naming buildings and other places in her honor. One such unique honor is

that of a hill on Mars most recently being named after her, as Chawla Hill.

Asian-American women often get left out of the conversation on aeronautics history in the US and in the world, which is quite sad to think about considering how some of the earliest aviators in their respective fields have been accomplished and brave Asian Americans. Had these women not existed, many things could not have been managed, and while several ended in tragedy they all still worked and paved the way forward for other Asian-American women who might not have thought they'd have ever had the opportunity for a career in those fields prior. They are incredible women, and the future of the aeronautical field is bright knowing that a considerably large percentage of women going into the fields now are also Asian-American – which was not the case in the past. Their impacts are seen, heard, and remembered – and now shared here, with you.

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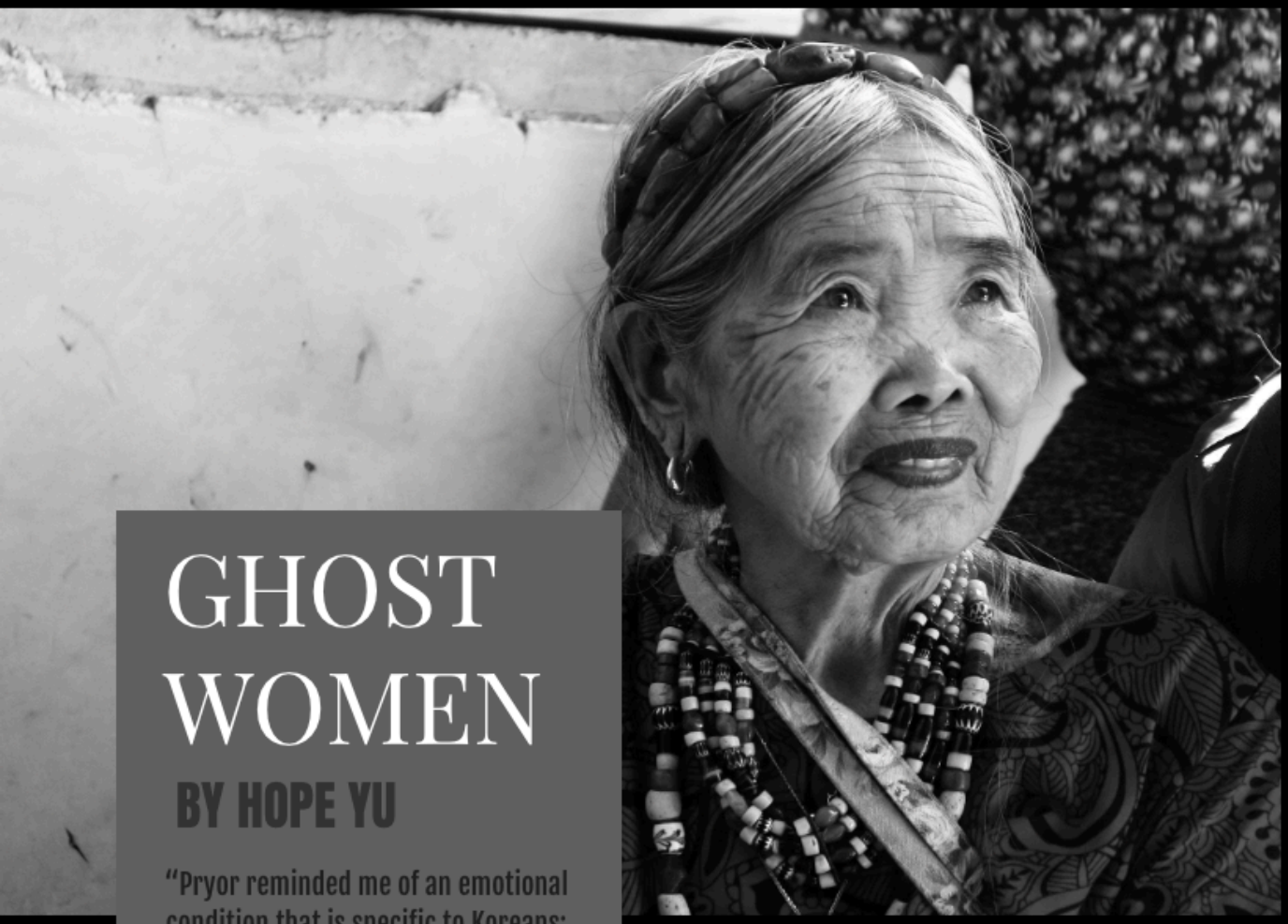

GHOST WOMEN

BY HOPE YU

"Pryor reminded me of an emotional condition that is specific to Koreans: han, a combination of bitterness, wistfulness, shame, melancholy, and vengefulness, accumulated from years of brutal colonialism, war, and U.S.-supported dictatorships that have never been politically redressed. Han is so ongoing that it can even be passed down: to be Korean is to feel han." - Cathy Park Hong, Minor Feelings

March is women's history month and thus our overall theme for this issue is Asian-American Women. Where does your mind go when you hear the words "Asian-American Women?" My brain went straight to a young woman, trying to quietly achieve a goal for herself or for her family, all the while caught in inner turmoil between cultural values and the American conscious. Now, while that isn't exactly untrue, there are an infinite number of variants to that scenario that many, including myself, fail to consider. When coming up with ideas for this article, I wanted to tell a story about a demographic of women that aren't represented to the same extent as others may be. Furthermore, I knew I wanted to talk about mental health but I didn't want to reiterate the same messages you see easily thrown around, including: the Model Minority Myth is racist and parents put too much pressure on Asian youth. While both of those statements are true and important, I think many people are well aware of such things. Thus, the topic of the mental health of older Asian-American women was born.

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The American conscience* has very little patience for the elderly, especially those of non-European descent. Though this is not applicable to just Asians, one example could be the recent attacks on Asian elders throughout the country. Imagine being a recent immigrant and when you read the news you see people just like you being attacked; that is traumatizing no matter your English comprehension. When Asian Americans, especially those on the older side, work in jobs that require communication, customers easily get fed up if they don't understand what their server is saying or vice versa. Additionally, I think we all know the stereotypes on Asian-American drivers, especially women. I have heard that joke thrown around more times than I can count. Though these were just some examples, think about how that may affect someone's mental health, especially someone who immigrated here thinking life was going to be like what they saw on the TV from shows like F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

Combining these ideas, I came to the opinion that while society is generally open to the discussion of Asian-American mental health, we tend to not consider all age brackets. This is likely because the conversation is led by young adults and youth. However, that is no excuse to ignore other age demographics. There is much we can learn from the experiences of others, especially those who have been alive for much longer.

The first thing I must note is that there is very little data about this subject. Upon beginning my research, I found only 2-3 pages of studies, which quickly went off topic. Though I was not surprised, it was a little disheartening to see such an evident lack of research available to the general public. While I was reading through those articles it appeared that they too, had come to such a conclusion, claiming, "there are only limited research reviews that solely focus on the Asian American mental health issues with a focus on older adults," (1). Further noting, "When data on Asian Americans are collected, despite the vast diversity, it is often not broken down for subgroups" (2). These two statements directly point out the largest problem, there is very little research and what they have is poorly categorized. Throughout the world, Asians tend to be categorized as one monolithic culture; East Asians set as the standard. From a research perspective, while there is something to be said about the common experiences between specific ethnicities and races, when attempting to do research on specific peoples, all must be represented. However, as shown in the first quote, there is very little data either way. Furthermore, when mental health is brushed away or not considered important in the perspective of a certain culture, we can't expect those who are part of said culture to actively advocate for their own or others mental health.

One of the major negative repercussions is that "the limited existing aggregate data on Asian-American older adults tend to paint a deceptively positive picture of "model minority" health and well-being" (2). You've most likely seen or heard headlines of how young older Asian women look and those stories about old ladies being incredibly fit from tennis and walking, or something to that effect. The lack of angst-filled stories are not because they don't exist; instead, they are absent from the public narrative for many reasons related to cultural customs and more. For example, "embedded in collectivist culture and traditional views of body and mind as a unitary entity, older Asians tend to present and report somatic symptoms while suppressing or discounting psychological or emotional symptoms," and "mental health problems are often masked as a taboo in Asian culture, because acknowledging mental illness is associated with shame, weakness, and stigmatization of individual and family" (1). Other factors include, "a lack of health insurance, a paucity of culturally adapted treatment, and limited English proficiency" (1). Firstly, cultural stigma is quite difficult to change head on, while working for a true end goal, taking avenues that appear to be like loopholes may be a more efficient manner. Though that is up to interpretation, having mandatory mental health check ups with translators or something to that effect; however knowing the priorities of this country, don't hold your breath. Furthermore, the hiring of translators shouldn't cause so much divide, instead it should be commonplace to have people who can instantly communicate.

Cultural-bound syndromes are not addressed in the manner that they should. Many of you reading this may have never heard of them in your life. They are defined as, "Culture-bound syndrome (CBS) is a broad rubric that encompasses certain behavioral, affective

**Note that my current definition of the American conscience is that of a predominantly White demographic based on European cultures and values.*

and cognitive manifestations seen in specific cultures" (3). They are "critical but often overlooked constructs that provide a more accurate understanding of older Asian Americans' mental health" (1). Some examples include the "Dhat syndrome (South Asians), Khyâl cap (Cambodians), Shenjing Shuairuo (Chinese), Taijin-Kyofusho (Japanese), and Hwabyung (Korean)" (1). As one may guess, "Older Asian Americans experiencing these culture-bound syndromes can often be misdiagnosed without adequate consideration of cultural factors" (1). It is easy for doctors and nurses to diagnose Asian-American elders with general terms such as depression or PTSD, all the while, not realizing the historical connection. One solution is to bring in staff from a mixture of backgrounds in hopes that they will have a better understanding of certain patients' needs. For instance, "Chow et al. (2000) found that in California, centers with bilingual staff increased the utilization of Alzheimer's disease management by Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Islander older adults" (1) because they decided to higher staff that didn't just speak English, their ability to communicate with patients greatly increased. Of course, one could argue that these are just broad categories of a multitude of illnesses related to experiences of one region. While that claim may be true to a certain extent, only someone with a medical background and a deep understanding of the subjects cultural identity would truly be able to discern what specifically plagues them. Clinically, it has been shown that it would be beneficial if those who work with older Asian Americans took a multifocal perspective of the health of their patients, in contrast to a point of view that focuses solely on race or country of origin. Instead, consider factors surrounding different aspects of the individual's life including their mental and physical health, while still taking their own culture into consideration.

Take all that we have discussed, and then consider gender. Asian-American women who are on the older side are a very specific demographic. They are of a specific Asian ethnicity, they reside in America, they are in old age, many are immigrants, and they identify as women. At the beginning of Asian immigration, there were barely any women at all since the demand was mainly for labor purposes. Later, exclusionary laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and the Immigration Act (1924) effectively barred almost any immigration of any gender. However, in the late 20th century up until now, there has been an increase in specifically female immigration as, "new regulations admit Asians with needed skills and stipulate annual quotas for Asian women and their children," (3). Some reasons that may drive specifically female immigration are to reunite families, gain financial stability through work, and to escape less than ideal situations in other countries. Though now considered timid and helpless to the general public, many of these women have gone against the odds to just get here. From literally fleeing war zones and intense famine to the military driven sex industry, many found America as their only option. Those who grew up here did not have it much easier, as they likely faced heavy racism and "exploitation from the earliest days as farm workers, prostitutes, and domestic servants" (3). Of course, much of that is now forgotten and they have been boiled down to quiet and well-mannered people who can't speak English.

Just the very term, "Asian-American" is contradicting when it comes to both perspective of self and world. Within the American conscious, the common and desirable characteristics are focused on individualistic goals that are future oriented and egalitarian. On the flip side, Asian values (note that this is a generalization and that each of these components will vary between ethnic backgrounds) focus on personal contributions to a community, the respect of status and age, and a "passive acceptance of one's situation" (3). Now, the culminating factor is the model minority myth. In my mind, this is the former perspective of the characteristics of the latter; they have taken stereotypical Asian characteristics and twisted them for their own gain. The toll this can take on one's mental health is extreme.

As time continues, these specific factors will change in magnitude for every new generation of Asian Americans to reach a certain age. With the increase in interest of telehealth during COVID times, subsequent generations may show much higher levels of participation in studies surrounding mental health within their demographic. Furthermore, the ability to distinguish cultural syndromes, or anything to that sort, will become much more difficult between non-first generation immigrants. The history of Asian-American women and what they have been through will always be remembered by some, one can only hope that it will one day be taught to a much larger demographic of people.

---------- Hope Yu ----------

Asian-American Hate Crimes: Then & Now

by Jeenah Gwak

Recent posts all over social media highlight the racism towards the Asian community. The series of frightening attacks on elderly Asian individuals in the Bay area has caught the attention of media outlets around the country. An 84-year-old man of Thai descent, Vicha Ratanapakdee, for instance, was assaulted and killed in early February. In a nearby neighborhood, a 91-year-old man and a 55-year-old woman, both of Asian descent, were violently attacked. In San Jose, a Vietnamese woman was assaulted and robbed of $1,000. While anti-Asian sentiment has existed since the beginning of Asian immigration to the United States, racism towards the Asian community has been on the rise since the outbreak of the coronavirus, and these brutal attacks have been present since the beginning of the pandemic. The media, however, has only just begun to cover this news after the series of attacks in San Francisco was brought to light. Why did it take so long for mainstream media to highlight these events? And what can be said about the state of Asian American safety and rights in view of the recent violence?

Photo by Pattara via SiamtownUS

"Confucius Plaza, 1974." Photo by Corky Lee

Racist attacks on Asian Americans have been in occurrence since the beginning of our nation's history, and periodically, mainstream media has highlighted these brutalities. One of the few recorded attacks include the 1871 hanging of 17 Chinese immigrants in makeshift gallows by a mob of white supremacists in Chinatown, Los Angeles. In 1885, a mob of armed white individuals forcefully propelled the Chinese out of Tacoma, Washington; they threatened lives, broke into houses, and destroyed property. Later that year, 28 Chinese coal miners were murdered by white workers in Wyoming. However, these aggressions failed to result in increased protection for its victims, or in better, law enforcement. Instead, these increasing anti-Asian sentiments fueled the expansion of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1888 – the first time the United States had barred an ethnic group from immigrating to the nation.

In response to brutalities throughout history, Asian Americans have united to create a momentous wave of Asian-American activism in the past. Inspired by the African-American Civil Rights Movement campaigns of the 1960's, idealistic Asian immigrants concentrated their focus on Chinatown's never-ending problems to demand equal rights and access to public services. Asian Americans for Equal Employment – now known as Asian Americans for Equality – was one such example of an activist group; protestors carried signs that said, "The Asians built the railroad; Why not Confucius Plaza?" (via AAFE) These protests began in Chinatown in New York, and the movement spread throughout the nation as Asian Americans began to take a stand against this ongoing injustice. This Asian-American Movement solicited change in public institutions, such as universities, and the workplace. Activists of various Asian ethnicities united to protest against neo-imperialism present in the U.S. at this time, as well as the racism that would linger to this day.

In the past, white supremacists have most commonly justified their hatred for the Asian community by highlighting the depiction of China as being "a place of billions of people living together with unsanitary health habits and strange eating customs that mark them as uncivilized in comparison to the West" (Lee). The 1875 outbreak of smallpox in San Francisco, for example, was attributed to the "unscrupulous, lying and treacherous Chinamen," as a disgusted city health officer claimed. The city officials went on to decontaminate all Chinese homes, but unsurprisingly, the spread of smallpox continued unabated. Evidently, this notion that Asian countries are unsanitary has endured in the minds of Americans to this day, as the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020 rekindled racist slurs and commentary toward people of Asian descent, especially the Chinese.

The virus, which has hurled the entire world into lockdown state, is more often than not attributed back to the Chinese. While it is true that the coronavirus emerged from Wuhan, China, the virus could have been contained if our nation had taken prompt and decisive action. Former President Donald Trump, in an attempt to deflect attention from America's lackluster response, repeatedly referred to this virus as the "Kung Flu." Perhaps it is this political influence that compelled racist to blame all Asians in sight for bringing the virus to the United States. In recent months, violence against Asian Americans has only heightened. Forms of these accusations have included, but are not limited to, brutal physical attacks, armed assaults, and racist slurs. Although this violence has occurred since the outbreak of the virus, mainstream media are merely headlining such struggles now.

Why did it take so long for mainstream media platforms to start covering Asian hate crimes?

These attacks have threatened our lives since early February of last year. There has been much aggression against the Asian community – which have resulted in many hospitalizations, injuries, and even deaths – due to the outbreak of the coronavirus. In late February 2020, for instance, an Asian elder was collecting garbage in San Francisco when he was threatened by a mob of white individuals, who followed him, robbed him of all valuables, and shouted abuse. Only a few weeks later, an Asian man, who was wearing a surgical mask in Brooklyn, New York, was stabbed more than a dozen times on the subway. He was barely alive when he was taken to a hospital in critical condition. These are just two of the numerous assaults that have not been widely reported. In fact, according to the Stop AAPI Hate coalition, there were nearly 3,000 cases of violence towards Asian Americans in 2020 alone, some of which were not reported to the police.

The only media source that has consistently covered these brutalities against Asian Americans is NextShark, which refers to itself as the "leading source for Asian American news covering culture, issues, entertainment, politics and more" (via the NextShark website). Its Instagram platform currently has almost 400 thousand followers, and quite frankly, it is not only the leading source of Asian-American news, but it is also the sole source of Asian-American news that covers these attacks to a great extent. No other source of mainstream media has extensively covered the heightened racism and the violence that arose from the pandemic until the series of attacks in San Francisco against Asian elders. Perhaps the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020 became such a huge point of contention that Asian Americans were hesitant to speak up. Perhaps the fact that Asian Americans are viewed as "the successful minority" invalidates Asian- American experiences with violence. Perhaps Asian Americans, in many

communities, are not considered a "minority" because they are "right under" the white population in status. It may be the combination of any or all of these factors; however, the lack of Asian-American representation in media is certainly a problem to be addressed.

When the series of attacks against Asian elders in San Francisco was brought to the attention of mainstream media sources, prominent Asian influencers began using their platform to advocate for the cause. Such celebrities include Jeremy Lin, a Chinese-American NBA veteran, who has publicly admitted, "This has been...boiling up a little bit for me" (via CBS) He revealed on his Facebook platform that he was called
"The Coronavirus" on court, utilizing his media influence to spread awareness on Asian-American experiences. In addition, Naomi Osaka, a professional tennis player, also stated that "the amount of hate, racism, and blame for COVID towards the Asian community is disgusting," highlighting that "this topic is not very widely covered" (Cho). Evidently, the public recognizes the lack of media coverage of Asian-American experiences.

The rise in media attention has encouraged more Asian-American elders to speak out on their experiences. Past victims of this violence who have been hesitant to report incidents and press charges have come forward in an effort to spread greater awareness on this topic. A Korean-American activist, Esther Young Lim, even took the initiative to write a small booklet – with fifteen pages of information in various native languages – to help people report hate crimes. Her booklet, "How to Report a Hate Crime," has already been distributed to thousands of people of minority populations. In addition to Lim, various organizations have taken action to provide resources for Asian-American communities.

Photo by Pattara via SiamtownUS

In response to the rising instances of the "hate crimes" against our elders, Asian Americans and allies have organized protests, which took place in New York, Irvine, Los Angeles, and other cities. While these rallies were met with much support, critics have also shamed these protestors for supporting the Asian-American community.

Continuously for the past month or so, we have been waking up to news of Asian-American brutalities: two women verbally abused an Asian Uber driver in San Francisco, California on March 7th; an elderly Asian man was robbed and eventually dead after being attacked in Oakland, California on March 9th; anti-Asian protestors left hate speech such as "F*** China" and "You will pay" near multiple churches in Seattle, Washington on March 17th; and that same morning of the 17th, we all woke up to news of a mass shooting of at least eight people, including four people of Asian descent, at massage parlors in Atlanta, Georgia.

When will this violence stop?

As Martin Luther King Jr. so aptly remarked, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Now seems an excellent time to take a stand against racial violence, period, without conditions or limitations.

Jeenah Gwak is a junior at Newport High School in Bellevue, WA. In her free time, she enjoys playing piano, reading, and spending time with her loved ones.

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Photo by Pattara via SiamtownUS


Congresswoman Katie Porter at a protest in Irvine. Photo by Grace Widyatmadja

Photo by Pattara via SiamtownUS

Photo by Grace Widyatmadja


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California State Senator Dave Min at a protest in Irvine. Photo by Grace Widyatmadja

Photo by Grace Widyatmadja

Photo by Grace Widyatmadja

Atlanta Spa Shootings: An Intersection of Racism and Misogyny

BY ASHLEY CHEN

On March 16, 2021, eight people were killed at three different Atlanta spas. Six of them were Asian-American women.

Upon hearing this news, I thought to myself, *not again*. Though the details of the event hadn't been fleshed out by news sources quite yet, it seemed pretty obvious it was a hate crime.

In a news conference the next day, Captain Jay Baker reported that the gunman, Robert Aaron Long, claimed that he sought out those spas because of his "sex addiction," a temptation that he wanted to eliminate. He clarified that Long was not racially motivated. Baker phrases this as Long having "a really bad day." Ironically, this captain is the same man who tweeted a picture promoting the sales of shirts that said, "imported virus from Chy-na" (Shear et al.). How exactly is a white man taking a gun to ASIAN spas to "eliminate his temptation" him having "a really bad day?" To me, it just sounds like a white man dismissing the deaths of six Asian-American women for a man who had a "bad day."

Captain Jay Baker is no longer working on this case (Shear et al.).

As of now, Long is charged with eight counts of murder and one count of aggravated assault but not with hate crime (Shear et al.). Georgia only just recently created its own hate crime law after the tragedy of Ahmaud Arbery last year. The Atlanta spa shooting puts this new law to a test. Under the new hate crime law, categories including race, gender, religion, and national origin are all protected. There is just one caveat: there has to be "proof" that it was actually a hate crime (Witte et al.).

To most of us, it seems absurd that a sane man driving to spas – of which he knows are run by Asian women – with a handgun would not be classified as a hate crime. He knew exactly where he was driving to and who he would be shooting at. Those who don't believe this was racially motivated deny the fact that only 7.6 percent of Fulton County (which includes Atlanta) are of Asian descent (Taylor and Hauser). Even if Long himself doesn't believe this was racially motivated, the fact of the matter is that he targeted Asian-American women.

For me, this news instantly clicked with the concept of "Asian fetishization." During the days of early Hollywood film, Asian-American women were often exoticized and hypersexualized. Celine Parreñas Shimizu, author of the book *The Hypersexuality of Race*, notes that classifying the gunman's violence as a simple "sex addiction" detracts from the tragedy of the Asian women (Ramirez). Not only does it dehumanize the victims, it makes problems for prosecuting Long later on if a jury pool casts these women as "sex workers" (NowThisNews). She further explains how after the Korean War, Americans brought back Asian women as war brides, as they were romanticized to be the docile and ideal wife (Ramirez). Between 2011 and 2014, 11 people who worked at Gold Spa were charged with prostitution-related offenses, the same place three women died this week (Shear et al.). Human trafficking advocates have said that these women are often coerced into prostitution, even if they do earn extra money (Bogel-Burroughs). Nonetheless, Gold Spa hasn't been on the police's radar since 2014 (Shear et al.). Long seeking out these spas to eliminate his "sex addiction" is both racist and misogynistic. He pinpointed Asian

Photo by Wain Tan (@brucewainn)

women as the source of his "sex addiction" and in an effort to eliminate his temptation, he took a gun and killed these women. And for law enforcement, this hasn't warranted charging Long under the hate crime law.

Asian-American hate crimes surged by 149% in 2020: 3,800 anti-Asian hate crimes were reported in 2020 alone, with women reporting at 2.3 times the rate of men (Moon). Some examples of hate crimes include: a Filipino man being slashed across the face, an Asian woman whose face is swollen to the point she can't see out her left eye, and even a two-year-old was a victim of a knife that went across his face. These events have been happening for a long time, but the media hasn't been paying attention. K-pop star Eric Nam, an Atlanta native, writes about his own experiences, how a man got out of his car, slammed his fists on his mom and his window, and yelled racial slurs at them (Nam). Racism has always existed in America, or else there wouldn't be the resurgence of anti-Asian sentiments due to Covid. It was only supercharged by Former President Donald J. Trump's xenophobic phrases of "China virus" and "kung flu" (Bogel-Burroughs). He effectively put a target on the back of every person of Asian descent in America.

And such rhetoric portrayed a gunman who murdered eight people in one night, six of them Asian-American women. The victims of the shooting were:

Soon Chung Park (74): A worker at Gold Spa. The oldest person killed on Tuesday. She lived in New York prior to moving to Atlanta.

Hyun Jung Grant (51): A single mother who worked overtime and didn't go home to support her two sons' college tuitions.

Suncha Kim (69): An employee at Gold Spa. She moved to the US from Seoul looking for a better life. She spoke little English and worked multiple jobs.

Yong Ae Yue (63): An employee at Aromatherapy Spa. The last person killed on Tuesday. She moved to the states from South Korea in the 70s. Her husband was in the Army. They had two sons and divorced in 1982.

Xiaojie Tan (49): The owner of Young's Asian Massage. A warm-hearted woman. She made her patrons feel at home. She was killed two days before her 50th birthday.

Daoyou Feng (44): An employee at Young's Asian Massage. She just started working for a couple months.

Delaina Ashley Yaun (33): A mother of two. She was on a date with her husband at Young's Massage Spa. She grew up in the area.

Paul Andrew Michels (54): An Army veteren. He grew up in Detroit and moved to Georgia 25 years ago. He was always trying to make jokes.

And **Elcias R. Hernandez-Ortiz (30)** remains in critical condition after being shot multiple times while walking past the parlor (Taylor and Hauser; McDonald).

We need to put an end to this now. Asian Americans around America are no longer going to sit back and be victims of racialized attacks. Asian Americans are no longer going to be the "model-minority" America wanted them to be. Asian-Americans are now starting protests, standing up for themselves, peacefully marching on streets and parks against a system that has allowed racism to persist. They chant "HATE IS A VIRUS" and "ASIAN-AMERICANS ARE AMERICANS." They hold up signs that plead "#STOPASIANHATE" and "JUSTICE FOR ASIANS" only to finally garner widespread media attention. Vigils are placed in every city surrounded by flowers and photos for those who lost their lives.

We expect changes to come in the form of more robust hate crime laws and education about the history of racism in the US. Communities protect their Asian populations by standing guard and delivering food when elderly Asians are scared to even walk outside their house. To support the AAPI community, we can report hate incidents (stopaapihate.org), donate, and volunteer (Moon). Listen to podcasts about stopping Asian hate. If you would like to donate, please visit the fundraisers on gofundme.com/c/act/atlanta-area-spa-shootings-fundraisers. It is no longer the job for just Asians to fight against Asian hate crimes, but everyone to fight against racism.

Ashley Chen is a junior at Interlake High School. Her passions include blogging (mellowaltruist.com) and playing piano. In her free time, she likes to watch Chinese dramas and talk with her friends.

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Photo by Wain Tan (@brucewainn)

Kaila Karns

Music Corner | Asian American Reps

It goes without saying that Asian American musical acts and artists have been severely underrepresented for decades. It's easy to think of an artist from most ethnic backgrounds in America, but when you think of Asian singers the only ones that come to mind these days are international acts, and record labels in America still see Asian Americans as forever foreigners, limiting the chances they have at success homegrown in America. This has actually made the few Asian Americans that have succeeded in America have to hide their Asian heritage in order to find success (which is truly depressing). That being said, the tides are changing as more and more artists have made their music known and heard as self-produced, self-made singer-songwriters posting across streaming platforms without the aid of music labels. While still difficult, the new decade seems to bring about the hope that more Asian American artists can rise from the sidelines, and become household names and staples to crush stereotypes that have long since harmed those that grew up and were born here as Asian Americans.

Music News

New single released this past month by Korean & Black American artist Wolftyla, called "Play For Keeps."

Olivia Rodrigo

In a major win for Asian American musical artists and representation, singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo became the first solo Asian American (Filipino) to chart at number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 with her debut single "Driver's License." The song unpacks the "multifaceted" emotions Rodrigo felt after heartbreak, and the song received critical acclaim from major American pop artists like Taylor Swift & Rolling Stone magazine which applauded it with critic Brittany Spanos saying "she'd probably be pop's next great raconteur."

Artists you may not know were Asian American...

-Tyga, a Vietnamese & Black American singer and rapper from Compton, CA
-Conan Grey, a Japanese & Irish American singer-songwriter from Lemon Grove, CA
-Keshi, a Vietnamese American singer-songwriter from Sugar Land, TX
-Yaeji, a Korean American singer-songwriter from Flushing, Queens in NYC, NY
-Bruno Mars, a Filipino-Puerto Rican American singer-songwriter from Honolulu, HI
-Nicole Scherzinger of The Pussycat Dolls is a Filipino-Ukrainian American singer from Louisville, KY
-Eddie Van Halen of the band Van Halen was Indonesian & Dutch American, from Pasadena, CA
"-Fly Like A G6" was the first top 100 song for a group of Asian American artists (the entire group is of Asian American descent: Far East Movement, Dev, & The Cataracs

Eddie Van Halen on growing up Asian American:

"Growing up, schools were still segregated and my only friends were the Black kids, as White kids bullied me for not speaking English initially."

ART CORNER

Deluxe Wardrobe

By Grace Park

One of the most prominent and intricate dimensions of Asian women's identity is style, namely the beautiful traditional clothing that each culture presents. For many Asian American women, these traditional dresses - Hanbok, Qipao, Chakkri, Kimono, Baju Kurung - provide an intimate link to their motherland culture. The ornate, elaborate patterns. The delicately polished collars and sleeves. The silky, shimmery prints. These features are not merely garments that are pleasing to the eye, but also a symbol of pride for Asian American women. As they strive to remember and cherish their ethnic origins while living in a foreign country, these clothing empower Asian American women to manifest honor for their identities. For this reason, this wardrobe is a deluxe one; when you open it, you will be showered with stunning dresses as well as hope and pride.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Grace Park is a junior at Bellevue High School in Bellevue, WA. She loves spending time with her family and friends, listening to music, and learning about medicine. As a recent immigrant, she loves to share her story of being an Asian American through art.

Dragon City By Linda Yan

This piece takes inspiration from the technique of the traditional Chinese painting with its rolling clouds and waters. I grew up surrounded by this type of art but noticed that while there are many modern Chinese painting artists, they rarely pursued anything outside of the classical landscapes and flowers. So, I decided to paint modern Chinese cities rather than what this technique is conventionally used for. The one depicted in this particular piece is Shanghai, a place where I have fond childhood memories. In Chinese folklore, oftentimes cities have guardian dragons that watch over them, ensuring their good fortune and luck.

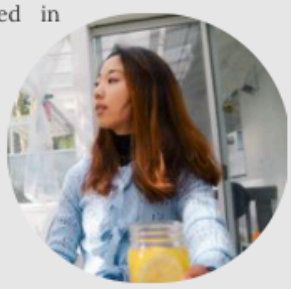
Fish of Fortune

By Linda Yan

Growing up, my house had a koi pond by which I would often spend hours next to, gazing at the mesmerizing movements of the beautiful fish. I could feel their strength and regality. In Chinese culture, koi fish have traditionally served as symbols of luck. I like to think that the fish are my guardians watching over me as I go about my daily life.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Linda Yan is a senior attending Bellevue High School who loves both the sciences and the arts and hopes to someday become a biodesigner. She spent her childhood between Canada, China, and the US and credits this unique upbringing in helping her become the person she is today. Outside of school, Linda is an avid cross country runner and an intern for Penguin productions, a youth-driven theatre company based in Seattle.



To be Rooted and Free

By Murphy Jung

This piece depicts my experience as a Queer, AFAB Asian American person. As I started to heal from all my inherited traumas, I felt more and more connected to this culture that I rejected because I believed it had rejected and harmed me. And in many ways, it did. The roots were rotten because of many factors from colonization, capitalism to misogyny and oppressive patriarchy. When I started gently isolating and cutting out the rotten roots, I found that the roots started growing back again, stronger and healthier than ever before. And by finally using my voice – which had been stifled my whole life, I could call out to the rest of the universe, healing and connecting with the world, my ancestors and myself.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:
Murphy was born in New York City, and grew up in LA, Seoul and Hong Kong. They studied Film production, worked briefly in marketing before working as a video producer at Buzzfeed for three years. Since Buzzfeed, they have animated a music video for Wajatta, worked as lead prop designer on an animated show and is currently designing a video game. In their spare time, they draw and write comics about emotional wellness, bake desserts to share with their neighbors and friends, play covers of sad songs and have solo dance parties in their tiny apartment.

MEET THE TEAM
of
WHAT WE EXPERIENCE

Jeenah Gwak
Co-Founder / Editor-in-Chief

Jeenah is a junior at Newport High School in Bellevue, WA. Some of her hobbies include performing piano, reading new novels, and spending time with her family and friends. She founded this magazine in hopes of spreading awareness about the experiences of Asian peoples living in American society.

Hope Yu
Co-Founder / Editor-in-Chief

Hope is a junior at Garfield High School in Seattle, WA. Some of her hobbies include reading, painting, and swimming. She helped to found this magazine because of the lack of Asian representation throughout all forms of media and politics in the U.S.

Ashley Chen
Content Manager

Ashley Chen is a junior at Interlake High School in Bellevue, WA. Her passions include running her own blog and playing piano. In her free time, she likes to watch Chinese dramas and talk with her friends. Her favorite topics to write about are Asian American mental health and the history of Asian American racism.

Gabriella Ignacio
Design Manager

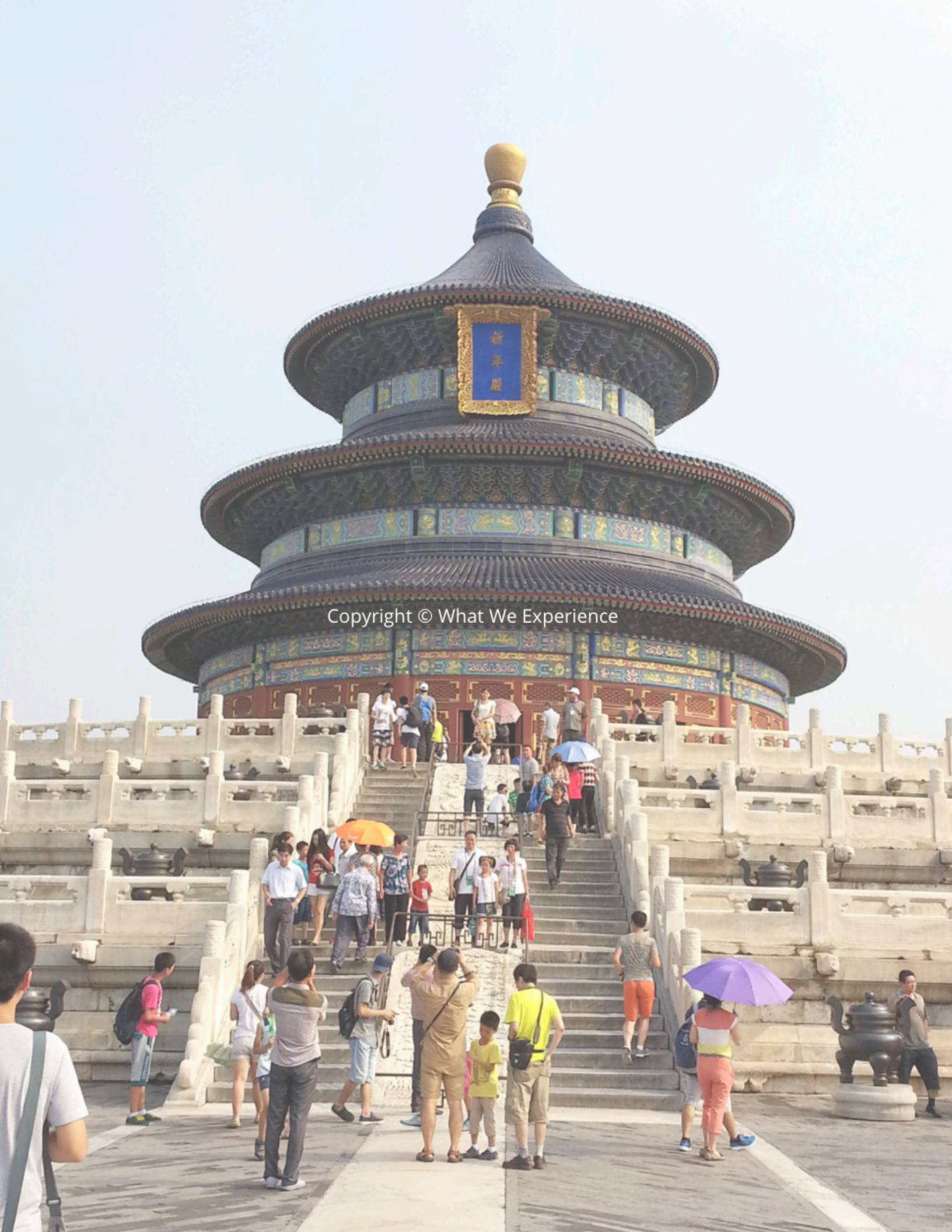
Gabriella Ignacio is a sophomore at Newport High School in Bellevue, Washington. Her interests include visual arts, such as drawing, and reading. She is passionate about their cause because Asian heritage is a big part of her identity.

Kaila Karns
Staff Writer

Kaila Karns is a Welsh-Korean American fashion model and video content creator from Orange County, CA. She is currently working on a degree in communications, and she loves to work on music, write, dance around her room, and rollerskate.

Grace Park
Art Manager

Grace Park is a junior at Bellevue High School in Bellevue, WA. She loves spending time with her family and friends, listening to music, and learning about medicine. As a recent immigrant, she loves to share her story of being an Asian American through art.



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