

Spring 2021

ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

*The official newsletter of the Asian American
Psychological Association*



Cover art by Thanh Nguyen

June 2021

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Asian American Psychological Association Newsletter Disclaimer

Asian American Psychologist is the official publication for the membership of the Asian American Psychological Association and is published three times annually to provide a forum to inform members of news and events.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

RICHELLE CONCEPCION
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A frequently asked question I'd been asked as a clinician is "What do you do for self care?". It is such a simple question and yet it carries loaded implications. What does self care even mean right now? Does it entail what replenishes our energy stores at the end of the day? Does it redefine our purpose when we find ourselves burning out due to overexerting ourselves? I'd been paying attention to a number of individuals on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter who've shared their own resources for self care. Truth be told, there is not a one size fits all definition of self care for each person and quite frankly for myself, what I define as my self care activity today is very likely to differ next week. In the meantime, the most persistent form of self care has been finding community especially within my different social networks to include this group. Though I've generally identified as a super-introvert, it has been energizing to share space with other folks for support, dialogues and even to share a meal.

The past year plus has been difficult for many of us. Self care has indeed been a must, yet we struggle to find what works to keep us sustained. Many of us have mourned loved ones and are actively fearful for our families in other countries that are severely impacted by COVID-19. While we struggle with the anxiety attributed to the infectious nature of the pandemic, we've also had to overcome the challenge of physical/social distancing especially as many of us are community-oriented by nature. We've also had to cope with and fight the racism attributed to the origins of the pandemic, something that is still pervasive in spite of the efforts that have contributed to the slowing of virus transmission. It seems that we are regularly witnessing other targeted acts of terror both in our nation and abroad. Yet, despite all of the above, we are still expected to function and carry on. May we continue to find healing during these times. May we also be kind to ourselves when we aren't able to function as effectively during these times. May this community serve as that support to carry us through when we need it.



Richelle Concepcion
AAPA President
United States Army -
Schofield Barracks, HI

FINANCE REPORT

JAN ESTRELLADO, AMANDA BREEN & MICHELLE MADORE *CO-FINANCE OFFICERS*

AAPA's Co-Finance Officers (FOs) Jan Estrellado, Amanda Breen, and Michelle Madore are happy to report that AAPA's bank accounts are in good condition. Our total combined balance from ETrade and PayPal is \$346,999.20 as of April 23, 2021. Subtracting fiscal agent accounts and AAPA Division balances, AAPA's main account has \$266,999.20 in working capital.

The FOs are pleased to share the following updates with the AAPA membership:

- **Alliance Project Funding.** The FO team is working to manage the fiscal portion of the COVID-19 Communities of Color (COC) Needs Assessment project, headed by Dr. Anne Saw.
- **2020 Taxes.** The organization will request an extension in order to file 2020 taxes. A new infrastructure has been introduced in order to simplify the process in the future.
- **W9s.** The FOs strengthened its disbursement process by working with division officers, awards committee, and its tax consultant to provide W9 documentation for taxable income to its contractors and award recipients.
- **Reincorporation.** The FOs, along with the presidential leadership team, filed federal and state paperwork (CA) to reincorporate and is in the final stages of re-establishing its 501(c)3 non-profit status. A lawyer has been retained and we are waiting to hear back regarding the filing of the paperwork.
- **Bank account consolidation.** As soon as 501(c)3 non-profit status is finalized, Matt Lee has graciously agreed to finalize the bank account move from E*Trade to Chase Bank. This process will allow for more efficient fiscal tracking and transactions, including for division finances.
- **Increasing available resources.** The FO team is working on the using Quickbooks as a financial management software that will help ease the transition of information to new FOs.
- **AAPA Website Development Project.** Under the leadership of Communications Officer Dr. Ming-Che Tu, the FO team is part of the EC project team to re-vamp the AAPA website.
- **On-boarding of new division financial officers.** The FO team had their first division finance officer orientation. The plan is to have an annual check in meeting to orient any new finance officers and update them regarding any changes in policy. Additionally, division finances are being jointly tracked by both AAPA and division finance officers in anticipation of the transfer to a new bank account.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

KAVITA K. ATWAL, PH.D.
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Hello AAPA Members!

Thank you for being an AAPA member. AAPA's overall membership continues to steadily grow. The Asian American Psychological Association currently has a total membership count of 1,499 members. Student members comprise the majority of our membership. Since November 2020, we have had an overall increase of 123 AAPA members. Specifically, we have had an increase of 79 student members and 43 professional members. See the table below for a breakdown of our membership by membership type.

The AAPA Executive Committee has approved expanding the AAPA membership team! We now have two Co-Membership Officers and two Student Membership Assistant Volunteers. Please welcome Dr. Amanda Waters as AAPA's new Co-Membership Officer, joining Dr. Kavita Atwal. Please welcome Carla Pamela Cortez and Oscar Lau as AAPA's new Student Membership Assistant Volunteers!

You can easily edit your AAPA membership through our website at www.aapaonline.org. By logging in online, you can also join our wonderful AAPA Divisions. If you are having difficulty logging into your account, there is an option to reset your password online.

Your AAPA membership lasts for a year from the date that you signed up and will be automatically renewed after the year is complete. Please email us if you would like to opt out of having your membership automatically renewed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding AAPA membership, please do not hesitate to contact our membership team at membership@aapaonline.org.

Please look out for exciting new updates from your AAPA membership team! Thank you for your continuing support of AAPA!

Best Wishes,
AAPA Membership Team

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	<u>November 2020</u>	<u>April 2021</u>
Students	847	926
Professional	517	560
Emeritus	12	12
Total	1376	1499

DIVISION NEWS:

The Division of Multiracial and Adopted Adopted Asian Americans (DMAA)

We are excited to announce our new division name, the Division of Multiracial and Adopted Adopted Asian Americans (DMAA)! The leadership team and our membership felt this name change was important to more accurately reflect and represent our community. In addition, our listserv has also changed to: dmaa@aapaonline.org.

Our division was excited to award our first research scholarships! Congratulations to our incredible 2020 DMAA scholarship recipients Annabelle Atkin, Yuki Yamazaki, and Aimy Paulsen!

DMAA will hold a virtual research event to showcase the results of our award recipients' projects. Those who are interested in learning about the research supported by DMAA and future funding opportunities are encouraged to attend. Please stay tuned for more details. We are looking forward to seeing you at upcoming DMAA events that we are planning for fall 2021!

The DMAA Board

Jason, Danielle, Jessica, Adam, Yuki, Molly, and Amy

"UNTITLED" BY
THANH
NGUYEN
WHAT CAN
SEEM TO BE A
SINGLE LINE IS
A CIRCLE WITH
MANY STROKES

*Interview with
Thanh Nguyen*

PORTIA CHAN

Traditions hold a significant role in many AAPI families and communities. One generation passes its beliefs, customs, and rituals to the next generation. In this spirit, the Asian American Psychologist is very excited to start a new tradition. Starting with this issue, we will highlight visual art by our members on the covers of our issues.

The inaugural cover was drawn by Thanh Nguyen, a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at UMass Boston. An artist once said that a successful composition is when you can see it all at once. Thanh has accomplished this feat. While we can reason that her drawing is not one single line, it can appear like it is one line that holds it all together. The piece is aptly dubbed "Untitled" because words cannot always convey the closeness that families feel.

When she described her drawing, she started with the depiction of herself in the front and center. The mask with "JUSTICE" in all caps is from Black Lives Matter and shows Thanh's commitment to social justice and solidarity

with #BLM. She said that she felt “depleted, alone” when she heard and read about repeated incidents of hate crimes, police brutality, murders of Black individuals. Her art was both solace and action.

From her locus, she proceeded to describe her son securely attached to her and looking with a peaceful expression towards the future, which she hopes is more just. She said she was missing home and thought of the family members who have given her the strength and motivation to pursue work in dismantling systems of oppression. To the right of her son (from our viewpoint), her younger brother smiles behind his glasses while wearing a hoodie. Thanh said that he “brings me joy” and that he’s “just like my dad.” Her father, who is next to her brother, taught her to “work within the systems but don’t lose yourself in them.”

To her left, she drew her mom who is the “definition of unconditional love” and whose “hand is always on my shoulder.” Behind her is her maternal grandmother who modeled compassion and unconditional love.

Next to her is her maternal grandfather



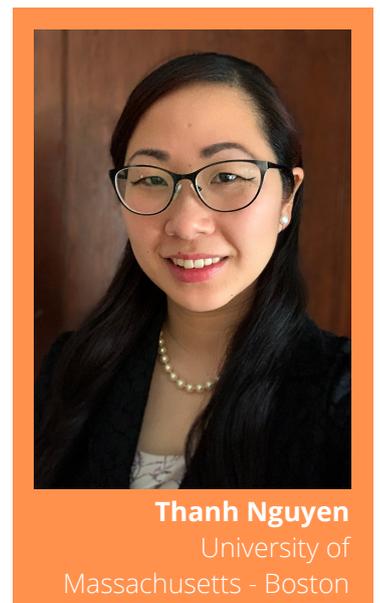
“Work within the systems but don’t lose yourself in them.”

and so inviting of his neighbors,” always ready with “a cup of tea and no judgement of anyone based upon social status.” Behind her dad and in the upper right area, she drew her cousin who had Down’s Syndrome and passed away recently. She and her family cared for him when they lived in Vietnam. He, along with her younger brother, taught her how to be a caregiver and advocate for individuals with disabilities. Her experience growing up with them has inspired her path in clinical psychology and social justice.

As she spoke, her phrases felt just like her art. It felt like one phrase, yet it was several sentences creating dialogue. When asked why she kept her picture as black and white, she explained that by not coloring it in, the viewer is invited to perceive their own colors and might be able to see their families in her family. While no families are exactly the same, this decision helps us to connect and

to really see each other. By drawing members of her family, what can appear to be one line is actually a circle with many strokes. Drawing helped her to realize that she is not alone.

Thanh concluded our interview by saying, “We do not exist on our own. Our individual well-being is the well-being of our community. The well-being of the community is our own well-being. That is what I hold onto as I move forward. And I hope it’s like that for others.”



AAPA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Donna Demanarig
Interviewer: Maica Porcadas

Maica: Hello! Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Dr. Demanarig: I am an assistant professor at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. I mostly teach undergraduate students, in addition I also do research work which involves a lot of multicultural topics. A little bit about myself in terms of where I grew up: I was born in the Philippines and have lived in Majuro, Marshall Islands, which is part of the Micronesian islands. I lived there for several years because my mom taught at a nursing college. My mom then decided we should move to the US mainland in order for me to get a better education. We moved to Massachusetts and have been there forever, until I went to grad school in California. I got my undergrad at UMass Amherst in Massachusetts, then went to Alliant International University in Fresno, California for my PhD. I did my postdoc residency here in Connecticut, and I just stayed here because I hate moving [laughing].

Maica: What inspired you to get into the work that you do?

Dr. Donna Demanarig: A lot of the students I work with in the university are first generation, students of color — a lot of them may not have yet had the privilege of conducting research. When I tell my students that a lot of psychology involves statistics, research methods, and math—especially if they plan to go to graduate school, many of them are surprised. That's



Dr. Donna Demanarig
University of Bridgeport
Connecticut

really the fun part of working with undergraduate students, it is like being able to mold the next generation of psychologists, and I love it. I have always wanted to do research work because when I was an undergraduate student taking psychology courses, I was thinking, “wow it is a lot of white men”. You do not really get to see a lot of you reflected in psychology, let alone issues that are important to you, and that is what got me started. I grew up with the stereotypical parents wanting me to become a doctor, and I thought that’s what I was going to do until my freshman year in undergrad where I took an Introduction to Psychology course, and had this awesome professor. I’ll never forget her, she was the only one who really inspired me to look into psychology and to look beyond it. You know psychology to be mostly white and male, and I was thinking, “yeah, we definitely need to change that”.

Maica: How did you first get involved with AAPA?

Dr. Donna Demanarig: When I was in graduate school I presented my

dissertation at AAPA and it was just the most welcoming and supportive environment. I've been to quite a few conferences, even as a grad student, and I was like, "oh my gosh, a lot of brown folks — I love this!" I loved seeing folks who can relate, and who I can relate to. I wasn't as active until a few years ago when I became the newsletter's Co-editor-in-chief with Dr. Sunny Ho from 2017-2019. I am currently the 2020-2021 Leadership Development Institute (LDI) fellow, and being a part of it got me more interested in leadership work. In the late summer of last year, I signed up to be a part of the sessions committee for the AAPA Convention. The organization also put up a position for the Historian/Secretary, so I ran, and now have that role. I am also currently the Finance Officer for DOFA. I went from not doing too much, to now doing a lot. Through this, I have met so many awesome and supportive folks, and am so appreciative of the organization's leadership. I could not ask to be a part of the phenomenal leadership, and at a really great time, because I am learning so much from them.

Maica: What was your experience like being the Co-editor-in-chief of the AAPA newsletter?

Dr. Donna Demanarig: I've been very lucky to have an awesome Co-editor-in-chief. Sunny and I, we tag teamed. His strengths were my weaknesses, and my strengths were his weaknesses. It really worked out well for the both of us, and up until this day Sunny and I are still buddies. We update each other on what's been going on, and I can't say enough good things about him. We had a really great newsletter team.

Maica: Has the current COVID climate impacted the way in which you do your work? If so, how did you adjust?

Dr. Donna Demanarig: After the pandemic hit last year, we were told we were not going back to campus and that we needed to move everything online. I didn't really have a lot of issues with that. I was able to navigate the online world because our university uses Canvas, which is a user-friendly platform. It is challenging when trying to teach statistics, research methods, along with the more challenging courses online. There are a lot of pros and cons to it, but I do believe that for a lot of first year students, it shouldn't be a thing because it is not conducive to their learning. I make sure to send them announcements every week of events or resources that they might be interested in. And with everything happening from Black Lives Matter, to the shootings in Atlanta, and with the AAPI community — it is just too much. I understand especially for the first year students that there's this level of intimidation or, "I don't want to bother the professor," and it's like, "look I'm telling you, bother me!" I told my students that I am going to be here for them if they need to vent or to talk.

Maica: And how have you been taking care of yourself amidst this pandemic?

Dr. Donna Demanarig: So my husband and I like to go hiking with our two rescue pitbulls: Parker and Zoe, and they are the laziest dogs ever. When we do go hiking they are very energetic, so we try to hike two to three times a week. We also like to explore the different state parks here in Connecticut and even some of the obscure trails here. I do a lot of online shopping [laughing] — retail therapy. Of course, napping, definitely. Zoom fatigue is real so whenever I can, I will try to sneak a nap in between meetings.

Maica: Do you have any tips or general wisdom you would like to share with readers or the audience?

Dr. Donna Demanarig: Something that works, at least for me, is surrounding yourself with supportive folks. Setting up a time to talk about something fun that does not necessarily have to involve work. I reach out to my friends at work, my colleagues, and I talk to my mom and husband. Reaching out to folks is very important especially with how we are all isolated, so that it's even more dire now to do that. And if you are angry as I am, especially in this current [political] climate, channel that anger to productive work. Be creative, write a poem, sing karaoke, become an activist, do something on your side of the world that can make an impact on you, that can make an impact on your family, your friends, and especially your community.

AAPA STUDENT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shujianing Li

Interviewer: Mele Kramer

Shujianing Li is originally from Shenzhen, China, and she immigrated to the United States when she was 12 years old. She is a founding member of A Safe Haven for Asians and Asian Americans (ASHAAA) and a lab manager/researcher at Harvard University. She is committed to quality research and making safe spaces for AAPI in America through her ASHAAA organization.

Mele: Thank you for taking the time to interview. I understand you are an AAPA student member who has a project aimed to help Asians and Asian Americans in the U.S. Before we talk about your project, can you tell me a little about you, your background and your journey to Boston and leading this project?

Shujianing Li: Yes, thank you. I am happy to be here, my name is Shujianing Li. I personally identify as a "1.5-gen" Chinese American queer woman. I am turning 24 and a full-time Master's student in the Mental Health Counseling program at Boston College. I graduated from Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, majoring in Psychology (with a concentration in social and cultural psychology) with a minor in Economics. After I graduated, I moved to Boston to do work as a Research Lab Manager in a social psychology lab at Harvard University. In this role, I do both research and supervise the floor. I have enjoyed great mentorship in this role which has inspired me to think about ways in which I could best serve the larger BIPOC and immigrant communities. Eventually, I decided to pursue a Masters in mental health counseling at Boston College, while continuing research on Asian American experience and identity at my job. I have a sister who is an animation artist in L.A. In my free time, I enjoy taking walks, watching TV, and listening to podcasts.

Mele: Thank you for sharing your story. It is a nice education and career trajectory. Certainly, you are analyzing your steps and learning what really resonated with you while balancing how to bring both the clinical and applied sciences together. You have a very focused process to keep your career goals in mind. This is really exciting! Thanks for sharing.

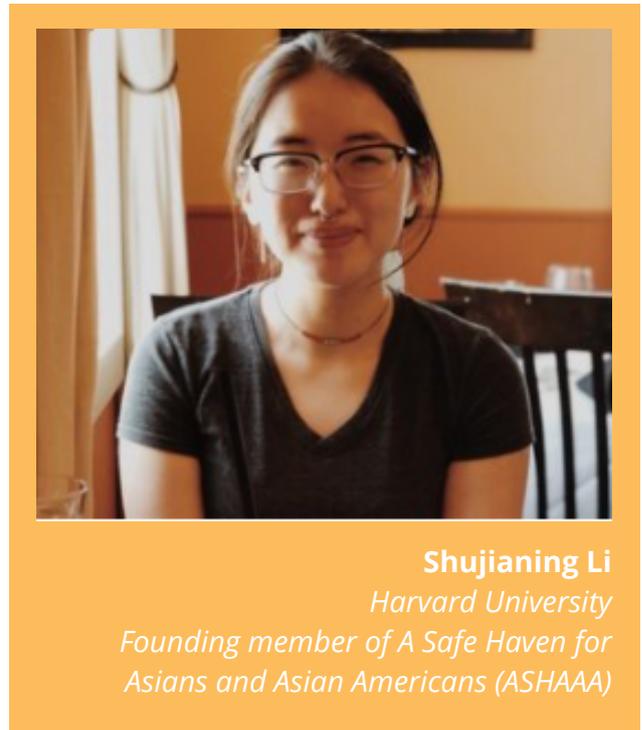
Mele: You mentioned you are a "1.5 Genner" can you explain what that is?

Shujianing Li: Yeah, this is actually a funny story. In December of last year, I was looking into demographic questions for a study and came across a highly elaborate generation status question; one category was 1.5 gen, which describes someone who immigrated as a child. I always identified as first-generation until this point but realized 1.5 gen describes me more as I immigrated when I was 12. I often thought about how my mom's experience is very different from mine although she's also first-generation. For example, she is well educated, but her degrees mean nothing in the United States compared to my education. She has experienced a lot of obstacles in her life because of her first-gen status, and they are not the same as the challenges I face. So, to me, the 1.5 gen category helps to capture some of the nuances in immigrant experiences.

Mele: I appreciate you defining this. I had not heard of this term before and having a specific category makes sense. Coming as a child, your language skills will be different than your first-generation parents. This distinction is important not only for your story but also for the general public to understand a broader perspective of the Asian American experience. The 1.5 generation category allows us to have an understanding of your experiences and challenges as a group, separate from your first-generation parents. I appreciate you explaining this.

I understand that you have launched a project with your colleagues. Can you tell us what the project is, who your co-founders are, and why you started the project?

Shujianing Li: This project is called A



Safe Haven for Asians and Asian Americans (www.ashaaa.org) and it's a resource website for Asians and Asian Americans. We started the project in March of 2020, right after the COVID-19 pandemic started and the anti-Asian sentiment began to worsen globally. ASHAAA is a first step to guide Asians and Asian Americans gain information and help in an organized, step-by-step way. So many Asians' lives changed drastically when the pandemic started. I knew one of the co-founders through a campaign she launched, called "I am not a Virus." Through subsequent conversations, we realized many people of Asian descent need help to understand what is going on and to provide resources. Our question was how do we provide access to Asians quickly and efficiently so they know what to do, especially during emergency situations. This was the genesis to the website launch. The website itself is designed to be a user-friendly, virtual "Resource Room" divided into four primary areas.

The ASHAAA website has four pillars:

1. Education – To begin seeking help, you need to be able to tell when you're being discriminated against. This section gives a textbook definition of discrimination and the history of anti-Asian discrimination in the U.S. It also includes educational articles and questions that could help Asians identify instances of discrimination.

2. Mental Health Resources – Conversations around mental health haven't been normalized in the community and some people may just want to know what it's about, whereas others desperately need to get on the phone with a professional. This section has national and regional crisis hotlines that people can call for immediate assistance, and a list of educational resources (e.g., articles, mental health organizations)

3. Filing Civil Rights Complaints – We should preface by saying that none of us come from a legal background and the goal of this section is just to highlight complaint-filing as an option. We compiled a spreadsheet with contact information of departments that handle civil rights complaints in every state. Keeping in mind the language barrier some Asians are facing on top of the psychological distress, we also created a template people may use for free to initiate communication with the appropriate department.

4. Community support – The last section provides information on AAPI organizations for community connections, communications, virtual gatherings, and networking. Ideally, this would help Asians build support networks within their professional and/or regional environments.

Mele: Thank you for sharing the parts of the ASHAAA website's "Resource Rooms." This is a valuable and meaningful resource giving Asians and Asian Americans a quick and easy space that is full of information to help access resources, especially in an emergency. Can you tell me about your colleagues and how you all launched the project?

Shujianing Li: Viya Qu is my co-founder, with whom I developed the idea and blueprint of ASHAAA. Three of our friends and colleagues, Tatum Leclair, Vivian Liu,

and Dani Lobo, also contributed tremendously in terms of gathering resources, writing some of the section introductions, and testing the website. What is so cool about this team is we are all Asian or Asian American women from different professional backgrounds. The first thing we did was assessing our skills and dividing the labor into our subject matter expertise (SME). Each worked on her expertise area and then we brought it all together into one website space. The big push was now how to get the word out.

Culturally, we don't push our work and it should be enough to do good work. However, it is one thing to do the good work, but another thing to become visible. This is why I am grateful you listened when I reached out to you.

Mele: Before I talk about invisibility, I want to say you all did a wonderful job planning and constructing this resource room website at ASHAAA. It is detailed yet easy to navigate for the end-user. The visibility of projects like these is important. AAPI projects like this, and straddling the balance between humility and invisibility is an important distinction and concern. Being "invisible" is a relevant concern for AAPI. In my coaching world, I use the expression "name it, explain it, and claim it" to help raise awareness. This is how visibility becomes an effective defense to the rise of any kind of discrimination and danger of violence. What we know about bullying is it does not just go away. By naming the concerns of anti-Asian sentiments, discrimination, violence, invisibility is banished. Explaining how AAPI humility culture of good work is not enough in times of crisis. We also need our own community to "claim it." This means to claim our voice and promote our needs and promote those doing the "good work." This is how we challenge invisibility.

Shujianing Li: Yes, this is a good point. I am not knowledgeable on how to market or brand a project and appreciate this spotlight of the project.

Mele: How do you see this project growing?

Shujianing Li: Viya and I have been talking about developing a new section on the website and we are considering several

"...it is one thing to do the good work, but another thing to become visible."

exciting new ideas. The overarching goal is to document narratives of Asians and Asian Americans, how they connect with the AAA identity, and how they navigate through obstacles and thrive. Now more than ever, I hear people in the community talk about how invisible and dismissed they feel; sometimes, I feel the same way. Taking someone's voice away is one of the most degrading and insulting things you can do, and I hope this new section would be a way to regain that voice. Personally speaking, working on ASHAAA helps me process much of the anger and frustration and focus on ways I can serve a community I have been increasingly more in touch with. Also, it would continue to be useful, even if Viya and I could no longer actively work on it.

Mele: Thank you for sharing. Yes, sublimating an emotion such as anger, into a project that helps others is healthy. Anger is the gasoline that fuels the fire of passion for social change. This is how legacy projects happen. This is how anger is used in a healthy way. It is a hallmark of social change. I want to congratulate you and your team for working so diligently on this meaningful work. This project and your team are

providing a wonderful service for the AAPI community. Your team members are leveraging their expertise and strengths to provide viable and needed resources. It is my belief it is the youth that will be the biggest social change drivers. Thank you for all you and your team at ASHAAA are doing for the community.

What has the AAPA meant for you?

Shujianing Li: I was involved in AAPA before I co-founded ASHAAA. Attending my first AAPA convention was the first time I saw so many AAPI scholars in the same space. That experience was powerful and validating. I have gone through several Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) and in psychology literature, AAPI populations are usually underrepresented. So, it could feel quite lonely when you want to have a conversation about this. AAPA, along with the support from Asian and non-Asian mentors, made me feel like I have a support network. That sense of security motivated me to co-found ASHAAA.

Mele: Do you have any messages for the AAPI and AAPA communities?

Shujianing Li: To me, one of the reasons this project is so important is that it is a first step to recognizing what you are going through. Asian Americans coming together, coming to terms with what we are going through, having needed resources, hopefully, can also help us have compassion for other groups also going through crisis and trauma. While advocating for our rights and welfare, we need to show up for other groups as well. The Asian communities in places like California have a rich history of forming interracial coalition and demonstrating solidarities for other

communities. I hope this project and service can help address our needs and catalyze empathy and solidarity for other disadvantaged communities.

Mele: Yes! You are thinking full circle and long term. Thank you again for all you and your team are doing for the AAPI community. I am listing your website below for AAPA members. Good luck with everything you and your team are doing with ASHAAA!

For more information about A Safe Haven for Asians and Asian Americans you can email: team@ashaaa.org

Website: <https://www.ashaaa.org/>

AAPA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Chu Kim-Prieto
Interviewer: Mele Kramer

Professor and editor of Asian American Journal of Psychology, Dr. Chu Kim-Prieto is committed to delivering content that focuses on understanding the psychological needs and experiences of a traditionally underserved population.

Mele: Hello Dr. Kim. Thank you for taking the time to interview with me and congratulations on being nominated as an AAPA spotlight member! Can you tell me a little bit about your educational background that brought you into psychology and into your current role?

Dr. Kim: I did my graduate work at the University of Illinois. I worked primarily with Ed Diener, but also with Sumie Okazaki. I was very interested in cross-cultural psychology and the ways in which culture impacts our experiences of emotion and our beliefs. After I received my Ph.D., I came to TCNJ (The College of New Jersey) and that's where I have been since. TCNJ is a wonderful place to be. It is primarily an undergraduate institution, with a focus on teaching. I do a lot of mentoring of undergraduate students, and work on my research with them as well.

Mele: Can you tell us a little about your Cultural Diversity Fellowship and what that meant to you?

Dr. Kim: This was an interesting and educational experience that I undertook a number of years ago. TCNJ initiated an effort that looked at whether educational opportunities were accessible to all members of our community. This was an attempt by TCNJ to think of ways to support our students to make sure everyone had access to educational opportunities and to make sure everyone had comparable outcomes. I worked with another faculty member, Dr. (Tabitha) Dell'Angelo, to learn about the barriers at TCNJ that inhibited students from successfully completing their education.

Mele: Did you find any surprises from your research fellowship project?

Dr. Kim: Despite the fact that TCNJ is a public institution and therefore more affordable compared to many private

private higher education options, I still saw economic barriers that made it difficult for students to manage the expense of a college education.

Mele: Education is so vital and so unaffordable for so many people. When we do have a college that is affordable, it is important to make sure that schools like TCNJ are supported. I am appreciative of your work and the school you chose. In your current role and practice, I saw in your profile you're doing cultural research and research in emotion as well as instructing. Is that correct?

Dr. Kim: Within my role as a psychology professor, I do research with my students. As such, my goal is not just to conduct research, but also to mentor my students so that they find their own path in life, whether it be graduate school or something else. I support them from where they are, to best match what they want out of their education. Their path might take them to become a psychologist, a social worker, a speech therapist, physical therapist, lawyer, or anything else they want to pursue, since psychology at the undergraduate level can lead to so many different careers. Sometimes it is overwhelming how many options they have, so as an educator, my role is to help them find where they want to go. My job is to help students to find the best path for themselves.

Mele: Thank you for sharing your role and goals! I can see where it can be both exciting and confusing for undergraduate students entering the field. For the students to know there is a mentor there for them helps guide their future. Thank you for your work! Not only for them but also for us.

You are also the editor of the AAJP? Can you tell us about your journey into this role?

Dr. Kim: I was the associate editor under Brian Kim. When his term was over, I wasn't sure if I was ready to take on the editorship. I was very honored to be given the position as editor of the Asian American Journal of Psychology, AAPA's journal published by APA. My goal as editor is to make sure that it provides cutting-edge research on the psychology of Asian Americans and provides our members, as well as the general public, with empirically supported scientific research on Asian Americans in the field of psychology. It is humbling to read the amazing research that is being done.

“...my goal is not just to conduct research, but also to mentor my students so that they find their own path in life...”

I am also grateful for the opportunity to be able to help guide new researchers or doctoral students who are starting their careers, those who might be new to the editorial process. This has been very fulfilling.

Mele: Can you describe more of your role reviewing manuscripts as the editor compared to associate editor of the Asian American Journal of Psychology (AAJP)?

Dr. Kim: When manuscripts come in, it's hardly ever a simple 'acceptance' or 'rejection' of the manuscript. Many times, the manuscript is invited for resubmission. The editor's role is to gather the peer reviews that have been received about the manuscript to provide guidance for the authors on how to improve the manuscript. Sometimes it is one round of revise and resubmit. More often, it's multiple rounds. The goal is to help the authors be as impactful as possible in their research.

Mele: I appreciate this clarification! I was under the thought publications are an accept/reject of a manuscript. It is good to know there is an ongoing process to help the authors.

Dr. Kim: Oh yes! Revise and resubmit is a good thing. If you get this, you should definitely resubmit with changes. Sometimes, authors get discouraged and do not resubmit, but it's important to remember that revise and submit is not a rejection.

Mele: Thank you for sharing that. This is good guidance and direction, especially for new authors.

What led you to the AAPA and how does it enrich your career?

Dr. Kim: I went to my first AAPA conference in 2014. Previous to that, I had wanted to attend but couldn't for various reasons. Because I am not a clinical psychologist, I had mistakenly believed that it wouldn't be as relevant to what I was doing. But when I went, I realized that it was a great conference that provided targeted information and wanted to make an effort to attend more conferences.

Mele: You are right, there are so many wonderful presentations and relevance to our population, and my first conference experience was two years ago upon the recommendation of my mentor to have support for my research. He was right. The people and topics made me feel supported and at home!

When you look at your career, what has been your most memorable career experience?

Dr. Kim: Becoming the editor for the AAJP. It is similar to the associate editor, but in the editor role, it is quite eye-opening to see the whole picture of all that is going on.

Mele: **What research projects do you feel are needed for the AAPI community now?**

Dr. Kim: I would love to see more research that addressed equity and justice, as well as research that focused on underserved and underrepresented AAPI communities.

Mele: **Thank you for your insights.**

Your role is a heavy responsibility for sure. What message do you have for AAPA members?

Dr. Kim: My guidance is to use the resources available from the AAPA. For non-members, be sure to find a professional “home” where you belong and are supported.

Mele: **Thank you for your time and professional insights for our AAPA members. I look forward to reading the upcoming AAJP issues and look forward to seeing you at future AAPA events!**

THE PURSUIT OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL "TRUTH"

A first generation Asian American's perspective

JACQUELENE LOPEZ

When I first moved to the U.S. from the Philippines and for twenty years since, I am frequently asked, “What are you?” In an attempt to not be seen as “too sensitive,” I would often mask being offended and jokingly respond, “I’m human.” Next would be the usual follow-up inquiry about where I’m actually from. Guessing my identity seemed like entertainment to others. Discussing it was their version of having small talk. It could be that they were simply curious, but regardless of the intention, what it communicated to me was that I obviously looked different. I stood out like a sore, brown thumb in a predominantly white, mid-sized city that prided itself being more like a small town. Strangers, stares, and questions about my appearance were not uncommon. Friends informed me that it was because of my “exotic” look, although this made me question whether to feel ashamed or admired. The uncomfortable stares and questions served as a constant reminder that people would always see me as different no matter how hard I tried to fit in. I later understood how it is difficult for people to put you in a box when they don’t know what to make of you.

My use of humor to save face was usually the preface to a teaching moment. I remember explaining where the Philippines are located. That I’m Asian but not Chinese, or why my last name is Spanish, but I’m not Mexican. Not all questions I

received about my race and ethnic background were genuine. The most shocking and blatant questions I recall was from a girl who mockingly asked whether my family and I only wore pieces of clothing to cover up our private parts and whether we lived in huts back when we used to live in the Philippines.

It was tough having to adapt to a new country and culture as a thirteen-year-old teenager. I felt self-conscious about my undefined brows and the way my short eyelashes always pointed straight down. I would jokingly refer to myself as “looking like a fob” or fresh off the boat. I struggled with the transition and culture shock. I was born and raised in the busy city of Manila, surrounded by tall buildings and the frequent choir of honking cars in traffic. With the overseas move, suddenly, everything changed. The next thing I knew, I was the one brown girl with black hair in eighth grade. I was surrounded by a sea of fair-skinned blondes and brunettes in a school situated on farmland where mooing cows and the fresh smell of manure fertilizer permeated the air. I was unaware that this transition period would be one of the defining moments in my life. The constant reminders of being and feeling different drove my search for who I was and where I belonged, which also led me to discover psychology.

I began reading about Jung and Freud and became fascinated with the unconscious and subconscious. At fourteen years old, I remember telling myself that I would study psychology in college if ever I’m given a chance. I was excited for the opportunity to learn more about myself and others. However, early in on, I noticed the textbook and readings did not include or relate to the Filipino heritage and or experience. My dual identity as a Filipino, Spanish American, and Chinese cultural upbringing was complex and not included in the readings. This realization set me on a path of seeking the “truth” and looking for answers. I needed to understand whether my Filipino culture and experiences had any place in the study of psychology. It became my quest for learning the value of culture in psychology that became the catalyst to my pursuit of this psychological “truth.”

In the nearly ten years since I completed my undergraduate studies, this pursuit has followed me as I worked in clinical mental health, social services, and prevention science research and especially as I completed my graduate studies. Regardless of where I was professionally or academically, it was apparent that the study of psychology continues to be dominated by western norms and values. It was evident that multicultural research on racial/ethnic minorities remains understudied, and these populations are underrepresented in both clinical and research areas.

My experiences have taught me that the sensical resolution to understanding psychological “truth” was to integrate my cultural experiences within it. This integration seems most logical. What makes up an individual is greatly influenced by their culture(s) through the feelings, experiences, beliefs, perceptions, etc., that help form the “truth” to that specific individual. By incorporating my cultural experience into knowledge, I gained studying psychology. I found that I understood better and balanced the meaning of psychological “truth.”

Today, I have a deeper awareness of how the divide between subjective experience and psychological "truth" emphasizes the continued need for a

psychology science to represent the whole and diverse human experience. Until empirical evidence research includes diverse populations, “evidence-based” research is skewed, only reflecting the dominant “white” culture data. What is needed is a more balanced psychological “truth” to emerge from new research that is inclusive of all populations.

I am sharing my story to honor my mother’s and my ancestor’s sacrifices and honor others before me who have made me what I am today. Finding a place for my Filipino culture in psychology has taught me that my value comes from understanding and sharing why I do it. May our stories continue to guide our work and honor our cultures.



Jacqueline Lopez

REACH OUT TO OTHERS. THAT'S HOW WE GROW:

LAUREN YANG'S REFLECTION ON AAPA MENTOR OFFICE HOUR

Interviewer: Yun Garrison

Thanks to our student members and leaders of the Division on Student's ideas, the AAPA leadership team launched the AAPA Mentor Office Hours this year. Lauren Yang, a fourth-year clinical psychology doctoral student at Yeshiva University, shared her reflections on attending the AAPA Mentor Office Hour sessions held by Dr. Nellie Tran and Dr. Jocelyn Buhain in March 2021.

Yun: Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. Could you tell us about yourself?

Lauren: I am originally from Southern California, so it was quite the move for me to come to New York for graduate school. I am excited that I will be conducting my internship year at the San Jose State University Counseling Center. Using an interpersonal and relational approach, I enjoy working with people who are struggling with transitional life issues. To better understand how we can serve this population, my dissertation focuses on the effectiveness of a Dialectical Behavior Therapy program for young adults.

Towards the end of college, I learned more about mental health services, and it was what first inspired me to consider clinical psychology as the field that I wanted to go into. I wanted to affirm this for myself, so I worked at outpatient treatment centers back in California

before starting grad school, which helped me see the impact of therapy on improving people's quality of life. I have always been interested in people's narratives and the different backgrounds. Being part of my high school and college yearbook staff was where a lot of this interest came from. I aim to bring this perspective into my clinical work through my curiosity about others. As I have learned through my clinical training, connection with others is something I really enjoy.

Yun: How did you get involved in AAPA Mentor Office Hour?

Lauren: Someone from my program forwarded an email about AAPA about a year ago. I have been a member since then. I wanted to connect more with other academics and professionals in the field who do identify as Asian American because I have not had much mentorship in my network from those who have cultural sensitivity and awareness. I understand that this is something new being offered by AAPA, but I would have been thrilled to take advantage of this opportunity if it were offered earlier.



I also learned that I need to have allies that I can turn to for support.



Yun: What was it like for you to attend AAPA Mentor Office Hour sessions?

Lauren: With Dr. Nellie Tran, I wanted to learn more about leadership and professional roles in social justice. Growing up, there were messages like “do not rock the boat” or “keep your head down.” I was taught not to speak out much on issues, so I appreciated the perspectives that Dr. Tran brought into the office hours. She was addressing student concerns of feeling isolated due to microaggressions or macroaggressions. I felt inspired by Dr. Tran’s assertiveness and advice about how to navigate predominantly white institutions. I think I underestimated how much that would impact me in choosing to come to this program. As I said before, I have not had much guidance or support in exploring and using my cultural identity to inform my work and navigate society as a professional in terms of social justice. Those were the major reasons why I attended her Mentor Office Hour.

With Dr. Jocelyn Buhain, she is a staff psychologist at a University Counseling Center. Given that is where my internship is going to be next year, I had some specific professional, and personal development questions that consider the intersection of my cultural identities of being a second-generation Asian American woman and having a multi-ethnic background as a Filipino and Korean. I also wanted to hear about what she would have liked to have known before going into college counseling or internship year. She offered insights into being aware of workplace culture, getting to know my cohort, and being prepared for

for supervision. I also learned that I need to have allies that I can turn to for support. She also shared advice about how training sites truly do foster values of diversity in their interns.

Yun: What did AAPA Mentor Office Hour space mean to you?

Lauren: It helps broaden the access or network of people who can tap into this sort of resource and connect with others in the field who are more established. Especially over the past year. During the pandemic, we have all been struggling with that sense of isolation. I have been trying really hard to maintain connections, not just in my personal circles, but also professionally, so I can find ways in which I can learn more. These mentors have insights to offer, whether about first entering the field or becoming more established in early career development. In the last office hour that I went, there was an undergraduate student, a master's student and then there were a couple of us at the doctoral level of education. I think it is also nice for everyone to see the broad range of experiences and career trajectories.

Yun: Any advice for those who may be considering getting involved in AAPA?

Lauren: Be open minded about just trying things—whether attending conferences or signing up for these office hours. I know AAPA also held this community space to process the anti-Asian hate that has been going on. I also ended up sitting in on, reflecting, and listening to others. Be open to exposing yourself to new experiences, even if it might seem intimidating. I know that came up in the last office hour--It can seem like there's already an established network where people know each other, and it

might feel hard to break into those circles. Be willing to push yourself a bit outside of your comfort zone to reach out to others, and to attend these sorts of events because that is how we grow. Also, there is a division for students and I am looking to get more involved in. Be proactive because there are a lot of opportunities to connect. I feel like I often see announcements shared on social media also, so I try to sign up for things as events come up. AAPA has much to offer, and I hope to become more involved in this community as I start this new chapter in my training.

Yun: Thank you so much for your time today. I hope you wrap up your time in your doctoral program well and enjoy your internship!



Lauren Yang
Yeshiva University
New York, New York

AAPA HEALING SPACE PERSPECTIVE FROM KENNETH CAMACLANG

REPORTER/INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL P. HUYNH

On March 21, 2021, AAPA hosted a healing space in response to the Atlanta spa shootings and rise in anti-Asian hate incidents.

One of the attendees, Kenneth Camaclang, shares his experiences and thoughts about the importance of finding community and belonging in these settings.

Michael: Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you got involved in the AAPA space?

Kenneth: Right now, I'm a student at John F. Kennedy School of Psychology at National University. I'm in the dual degree program, working towards a master's in sports psychology and a clinical PsyD. It was through one of my professors who taught clinical sports psychology and was Filipinx, and she told me about AAPA because I didn't know about it before or consider it in terms of professional organizations. Once I found out about AAPA, I knew, okay, maybe this is something I should check out. The first conference I went to was a couple years ago in San Diego, and when I went there, I originally started as a volunteer just because I figured that was the quick and easy way to meet people. Going to some of the events spoke to that feeling that I know I'm here for a reason, and I need to keep this going. Within the Division of Filipinx Americans (DoFA) and the Division of Students, I'm always keeping an eye on things and the listserv but trying to balance that and student life as well.

Michael: Some things you brought up were the AAPA conference and your involvement in the divisions. I was wondering if there were any particular moments or memories that stood out to you the most in terms of finding a sense of community in this space?

Kenneth: I think the first one that stuck to mind was the DoFA meeting and getting the sense of community there. All of the events were great, but it was the banquet at the end of the conference in San Diego where I got to meet a lot of people and felt that belonging. The healing space was another sense of community and belonging.

Michael: Going along that, what made you choose to attend the healing session in the first place?

Kenneth: Honestly—I don't want to say a spur of the moment, because there was planning and there was still time for me to decide not to go between the time when it was sent and when it actually happened. It was that week in general where there were a lot of raw emotions and thoughts and even things that I didn't know how to put into words. I thought being in spaces where there are people who probably could put it into

better words, even though they're feeling just the same type of raw emotions, I knew I could rely on AAPA to be that space where I definitely will see a lot of people like me. At least within my PsyD cohort, there's a handful more Asians than in other cohorts, but it's still a really small number, and even within that small number, there's not many who are willing to speak out. I knew I needed somewhere to go with all of these thoughts and emotions that were running through my head.

Michael: I'd like to hear more about the actual healing space in AAPA! What did it look like, and what was it about?

Kenneth: I think there were a handful of students, but I would say the majority was people who are already in the

going through the same things that we [students] were going through.

Michael: It's kind of enlightening to see that while it's tragic these anti-Asian hate incidents are getting so prominent, it's also interesting to see this collective action and solidarity in wanting to do more and be able to share these feelings of uncomfotability. You might've mentioned this before, but overall, how has the healing space impacted you personally?

Kenneth: It put me in a better place mentally; it was really inspiring and uplifting. It set me forward where it's not just this healing space, but it's continuous progress, and it's been continuous progress that's been happening for decades. Being in that space, you don't have to teach and worry about

"I knew I could rely on AAPA to be that [understanding] space where I definitely will see a lot of people like me."

professional realm, but honestly being there, it didn't feel like that. It was just a bunch of people in this community coming together with different experiences and same class of emotions. There were actually some non-Asian allies who were there as well, a good enough number to have their own separate breakout room. We went into breakout rooms to process in more intimate settings, and the fact that there was enough to have a separate breakout room for them was inspiring. Even then, it was still nice to have that predominantly Asian space. As a student, it was really nice to see these professionals also be able to not only speak but have that difficulty in speaking, humanizing the fact that it's getting to them too. They were

telling them context to explain what it's like to be Asian, what it's been like with this pandemic experiencing different types of anti-Asian sentiment—you don't have to explain any of that. You can focus on the emotions from it, and in being able to focus more on the emotions, it was a way to process more effectively and not have to worry about filtering. It was very cathartic after that. I'm really glad I went, and I'm glad that everyone else who did go went as well.

Michael: You know, even as you were talking, it made me think about why it's so important to have these spaces, because it's a lot of work to explain the facts, but being able to not have to worry about that and bypass it really does help to just focus on our emotional development and

growth in this setting. You mentioned other folks who came into this space; how do you think this healing space was not only beneficial to you but also to them?

Kenneth: The first step is just showing up. For non-Asians who were in that space, I'm just glad that they took that first step. There's a whole discussion in terms of just the fatigue of having to explain Asian-ness to non-Asians and that you're expected to teach others because you're Asian. I think being in that setting where you don't have to ask to learn something, just listen and take it in, I hope they got something out of that. Obviously, if they were there in the first place, there's at least some interest looking to get something out of it, so I hope they did.

Michael: I hope so too. I think being able to create that sense of allyship feels more relevant and important than ever. Is there anything else that you'd like to share to other people who may not have ever been in spaces like this or worried if they feel comfortable going to these types of spaces?

Kenneth: You're going to feel uncomfortable eventually! Even with me, I didn't know what I was getting into either. Being a student and still relatively new to AAPA, there was a lot of discomfort, uncertainty, and not knowing what's going to happen when I get there. Sometimes you just got to take that leap—when you're ready, of course! Obviously, don't push yourself, but I think being in AAPA and being around people within the organization, there's at least more of a safety net where there are more shared identities. At the end of the day, you just have to make that decision for yourself when you're ready, because they'll always be ready for you, but you have to be ready to be in that setting too. Sometimes, you

don't want to expect things because if it's not what you expected, then you might be upset about it, angry, or disappointed, but if you go in just to be there, I feel that it's an enriching position. You really do get to see the sense of community, and even if you don't have similar experiences, you learn. The way I see it, it's a win-win situation! Whenever you are ready, just know that there is a place for you.



Kenneth Camaclang

John F. Kennedy School of Psychology
National University

AAPA HEALING SPACE REFLECTION: A STUDENT MEMBER PERSPECTIVE

MOLLY SAWDY

Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student
Suffolk University

Student Representative

Division on Multiracial and Adopted Asian Americans, AAPA

I am alive. We are alive.
I am alive. We are alive.
I am free. We are free.
I am free. We are free.
I am capable. We are capable.
I am capable. We are capable.
I am strong. We are strong.
I am strong. We are strong.

With each syllable, I start to feel more still. With each mantra, I feel my breath become more even. It had been five days of my heart feeling heavy for the loved ones and communities of the Asian women murdered in Atlanta, Georgia on March 16th, 2021. It had been over a year of my heart feeling heavy for the surge of targeted violence against AAPI communities. And it had been almost nine years since the birth of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

What made it so powerful to be part of the healing space was the sense of community that spanned across all generations of AAPA community members. It was the feeling of automatic acceptance as part of the AAPA community irrespective of one's personal identity, stage in career, institution affiliation, or Twitter followers.

As an Asian transracial adoptee, I do not need to fear for my adoptive family's lives in the same way I would if they were Asian. Growing up and navigating my identity as an Asian transracial adoptee meant that I was constantly in an in-between space: White versus Asian, US versus China, POC versus PWI spaces. What made the healing space so powerful for me was that it allowed everyone to come together and just be in their rawest, truest form.

Over the past year I have become more involved with AAPA and have started to virtually meet and connect with the stellar scholars, clinicians, professors, and students of the community. Some individuals may discover a professional psychology organization that fits well with research their interests, while other individuals may find a professional psychology organization that fits well on a more personal level. I am thankful to have joined AAPA because it has provided a home for both.

The healing space provided a place to appreciate and reflect upon the pioneering work of older AAPA members and to bring a sense of renewed responsibility to continue that work for future generations of AAPA members. The healing space also provided a place to simply feel together, grieve together, and to share compassion for each other and for ourselves in the injustice against the AAPI community. It should not have taken a mass killing of Asian women that got national media attention to have enabled this country to realize the historical and ongoing racial injustice AAPI individuals have had to endure. Similarly, it should not have taken the murder of a Black teenager to have the country realize the extent to which it was built and continues to operate on systematic racism and oppression. To echo many others, I want to call for solidarity across AAPI communities and Black

communities because solidarity is more crucial than ever before. #StopAsianHate cannot happen until #BlackLivesMatter.

As I continue the endeavor of graduate school and beyond I will remember the empowerment that came from the mantras and will be reminded that there are others ahead, beside, and behind me who will continue lifting the voices of AAPI experiences in psychology research, teaching, and clinical practice. For now, these mantras will serve as reminders that we are more than our community traumas because we have the strength as a community to continue moving on together.



Molly Sawdy

Suffolk University

DMAA Student Representative

I am alive. We are alive.

I am free. We are free.

I am capable. We are capable.

I am strong. We are strong.

I am alive. We are alive.

I am free. We are free.

I am capable. We are capable.

I am strong. We are strong.

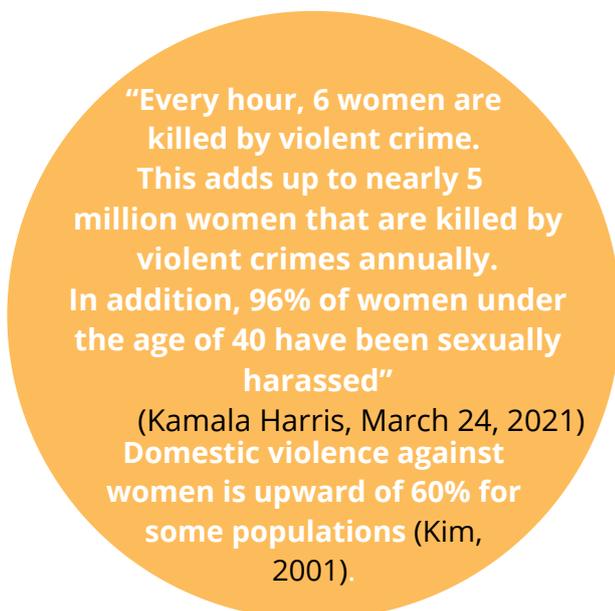
The end of women's history month, but not the end of honoring women!

MELE KRAMER

“ Thought for the day... Men 'rank' people. Women 'connect' people. ”
- Gloria Steinem



however,



Did you know...

Through the collaboration of former Minister Ms. Park Young Sun, over 180 million vaccines using the optimal K Syringe were delivered globally and continue to supply the world. By her diplomacy, grace, and intelligence, she was the success bridge for delicate and heated global negotiations between PoongLim Pharmatech, maker of the K Syringe, and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, while increasing 50,000 jobs. This negotiation also benefited Pfizer by increased productivity and efficacy for Pfizer's Covid vaccine by 20% (Korea Society interview, March 2021).

Never underestimate the power of the "collaborative" negotiation of a woman!

“To achieve success, we must first break all the rules.”

~ Indra Nooyi - Former CEO PepsiCo

Before Ruth Bader Ginsberg, women could not:

- Carry a credit card in her own name
- Widowed women could not receive social security
- Women who were married could not receive overtime
- Women could be fired for marrying
- Employer "weight checks" were legal

Real facts about AAPI women:

Research shows stereotype perceptions affect leadership advancement (Biernat, 2003; Yu, 2020).

Asian Americans are among the highest educated yet hold less than 1% of leadership roles (Hyun, 2005; Harvard Ascend, 2018).

Leadership representation for AAPI matters (Kamala Harris, 2021).

The path up is always a jagged line, not a straight one.

It is not a one-woman marathon, but a relay race, and a worthy one, not just for women but for all mankind.

~ Gloria Steinem



As Women's History Month closes, I hope we remember it takes both Yin and Yang energy to be complete!

I hope you remember to celebrate a woman you admire today and always,

With Love,
~ Mei

The Yin and Yang is a symbol of Unity, not Duality.

BULLETPROOF DAD

PORTIA CHAN

Sheltering in place and physically distancing for over a year has led many of us to turn to the arts for not only entertainment but also for healing. Since part of my ethnic heritage is Korean, I have really wanted to like K-pop for a long time, but I could not really get into it, as much as I would have liked. All that changed when I heard “Dynamite” for the first time. As a middle-aged woman who will be 50 years old in two years, I did not know much about BTS, but, to my surprise, I have become quite the fan girl! While I have not joined the BTS ARMY (the official fan base and acronym for “Adorable Representative MC for Youth), these seven young men have really had a profound impact on me.

When I learned that BTS stands for “Bangtan Sonyeondan” and means “bulletproof boy scouts” in Korean, my fandom quickly became more like an academic inquiry. The more I read about RM, Suga, J-Hope, Jin, Jungkook, V, and Jimin, the more my admiration and awe grew. I once heard that “we are the answers to our grandparents’ prayers,” and, since most of BTS are young enough to be my sons, my thoughts went to my Dad. He was born in 1940 and lived through both World War II and the Korean Conflict. There were times when he had to be literally “bulletproof” to survive.

As a young man, my dad was cute like the lads in BTS, and he liked to sing karaoke with his friends. He was also a great athlete and earned a 9th degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, so he probably could have been a great dancer, too. He studied sociology at Korea University and came to the United States as a teacher in the 1970s. Although I was born into relative comfort and solid social standing at Severance Hospital at Yonsei University, my dad’s journey led us to many places with friends of diverse backgrounds.

My Dad loved to observe and study groups of people and interactions, and he loved how the U.S. was so diverse. As a toddler in Oklahoma, he took us to Native American pow wows. Our immigration to the U.S. was sponsored by a mostly Italian family who included a wise and kindly German-American grandfather as a patriarch. After that, we were in a rural area of central Virginia, and our next door neighbors were an older couple, Mr. and Mrs. Stevens. We were not there for long, and, when we told them that my Dad was being called to Richmond, Virginia, Mr. Stevens gave us the name and number of his good friend, Henry V. Langford. I was almost 4 years old by that time, and I learned English in Jackson Ward, a historic Black neighborhood, which was home to the legendary Maggie Lena Walker. This is the place where the preschool version of me learned English and where my love of words, narrative, and history began. Mr. Langford turned out to be the notable Reverend Langford, who endorsed the ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954). His public support caused him to be fired from his job as a pastor and he was not able to find work as a pastor again after that.

Before Claire Jean Kim published her seminal article on the racial triangulation of Asian Americans, my Dad felt the effects of being neither White nor Black. The alienation led to depression and anxiety, and he was once addicted to alcoholic beverages as a source of reprieve. These conditions made him hard to approach at times, and, as a child, I had a hard time understanding what happened to him. He gave up and the role exit was too much for

him to endure. Yet he gave me a model of Asian masculinity that was counter to the prevailing media images of Long Duk Dong, Arnold, or Mr. Miyagi. His strength was an inspiration to me, even when he yelled at me at the many doctor's visits where I was his chauffeur from the age of 16 to even now.

Asian masculinity has been attacked since the late 1800s, and even today AAPI are often the subject of caricature. As mothers, we want to protect our children and ensure their physical and emotional safety. Last summer, when George Floyd called out for his mother, all mothers felt that call. When I think of "bangtan" and how it means "bulletproof," there is a whole other layer of meaning to this. As the statistics indicate that the rise in hate crimes against AAPI has increased 150% since the beginnings of COVID-19 infections in the U.S., being afraid or nervous is an appropriate response. In light of the recent shootings in the Atlanta area, I am filled with anxiety as an AAPI woman. However, in watching my parents over the last half-decade, I remember them telling me to

hold on to hope and that it can come in unexpected ways.

When I saw BTS donate \$1 million to Black Lives Matter and listened to them speak about mental health and self-regard at the United Nations, I felt that hope. I also remembered that my Dad is literally bulletproof. Back in 1993, he was shot in an attempted robbery. He has so much muscle in his body that the bullet was lodged in his right muscle. He told me that we are made of strong stuff and that when it is time to write his story, I will know what to do. I have forgotten that over the years, but remembering it now gives me hope that is big enough to share with others.



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