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# foundations

Dear Reader:

It is our pleasure to introduce to you the second edition of the Asian American Students Alliance's **foundations**. The first year at Yale can be exhilarating and eye-opening, and we are excited about what is in store for you. As you begin this chapter of your life, we hope that you will find this copy of **foundations** to be a helpful guide that will interest, motivate and encourage you.

**foundations** was created to fill the need to heighten awareness about ourselves as Asian American students at Yale. We have organized this publication for both incoming freshmen and upperclassmen: all of us can benefit from learning more about the rich history of Asian Americans at Yale University.

We sought to capture the most pivotal moments of our history at Yale. In cooperation with the Asian American Cultural Center and the member groups of the Asian American Students Alliance, we tracked down alumni who played crucial roles in these moments and asked them to tell us about their experiences. Included are a diverse set of stories: the founding of organizations, dramatic protests, incidents of racism and conflict. This publication also bears witness to efforts to display the beauty of our cultural backgrounds, the causes that we believe in and work towards, and how much the Asian American community as a whole has flourished and grown in the past few decades. The result is **foundations**: a collection of sometimes captivating and momentous narratives that weave into the elaborate fabric that makes up our history.

So we invite you to turn the page and explore the decades of history that our community has seen at this fine university. **foundations** was not created as something to be read once and tossed aside. We hope that this publication will be more than a static collection of history that goes no further than begging the question, "So what?" We hope that the stories included in these pages will provoke discussion, incite action, and remind all of us why we are or why we should be involved in the community. These stories are to remind all of us that we are part of a much larger legacy that we must sustain beyond our own time at Yale.

**foundations** is as much about our future as it is about our past. Though what you will read in these pages is behind us, remember that one day your mark on this community may be passed on to future classes through this publication. You, as the present, are empowered to direct our future.

Sincerely,

Amit Mahadevia  
AASA Co-Moderator

Priya Prasad  
AASA Co-Moderator

Nan Guo  
Editor-in-Chief

editor-in-chief  
& alumni outreach chair  
Nan Guo, SY '09

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Amit Mahadevia, SY '08  
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apa heritage co-chairs  
Nicole Fish, PC '09  
Mindy Lu, BK '09

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# then and now.

Although the Asian American community at Yale as we know it through AASA was born only three and a half decades ago, Asian Americans have been at Yale for almost half of our college's existence.

These pages chronicle the evolution of the Asian American community at Yale. Although it is impossible to encapsulate the rich history of our community in 21 pages, the juxtaposition of the past and the present illustrates how far we have come.

As you follow the journey that our community has taken, remember that there is still more that lies ahead.

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## asian american history at yale in a nutshell.

**1854**      **The Beginning.** Yung Wing, a student from China, graduates from Yale College. He is the first Asian to graduate from Yale and the first Chinese to graduate from a U.S. college.

**1969**      Don Nakanishi, SY '71, forms the Asian American Students Association (AASA). The group is later renamed the Asian American Students Alliance.

**1970**      Amerasia Journal, an Asian American newsletter that has become the premier academic publication in Asian American Studies, is started at Yale.

The first Asian American Studies course, "The Asian American Experience," is taught by Prof. Chitoshi Yanaga.

Don Nakanishi, SY '71, proposes a "floating counselor system" for students of color, which later evolves into the ethnic counselor system.

Yale becomes the first institution to include Asian Americans in its affirmative action program.

**1972**      AASA is given a one-room office in the basement of Durfee.

**1981**      The Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) is established.

**2004**      Yale celebrates the 150th Anniversary of Yung Wing's graduation from Yale College in 1854.

AASA celebrates its 35th Anniversary.

**2006**      **The Present.** The Class of 2010 arrives at Yale.

Don Nakanishi, the founder of AASA, is currently the director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. He is a political scientist by training with a PhD from Harvard University and has been chair of the Yale Alumni Schools Committee of Los Angeles County for the past 25 years.

AASA was not just a political thing.

A lot of it had to do with how the Asian American students were feeling themselves, and about their own identity, or how they thought they were being viewed by others on campus. One thing that I always remember from my first or second year was the ways that Asian Americans interacted or didn't interact at Yale. I realized how strange I found it to walk down the street at Yale and see another Asian American student walk towards me. When the person got close to me, she would look at the ground and not look at me directly. More generally, there was a feeling of isolation, of being marginalized. The mainstream of Yale life was not in any way committed to diversity or multiculturalism.

AASA's founding had a lot to do with the impact of African American students as well as the Mexican American students [organizing]

**There was a feeling of isolation, of being marginalized. The mainstream of Yale was not committed to diversity.**

themselves. The first group I joined was the Mexican American students' organization at Yale. The lessons I learned from that, I shared and applied to the founding of AASA. In addition, I was very much influenced by an incoming graduate student in psychology, Glen Omatsu, who I had met over the summer in 1969. Glen had been active in Asian American student activities at UC-Santa Cruz.

In the fall of 1969, I was inspired to start a similar group for Asian Americans. I knew some Asian American students in my class and knew some of the female Asian

# aasa then



## AASA Board of 2006

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The Asian American Students Alliance web site can be found at [yale.edu/aasa](http://yale.edu/aasa). To subscribe to AASA's weekly newsletter, please contact [marisa.landin@yale.edu](mailto:marisa.landin@yale.edu).

American students. There was a small group of us who decided we should try to pull all the Asian Americans together. We went to the telephone directory and picked out Asian surnames. We had something like 50 students out of the 4,600 students at Yale. After we compiled the list, a group of us just called up people and asked them to come eat dinner in Saybrook. There were around 35 students who showed. When we marched in, everybody was looking at us.

One of the things we decided was to take up issues involving the McCarran Act, a law that basically allowed the government to round up people and put them in concentration camps [as they did with] Japanese Americans. We decided we would go to every dining hall at Yale and we got 4,000 signatures and sent them to Congress. They put in the Congressional record that Yale University was in favor of the repeal of Title 2.

We also saw there were not enough Asian Americans, [especially] working-class Asian Americans, and so we formed another committee to go negotiate with the admissions office for recruitment. As a result of

AASA's early efforts, Asian American students came to be considered as part of Yale's affirmative action and diversity programs.

In addition, we wanted a class for Asian Americans and asked Professor Chitoshi Yanaga, the first Japanese American to be a tenured professor at Yale, [to teach the first Asian American Studies class] in the spring of 1970. If I have any regret about Yale, it would be the fact that Asian American Studies hasn't gotten a stronger foothold.

Within two years, we saw some results. By the time we left, there were around 90 Asian Americans out of 4600. The course had been repeated, it was going to be continued, and we were part of Yale's plan [to] recruit other Asian American students. We had held three very large regional conferences that had attracted three or four hundred people. We had also formed the Amerasia Journal with Lowell Chun-Hoon of Hawaii.

When we left, I think we were very optimistic about the organization, its long range future, as well as its [necessity]. Over the course of 35 years, I have seen the group as being very strong and also barely surviving.

Tashin Le-Nguyen, TC '08, is from Atlanta, Georgia. She served as the Alumni Outreach Chair for AASA and the Social Chair of the Vietnamese Students Association (ViSA) in 2005.

Originally the Asian American Students Association, AASA has blossomed from being the only Asian American group on campus to one that encompasses many. Recently renamed the Asian American Students Alliance, AASA serves as the umbrella organization for seven Asian American groups on campus. These groups include the Chinese American Students' Association (CASA), KASAMA: The Filipino Club of Yale University, Korean American Students at Yale (KASY), the Muslim Students Association (MSA), the South Asian Society (SAS), the Taiwanese American Society (TAS), and the Vietnamese Students Association (ViSA). AASA also works with a number of affiliated groups, including the Japanese American Students Union (JASU), In-sight: The Yale Chapter of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, the East Coast Asian American Students Union Conference, Builders of a Better Cambodian Community (BBCC), the Malaysian and Singaporean Students' Association (MASA), SATAY: Thai Students at Yale, and Jook Songs.

Encouraging collaboration and harmony among the cultural groups, AASA

fosters the idea that as diverse as our community is, we all share ties to the immigrant experience and our common interest in Asian American political issues. AASA sponsors political, cultural, and social events that cater to the entire Asian American community on campus and contribute to the larger Asian American cause. AASA provides funding to the individual organizations and holds Executive Board meetings where representatives from its

**AASA fosters the idea that as diverse as our community is, we all share ties to the immigrant experience and Asian American issues.**

member groups discuss events, problems, and other situations that demand the attention of the entire community.

In the fall, AASA hosts "Prelude," undoubtedly the hottest party on campus. In the spring, AASA co-sponsors the Asian American Film Festival, an Asian American art exhibit, and a number of other events during April, which is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. AASA also holds a yearly spoken word and

poetry performance every spring called PULSE. At this past year's hugely successful PULSE, AASA invited Yalies to perform their own unique and astounding songs, poems, and standup comedy in a packed Branford Common Room. In previous years, PULSE featured Yale talent as well as Def Jam Poet Beau Sia.

AASA also mobilizes in response to pressing social issues. In response to the devastation caused by the tsunami of December 2004, AASA cooperated with the American Red Cross of Yale University to organize the Tsunami Relief Benefit Dinner. With donations from over twenty local restaurants, participants enjoyed everything from pad thai to curry and sushi. The event garnered massive campus participation, raising over \$3,500 and attracting over 500 students. In the spring of 2006, AASA members attended a conference held by the East Coast Asian American Students Union (ECAASU), where many issues affecting Asian Americans were examined and discussed. The Yale attendees bid to bring the conference to Yale in Spring 2007 and won! The conference will be held on campus February 8-10, 2007.

AASA also seeks to nurture a sense of camaraderie among the individual ethnic and cultural groups within our community. Events such as Fusion, a game night held at the Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) by the AASA freshman liaisons, bring students to the AACC to enjoy an evening of food, drink, music, games, and each other's company as well. This past year, the APA Heritage Chairs, with the support and help of our affiliate groups, held the Pan Asian Dinner, which brought all the groups together in a unified effort to showcase the diversity of our cultures. The proceeds from the dinner benefited South Asian tsunami and earthquake relief funds.

While AASA functions as an independent organization, its strength depends on the vitality of the individual member organizations. AASA plays a crucial role in coordinating dates, events, and other activities to maintain harmony and cooperation within the Asian American community on campus. Many members of AASA are also heavily involved in AASA's umbrella groups.

AASA holds weekly Board and Executive Board meetings at 7 p.m. every Monday at the Asian American Cultural Center. We invite you to join a tradition that spans over thirty-five years!

Clockwise, from top left. AASA members kick off the year with the AACC/AASA Fall Retreat at Water's Edge Resort; the Yale bid team networks with students from other schools at ECAASU 2006; AASA board members at the AACC after a Monday night meeting.



asian american students alliance

**aasa now**

Grant Din, BR '79, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in Sociology. He was an active member of AASA during his time at Yale and currently serves as Executive Director of the non-profit organization Asian Neighborhood Design in San Francisco, California.

I really enjoyed my Yale days, back in ancient history, and a large part of it was because of the friends I made in AASA (back

**We'd been hoping to get a larger facility for AASA than the two small rooms in the Bingham basement that we had. This was a step up from the tiny room in the Durfee basement that we used to have.**

then there were only a couple of Asian American organizations.).

It may be hard to believe for the recent grads in the group, but there were only 250 Asian Americans on campus in 1975 (back pre-PCs, when we had to type out drafts on our typewriters. Sheesh, what dinosaurs!). Asians

**President Giamatti and his aide could barely make it through the shoes and the people to their seats.**

were much less diverse than we are now on campus, primarily Chinese, Japanese, and Korean American.

Among other things, we laid the groundwork for Asian Community Services by starting a tutoring program in New Haven, ran a student-taught Asian American studies course for credit in the sociology department, and advocated for the Asian American Cultural Center partly through a legendary 1978 meeting that Nick Chen '79 organized.

We had been hoping to get a larger facility for AASA than the two small rooms in the Bingham basement that we had. This was a step up from the

# aacc then



## 2006-07 AACC Staff

**Assistant Dean, Director of the Asian American Cultural Center**  
Dean Saveena Dhall

**Graduate Assistant Coordinator**  
Debjani Bhaumik, MPH '07

**Head Coordinator**  
Christopher Lapinig, CC '07

**Historian**  
Esther Chu, SY '09

**Asian American Studies Coordinator**  
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to be announced

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to be announced

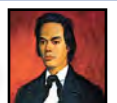
For more information about the Asian American Cultural Center, please call (203) 432-2906, direct questions to saveena.dhall@yale.edu, or visit the AACC's web site at [www.yale.edu/aacc](http://www.yale.edu/aacc).

tiny room in the Durfee basement we used to have. Nick managed to get President Bart Giamatti to have a meeting with us about a cultural center. In a stroke of genius, Nick had the president come meet in our space.

We spread the word to every Asian American student on campus that if they came to one AASA event in their four years, they should come to this meeting. The place was

packed, and everyone took off their shoes and put them outside the door. President Giamatti and his aide could barely make it through the shoes and the people to their seats, and we all had a cordial discussion — he said he'd look into it. AASA students including Mary Li Hsu and others continued to work to get the center after we graduated in 1979, and we were thrilled to hear about their successful efforts.

## Yung Wing (1828-1886)



Yung Wing was the first person of Chinese descent to graduate from an American university and the first Asian to earn a bachelor's degree from Yale. Yung was born in 1828 in a small village in Guangdong province. He received his early education in a missionary school under the tutelage of a Yale graduate, the Reverend Samuel Robbins Brown. Yung accompanied Brown to the United States in 1847, where he enrolled in the Monson Academy and later at Yale College. After graduating in 1854, Yung Wing returned to

China where he engaged in various projects to promote China's modernization. He is best known for having organized the Chinese Educational Mission, which brought 120 Chinese students to colleges in the Northeast, including Yale, in the 1870s. To commemorate the 150th anniversary of Yung Wing's graduation in 2004, the AACC collaborated with university departments and student groups, such as CASA and AASA, to organize a series of events highlighting Yung Wing and Asian American alumni.



Welcome, Class of 2010! We are excited to have you on campus, host you at the Asian American Cultural Center (AACC), and introduce you to the various student groups and programs we have to offer.

The AACC was established in 1981 due to the efforts of the students in the late 70s and early 80s who were persistent in lobbying the administration for a center, a place to call "home" at Yale. At that time, the Asian American student population was about 5% of the undergraduate student body and there was one Asian American student organization, the Asian American Students Association, which served as an umbrella group for the Asian American student population. Now, Asian Americans comprise 13% of Yale's student population, and the AACC plays host to over 35 student organizations. The Asian American population is made up of Southeast, East, and South Asians. The AACC, the Asian American Ethnic Counselors, and the various Asian and Asian American student groups work together to help create a supportive community as you transition to your new home at Yale.

The Center and affiliated student organizations are committed to the intellectual, cultural, social and political development of the Asian American student

community. To best serve these needs, we work carefully to bring diverse programs to campus (speakers, conferences, dinners, writers, study breaks, artists, activists, an annual Asian American Film Festival and Asian American Arts Exhibit) with the goal of enriching student life at Yale. Examples of speakers include former Governor Gary Locke, JE '72; playwright David Henry Hwang

**The AACC serves as a second home to our students and is available for both informal and formal gatherings.**

DRA '81; Indra Nooyi, SOM '80, President of PepsiCo; chef Ming Tsai, BR '86; Professor Gary Okihiro of Columbia University; AIDS researcher Dr. David Ho; Professor Vijay Prashad of Trinity College; Monique Truong, TD '90, author of Book of Salt, and many more!

In the 2005-06 academic year, the Center continued to offer a wide variety of social, political, and cultural events as well as a few new activities for both students and alumni. Guest professors and speakers included Professor Viranjini Munasinghe who spoke on the Asian experience in the Caribbean, Pro-

fessor Shilpa Dave, a specialist in issues regarding Asian American masculinity and media representation, and our APA Heritage Month Guest Speaker, Kenji Yoshino, Yale Law School Professor and author of *Covering: the Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*. In addition, for the first time, the center put on two new events: an open mic night featuring student musical performances as well as a haunted house co-hosted with La Casa Cultural Center over Halloween weekend. This coming February, we will be hosting the East Coast Asian American Students Union (ECAASU) Conference at Yale which will allow you ample opportunities to interact with alumni in various fields and learn about life after Yale.

Saveena Dhall, Assistant Dean of Yale College and Director of the AACC, works with a team of student staffers to manage the center's activities and ongoing programs. Dean Dhall also serves as a freshmen and sophomore advisor and works with various offices such as Admissions, the Association of Yale Alumni, Career Services, and Fellowship Programs. She serves as an additional resource on a variety of issues and is available to meet with students. Dean Dhall's office is in SSS 110, the Yale College Dean's Office; she can be reached at [saveena.dhall@yale.edu](mailto:saveena.dhall@yale.edu). The AACC also has an Advisory Board consisting of Yale faculty members, administrators, alumni, and members of the New Haven Asian American community who advise and provide support for the Center and its goals.

A collage of events from the 2005-2006 academic year illustrates the many activities that the AACC staff and AACC-affiliated groups hold every year, many of them at the Cultural Center itself.



asian american cultural center

The AACC serves as a second home to our students and is available for both informal and formal gatherings. Students are encouraged to come to the AACC to study or to use the computer room, kitchen, TV room or conference rooms. The Center also houses an Asian American Studies Library, which has books and magazines of Asian American interest. We invite interested members of the Yale community to feel welcome to attend any of our events.

Our hours are Monday - Thursday 4 to 10 pm and Sunday 2 to 6pm. We're located at 295 Crown Street between York and High Streets (one block from Old Campus) in a three-story converted duplex. Visit us online at [www.yale.edu/aacc](http://www.yale.edu/aacc).

**aacc now**

We look forward to seeing you over at the AACC and wish you much success during your freshman year!

Steven Lin, SM '99, is a founding member of the Chinese American Students' Association. He graduated from Yale with a degree in Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry. He is currently a surgeon practicing in Chicago.

I guess this whole thing started my freshman year. There had been a CSA in the years before I came to campus, but before we started CASA, it became defunct because of a lack of participation. When I came in, there was a group ahead of me that had an interest in restarting it, and that was done the first semester I was there in 1995. At the time, TAS was the Taiwanese Club, and that was the group organized by Chinese students. In our first year, we were a pretty small group and there was a lot of intermingling between TAS and us, but they had a much stronger bent toward the Taiwanese political situation. It was after the first semester that we decided to change the name to CASA to separate ourselves from the previous organization and to focus on our experiences of being Chinese and living in America.

We were practically a brand-new organization. We had nothing to do with the previous organization. We basically started from the ground up as a bunch of active freshmen. The

**The long-term goal was to create a community for those people of Chinese descent regardless of where they were from.**

only obstacle as a new group was getting bodies. In a way it was kind of easy because we were freshmen so we just got all of our friends to come. I think that over the years, as CASA got bigger and bigger, there was a lot more work in delineating among the different groups.

By the time I graduated it had changed a bit, but in my four years at Yale, KASY was the strongest organization. VISA was a close second and fairly powerful in its own right. AASA provided us with a path of legitimacy by having CASA on the board and being a recognized member group. We got funds from

# casa then



## 2006 CASA Executive Board

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The Chinese American Students' Association web site can be found at [yale.edu/casa](http://yale.edu/casa). To be added to the CASA email list, please contact [victor.wong@yale.edu](mailto:victor.wong@yale.edu).

the Dean's Office, and we got a chance to put it on a level playing field with these other groups. On the flip side, the Asian community was quite ethnically separated at the time. Most groups tended to do their own thing.

In our first year, we actually did a lot of small things, like movie nights, where we would have a room where we would show Chinese movies, old cultural flicks or some more modern stuff from Taiwan. We also had dumpling nights and ski trips. The bigger events, such as the cultural show, started the year after me. The group after us also got in contact with the Chinese school that is on campus and started to get the sibling program going.

I am from North Carolina, so I did not grow up among Asian people. The first time I saw Asian people I was not related to was when I came to Yale. The long-term goal was to create a community for those people of Chinese descent regardless of where they were from, whether you were from overseas, from mainland, from Taiwan, whether you were born here or born there and lived here all your life. Our mission statement at the time was that we were all of Chinese descent and we were all living in America, and

the idea of the Chinese American Students' Association was about our lives as they were then. We just wanted to create a place where people could get together and freshmen could meet people easily, to help each other, and

**And it's a wonderful thing that they have these traditions that just keep going, it's great to see the continuity.**

to teach others a little bit about our heritage. I did not celebrate all those typical Chinese holidays growing up; I did not know the stories and legends. College is a place where you are growing and learning- a good place to learn all these things and hopefully to make friends. It is a wonderful thing that they have these traditions that just keep on going. It is great to see the continuity, and I think that they are doing a great job. I want to reiterate my admiration for everyone right now.

I helped start this, but by far, it was not only me, many people were involved, and with each generation, it grows and gets better and better.

Aaron Meng, MC '08, is from Hockessin, Delaware. He currently serves as the President for CASA: the Chinese American Students' Association.

CASA is an organization that truly caters to a wide range of interests and personalities. Some of our members make CASA a major part of their college lives, while others choose to participate in only one or two events each year. These events can be broadly categorized as social, political, community, cultural, or often a mix. We encourage students of all backgrounds interested in any of these aspects to come check CASA out.

**It is hard to get across in words just how great of an organization CASA is.**

CASA was founded to promote awareness of Chinese and Chinese-American identity, and this is largely achieved through an expansive social network that is strengthened every year. The key to this network is the CASA family program, where interested freshmen are given two upperclassmen "parents" and a freshman "sibling."

Parents take their kids out for food, give them helpful advice about college life, and provide a strong foundation for interclass interactions. These familial bonds are maintained throughout the academic year with family events such as Fall Olympics and Hotpot Night.

Other social traditions include an annual banquet, a school-wide dance, a barbeque on Old Campus, and a cultural dinner with home-cooked food. To keep CASA members in touch throughout the year, we fill the weeks in between with study breaks and movie nights. We also coordinate dim sum mixers in New York City with counterpart groups from other schools such as Columbia or Princeton.

On our political side, our campus-wide events draw out even non-CASA members; recently, we hosted Eric Liu, an acclaimed author and former presidential speechwriter. Other past speakers include Professor Jonathan Spence, Iris Chang, and Chun Yu. We also spearheaded the 150th Yung Wing Celebration Series in collaboration with Dean Dhall and the Asian American Cultural Center. More recently, we have also been increasing awareness through the CASA Political Review and InformAsian, a weekly newsletter created by

AASA member organizations.

Do not miss out on CASA's celebrations of Chinese culture. Hotpot Night celebrates Chinese New Year with traditional Chinese cuisine, and the Mid-Autumn Festival includes moon cakes for all. We also produce a huge cultural show every year that is widely attended by students, parents, and faculty from across the Yale community. The show draws on the talents of the entire CASA membership and showcases acting, martial arts, Chinese dance, hip-hop performances, traditional music, a fashion show, and many other acts. Anyone can get involved in any aspect of the show, including scriptwriting, performing, directing, or stage crew. Or, simply come out and watch to have a great time!

Finally, CASA prides itself on its involvement beyond the Yale community. In addition to working with New Haven public schools in the Cultural Awareness Program, we also have a mentorship with the New Haven Chinese School in which Chinese school kids are paired up with a big sib from Yale. In collaboration with the Taiwanese American Society, we founded the Chinese Adopted Siblings Program for Youth (CASPY), which is on its way to becoming a national program. CASPY pairs Yale students with adopted Chinese children from the tri-state area and allows them to form tight bonds through participation in the bi-annual event. A day is spent in cultural immersion with fun activities, workshops, and games that is deeply fulfilling for families and students alike.

Another community (and very social) event is our popular Triad Night, where members dress to impress and get together for karaoke, mahjong, poker, blackjack, and other casino games. Prizes are auctioned off to those with the most "Triad money," and the hundreds of dollars raised by the event are donated to a children's charity in China.

It is hard to get across in words just how great of an organization CASA is, so you should just come out and give it a try. Come meet the people that make CASA what it is today and you'll see why we love CASA as much as we do. YOU are CASA's future – we look forward to seeing you around!

Members of the 2006 Executive Board of the Chinese American Students' Association pose for a picture together at the CASA Banquet in the spring of 2006.



**casa now**

*chinese american students' association*

Wendy Pizarro Campbell, SY '92, a founding member of KASAMA, currently serves as President & Chief Operating Officer of VIPMobile, Inc. She earned a B.A. and M.A. with honors from Yale University, a M.St. from Oxford University, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

We came together my freshman year, around the spring of 1989. We founded KASAMA because there was a need for us to find unity and a voice when it came to being Filipino. We could go to AASA meetings, but we could not really connect with some of the experiences of the Korean American and Chinese American students. There was a great disparity between the history of Filipino Americans and how we were brought up and their history and upbringing.

We met every week at one of the colleges for dinner. We [also threw] some really good potluck dinners. We would have lumpia, pansit, all kinds of food for the greater Yale community, and that was really neat – it was the first time at Yale a lot of people outside of our community were exposed to traditional Filipino food. Our dinners were very popular. The food was just great; the people just loved it. I remember we would spend all day cooking it ourselves. And the best part of our dinners was not just getting together and getting our friends to try our food, it was actually making the food. We would spend all day as a group making it together.

It was a pretty interesting time. This was during the fall of Marcos, and a lot of Filipinos in the country were

**We founded KASAMA because there was a need for us to find unity and a voice when it came to being Filipino.**

very much on the political scene talking about democratization. If you remember, at the time, Imelda Marcos was on trial, and she was in exile in Hawaii for human rights abuses. And there was a class action suit against her, filed in New York. She actually came to Yale, and KASAMA was on the host committee for her

# kasama then



## 2006 KASAMA Executive Board

### Co-Presidents

Aldrin Agas, TC '08  
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### Social-Cultural Co-Chairs

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Ryan Salinas, BR '09

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### Secretary/Treasurer

Andrei Javier, TC '08

The KASAMA: The Filipino Club of Yale web site can be found at [yale.edu/kasama](http://yale.edu/kasama). To subscribe to KASAMA's weekly newsletter, please contact [andrei.javier@yale.edu](mailto:andrei.javier@yale.edu).

with Yale Law School. She came to talk more about her trial and a little bit about the Philippines and so on. We co-hosted that event, and again, that really was one of the defining moments of KASAMA. As an alum, I like to be able to say that I recruited at least two KASAMA members to Yale personally. I wrote them letters to help them get in and did what I could to let them in. I helped them do their applications and talked to the people from the admissions office. And I hoped that the two people I recruited would recruit two people each. We need to look for candidates that have potential and promise. And that is how to get growth. It is up to us.

I am sure if you talk to any of us, one thing that we are happy continues is FIND (editor's note: FIND stands for the Filipino Intercollegiate Networking Dialogue, an organization founded by KASAMA in 1991 that now holds conferences for Filipino American students across the Eastern seaboard). FIND was our brainchild the second year after KASAMA was born. We had about 100 students attend the first conference. It was very social – we would just hang out with stu-

dents from NYU, Columbia, Penn, or from wherever. We decided, "Let's make it fun, let's make it so people will want to come, let's not make it very militant. Let's make it more unifying." That is why we used the name FIND, which was

**KASAMA was a great outlet for us to come together and bond based on our background.**

one way to instill more coming together, a little more touchy-feely, less controversial than what people would use for other conferences. We just wanted people to come.

So what does KASAMA mean? KASAMA is about unity and it is about friendship. We founded KASAMA as a group to promote friendship, unity, dialogue and finding a sense of belonging at Yale. All of us did different things and so KASAMA was a great outlet for us to come together and bond based on our backgrounds.

Therese Lim, BK '07, is from Manila, Philippines. She served as Secretary/Treasurer of KASAMA: The Filipino Club of Yale University in 2005.

KASAMA. Not an acronym, but a Tagalog word that means "companion" or "to accompany." And KASAMA doesn't just live up to its name — it goes beyond it. KASAMA is com-

### **A Tagalog word that means "companion" or "to accompany."**

prised of Yalies devoted to promoting Filipino culture and understanding Filipino-American identity and politics. Most importantly, it is a close-knit community that is ready to shower anyone with some good old Pinoy warmth and hospitality. Small enough so that everyone really does know your name, KASAMA was established in 1989 by students who saw the need for Filipinos, Fil-Ams, and friends to advance Philippine-specific issues. The ultimate goal was — and continues to be — to create a space in which people could enjoy each other's company. Currently, KASAMA has over twenty active undergraduate and graduate members who are deeply involved in

all of what KASAMA does. We come from all over — the Philippines, Hawaii, the Bay Area, New York, and all over the world. We are budding artists, musicians, politicians, lawyers, writers, economists, diplomats, doctors, and scientists. We are not all Filipino by blood, but we are all tied to the motherland in some specific way. Together, we empower and inspire each other to make things happen.

In April of 2005, KASAMA proudly revived Barrio Fiesta, our main event of the year. Literally translated as "village feast," Barrio Fiesta featured an extravagant showcase of Philippine culture through song, dance, performance, and of course sumptuous Filipino food. We shared with the larger Yale community the rich tapestry of Filipino traditions and values and had plenty of fun along the way. Barrio Fiesta 2006 was a smashing success, winning over the hearts — and stomachs — of over 150 audience members.

But Barrio Fiesta is only one of many activities KASAMA organizes. Every semester, the group holds smaller gatherings to celebrate Filipino culture, and like most Filipinos, we love to eat! In October of 2005, we held the second annual Halo-Halo Night, where KASAMA members and over forty Yalies gathered to prepare the

delicious Filipino dessert, a "mix mix" of tropical fruits, milk, and ice. We also satisfied our craving for Pinoy cuisine at November's Adobo Night and March's Longganisa Night, where KASAMA members bonded over more cooking and dining. And we sprinkle the remainder of the school year with our notoriously fun-filled Happy Hours, where members and friends can unwind over drinks, music, and dance.

Another integral part of KASAMA's mission is the advancement of Filipino-American political and social interests. KASAMA founded the Filipino Intercollegiate Networking Dialogue (FIND),

### **KASAMA is a close-knit community that is ready to shower anyone with some good old Pinoy warmth and hospitality.**

the largest Filipino youth program in the country, over a decade ago in 1991. Last year, KASAMA worked hard to revive our FIND district and attend national conferences. KASAMA's Political Chairs have also worked to bring Tagalog language instruction and other Philippine Studies courses to Yale. KASAMA also recognizes the severe underrepresentation of Filipinos at Yale, and we have collaborated with the Admissions Office to ensure that more Filipino students are admitted and choose to come to Yale.

In order to spread awareness about our beautiful culture, KASAMA also participates in the Cultural Awareness Program. Through CAP, we have shared with New Haven public school students the colorful history of the Philippines; tinikling, our national dance; and of course delicious delicacies such as turon, Philippine fried banana.

After rejoining AASA in 2004 and then reviving our cultural show in 2005, KASAMA is now at an exciting stage. For those of you that are missing your pansit and for those of you that would like to find out what it is (tasty Filipino noodles!), come and join us for one of our weekly KASAMA dinners. You won't find a friendlier, more energetic, and welcoming place at Yale. We are all proud to be a part of KASAMA, and we are looking forward to sharing it with you!

Members of KASAMA: the Filipino Club of Yale come together for a night of fun and friendship at the KASAMA Easter Egg Hunt, held at the AACC in the spring of 2006.



## **kasama now**

*kasama: the filipino club of yale*

Victor J. Lee, PC '91, served as the first KASY president from 1988 to 1989. He is currently employed by the firm Semper Ventures, and he and his wife recently had their first child.

In 1987, a small core group of Korean American students led by David Yeo (BK '88, then a senior) met informally, as Korean American students had in past years, under the banner of the Korean American Student Association (KASA). KASA was an unregistered organization and primarily social in nature. But 1987 was different. The incoming freshman class of 1991 had a sufficient critical mass of Korean American students (approximately 30) to sustain a multifaceted organization. There were already several outlets for Korean American students to congregate, three Korean churches in the New Haven area, the Korean American Journal, the East Rock Institute run by Dr. Hesung Koh, and last but not least, the Korean intercollegiate volleyball tournaments.

That year's Korean American students formally registered with the Yale College Dean's Office and came up with a new name unique to Yale, KASY. KASY was granted a modest budget under the umbrella of AASA and was assigned to the office of the Dean of Asian American Affairs, Dean Joyce Baker, who was tremendously supportive of KASY. In addition, KASY established the Korean Studies Task Force, which successfully lobbied the administration to implement a Korean History course, and by 1990, Yale's first Korean language course. By the end of second semester, it came time to elect the first President of KASY. The voters had a choice between a freshman and a sophomore. Through active campaigning among the large freshman class, I, the freshman candidate, won the election.

The first active year of KASY, 1988-89, was a year of growing pains. In addition to establishing an effective organization and setting agendas through our four committees (political, cultural, social, and financial), KASY was busy reaching out to organizations at other

# kasy then



## 2006-07 KASY Executive Board

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Andy Yu, TC '08

**Vice President**

Edward Miller, PC '07

**Secretary**

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Janet Noh, SY '09

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**Political Action Chair**

Christina Park, SY '09

**Cultural Chair**

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**Social Chair**

Jen Jun, PC '09

**Media Chair**

David Kim, BR '09

The Korean American Students at Yale website can be found at [yale.edu/kasy](http://yale.edu/kasy). To subscribe to KASY's weekly newsletter, please contact [edward.l.miller@yale.edu](mailto:edward.l.miller@yale.edu).

schools through social, cultural, athletic, and political events.

One incident, however, stands out. That year saw KASY at the forefront of the racially charged environment

**KASY established the Korean Studies Task Force, which successfully lobbied the administration to implement a Korean History course, and by 1990, Yale's first Korean language course.**

of that time. The second semester of 1989 heralded the first Korean History course, taught by a professor of Japanese history. Attesting to the pent-up demand for Korea-related courses, over 50 students signed up for the course, far exceeding the History department's expectations. One particularly outspoken Korean American student, dissatisfied with learning Korean history through the perspective of a scholar of Japanese

history, was particularly vocal during class and raised acerbic questions throughout the semester. After receiving an "F" on her mid-term exam, the vocal student raised the accusation of racism in an editorial in a campus newspaper. In the ensuing uproar, as KASY's representative, I responded with another editorial that entreated the student body not to attack the vocal student, but to rather look at the facts of the case and the unfair grading. Needless to say, the Korean history course was subsequently dropped from the curriculum. Despite the setback in Korean studies that year, Yale introduced a Korean language class the following year, which became a highly popular course.

The ensuing KASY classes expanded upon the first KASY class's efforts, initiating community outreach programs with Korean adoptees in the Connecticut area and continuing traditions such as the KASY formal, originally called "Blackout".

It is with tremendous pride and great honor that I can contribute to the oral and written history of Korean American Students at Yale.

Chang Park, TC '06, is a psychology major originally from Bergen County, New Jersey. He served as president of KASY for the 2004-2005 school year.

"The Korean American Students at Yale was established in 1984 by a group of students who wanted to promote the political, cultural, and social interests of the community of Korean Americans at Yale. Starting with only a handful of members, KASY has grown both in size and in the scope of its goals.

KASY aims at forming strong bonds within its own community, not only for the enjoyment of its members but also for the political and cultural future of Korean America. In addition to large social events such as the Blackout dance in the fall, KASY hosts a variety of activities such as ski trips, movie nights, and study breaks — media through which KASY can become a more close-knit community."

- Excerpt from the KASY web site

KASY events and goals are centered around what we call the four pillars of KASY – social, political, cultural,

and our recent addition – community. Each event involves at least one of these pillars and aims to meet the wide-ranging interests of the Korean American community at Yale.

Some of our biggest events include the Adopted Friends Picnic, the annual KASY cultural show, March 1<sup>st</sup> Independence Day Celebration,

**Despite its emphasis on a close social community, KASY realizes that the future of Korean America lies in a growing political voice and the retention of its culture and heritage.**

and Blackout, the KASY dance. These events encompass the four pillars of KASY and demonstrate the diversity among our events. Many members find our Adopted Friends Picnic, a full day event for Adopted Korean children and their American parents to learn Korean culture from Korean Yale students,

Members of the incoming KASY executive board for the 2006-2007 school year pose for a group picture as they celebrate after a general meeting and election night at Linsly-Chittenden Hall.



# kasy now

the most fun and rewarding event.

One of the biggest strengths of KASY is its family-like community. KASY members actively welcome new people and seek to introduce new members to the organization. For example, freshmen are paired and placed into a family in which upperclassmen parents help their new children adjust to college life and serve as resources, role models, and friends. KASY is focused on maintaining a tight-knit community that really is like an extended family to Yale students.

Despite its emphasis on a close social community, KASY realizes that the future of Korean America lies in a growing political voice and the retention of its culture and heritage as time passes by. KASY's long term goals include emphasizing those two pillars – dealing with current events that affect not only Korea but the US and the rest of the world, and continually rediscovering our knowledge of Korean culture that will inevitably wear down as the generations advance.

Lastly, KASY wishes to seek out its own rich history. KASY is one of the oldest Asian organizations on campus, and its history extends back twenty years. Because of the nature of college organizations, a lot of KASY's past has been forgotten. One of our projects is to go through our archives and old documents to discover what KASY was like five, ten, and even twenty years ago when it was first started. We believe that knowing about the past is an invaluable resource for KASY's future. To accomplish this, KASY also aims to keep close contact with its alumni and always seeks to rediscover former participants.

KASY prides itself on its rich history and its goals for the future. We aim to make Korean Americans feel that they belong to a community and expose them to the issues that Korean Americans face. As the Yale environment has dramatically evolved in the past twenty years, so too has KASY – and we hope that KASY will always be a prominent organization on the Yale campus.

korean american students at yale

Hasina Mohyuddin, co-founder of MSA, is currently employed by DDM, Inc. She holds an M.B.A. Vanderbilt University and a B.A. in Economics from Yale University.

When I first came to Yale, there were three Muslims in our freshman class in Berkeley College: Nael Al-Abdullah, our friend Nazish Agha, and myself. Nael (later my co-president) and I were both from Nashville, and we had met each other and our respective families before reaching New Haven. It was important to us that we were all together to support each other and feed off each other's ideas.

We all assumed that Yale would have an MSA or ISA, as they were fairly common at major universities. Unfortunately, there was none. We had heard later that there had been previous attempts, but when the leaders left Yale, the MSA/ISA had not survived. Our first discussions for an MSA/ISA started with the need for a place to pray Jummah on Fridays. To use a University facility on a regular basis, you had to be an official Yale organization. In addition, we wanted to have special functions during Ramadan and Eid. Our primary goal in the beginning

**We all assumed that Yale would have an MSA or ISA, as they were fairly common at major universities. Unfortunately, there was none.**

was to be able to practice our religion on a regular basis and to have a way to maintain our Islamic traditions.

Once we got the paperwork going, we needed to get more members. Several of the grad students were instrumental in helping to organize our group and in establishing the Friday prayers. Yale was good about facilitating our requests, and we were able to have regular Jummahs, get food from our meal plans to keep in our dorms during Ramadan, and organize functions for Eid. We had a lot of overlapping membership with the South Asian Society and held joint events with organizations such as Hillel. My

# msa then



## 2006-07 MSA Executive Board

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Altaf Saadi, MC '08

**Vice President**

Usman Humayun, BR '08

**Treasurer**

Shoab Ahmed, BR '09

**Political Action Chair**

Zahreen Ghaznavi, JE '08

**Social Action Chair**

Firat Erel, PC '09

**Secretary/Librarian**

Fatima Ghani, TC '09

**Alumni Relations/Historian**

Nadim Mahmud, TC '08

**Graduate Liaisons**

Sharmin Ghaznavi, '08

Lubna Shamsi, MPH '07

The Muslim Students Association website can be found at [yale.edu/msa](http://yale.edu/msa). To subscribe to MSA's weekly newsletter, please contact [altaf.saadi@yale.edu](mailto:altaf.saadi@yale.edu).

junior year, Yale hired the local New Haven Imam as a Muslim Chaplain, and we had a few events with the New Haven Masjid as well. Having the Imam helped us develop ties with the local Muslim community, and we also began to look at collaborating with MSAs at other colleges for conferences and other events.

Getting members was a slow process. The perception at the time was that if you were part of an MSA/ISA, you were a very conservative Muslim. I found this to be especially true for women. Many felt that if you didn't wear a hijab, you didn't have a place in the MSA. For this reason, the female participation in the MSA, and to a lesser extent, the male, was relatively low in the beginning. Graduate students were the most likely to come and were very regular in their attendance at meetings, prayers, and other gatherings.

Once people got to know members of our group personally, however, they were much more likely to join and participate in our activities. They realized that we were not out to criticize anyone but were just trying to provide a positive atmosphere in which to practice our religion. By

our third year (when Nael and I were getting ready to graduate), we had a good solid group from all classes — everyone from freshmen to seniors, and grad students as well.

By the time I left Yale, we had accomplished our short-term goals of providing space for Jummah and having Ramadan and Eid events. We were into the secondary stage of reaching out to the local community and other MSAs. But our biggest goal was to have longevity for the group. We did not want [what happened to previous MSAs at Yale] to happen again. We wanted to ensure that there was future leadership, and I think we were able to accomplish that.

As I was looking at the MSA website recently, I was impressed with how closely the current MSA articulated our original vision. It was amazing to see how similar it was to what we were trying to do back then. It is great that issues of Islamic identity continue to be discussed because these are issues we must all deal with on an everyday basis. I hope the MSA continues to reach out to non-Muslims as well as Muslims and to let people know the truth about Islam.



*Gul Raza, PC '06, is a political science major originally from the Atlanta, Georgia area. She served as president of MSA for the 2004-05 academic year and as an ethnic counselor for the 2005-06 academic year.*

The Muslim Students Association at Yale (MSA) originated primarily to bring together Muslims of diverse

**In addition to providing Muslim students with a supportive Muslim environment, the MSA serves the broader community by being open to all those interested in Islam.**

backgrounds and cultures under one unified, organized, and proactive community — one that is welcoming to all, regardless of the extent of religious knowledge or determination. Now, as the Muslim population at Yale has flourished, it has also become an organization for political, social, and intellectual exchange.

In addition to providing Muslim students with a supportive Muslim environment and making sure their

needs are met, the MSA serves the broader community by being open to all those interested in Islam and its many diverse facets.

Since its inception in the early 1990s, the MSA has grown dramatically to involve the participation of undergraduate, graduate, local, and international students. It has become active and visible both on campus and within the community. The organization currently consists of an Executive Board made up of nine positions. While the freshman positions are elected in September, general elections are held annually in April. The MSA board meets every Monday in order to plan for future events and discuss the progress of current affairs.

This past year has been a historic one. For the first time in Yale's history, halal food has been made available in all college dining halls thus fulfilling a long-standing need for many of the Muslim students on campus. Another first in Yale and the MSA's history is the hiring of a Muslim Chaplain Fellow by the Chaplains' Office as an exclusive resource for Muslims on campus.

Major events taken on by the MSA include activities during the holy month of Ramadan, where Muslim students partake in daily fast. Activities include providing daily iftars (din-

ners) and suhoors (breakfast) during the month, as well as daily Taraweeh prayers and the annual Ramadan Banquet. This year's Ramadan Banquet, held in Commons Dining Hall, was a huge success. It was one of the most widely attended events of the year, with over 400 students and faculty in attendance. Even the illustrious Dean of Yale College, Peter Salovey, was there in addition to Deans and Masters of several residential colleges. In addition, the MSA hosts an annual Islamic Awareness Week, with the purpose of better acquainting the campus community with the faith of its members in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Past lecture titles have included, "Muslim Women and Leadership" and "Defining a Muslim Identity at Yale and in America."

Recently, the MSA has also put on the Critical Islamic Reflections Conference in sponsorship with other organizations. In the hopes of providing a framework to pursue a sophisticated understanding and discourse of issues pertinent to Muslims in America in light of prevailing realities, the CIR group has successfully run conferences such as "Rooting Islam in America," "Muhammad the Prophet in the Academy," and "Islamic Law: Questions of Authority and Change."

The MSA also organizes many social and food-related events such as study breaks, chill sessions, girls' nights, and movie nights. Some other annual events include the hike to East Rock, freshman Barbeque, and the "Meet and Greet" session held at the beginning of the year. Weekly events include nightly prayers in the MSA Prayer Room (located in Bingham Basement), weekly dinners held at one of the 12 Residential colleges, and the weekly Jumu'a (Friday) Prayers. In addition, a weekly halaqa (discussion circle) is held on Wednesday nights.

MSA also works with many other related groups including AASA-affiliated organizations, SAS, Yale Muslims in Medicine, ASA, and Yale Muslim Law Students' Association to bring its students activities to create lasting friendships, have fun, and increase involvement.

The Muslim Students Association is dedicated to providing students the opportunity to come together and aims its efforts in helping members to evolve intellectually, socially, and spiritually during their tenure at Yale University.

Past and present members of the Executive Board of the Muslim Students Association pose for a picture with Dean Salovey at the Ramadan Banquet in the fall of 2005.



*muslim students association*

**msa now**

Ranjit Shastri, the founder of SAS, is currently employed by PSi, Inc. He holds an M.B.A. with honors from the Wharton School and a B.Sc. with honors in applied mathematics from Yale University.

It has been over 20 years since I founded the South Asia Society at Yale. I recall that it was in January 1983 (my junior year) that I prepared a list of all the students that I knew of South Asian origin, about 40 in all. I thought it would be fun to get together with some of them over a meal, just to get to know each other better. I then called 4 or 5 students and suggested that we meet for dinner. I asked each of my fellow students to contact 8 or 10 others in the same way and get those that they contacted to call the others. One of us was able to reserve the room at the far end of Commons dining hall.

When we all met, I was pleased to see that almost everyone on the list had shown up, plus a few that were not on the original list. The majority of those present were undergraduates, but a few graduate students also joined us. We passed around a sheet of paper so that everyone could record their contact details. I am still in touch with several of the people who attended: Manu Bammi, who today is my business partner; Anuradha Malhotra, whom I married 4 years later; K. "Nandu" Narayanan, whom I see whenever I'm in New York. I've unfortunately lost touch with many others.

In the discussion that ensued, it was agreed that we should get together more often. Although most of us were of Indian origin, we decided to call the club the South Asian Society rather than the Indian Society to be as inclusive as possible. While there already existed an Asian Society, few of us knew much about it or felt a strong connection to it.

By the fall of next year we had obtained official recognition from Yale College as a club, and since I was the main organizer I took on the role of President.

One of the first events we organized in the fall of 1983 was a concert by Ajoy Chakravorty (vocal) and Viji Jog (Indian classical violin), whose trip from Calcutta Siddharth

# sas then



## 2006-07 SAS Executive Board

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**Vice President**  
Neal Ubriani, SY '08

**Social Chair**  
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**Publicity Chair**  
Sharmistha Das, MC '09

**Cultural Chair**  
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**Political Action Chair**  
Kersi Shroff, BR '09

**Political Action Chair**  
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**SASAC Chair**  
Suyog Bhandari, JE '09

**Outreach Coordinator**  
Chhitij Bashyal, TC '09

The South Asian Society website can be found at [yale.edu/sas](http://yale.edu/sas). To subscribe to SAS's weekly newsletter, please contact [tarana.shivdasani@yale.edu](mailto:tarana.shivdasani@yale.edu).

spearheaded. Rajiv Sahney and I drove along the highways around New Haven to collect funds from Indian-run motels. We told them that we were from Yale and were organizing a concert, and that we would put their name as benefactors on the program. We all chipped in to distribute fliers

the culture of South Asia, which we felt was a way for us to make a positive impact on the University. It also served as a way to connect with people who shared a common cultural experience. This was particularly attractive for those who were new to the United States; they sometimes needed that reassurance.

**Although most of us were of Indian origin, we decided to call the club the South Asian Society to be as inclusive as possible.**

I'm happy to say that I continue to be involved in the South Asian Society. About six months ago I met with some of the leaders of the club in New Haven (to discuss the preparations for President Levin's recent visit to India), and am working with them on a monthly newsletter called "India Business & Investment Report", for which my company is providing financial support. I've also offered three summer internships to Yale students to work in my office in India through a new campus organization called "Yalies in India". Anu and I are also active in interviewing Indian high school students who are now applying to Yale.

around campus, booked the hall and pressed our friends to attend. The event was a great success — the music was wonderful and the hall was overflowing with Yalies and non-Yalies (including the families of the motel owners!).

Over the course of the year we organized several other events, including an Odissi dance performance by Protima Bedi. Our goal was to expose Yale to

I'm pleased to see that the South Asian Society has continued to grow and branch out in so many unpredictable ways, and I am grateful to have played a role in its creation.

Abbas Hussain, BK '07, is from Karachi, Pakistan and served as the president of the South Asian Society (SAS) for the 2005-06 academic year.

The South Asian Society at Yale (SAS) is an organization of social, cultural, and intellectual exchange for those with a special interest in South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). The mission of SAS is three-fold: to increase awareness of South Asia and South Asian American political issues, to increase South Asian cultural awareness, and to serve as a social link between the South Asian community at Yale University.

Founded in 1983, SAS has burgeoned over the years, currently boasting a membership of more than 300, most of whom are undergraduate, but also including graduate and professional students, faculty, and community members. As indicated by its large membership SAS is not necessarily just for South Asians: it is open to all that share an interest in any aspect of South Asia. SAS also works with many other groups such as the Muslim Students' Association, the Asian American Students' Alliance, the South Asian Graduate Association, the South Asian Law Students' Association, and South

Asian Medical Student Association.

The Executive Board of SAS is currently comprised of a president, secretary/historian, publicity chair, treasurer, cultural chair, social chair, community outreach chair, one political action chair, and three freshman liaisons. While freshman liaisons are elected in September of

**The mission of SAS is three-fold: to increase awareness of South Asian and South Asian American political issues, to increase cultural awareness, and to serve as a social tie for the community.**

each year, general elections are held in April, with all members voting. Two major SAS events include the annual fall and spring cultural show. The fall show, called Roshni (light), is a celebration of all religious holidays from Diwali to Ramadan to Christmas. It traditionally includes a dinner followed by a show. The spring

show is a larger theatrical event, and is called Jhalak (a glimpse).

SAS also sponsors a yearly South Asian Awareness Week in February. Events include forums, speakers and movie screenings open to the entire Yale community. The goal of the week is to foster a greater consciousness of South Asia at Yale.

Through SAS and its many affiliated student groups, any interest or goal can be sought. There is ample opportunity for members to pursue their own interests in South Asian culture and to increase the South Asian presence on campus in unique, novel ways. SAS sponsors various community service efforts in New Haven which enhance bonds both within and outside of the Yale community. SAS members have also formed "Shakti: A South Asian Experience," a literary magazine filled with writings on South Asia and South Asian experiences in America. Other subsidiary organizations within SAS include a South Asian Women's Forum, a Hindu Prayer

**There is ample opportunity for members to pursue their own interests in South Asian culture and to increase the South Asian presence on campus in unique, novel ways.**

Members of the South Asian Society take a group photograph after an afternoon filled with paint-filled madness during Holi 2006 on Cross Campus.



**sas now**

Group, the South Asian Arts Collective, Bharata Natyam classes, and AID (Association for India's Development). Currently, there are two dance groups – Megha and the Yale Bhangra Team. These groups represent the flexibility within SAS and the support for the interests of the changing community.

The South Asian Society is committed to the idea of allowing members to create and pursue any projects and opportunities related to South Asia that they find interesting. Playing the role of a facilitator, SAS makes every effort to support its members' ideas and endeavors, and tries to serve as a forum through which its members can participate in a host of activities: service, performance, learning, and growth.

Judy T. Lin, BK '92, a founding member of the Taiwanese American Society, received a bachelor's degree in psychology.

TAS started as simply the Taiwanese Language Table. As a freshman, I feared I would lose my ability to speak Taiwanese because I was away from home. Most Taiwanese-Americans of my generation grew up speaking English; often Taiwanese was a second language that our parents and older relatives spoke with each other, and only sometimes to us. Furthermore, even in Taiwan, the language was fading fast. In 1988, Mandarin had been the official language of the country for over 40 years under the Nationalist government, and many parents had decided it was more useful to teach their children Mandarin instead of Taiwanese. I was very worried that the language would become extinct, so I wanted to keep up my fluency. At the same time, I wanted to encourage others to see the language as an important part of Taiwanese culture, as distinct from Chinese culture. I managed to convince a few friends that it would be really fun to have a Taiwanese Table

**Close contact with Taiwanese student organizations at other universities... made us feel more connected to the Taiwanese American community. What we were doing might actually have an impact beyond ourselves.**

and practice speaking Taiwanese, and that was how it all began.

During my freshman year, Taiwanese Table meetings were quite small—just myself and a handful of friends. Fortunately, as successive classes entered, more people joined, most notably Ula Hwang and Cindy Yeh, who were instrumental in the growth of the organization. In the following years, we evolved into a loosely-formed club that met regularly to discuss our ex-

# tas then



## 2006 TAS Executive Board

**Co-Moderators**  
Angela Ku, SY '08  
Frank Yang, PC '08

**Secretary/Treasurer**  
Chris Karas, JE '08

**Cultural Chair**  
Brian Ju, JE '08

**Social Chair**  
Diana Zhou, JE '08

**Education Chair**  
Alice Lin, TD '09

**Political Action Chair**  
Lillian Chen, DC '09

**Historian/Webmaster**  
Richard Shieh, CC '09

The Taiwanese American Society website can be found at [yale.edu/taiwan](http://yale.edu/taiwan). To subscribe to TAS's weekly newsletter, contact [frank.yang@yale.edu](mailto:frank.yang@yale.edu).

periences as Taiwanese Americans as well as practice the language. We started doing cultural activities, such as having "dumpling night" and celebrating the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, and also became more politically active. We were very pleased to find that Yale was one of the few U.S. universities at the time to actually offer a class on Taiwanese history, and many of us eagerly signed up for the class, taught by Prof. Beatrice Bartlett.

In my junior or senior year, someone suggested that we register with the University and apply for funds to support our activities, so the Taiwanese Club became an "official" organization. The biggest challenge was getting people to participate on a consistent basis. This was before e-mail became a prevalent form of communication, so I used to call everyone before each meeting to remind (read: beg, wheedle, cajole) them to come. Close contact with Taiwanese student organizations at other universities also helped to solidify the Taiwanese Club at Yale. It made us feel more connected to the Taiwanese American community as a whole, and

gave us the sense that what we were doing might actually have an impact beyond ourselves. Many of the original members of the Yale group

**It has been 17 years since that first Taiwanese Table meeting.**

were involved in the formation of ITASA (Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students' Association), and later after we graduated, SOTA (Society of Taiwanese Americans).

It has been 17 years since that first Taiwanese Table meeting, and many things have changed: in Taiwan, elected officials speak Taiwanese, and the Nationalists are no longer the ruling party; at Yale, the Taiwanese Club has renamed itself the Taiwanese American Society, to better acknowledge the American aspect of being Taiwanese American. I am gratified to see that the organization has evolved to meet the needs of a new generation of Taiwanese Americans, and I hope that it continues to do so.

Angela Ku, SY '08, is from Pasadena, California. She is currently a co-moderator of the Taiwanese American Society.

Today, the Yale College Taiwanese American Society (TAS) remains an undergraduate student organization for students who are interested

in the Taiwanese culture, and it is open to all the members of the Yale community. The mission of TAS is to maintain a network of interpersonal relationships among students interested in sharing the language, history, culture, and current affairs of Taiwan, while also to provide a forum for education and action.

The executive board of TAS is comprised of two co-moderators, an education chair, cultural chair, secretary/treasurer, social chair, political chair, historian/webmaster, and freshmen liaisons. While freshmen liaisons are chosen in the fall semester of each year, general elections are held in December. Board members, excluding freshmen liaisons, hold positions for the calendar year beginning in January, as opposed to the school year.

To sponsor many events that knit the community together—such as study breaks, excellent dances, delicious dinners, and other cultural activities—TAS has slowly established a balance between making its name as a unique organization while promoting collaboration with other groups in the larger Asian American community

here at Yale. Whether we are making homemade dumplings for our traditional Dumpling Night or cooking a full course meal for our newly established annual Cultural Dinner, the Taiwanese American Society experiences the enjoyment of working (and eating) together as a family. Moreover, TAS works together with the Chinese American Students Association (CASA) to organize the bi-annual Chinese Adopted Siblings Program for Youth. CASPY is a com-

**TAS is not simply about social activities — the society holds political discussions, lectures, debates, and sponsors guest speakers to educate the members of the Yale community on Taiwanese and Taiwanese-American history, culture, politics, and contemporary affairs.**

munity outreach program for families with adopted Chinese children in the Tri-State area to establish a special relationship with adopted children and their families while sharing Chinese/Taiwanese culture with them.

However, TAS is not simply about social activities — the society holds political discussions, lectures, debates, and sponsors guest speakers to educate the members of the Yale community on Taiwanese and Taiwanese-American history, culture, politics, and contemporary affairs. Recent political events have included political forums where professors discuss their perspectives on the transformations of Taiwan and the future prospects of the island and film screenings for the remembrance of the 2-28 Incident that occurred in 1947.

Through the many TAS events, a sense of identity arises. It is truly through this vital and essential combination of the strong sense of identity and the fun social interactions between the members of TAS that tight common bonds are forged.

*Taiwanese American Society*

## The Taiwanese American Society experiences the enjoyment of working (and eating) together as a family.

The Taiwanese Club was originally founded in 1991 to foster an awareness of Taiwanese language and culture at Yale University. The orga-

The 2005 TAS Executive Board passed the torch to the 2006 Executive Board at the organization's annual Turnover Banquet, held at the beginning of each year.



**tas now**

Quyên Vuong, DC '89, a founding member of the Vietnamese Students Association, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in Economics.

We formed ViSA because we needed a source of emotional and cultural support – to feel that we are Vietnamese and to get in touch with our culture and traditional values.

There were very few Vietnamese American students at the time, on average three per class. The number of Vietnamese students increased somewhat after that, on average about six to eight per year. When I got accepted to Yale, I had just completed my fourth year living in the US as a refugee. I was still struggling to adapt to the new life, struggling to help my younger siblings grow up in the absence of our mother, so the cultural support base was critical to my emotional and mental well-being. Going away to college across the country to a completely new place was quite a scary thought. I wanted to go, but I also wanted to make sure that I had access to a Vietnamese community and network of Vietnamese friends. MIT, with its strong network of Vietnamese American students and the neighboring networks of Harvard and other schools in the greater Boston area, sounded so much more attractive. Yale was in New Haven, and there was literally no connection between Yale and the Vietnamese community in New Haven. Upon hearing my concern, Loc Vo '88

**There were very few Vietnamese students at the time, on average three per class.**

laughed and told me, "Well, why don't you come to Yale and start a Vietnamese student club then?"

The majority of Vietnamese students at Yale at the time came to the US in 1975 at a very young age, some of them even grew up with adopted American families. They were much more Americanized and hardly spoke Vietnamese. But I could feel that deep down, they too were yearning to find their cultural roots. As for

# visa then



## 2006 ViSA Executive Board

### Co-Presidents

Steven Le, TC '08  
Jerry Nguyen, TD '08

### Secretary

Marilynn Ly, TD '09

### Treasurer

Will Nguyen, DC '08

### Social Chair

Anha Vo, BR '09

### Political Action Chair

Cecilia Ong, DC '09

### Publications Chair

Carrie Nguyen, ES '09

### Historian

Chris VanLang, BR '08

### Cultural Chair

to be announced

The Vietnamese Students Association website can be found at [yale.edu/visa](http://yale.edu/visa). To subscribe to ViSA's weekly newsletter, please contact [gerard.nguyen@yale.edu](mailto:gerard.nguyen@yale.edu).

me, I remembered sharing a lot of memories about life in Vietnam, the boat escape, and the experience of living in the refugee camp with Linh Nguyen '87, the only other Vietnamese student who was fluent in Vietnamese. Linh lent me the much needed emotional support to get through my first year at Yale.

Before ViSA was formally founded, an informal social network seemed to suffice. So we just hung out with each other, had dinners and picnics together. As we got to know a few friends from New Haven and neighboring towns, our connection with the Vietnamese community grew stronger. We were also 'adopted' by Prof. Huynh Sanh Thong (the Vietnamese scholar in Yale's Southeast Asian Department) and his lovely wife Bac Yen, who cooked for us occasionally. Those gatherings at their house provided the glue that brought us together. After a delicious bowl of pho (it was somewhat Americanized, but it was still heaven to us), we listened to Bac Yen's stories of how they met, how they survived as students in America back in the '50s, and the challenge of instilling Vietnamese roots in their children. We were mesmerized

by Bac Thong's discussion of Vietnamese culture and tradition as reflected in Vietnamese literature. It was like coming home to our own family with loving parents and a rich cultural heritage. In retrospect, those were precious moments that helped us nurture the desire to learn more about our Vietnamese cultural heritage and to shape us as Vietnamese Americans. The bonding grew stronger over time, and by my senior year at Yale (1988-1989) the time was ripe to found a Vietnamese student association.

The first big activity that officially brought campus-wide recognition to ViSA was the exhibition of the plight of Vietnamese refugees in the camps. The pictures and stories I brought back from Vietnam were so powerful and moving that everyone banded together and wanted to generate more awareness to help the refugees. We also went to share the stories and pictures with students at Harvard, MIT, and Princeton and worked with various groups to create a region-wide movement to help the refugees.

I am happy to hear that the group has grown in size and is doing a number of things to help support its members.

Ngocquynh "Quynh" Chu, BK '07, is from Amherst, Mass. She served as co-president of the Vietnamese Students Association in 2005.

ViSA aims to promote cultural awareness and community on campus, primarily for students of Vietnamese heritage, but certainly not limited to that. The purpose of ViSA, as stated in our constitution is "to establish an organized connection within the Yale community concerning Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American issues." Our organization is over two decades old, and we are always eager to welcome and embrace members who share our goals.

Founded in 1988, ViSA has remained a small but resilient organization on campus. We have about forty active members that comprise of not only undergraduate students but graduate students, professional students, and faculty and community members as well. One of our most important members is Prof. Quang Phu Van ("Thay Quang") who acts as an advisor to ViSA and helps us in any way he can. We are also proud to have members who are not ethnically Vietnamese but share our interest and love of Vietnamese culture. As a result of our small size, we have been able

to maintain a family-like community that students can turn to for support and advice from other members.

ViSA loves food! Our weekly meetings are held over dinner on Wednesdays at 5:30. These dinner meetings are meant to be a relaxing social gathering where members can simply socialize and catch up with each other. However, meetings are also informative. Members come to discuss cultural and social issues and

**As a result of our small size, we have been able to maintain a family-like community that students can turn to for support and advice**

learn about academic opportunities. ViSA's love of food is also reflected in three popular events – the cultural dinner, Pho Night, and an Iron Chef competition. The cultural dinner is our opportunity to share our culture with the Yale community through food. Pho Night is also a popular food event that serves Vietnam's

famous noodle soup. Interested members are divided into two teams for the cook-off complete with secret ingredients that is the ViSA Iron Chef.

Not all of our events are food-centric. Every year, ViSA invites various guests to Yale to broaden understanding of the Vietnamese and Vietnamese American community. In Spring 2005, ViSA hosted performing artist and author of "The Gangster We Are All Looking For," Le Thi Diem Thuy, to perform, speak to students, and run a writing workshop. Past speakers have included ViSA alum and actress Diep Bui, author of the acclaimed books *The Unwanted* and *The Tapestries* Kien Nguyen, and the renowned Vietnamese songwriter Pham Duy. In addition, we also have a cultural show. The most recent cultural show, held in December 2004, was a parody of the movie *Mean Girls*, appropriately titled *Mean Viet Girls*. Lastly, ViSA also co-sponsors events with other groups. We participate in the annual SEAS Spring Festival in conjunction with the Southeast Asian Studies Council. Sometimes we have small social events with other Southeast Asian groups, such as KASAMA, the Filipino student organization. We have also collaborated with the Institute for Vietnamese Culture and Education (IVCE) and the VSA of Columbia University to put on a cultural show.

Some members of the Executive Board of the Vietnamese Students Association pose for a picture after a night of white elephant to celebrate the holidays together.



**visa now**

# InSight

The Yale University Chapter of the  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

(an AASA affiliated group)



Michelle Wong, MC '08, currently serves as president of InSight.

Have you ever been to a party where some random, sketchy guy has gone up to talk to every Asian girl in the room?

Then have you wondered why he suddenly comes up to you and starts feeding you compliments like "wow, you're so cute"? How many times has he used that pickup line before?

.....  
I spent Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in Oakland, CA attending NAPAWF's Face 2 Face gathering, where leaders of each chapter, including Yale's chapter, InSight, could meet with both the national board and with each other, sharing ideas and learning from each other. As I sat in that room with 40 other accomplished young Asian Pacific American women, I wondered to myself, "What am I doing here?" As the youngest person there, I was initially more than slightly intimidated, surrounded by social justice workers, lawyers, activists and others.

As the day progressed, we shared our stories, and I realized that we weren't so different. While I was new to social justice work, the women offered nothing but encouragement, with one sister telling me, "at one time, we all started somewhere."

During those two days, we discussed how to further NAPAWF's visions and goals through the national agenda of reproductive and sexual justice, ways to end violence against women and human trafficking, and how each of our individual chapters could take on these goals as well. We brainstormed ideas about how to advance the national campaign of working with nail salon workers, the majority of which are Asian immigrant workers, who, through the nail products, are exposed daily to many toxic chemicals. We shared ideas on how to improve our chapters and learned more about social justice work. However, by the end of the weekend, over discussions about our contributions to NAPAWF's work of both social justice and empowerment, we began to make more than just networking



## 2006-2007

### InSight Board:

#### Presidents

Minghao Liu, JE '09  
Michelle Wong, MC '08

**Business and Finance Chair**  
Diana Lin, SM '08

#### Publicity Chair

Manasvi Menon, MC '07

#### Internal Relations Chair

Karin Lee, ES '08

#### Communications Chair

Anna Yu, MC '08

#### Issues and Advocacy Chairs

Katharine Jan, TC '08  
Tashin Le-Nguyen, TC '08

#### Community Outreach Chairs

Emma Kurose, PC '09  
Anha Vo, BR '08

connections, we were forging friendships.

.....  
Now, here's a call to all those strong, independent, bright, socially conscious, motivated and insightful women (and men, too!), who have wondered about these things. InSight, an Asian American women's interest group at Yale, is one of the first collegiate chapters of NAPAWF: National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. We meet weekly for dinner meetings where members have a chance to discuss many of the issues affecting the lives of young Asian American college women. Some of our past topics have included the "Asian Fetish," the stereotype of the "model minority," and the portrayal of Asian women in the

media through movies such as *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Through doing so, we hope to empower women by gaining insight on these issues as well as building a network of motivated women (and men) willing to spread awareness of them—putting them in sight.

InSight is also dedicated to being a social justice advocate for other Asian Pacific American women. Currently, InSight is working on an initiative with the nail salon workers in the New Haven area, many of whom are female immigrants from Asian countries, such as Vietnam, helping to educate them about the harmful effects of the products they work with and trying to introduce to the owners of these salons safer products.





*Japanese American Students Union*

**(an AASA affiliated group)**



*Thomas Nakanishi, SY '05, was a co-founder/president of JASU, chair of AASA PAEC, a co-founder of the Freestyle Expressions Crew and member of Jook Songs. He served on ECAASU National Board and helped organize the first National Asian American Student Conference. Currently, Thomas attends Harvard's JFK School of Government and works for Our Education and Liberty in North Korea (LiNK).*

a clear absence in Yale's APA community of Japanese American experiences, histories and more importantly organizational spaces. As a result, JASU began organizing weekly meetings in Spring 2002 and joined AASA as an affiliate organization, contributing to

of Executive Order 9066. Additionally, JASU worked with other Asian American and ethnic organizations on such events as the Dr. King Celebration and Indigenous Peoples' Day, recognizing the importance of interethnic unity and collaboration.

**... the founders of JASU recognized a clear absence in Yale's APA community of Japanese American experiences...**

The Japanese American Student Union (JASU) was founded in the fall of 2001 by a small group of Japanese American students that included Rich Ting '02, Daisuke Nonaka '02, Zoe Tanaka '03, Doug Shimokawa '04, Nathan Kitada '05, Mia Arakaki '05 and Thomas Nakanishi '05. While Yale had a large number of student organizations devoted to Asian American students, the founders of JASU recognized

the political action and cultural celebrations of Yale's APA community. JASU's students began by organizing a dialogue correlating the Japanese American internment with post-9/11 treatment of South Asian and Arab Americans and continued this dialogue with a Day of Remembrance in February 2002 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing

Founded primarily as a social/political organization for Japanese Americans at Yale to meet and for other members of the Yale community to understand the multigenerational experiences of Japanese in America, JASU also engaged the Yale community in Japanese cultural activities in coordination with the Japan Association at Yale. While many fourth and fifth generation Japanese Americans did not grow up with the immigrant-Asian American experiences

**JASU students sought not only to better understand their Japanese cultures but also to see how their families' multiple generations in America had transformed their "culture" into something purely Japanese American.**

Members of the Japanese American Students Union, an organization revived by presidents Justin Hayase and Takeo Toyoshima, come together after a Japanese film showing at the AACC.



that many APAs at Yale personally know, JASU students sought not only to better understand their Japanese cultures but also to see how their families' multiple generations in America had transformed their "culture" into something purely Japanese American.

In Fall 2004, Takeo Toyoshima '08 and Justin Hayase '08 sought out the remaining JASU founders and began re-organizing JASU for a new generation of Japanese American and APA students. In February 2006, JASU organized a Day of Remembrance to continue educating the Yale student body about the WWII Japanese American internment and brought JASU back into AASA and the Asian American Cultural Center. JASU has regular dinner meetings where it plans the various events and fundraisers it hosts as an organization.

# other groups

While there are presently seven groups under the umbrella of the Asian American Students Alliance, the Asian American community at Yale sprawls far wider than those groups. From other cultural organizations to dance troupes and task forces, our community is truly multifaceted.

## Cultural Groups

### Chinese Calligraphy Association

For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/calligraphy](http://www.yale.edu/calligraphy) or direct any questions by e-mail to [yili.dong@yale.edu](mailto:yili.dong@yale.edu).

### Malaysian and Singaporean Association

For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/masa](http://www.yale.edu/masa), or contact [hobeng.lim@yale.edu](mailto:hobeng.lim@yale.edu) and [wenshan.yeo@yale.edu](mailto:wenshan.yeo@yale.edu).

### Tamil Sangam

Meets to practice the Tamil language and promote the culture and literature of the area.

For more information, please contact [aditi.ramakrishnan@yale.edu](mailto:aditi.ramakrishnan@yale.edu).

## Dance Troupes

### International Silat Federation of Yale Students and Affiliates

"Silat Tuo: the Healing, Dance, Meditation, Movement and Martial Arts of Sumatra, Indonesia." Ongoing classes at Yale.

For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/silat](http://www.yale.edu/silat) or direct any questions by e-mail to [sara.hashmi@yale.edu](mailto:sara.hashmi@yale.edu).

### Affiliated with SAS Yale Bhangra Society

For more information, direct any questions by e-mail to [govind.rangrass@yale.edu](mailto:govind.rangrass@yale.edu).

### Megha

South Asian dance group.

For more information, direct any questions by e-mail to [aditi.anand@yale.edu](mailto:aditi.anand@yale.edu).

### Affiliated with CASA and TAS Lion Dance Group

Visit [www.yale.edu/lion](http://www.yale.edu/lion) or direct any questions by e-mail to [duncan.cheng@yale.edu](mailto:duncan.cheng@yale.edu).

### Phoenix Dance Troupe

Traditional Chinese dance troupe that incorporates ribbons and fans.

For more information, direct any questions by e-mail to [jennifer.k.lin@yale.edu](mailto:jennifer.k.lin@yale.edu).

### Affiliated with KASY

#### Unity Korean Cultural Music Troupe

Traditional Korean drum troupe, practices every Monday and Wednesday.

Visit [www.yale.edu/unity](http://www.yale.edu/unity) or direct any questions to [regina.kim@yale.edu](mailto:regina.kim@yale.edu).

## Political Groups

### PRISM: Queer Students of Color

For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/prism](http://www.yale.edu/prism) or direct any questions by e-mail to [ruth.yemane@yale.edu](mailto:ruth.yemane@yale.edu).

### Students of Mixed Heritage and Culture

For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/smhac](http://www.yale.edu/smhac) or direct any questions and inquiries by e-mail to [cameron.leroy@yale.edu](mailto:cameron.leroy@yale.edu) or [lauren.nelson@yale.edu](mailto:lauren.nelson@yale.edu).

### South Asian Conference Council (SACC)

Hosts yearly conferences exploring issues relevant to South Asian Americans.

For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/sacc](http://www.yale.edu/sacc) or direct any questions by e-mail to [aditi.anand@yale.edu](mailto:aditi.anand@yale.edu) or [saheli.sadanand@yale.edu](mailto:saheli.sadanand@yale.edu).

## Publications

### Korean American Journal

Literary journal affiliated with KASY.

For more information, direct any questions by e-mail to [sunny.kang@yale.edu](mailto:sunny.kang@yale.edu).

### Yellow Pages

Asian American literary journal.

For more information, direct any questions by e-mail to [karla.chien@yale.edu](mailto:karla.chien@yale.edu).

## Other

### Jook Songs

Yale's premier Asian American writing and performance group, meets every Monday at 9:30.

For more information, e-mail [jennifer.suhr@yale.edu](mailto:jennifer.suhr@yale.edu).

### ECAASU 2007 at Yale

A committee of Yale students organizing and directing the next East Coast Asian American Students Union conference, which is to be held at Yale in spring 2007.

For more information, contact [allen.pan@yale.edu](mailto:allen.pan@yale.edu) or go to [ecaasu2007.org](http://ecaasu2007.org).

## spotlight on...

### Asian American Studies Task Force

Yale's Asian American Studies course offerings and faculty still pale in comparison to other universities. Yale presently employs only a handful of junior faculty that specialize in Asian American Studies and offers just a few Asian American Studies courses each semester. A part of the Asian American Students Alliance, the Asian American Studies Task Force works to highlight the absence of Asian American Studies, increase awareness with speakers and workshops, and take political action for long-term goals. For more information, contact [david.tian@yale.edu](mailto:david.tian@yale.edu).

### Builders of a Brighter Cambodian Community (BBCC)

Open to individuals of all ethnicities and demographic backgrounds, BBCC is a group that seeks to promote and spread knowledge about Cambodian culture while emphasizing a strong devotion to community service, both locally and abroad. BBCC aspires to institute several activities to serve the Cambodian community, including fundraisers for those living in impoverished Cambodia and events that spread awareness about Cambodia and its culture. Last year, BBCC's primary project was "Build a Book, Teach a Kid," a yearlong project intended to promote refugee children's literacy by crafting bilingual storybooks. For more information, visit [www.yale.edu/bbcc](http://www.yale.edu/bbcc), or contact [hannah.hubler@yale.edu](mailto:hannah.hubler@yale.edu) or [bbccboard@panlists.yale.edu](mailto:bbccboard@panlists.yale.edu).

# our issues.

You might think that at an Ivy League institution with students boasting skyrocketing test scores and high IQs, we would live in a utopian bubble free of the problems that abound outside of our campus. But even within the Ivory Tower of Yale University, we must cope with the same issues that confront Asian Americans throughout the rest of the country.

These pages chronicle a few distressing incidents of intolerance in Yale's recent history. Yet even these pages provide only a snapshot of the obstacles that our community has faced and will face, unless we remain committed to the ideals of tolerance and justice.

So yes, we have issues. Let's do something about them.

# attacked

one asian american exercising her right to protest sparked a controversy yale was not ready to handle



This piece was adapted from an article originally published in the Spring 2003 edition of *Revelations*, the semesterly publication of the Asian American Cultural Center.

In the spring of 2003, at the peak of the war in Iraq, a series of events exploded the Yale

## **A female student's suite in Calhoun College was entered by three men armed with a 2x4 after she displayed an American flag upside down outside her dormitory window.**

campus into a place where students of color felt unsafe, where specifically Muslim, black, and anti-war students suddenly became the objects of an intolerant atmosphere that many felt was unchecked by the administration.

At the center of this controversy was Kat Lo, CC '05, who protested the war in Iraq by hanging an American flag outside of her suite window, a gesture typically reserved for situations in which the country is in distress. The following list chronicles the hate crimes in question, beginning with the Kat Lo incident, as summarized in an e-mail drafted by a group of concerned students and Dean Betty Trachtenberg on April 13, 2005.

1. A female student's suite in Calhoun College was entered by three men armed with a 2x4 after she displayed an American flag upside down outside her dormitory window. They attempted to enter her room that was locked and left the following note: "I love kicking the Muslims ass bitches ass! They should all die with Mohammed. We as Americans should destroy them and launch so many missiles their mother's don't produce healthy

offspring. I hate you. GO AMERICA!"

2. A group of undergraduates participated in a silent non-violent vigil type action in the Universities dining halls to mourn the loss of Iraqi civilians in the current conflict. A participant was followed out of Davenport and spit on by a white male student.

3. Multiple anonymous, racist and threatening posts made on the YDN online forum in response to the article on the Calhoun College incident. The YDN online forum was shut down later that evening.

4. The following note was left on the door of the African-American Cultural Center: "I hope you protesters and your children are killed in the next terrorist attack. Signed F\*\*k You."

5. Undergraduates decided to fly American flags upside down outside their windows as a sign of dissent, distress, and solidarity with the student in Calhoun College. The suite of a female undergraduate was illegally entered and her flag reversed to hang right side up, possibly in response to her active role in organizing the solidarity campaign.

6. Undergraduates put up an art installation permitted by the President's Office on Cross Campus. The work included 22 American flags representing the 22 failed U.S. attempts of military intervention in the name of democracy. One flag in the center was hung upside down. A white male student tore down the center flag and threatened to "rip this bulls\*\*t down," leaving only after having been showed the valid permit from the President's Office.

7. A flag hung upside-down by an undergraduate sophomore was ripped down and stolen. On April 10, 2003, Richard Brodhead, then dean of Yale College, sent an e-mail briefly touching on the University's commitment to combating intolerance. Still, students were concerned about the tone

of this email, which was decidedly lukewarm, especially relative to the seriousness of what had transpired. The major qualms with Dean Brodhead's statement was that it was late and very weak, though students of color and student activists were legitimately afraid for their safety at this point. There was a great sense that the administration needed to let the campus know that they recognized an insidiously intolerant environment, and that measures were being taken to keep the campus safe.

A sit-in at Woodbridge Hall, which houses the Office of the President, occurred the next day. Students involved were from a number of different campus groups, and of many different racial and religious

## **Students involved were from a number of many different racial and religious backgrounds. But they were united by their conviction to stand up against a racially hostile environment at this institution.**

backgrounds. But they were united by their conviction to stand up against a racially hostile environment at this institution.

The students who had staged the sit-in expressed their demands that the University disclose all of the events that had taken place, issue an apology for their failure to do so, and to pursue the strictest punishment for the culprits of these crimes. In response to the sit-in, President Richard Levin sent an e-mail to the undergraduate population outlining the incidents that had occurred and the University's

# attacked

one asian american exercising her right to protest sparked a controversy yale was not ready to handle

disapproval of what had transpired. Many students took President Levin's email to be a victory of sorts. He acknowledged the fact that the incidents were not freak ac-

**The power play was never the important thing: what spurred this exchange was a legitimate threat to the safety of minority students on campus.**

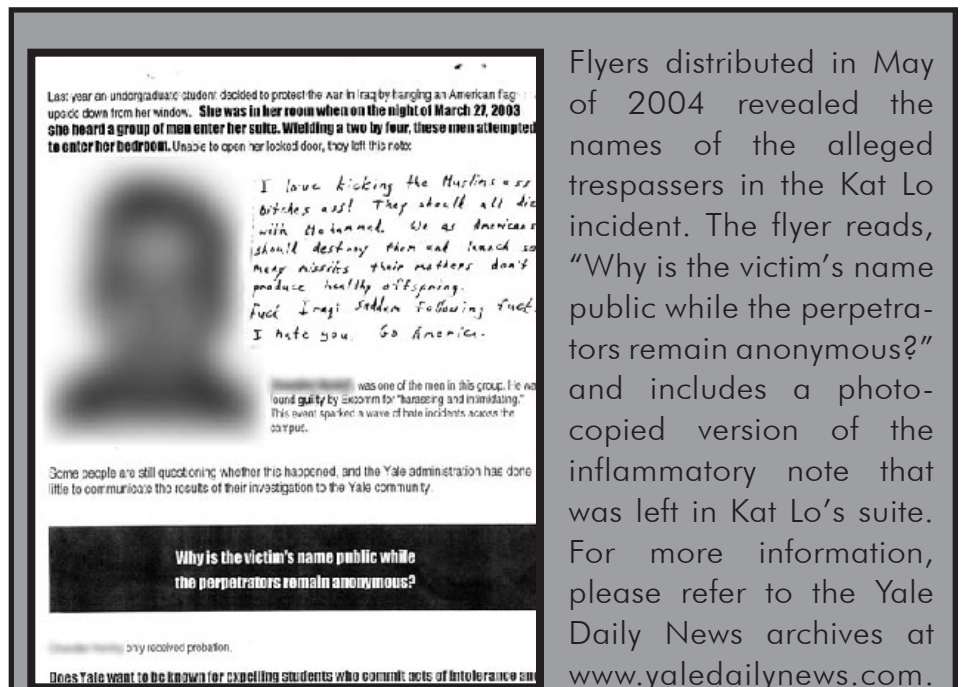
idents or isolated to a certain time, place, or demographic. While the e-mail was not exactly what students had asked for, it still recognized that there was a problem at this University and that it had to be addressed. A detailed e-mail was later sent by Chief of Yale Police James Perrotti, but President Levin failed to send any further correspondence regarding the matter.

In the end, the exchange turned out to be an interesting power play between administration and students. But it must be remembered that the power play was never the important thing: what spurred this exchange was a legitimate threat to the safety of minority students on campus.

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Since the original publication of this article, several developments have taken place: the names of the students who allegedly broke into Kat Lo's suite were identified in flyers that were distributed in May 2004. The Minority Advisory Committee was reinstated in Spring of 2004 to investigate bias crimes such as this incident.

The story was also adapted into the feature-length movie "Within the Ivory Tower" by the undergraduate group Bulldog Productions and the play "Face-Off" by Giovanni Adams '05.

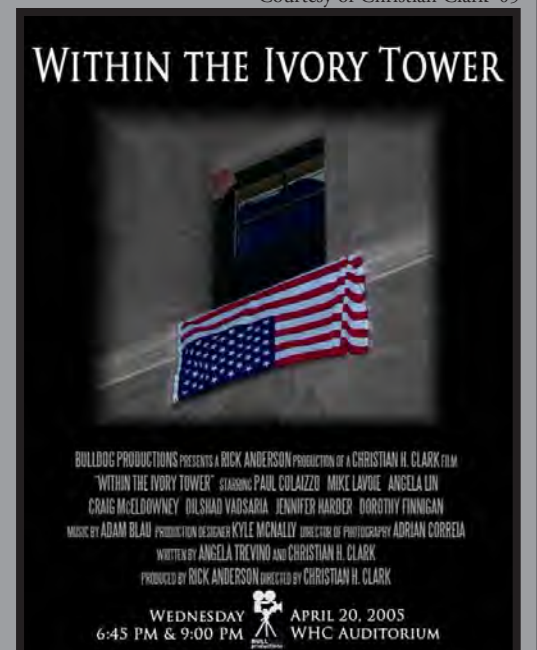


Courtesy of Yale Daily News

Flyers distributed in May of 2004 revealed the names of the alleged trespassers in the Kat Lo incident. The flyer reads, "Why is the victim's name public while the perpetrators remain anonymous?" and includes a photocopied version of the inflammatory note that was left in Kat Lo's suite. For more information, please refer to the Yale Daily News archives at [www.yaledailynews.com](http://www.yaledailynews.com).

Courtesy of Christian Clark '05

In Spring of 2005, the student organization Bulldog Productions screened an original feature-length movie entitled "Within the Ivory Tower." The movie chronicled the events of the Kat Lo story. The same semester, student Giovanni Adams '05 staged a play in Dwight Hall titled "Face-Off," which similarly centered on the incidents of racism and unrest associated with the Kat Lo story.



# unfunny. an april fool's joke gone wrong.

the original yale daily news\* article with an introduction by chiraag bains, BK '03

Chiraag Bains, '03 served as co-moderator of AASA with Hua Ting-ting Liang '03 when the Yale Daily News printed this article. AASA took on the leadership role of raising awareness, circulating information, meeting with the editor of the Yale Daily News and collaboratively sponsoring a forum to generate dialogue among students.

On April Fool's Day, 2001, the Yale Daily News\* published "Confessions of a Jewish Asian Worshipper" in its annual spoof issue. The article drew its inspiration from Justin Fong's attack on his fellow Asian Americans,

**Asian women were sluts and Asian men unable to satisfy them; together these truths made for an effortlessly active sex life for Jewish men with Asian fetishes.**

entitled "The Invasion," in Harvard's FM magazine. The author, Michael Horn, may have intended to satirize the FM piece, but in the process he reified racialized conceptions of Asian Americans and invoked additional stereotypes omitted by Fong. Asian women were sluts and

**Students said the article reflected the unique position of Asian Americans as a racial group acceptable to attack.**

Asian men unable to satisfy them; together these truths made for an effortlessly active sex life for Jewish men with Asian fetishes. The piece hurt and angered many among Asian Americans and other students of color, and whites too spoke out

against its message. Students said the article reflected the unique position of Asian Americans as a racial group acceptable to attack, and they suggested a consistency between its themes and the rise in anti-Asian violence in the country. Meanwhile, some defended the article as a joke and accused AASA of crying racism where none existed.

While the News accepted no blame for printing a gag heavy with racism, Horn circulated an apology

**The episode raises important questions about race politics and power: How willing are we to tolerate racism, whether overt or in the context of humor?**

by email. The News did dedicate one day's full opinion page to the controversy surrounding the article, and the paper co-sponsored a forum with AASA to discuss stereotypes and the role of the media.

The episode raises important questions about race, politics, and power: How willing are we to tolerate racism, whether overt or in the context of humor? How are the standards of what is objectionable changing? How seriously do we take the history of discrimination against Asian Americans, vis-à-vis that of other minority groups? What are the distinctions among racism, cultural insensitivity, and the perpetuation of stereotypes and which of these terms is most useful? And perhaps most importantly, in responding to an incident like this, what is the right balance between calling racism by its name and demanding justice, and settling for the more palatable dialogue in pursuit of healing and harmony?

## the original text.

March 15, I had expected, would have been a rather uneventful day. March Madness was about to begin, and with spring break coming to a close, I was planning on enjoying the rest of my vacation by sitting in just one place-in front of the television on my family room couch. With Yale's winter sports out of the picture, it just all sounded boring.

I had woken up a few minutes before noon, gone to make myself some breakfast, and settled down to scan the internet for the final minutes before college basketball would consume my life for the rest of the day.

CNN had nothing exciting to offer. The New York Times had something on President Bush and an upcoming fight with the Democrats. Standard fare, really.

But then, I nearly dropped my Grape-Nuts when I came across an astonishing article in the Harvard Crimson's FM magazine. "The Invasion," the headline read. Didn't seem like much - until I read it that is.

It was a long column written by a self-hating Asian, describing why, in detail, "most Harvard Asians can be pretty frickin' lame."

As later apologies by The Harvard Crimson stated, this article and its asides "were meant to provoke a discussion," which is exactly what it did among my friends and me.

We discussed the column and its points, applying them to Asians in general. And the more the discussion progressed, the more I found myself agreeing with the column's central points but disagreeing with its conclusion.

\* The views expressed in this article are not representative of the views of the present Yale Daily News staff.

Confessions of a Jewish Asian Worshipper

# unfunny.

an april fool's joke gone wrong.

The 2001 April Fool's issue of the *Yale Daily News* featured this piece entitled "Confessions of a Jewish Asian Worshipper." Espousing racist and ignorant comments about the general Asian American population, this "joke" caused students on campus to not only rethink the reputation of Yale's most respected newspaper, but also the status of Asian American students on campus.

## the original text. (continued)

You see, for all the reasons the author of the column Mr. Justin Geoffrey Fong '03 hates Asians, are the very reasons I love Asians. And let me make this perfectly clear – I do love Asians.

On an aside of my own, Mr. Fong, the column states, lives in Pfoho House, which is basically a miserable excuse for

**I'll grant Mr. Fong his point that Asian women are sluts.**

a pseudo-residential college. It's got the Swing Space mentality going for it, except it's not as nice. I know because I spent a night there during this year's version of The Game – with an Asian girl in fact. Well she was half-Asian, but hey, who's counting?

Anyway, back to Mr. Fong's argument.

First, Mr. Fong says the Harvard Asian woman is no different from the stereotypical Asian female who is "a super-erotic personification

**Follow my logic here. These Asians hang out in packs. Within the packs, the women are sex-craved fiends. And the Asian men in the packs are unable to fill their desires cause they're downright pathetic.**

of sensuality (Lucy Liu, Yoko Ono and Mulan) – a sex fiend hottie whose bones everyone wants to jump." Asian women at Harvard are "out-and-about: many men of different races with the Asian persuasion have capitalized on the local piece of ass."

I'll grant Mr. Fong his point that Asian women are sluts. My in-depth research has led me to the same conclusion. It's an indisputable, empirical fact. But I disagree with him that this is a bad thing. I mean, what's wrong with white men with Asian fetishes hooking up with Asian women? Exactly. Nothing. In fact, it's a good thing.

Furthermore, Mr. Fong attacks Asians for how they only hang out with other Asians. Yup, I know of those Asians. We in the white community call them the "Asian Mafia." But again, this does not seem like such a bad thing to me. It makes taking advantage of this whole Asian sex-fiend trait that much easier. It's just like hunting a flock of sheep; fishing amongst a school of fish in a pond; taking target practice. You're bound to nail at least one.

But Mr. Fong faces a logical fallacy here. If

Included in the original print version of "Confessions of a Jewish Asian Worshipper" was this picture of what the article suggested was the archetypal Asian woman.



the women are being taken advantage of by people of other races who have Asian fetishes, then that means these sex fiends are not only "hanging out" with Asians. They're also "hanging out" with non-Asians, people like me. Right. Let's ignore logic and move

**Mr. Fong also attacks Asian men. He says the typical Asian male is "a scrawny, impotent, effeminate brainiac." I see he's done his research.**

on with Mr. Fong's argument. Mr. Fong also attacks Asian men. He says the typical Asian male is "a scrawny, impotent, effeminate brainiac." I see he's done his research.

Oh, and by the way, Mr. Fong abhors being called Asian just "because [his] package is less than heavy duty, [his] eyes are poopy brown and [his] last name happens to sound like an onomatopoeia."

I say, come off it. Mr. Fong – don't be so hard on yourself. Be proud. These are only a few of the many things that make you Asian.

And again, as far as I'm concerned, the fact that the Asian male is impotent and is not well hung is a very good thing. Follow my logic here. These Asians hang out in packs. Within the packs, the women are sex-craved fiends. And the Asian men in the packs are unable to fill their desires cause they're downright pathetic.

And since – in the tradition of Blair Golson '01 (see photo Page 1) and the other managing editors – my package is certainly "heavy duty," it's easy for me to capitalize on a little piece of Asian ass.

Mr. Fong, I hope I get to meet you some day because you've cleared up the mystery for me. Thanks to some inspired debate, I now know why Asians are just a downright incredible race.

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# unfunny.

In the days that followed the April 1, 2001 publication of "Confessions of a Jewish Asian Worshipper," letters reacting to the article flooded into the Yale Daily News from students of all backgrounds.

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## Joke column is latent with insensitivity

To the Editor:

I can't think of a more fitting way to begin Hate Crimes Awareness Week than with [Confessions]. It is a perfect example of the kind of ignorance that leads to racially motivated violence. Deeming the column a satire and publishing it in a joke issue is a weak defense for your insensitivity.

Ann M. Thai '02  
April 8, 2001

*(This letter has been truncated due to space limitations. The full version of this letter as well as additional letters sent to the Yale Daily News can be found on the Yale Daily News web site at [www.yaledailynews.com](http://www.yaledailynews.com))*

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## Quiet prejudice is insidious and destructive

To the Editor:

[Confessions] raises an important issue -- that of "quiet prejudice." "Active racism" has largely gone away. People are no longer lynched, and police no longer beat or kill people without proper cause (well, in most cases). "Quiet prejudice," however, still remains; it is a subtle attitude that strips its victims of their human dignity. People with this attitude regard Asian women not as full human beings but as sex toys to be played with.

They regard Asian men not as people capable of love but as castrated workaholics. And I think quite a few people in America secretly harbor this attitude, although they claim to be opposed to racism, discrimination, etc. Precisely because it is subtle and can be hidden behind "jokes," it is hard to catch and to correct.

Nevertheless, I call upon of all you at the News to fight this quiet prejudice with the rest of us. Surely, we are not asking for much when all we want is just human dignity.

Jing Wang '02  
April 8, 2001

## Column on Asians was ironic, not racist

To the Editor:

I recently received a rather disturbing e-mail from the Asian American Students Alliance suggesting that I join with others in requesting an "apology" from the Yale Daily News for [Confessions].

I am writing instead to request that you not issue any sort of apology because the article in question is in no way "racist" or "sexist" as was alleged by the e-mail. How anyone could fail to see that the author wrote the aforementioned article with tongue planted firmly in cheek is completely beyond me.

I would expect Yale students would be intelligent enough to recognize the irony in such blatantly outrageous statements as "Asian women are sluts" and "Asian men are impotent," especially in the context of an April Fools' Day column. Where are these people's senses of humor?

In fact, I personally think the column does a rather good job of accenting the sheer absurdity of racial stereotypes. When groups like the AASA start throwing tantrums over affairs that are clearly devoid of any real sort of racism, it cheapens worthwhile attempts to spread "cultural awareness."

So, in defense of integrity, freedom of the press and April Fools' Day, I would like to request that you not publish an apology for the column.

Zubin Gautam '03  
April 8, 2001

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## Selective satire: Would you have done this to others?

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my deep disappointment and surprise at the ignorance that your joke issue column displayed. To lay my cards out on the table, I am an Asian-American woman, and I was very offended by the stereotypes that your column chose to perpetuate.

I find it hard to believe that people who are smart enough to get into Yale are dumb enough to print such garbage. I doubt you would have printed an article espousing stereotypes about African-Americans or Jews, so why is it OK to encourage stereotyping of Asian-Americans? The answer is, it's not. Stereotypes are harmful precisely because they aren't true. You can't judge a person based upon his or her membership in a group, nor by the actions of a few. If you could, based on your actions, I'd have to say that all Yale men are irresponsible.

I'm willing to give you the benefit of the doubt that you didn't realize just how hurtful your words were. But if you take anything away from this letter at all, please know that the column was not funny. Next time, be more careful about what you print. This is not acceptable "humor."

Kanchana Wangkeo LAW '02  
April 8, 2001





# OUR VOICE

To react constructively against an offense to the Asian American community, people from many ethnicities and walks of life came together to show the campus that we do have a voice, and we will be heard.

Annette Wong, BK '06, majored in History and International Studies. During her time at Yale, she was a Freshman Counselor, a member of Jook Songs, and the CASA Community Chair from 2002 to 2003. She was also a Community Health Educator and an active member of Yale Students for Christ and the Slavic Chorus.

The April 2006 edition of The Rumpus's pre-frosh survival guide featured a photograph of a man wearing nothing but a Chinese pigtail hat and a take-out box on his penis under the headline, "ME LOVE YOU LONG TIME: Yale's case of Yellow Fever." In the body of the article, Asian women were likened to SARS ("they take my breath away") and New Orleans Levees ("they only stay tight for so long."). That same week, the Yale Herald also printed a cartoon in the Comics section that featured characters implying that the fact that Yale College Council President Emery Choi was Asian was a valid reason to vote for his opposition.

Unfortunately, this was not the beginning of such racially-charged stereotyping at Yale. Earlier in the semester, the Yale Herald's Calendar section began its description of the Asian American Film Festival with, "If you have Yellow Fever, where can you find the largest gatherings of Lees, Wangs and Kims on campus this weekend? For once, the answer isn't 'at the library.'" Other instances were present not only throughout the year, but over the course of many students' Yale careers.

Yale prides itself on its diversity and strives to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. After four years of seeing ethnic awareness increase on campus, reading such base racial humor in our senior year was disappointing and frustrating. The idea that Yalies are so tolerant and understanding that the use of stereotyping for "ironic humor" would not be perceived as hurtful or offensive assumes that racism is a thing of the past. Ironic humor also relies on the structure of satire, which singles out the ludicrous or absurd and subtly attacks it to show it for what it really is. The editors of both papers defended their publications by citing satirical structure, but the articles and cartoons merely presented these

stereotypes without poking at their flaws.

Sometimes, the mutual respect for each other disintegrates in more visible ways. During our freshman year, the Katherine Lo/African American Cultural Center incident (see pages 28-29) showed us that race-based hate crimes can and do happen at Yale. More recently, at the Minority Advisory Council's open meeting of 2006, students recounted instances of blatant racial discrimination on Yale's campus. In the wake of a string of local robberies, the perpetrators were described as black males between the ages of 18-25—a description that many Yale students fit. African American students recalled having doors and gates shut on them purposely and staff questioning their status as Yale students. As a result, hearing members of the Yale community (even our friends!) tell us to "learn to take a joke," "stop taking yourselves so seriously," and "stop being so uppity" pointed to the larger problem of the campus's inability to discuss race in a relevant manner.

## It was gratifying to see such solidarity from so many facets of the Yale community.

What was inspiring to see, however, was the mobilization of concerned students in order to raise awareness around the issue. In response to the Rumpus and Herald articles, AASA first spoke with the respective editors of the publications and then released a petition letter. They photocopied and circulated the articles in question, and solicited official statements from the Dean's office speaking out against the articles in question. Alumni were notified and encouraged to write to the Deans of Yale College, including the Dean of Admissions, since two of the items in question had been released for Bulldog Days. A group of students also formed the "Students Against Flagrance" group on The-Facebook.com to provide a digital forum for students to discuss the articles. Within the first two days, the group had more than 300 members. A "Day of Silence" was also observed in which participating students dressed in black and/or wore cloth gags

to make visible to the student body our offense. Peter Salovey, the Dean of Yale College, Saveena Dhall, Assistant Dean of Yale College, and Betty Trachtenberg, the Dean of Student Affairs, met with students to discuss ways in which respect for ethnicity could be fostered on a long-term, institutional level. The Asian American Students Alliance and Realizing Race also organized a forum, moderated by Professor of History and Master of Calhoun College, Jonathan Holloway. The forum drew over 200 people from all walks of Yale life, from the writers and editors for the Rumpus and the Herald to the Deans of the Asian American, Latino, and Native American cultural centers. Students respectfully discussed various aspects of the issue and brainstormed ways to set a positive precedence for the future. The forum was scheduled to last for an hour, but it lasted twice that long, with hardly anyone rising to leave. Afterward, clusters of students remained well into their Thursday night to discuss the campus's race relations.

It was gratifying to see such solidarity from so many facets of the Yale community. This solidarity was motivated in part by what had been revealed earlier that week in the Minority Advisory Council's open meeting, that it was not just the Asian American community, but members of the African American, Native American, Latino, and LGBT communities that felt marginalized as well. But the response we heard from the administration, alumni, faculty, and fellow students gave us hope that, in the words of one student, "Real change is coming."

Students engaged in discussion at the forum held by AASA and Realizing Race in LC in spring 2006.



# people.

A hello and a goodbye. As you meet your ethnic counselors, seniors who will serve as your mentors and friends throughout this year, and read the thoughts of two sophomores on their own freshman years, two recent graduates, Kean Hsu and Suraiya Anita Jetha, embark on the next stage of their lives.

Just as Kean and Suraiya, as freshmen, entered a campus shaped by the students before them, you are entering a campus that has been shaped by students like Kean and Suraiya. Like all the students who have made up the history of Yale, their stories illustrate the endless possibilities that await you.

From Yung Wing to Kean and Suraiya, your predecessors have provided the foundations for you. Where will you go from here?

# freshman reflections



## Mitchell Ji,

*MC '09, is from Green Oaks, Illinois. He currently serves as CASA social chair and AASA community outreach co-chair, and his favorite Asian movie is "My Sassy Girl."*

Most freshmen will remark on how their first year of Yale was a time of exciting change and personal growth. I'll forever remember my freshman year with one word: awkward. On my second day of Yale, I walked in on a girl getting dressed because I thought it was my own room. Walking to class, I would say "Hi!" to people who I thought I knew, only to get a weird stare or a pity smile in return. Sometimes I even caught other people in my bathroom stealing toilet paper.

During the first week of Yale, I walked with

my awkward freshman clump of friends to the extracurricular bazaar. Most of us were pretty confused at the time and just wanted to stick together to seem cool. I walked into the row where all the Asian ethnic organizations stood. Without saying a word or making any eye contact, I was immediately asked by upperclassmen to join AASA, VISA, TAS, KASY, CASA, KASAMA, and any other Asian organization with an acronym. After that experience, I thought to myself, "Wow, Asians at Yale are intense!"

So how correct was I with my first impression of the Asian community? Looking up the word "intense" in the thesaurus, you will find the words "active", "determined", and "passionate". Given what I've experienced my freshman year, I feel that these words truly capture the spirit of the Asian American community at Yale.

One event that sticks out to me is the Pan-Asian Dinner. That night, Yale students anxiously waited in long lines to try our ethnic foods (which really put dining hall

food to shame). Through the joint effort of all of the Asian ethnic groups, we donated a large sum of money to help South Asian earthquake victims. Another highlight was ECAASU (East Coast Asian American Students Union). Dressed in bright orange and determined to succeed, over 40 Yale students attended the ECAASU 2006 conference at George Washington University and won the bid to bring ECAASU to Yale in 2007. Now Yale's Asian American community is working meticulously behind the scenes to ensure the success of ECAASU '07.

What make these events so special are the people who take the initiative to make them happen. The Asian American community at Yale is one of the most active and tight-knit groups that I have seen. Last year, I sat in my ethnic counselor meeting surrounded by the other Asian American freshmen. Most of us sat awkwardly looking at each other, not knowing that many of us would become very close friends as we share the Yale experience together.



## Christine Nguyen,

*MC '09, is from Culver City, California. She currently serves as AASA community outreach co-chair and was an AASA freshmen liaison during her freshman year. Christine loves homemade goods.*

I feared that college would change me. I was scared of exposure to new ideas that could contradict my beliefs and values. I was content with who I was and I wanted to retain my identity. But in retrospect, it seems that many years have gone by in just one, and they have gone by way too fast. I learned more about myself in this past year than I ever learned in the past 18 years; my strengths, my weaknesses, what I'm passionate about, and what I

despise. I had moments of triumph, but also emotional breakdowns that made me cry harder than I've ever cried. College made me realize that I AM human, that mistakes and failures are a part of life. Even when I felt alone, I knew that there were lots of shoulders for me to cry on. In such a short time, I found people that I can see myself still remaining close to years and years from now...I think it's even safe to say that I'll hold these people as friends even longer than forever.

The Asian American community at Yale was my foundation. During Bulldog Days, I met several Yalies that I loved immediately and they are still my close friends. They introduced me to the Asian American Cultural Center through an event called Fusion. Little did I know, Bulldog Days and Fusion were the beginning of my involvement with the Asian American community on campus. Being an active member of the community helped me embrace my Asian American identity and strengthened my leadership

and organizational skills as well as network among a group of talented people.

Yale didn't meet my expectations...it exceeded them. I'm a little sad that the first year went by so quickly, but I'm looking forward to the coming years.

The AASA freshman liaisons of the 2005-06 school year at the AASA senior banquet in spring 2006.





# senior reflections

**Kean Hsu, ES'06**, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in Psychology. During his time at Yale, he held officer positions for the Chinese American Students' Association, Taiwanese American Society, and the Vietnamese Students Association. He served as an Ethnic Counselor for Asian Americans his senior year. Kean is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Southern California.

I honestly had no idea what to expect when coming out here to Yale, hailing from a relatively small public school out in the middle of the suburbs of Littleton, Colorado. For many students, including myself, Yale was a university of mythical proportions. I didn't know how I would fare here, amongst what was (and still is) quite arguably the cream of the crop. However, upon my arrival, I realized something else. Despite everyone being amazing in so many different ways, students were exceptionally grounded and down to earth. The single

**The single unifying thought that students expressed throughout that first year was that they thought they were an admissions mistake, having arrived here out of pure luck.**

unifying thought that students expressed throughout that first year was that they thought they were an admissions mistake, having arrived here out of pure luck. This inherent sense of modesty on the part of students and the supportive atmosphere that Yale continually fosters create a place where you can learn just as much outside the classroom as you can inside. To this end, one of the most important realizations I have had here is that at Yale you ought to give everything a chance if only because you do not know what sorts of things you might learn from it. Although I learned a great deal from a number of different activities I've engaged in, none might have helped me grow and learn more than my time within the Asian American community. Coming from Colorado, where I had a

limited chance to learn about my own culture and interact with people of my own ethnicity, I was interested but slow to get involved with an ethnic group. I joined the Chinese American Students Association (CASA) to see what sort of things they had to offer and was pleasantly surprised at the variety of opportunities available. From having a CASA family that gave me the chance to learn from upperclassmen and get free food and good company in the process, to participating in the Chinese Adopted Siblings Program at Yale (CASPY; where my job as a big sib was to play with little kids and have fun) I was able to be involved in a number of different ways. The great experiences I had with CASA convinced me to join CASA board so I could contribute back. So it was only an added bonus that my experiences with the board taught me so much, including about myself. From my time on board I was exposed to other cultural organizations and became interested in learning about their interests and cultures as well. Learning from the other students around here is perhaps the most important thing that makes Yale great. Where else in the world, or in your lifetime, will you get an opportunity to interact with so many quality people of such a diverse range of perspectives? As a result of the different styles of groups around campus, no experience is the same and there is always something new to be learned. I joined other boards like the Taiwanese American Society (TAS) and the Vietnamese Students Association (ViSA) with this in mind and gained a richer perspective on life and wonderful friends along the way.

At Yale, countless choices and opportunities await you. It is up to you to pick and choose from the plethora of organizations around campus to find something that piques your curiosity and suits your interests. And whatever your interests may be, the Asian American community, through the wide variety of social, political,

community service oriented, cultural, and other experiences that are available in it, is always worth consideration. For myself, the Asian American community taught me leadership, imparted a greater awareness of important issues surrounding our community, gave me experiences organizing and working with others to achieve higher goals, inspired passion to contribute more back to the Yale experience, allowed me to better understand both

**For me, the Asian American community... inspired passion to contribute more back to the Yale experience, allowed me to better understand both my strengths and weaknesses, and most cherished of all, gave me friends that will last a lifetime.**

my strengths and weaknesses, and most cherished of all, gave me friends that will last a lifetime. There is no possible way for me to fully express my thanks to the Asian American community at Yale, including those before me who helped build and strengthen the community, as well as those after who bring perpetual energy and new perspectives and ideas. As an outgoing senior I still cannot believe that my time here has come to a close. But as I depart, I leave the door open to you and others with the hopes that you will make the most of your time here and the joy that you will have a chance to learn from those around you. Be well and take care.



# senior reflections

**Suraiya Anita Jetha, MC '06**, graduated with a B.A. in Anthropology. During her time at Yale, she worked with the South Asian Conference Council, the Asian American Cultural Center, and the Asian American Students Alliance as Co-Moderator in 2004. She served as Head Ethnic Freshman Counselor of Yale College (2005-2006) and has been a member of Jook Songs since 2004. Her favorite color is red.

I left Yale from the same place I arrived as a freshman—Phelps Gate. Very symmetrical and parallel, although I won't pretend I planned it that way. To my mother's chagrin, I have no pictures to prove this. I'm not too concerned about that though—my arrival and departure from Yale was not so important as the

**The Asian American community... exists in the voices of students, alumni, faculty, and staff; voices which I learned to appreciate in a very special group of people.**

time in between, the span in which I made some of my best friends, faced some of my most difficult challenges, and grew more than I ever would have expected. This education was not in the classroom; it was the "in-between" before and after academics where I learned the most about the overlaps, not gaps, between people, and what "community" can mean.

During my freshman year I happened upon the South Asian Conference Council (SACC) through an upperclassman Cultural Connections aide. In the conference I helped organize that year, I learned how to call strangers on the phone, I learned how to work for better or worse with a team, and I learned about the places in between the rifts made by national origin, religion, and class where a community exists.

Additionally, my increased awareness about South Asian American issues made me realize the massive breadth of issues about which I had not learned, especially those pertaining to the Filipino and Asian American facets of my identity. I sought

to fill my life with more knowledge and with the in-betweens that had the power to do things like make Tuesday nights worth looking forward to. From the Asian American Cultural Center to the Asian American Students Alliance, I struggled to work solely for the community, not realizing that by virtue of having such a goal, my understanding of "the community" itself would change with time.

I doubt anyone could give a comprehensive rundown of what specifically the Asian American community is—it transcends cultural shows, political events, and publications. It exists in the voices of students, alumni, faculty, and staff; voices which I learned to appreciate in a very special group of people.

Jook Songs, a writing and performance workshop for Asian Americans at Yale, was where I learned of Asian America. Every Monday night workshop began with a check-in and ended with Ivy Noodle; the in-between filled with voices that, despite their diversity, would find common ground with one another. Our similarities and differences didn't simply push and pull one another on some black-white spectrum of ethnic in America; they coexisted, layered and tangled for us to sift through and exchange.

In these weekly workshops, I found myself in people who quickly became my family at Yale. The writing, sharing, and critiquing made each of us grow as individuals as well as a group. I know I would be a completely different person without Jook Songs, but I also know that I would be a completely different person if any member of Jook Songs were absent.

The bond I felt with JS members is the kind that forges a community. It pushed me through four years of involvement at Yale. It's difficult to live near people, work with them, befriend them, and not become a part of their growth as individuals, and to be able to

watch their achievements is truly inspiring. There's a picture on my bureau from sophomore year; I took it with a disposable camera while standing in the middle of Crown Street a little after dusk. It's a bit noticeable that it was taken in a hurry, especially if you're familiar with the broken pavement and crazy New Haven drivers. People sit, crowding the front steps of the Asian American Cultural Center, holding chopsticks, and cradling oversized bowls, while more people stand in line to get in the front door. Not very artistic or well-taken, by "objective" standards.

This picture of one of ViSA's pho nights reminds me of my experience and of the

**The fresh, eager faces captured twenty years ago and those from two years ago lie in the students, reminders of the growing legacy of Asian Americans at Yale.**

community's own history at Yale. I can still hear the chatter of a Southern accent and a Filipino accent, and I can taste the basil and hot sauce on my tongue. I brought this photo with me when I studied abroad and kept it as remedies for homesickness along with others of my parents and brothers.

More importantly, this picture is one of many taken on the steps of the Center in the last twenty years. Comparing it, side by side, with an older photo, the hairstyles and clothing vary greatly, but the in-between, the similarity between the old pictures and the new is not only in the physical form of the AACC. The fresh, eager faces captured twenty years ago and those from two years ago lie in the students, reminders of the growing legacy of Asian Americans at Yale.

# ETHNIC COUNSELORS

Established in 1973, the Ethnic Counselor Program has been an important part of the Freshmen Counseling system to help ease the transition of students of color to Yale. Ethnic Counselors serve as an additional resource for their counsees and the freshmen of their residential college community on areas such as academics, extracurriculars, the cultural centers, and student organizations.



**Aditi Anand**  
ES '07

Born in India, Aditi claims New York City as her home away from home even though her parents now live in Dayton, OH. So don't ask her where she's from because in the words of Facebook, "It's complicated." Aditi is majoring in Anthropology and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and would like to go into the field of development...and open her own chain of tea cafes. Her academic interests include Diaspora com-

munities and postcolonial studies, and she is returning to Yale from an amazing semester in Durban, South Africa.

At Yale, Aditi has served as the special events co-coordinator at the Asian American Cultural Center, coordinator of South Asian Conference Council and cultural chair of South Asian Society. She also worked as a coordinator of the Yale Women's Center and continues to be involved

with WYSE (mentoring program for teen girls). Recently, she's been training in capoeira—a Brazilian martial arts—and isn't afraid to kick butt in general.

Her loves in life include her family, new media, revolutionaries, the arts, public transportation and the food network. Come find Aditi because she's always looking to procrastinate, especially if it involves greasy food from the buttery.



**Karla Chien**  
PC '07

Karla was born in Singapore and grew up in Hong Kong. After eighth grade, she left years of school uniforms, 40 people per a classroom and rote memorization of Chinese history textbooks to attend boarding school in the US. Between high school and college, she took a year off, working in an orphanage in Thailand and studying Mandarin in Beijing. After a year away from school, she was excited to get to

Yale. She majors in English, focusing on contemporary global fiction. She is the editor-in-chief of Yellow Pages, an art and literary magazine about Asian and Asian American issues; she is the Pierson Coordinator for Tutoring in Elementary Schools (T.I.E.S); she plays club squash and works for the Yale World Fellows Program. After college, she may or may not attend graduate school, but she does hope to pursue a

career in journalism. She wants a prestigious newspaper or magazine to pay for her to travel around the world and write about different minority communities. She is eager to meet Yale's class of 2010, and after seven years of dorm life, she would like to pass on her knowledge about sharing bedrooms, arranging furniture, late night snacking and packing clothes. Also, she is addicted to bubble tea from Oolongs.



**Iris Shim**  
SY '07

Iris was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. Her first loves are and will always be snowboarding, surfing and Mexican food.

Iris entered Yale interested in engineering, and ended up double majoring in Religious Studies and East Asian Studies. After Yale, she hopes to pursue a career in social entrepreneurialism and figure out some way to become an international "banker to the poor."

Outside of the classroom, Iris has devoted most of her time to the Asian American community. She is the founder and president of LiNK@Yale- a nonprofit organization striving to raise awareness about human rights violations in North Korea. She also served on the executive board for Korean American Students at Yale (KASY) and has contributed to the Korean American Journal (KAJ). She spent her Junior

year fall term abroad in Taiwan, studying Mandarin Chinese and developing an addiction to milk tea Boba. As a member of Instrumental Connections (IC), she loves teaching violin to elementary school kids. In her free time, she spends the fall/spring season playing ultimate frisbee and the winter season snowboarding. Year-round, she can be found chomping on burritos from the Burrito Man at Yale (BMY).

## so my ethnic counselor is...

**Stiles, Morse, JE\***  
**TD, Silliman**

**Saybrook, Pierson, Davenport\***

\*First half of the alphabet

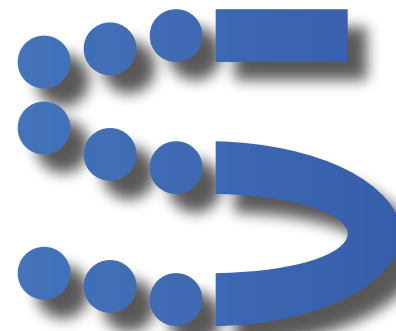
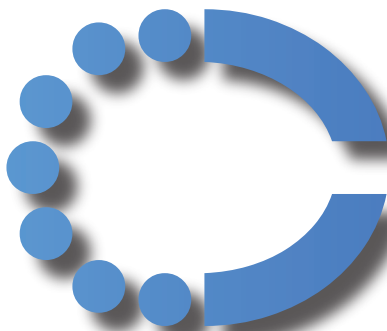
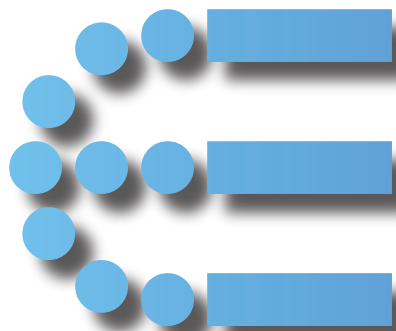
Aditi  
Karla  
Iris

**Calhoun, Trumbull, JE\*\***  
**Branford, Berkeley, Davenport\*\***

\*\*Second half of the alphabet

Christine  
James





# FOR THE CLASSES OF 2010

Christine is from the one and only Bend, Oregon--where Kevin Costner's unfortunate "The Postman" was filmed. She is a double major in East Asian Studies and Ethics, Politics, and Economics, which means she is basically majoring in everything.

During her time at Yale, Christine has dabbled in activities such as the Asian American Students Alliance (AASA), the Political and Educational Committee (PAEC), Five Magazine (a progressive, call-to-

action publication), Steppin' Out, YTV News, LDSSA, Rumpus, and YCouture. She has participated in FOOT, FOCUS on New Haven, and tutored in local schools. Sophomore year, she and a group of friends went "Trading Spaces" on the Calhoun Buttery, and organized the project to remodel the space. She also loved working at the Asian American Cultural Center her junior year, planning events like the Asian American Film Festival and Arts Exhibit. Christine has

spent her summers doing political canvassing and voter registration in the Seattle area and language study and research in China.

Christine fancies all things culinary, culture, and design. She is particularly fond of traveling, fresh produce, box dvd sets, sleeping, big earrings, gummy candy, and listening to music. She is an all-star procrastinator, and knows her New Haven Thai food. Feel free to email Christine about anything!



Christine Tsang  
CC '07

Born and raised in Connecticut, James loves the Northeast (including the weather) and thinks the cold makes people feel alive. Before anything else is mentioned, it must be known that James loves to eat. Maybe this comes from his mom's great home cooking, or possibly his hollow left leg, but either way, he frequently eats out late nights, indicated by his seemingly perpetual lack of cash. James' other interests include movies, cars, and hanging out among others.

Majoring in History, but frequently procrastinating, James spends most of his time and energy either at work in the library or fencing at the gym. He works at the Sterling Circulation Desk three to four nights per week to support his late night addictions and is always willing to help students navigate the dark and dreary stacks. Varsity Fencing is the other activity that consumes most of James' time. He practices daily on the seventh floor of Payne Whitney and encourages all

his friends to attend the team's two or three home meets every season. James is still active in the Chinese American Student Association, having previously served as the Social Chair and, later, the Vice President. For the past few summers, James has studied and worked in Beijing, China. When this was written, his summer plans for 2006 had yet to be solidified, but there was no question that they would be equally spectacular. James is looking forward to meeting you!



James Yin  
BR '07

## so how do i find my ec?

**Aditi Anand**  
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L A22

**Karla Ch'ien**  
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TD H43

**Christine Tsang**  
christine.tsang@yale.edu  
B A21

**Iris Shim**  
iris.shim@yale.edu  
LW C21

**James Yin**  
james.yin@yale.edu  
V C11

**so what can they do?**  
One thing to remember is that ethnic counselors are freshman counselors, too, so feel free to talk to them about anything — what classes to take, how to cope with a noisy roommate, even what foods are best for late-night sustenance. You can reach them by phone, e-mail, or just swing by their suite!

AASA

the asian american students alliance  
www.yale.edu/aasa  
second edition two thousand six