The Eastern Tide, sponsored by BAASA, is the Brandeis Asian literary publication. Published each semester, the Eastern Tide includes letters to the editor, news, interviews, literature, boosters, and advertisements of interest to the Asian community at Brandeis University. We reserve the right to edit all articles and letters.

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BAASA NEWS

BAASA had many activities in the fall semester of 1987. On Wednesday, October 7th, BAASA showed *A Great Wall*, a humorous film written and directed by Peter Wang about a Chinese-American family who visited relatives in China. A crowd of about 50 people came to the Castle Commons to enjoy the film and munch on the free popcorn, since there were no classes the following day. Despite some technical difficulties with the picture, people enjoyed the film to the end.

BAASA began having regular volleyball games every Saturday afternoon starting on September 26th. The Korean Student Association and BAASA gathered their best players to form a competitive team to play the Asian teams from other schools and also to participate in the A league intramurals in the coming spring semester. BAASA will also have a B league team for anybody else who wants to learn and play the sport. Anyone who wishes to may come down to the gym on early Saturday afternoons to practice and have fun.

A Restaurant Guide was started this semester. When it is finished, it will have names, addresses, and descriptions of numerous Asian restaurants in the Boston area. This is a project which all BAASA members can be involved in by bringing back menus, cards, or descriptions from their favorite exotic restaurants. This will be an ongoing project, because there are plenty of restaurants to go to, and new ones open constantly.

This semester also saw the introduction of the BAASA newsletter, which was designed to give interested students more complete, accurate, and easy-to-read information about recent news and upcoming events.

In keeping with tradition, BAASA organized a restaurant trip once again. In the past, BAASA officers would just pick a restaurant in Boston (often in Chinatown). This year, the choice was made through votes at a general meeting. The final choice was Genji, a Japanese restaurant on Newbury street, which has a combination of good food and atmosphere. The prices were a little high, but nevertheless, thirteen people showed up in the special tatami dining room reserved just for the club.

As a fundraiser, BAASA sold sweatshirts at the end of the fall semester. There was a contest to see who could come up with the most creative and original design for the shirts. The winner of the contest was Bobby Wong '90, who designed a shirt that was an innovative way of saying hello and goodbye to someone in many different Asian languages. The sweatshirts were so popular that we quickly sold out and we will order some more to sell in the spring.

In the spring semester, BAASA will continue to provide information on seminars, conferences, dances, arts, etc. sponsored by Asian clubs on other campuses in the Boston area. The club will also add speakers from on and off campus to its list of activities. With the fresh energy of new officers taking office in January, and with increased involvement and help from both new and old students, BAASA will hopefully have its most active and best semester ever!

by Jon McIntyre

Volleyball

This semester, for the first time in four years, a team of Asian volleyball players from Brandeis competed with Asian teams from other universities in Boston area tournaments.

On November 14th, 1987, the Brandeis Korean Students Association and BAASA came together to form a team for the Smith College Korean Student Association’s Invitational Volleyball Tournament. The team consisted of Captain Kil Joon Park, Jun “Fuji” Kim, Peter Wong, Peter Li, Jung Choi, “Ho” & Charlie Kim.

The day started off on a bad note with losses to BU and Drexel. The team played well but the lack of experience showed and crucial mistakes were made. The team regrouped in the afternoon to face Harvard, one of the toughest teams at the tournament (Harvard eventually made it to the semi-finals). With a “nothing to lose” underdog attitude our team took the court. Brandeis scored first, getting them pumped up. From there on, the team spirit skyrocketed as Brandeis kept pace with the usually overpowering Harvard team. When Brandeis took a 9 to 8 lead, Harvard was forced to call a rare (for them) timeout to regroup. Following the timeout Harvard stabilized and came back to win, but the match was thrilling nonetheless.

It must be noted that the team could not have maintained the intensity that it did without the constant cheering from the sidelines of KSA & BAASA members who came to support them. As Fuji put it, “We finally put Brandeis back on the Asian map.”

Although the team lost, all who came had a great deal of fun. The team would like to thank the students from Brandeis for being there and giving them the moral support they needed. See you at the next tournament!

Written by Peter Wong
Dimsumming at Dynasty

What do you usually have for brunch on the weekends? For those who live on campus, the rather convenient Usdan cafeteria offers a colorful selection of brunch nourishments: bagels, donuts, eggs, cereals, and other varieties, all relatively fresh. Most of us know what we like for breakfast, so on Sunday mornings, we tend to stick to what we usually eat on weekday mornings. But perhaps you want something else instead of coffee on your usual breakfast menu on weekends. That’s when a restaurant in Boston can offer you an exciting and almost adventurous alternative. In the heart of Boston’s Chinatown, a Chinese restaurant can boast an incredibly authentic cuisine guaranteed to satisfy the picky eater.

Boston serves the country’s best seafood, and certainly the city’s best Chinese meal. To refill it once it is empty, simply leave an opening by sliding the lid off the heart.) is served by waitresses driving carts containing small plates of food. The most important part of dim sum, however, is not the eating but the drinking of tea. Tea is supposed to “wash away” the grease in the food and is essential to the Chinese meal. To refill it once it is empty, simply leave an opening by sliding the lid off a bit. In any case, the term yam-cha (tea-drinking) is customarily used as a synonym to dim sum. In Asia, yam-cha could be a lunch hour pastime for workers, or a leisurely chit-chat session for the idle, or a get-together for families and friends. It is a common everyday activity for most people.

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Mr. America

He lives in a red and white two story
with an acceptable yard
filled with pink posies
guarded by a broken
white picket fence.
He dreams of castles,
but lives on hand me downs
and consumes frozen dinners
in a gourmet manner.
He goes camping with his pop
and the pooch's tail wags
behind the mirror image pair.
They talk of school girls
while guzzling some Buds
and letting nature
tend to their problems.
Back home,
the radio blares
with left over 60's hits
and the noise drowns out
the leaky faucet.
He studies hard
to outdo his folks
so his picket fence
will be whole.
Meanwhile, Pop pays a bill
and the pooch eats the posies
in the acceptable yard.

by Nicole Freezer

Before the Cold

We both had
a slice of lemon-raisin pie,
agreed to take the blame
if the store-owner
saw us steal it.
But always,
he was too busy to catch us.

The next day
you went away to
another place.
In the letter
you explained you'd joined
the marching band,
practicing every afternoon
with the drumsticks
that made a hole
on the white shopping bag
I gave you two Christmases ago.

Now you talk of Vivaldi
and the art
of writing poetry
under an overgrown chestnut tree
with fledgy birds flying away
at a distance. Perhaps,
one day you'd hide among the fields
topped with ferns and dirt, pull me
down with you, and tell me
about birds flying south
before the winter.

by pichet ongvasit
"Astra"

La silence lumineuse
Chaque nuit
Je parle le langage
Des particules musicales
Produites machinalement d'une machine.
Ou je ne parle plus
Tant tout est silent dans mon univers.
S'il m'advient un bruit
Ou un mot sonore,
Ce n'est qu'un hasard.
Rien que cette silence cristale,
ô! Diamant de la souffrance,
Je t'ai pris enfin de ma main endurcie.
Quand ce cœur ne souffle plus d'ambition
Qu'il reste dans ton royaume supérieur;
Où la musique est un marbre parfumé
Que l'on peut toucher des yeux;
Où la lumière chante rose et blanche
Et toutes les choses sont transparentes à tous mes sens.
Dieu Silence, tu ne sais rien et tu sais tout.
Tes yeux noirs sont plus lumineux que tous les soleils.
Maintenant...

by Bé Bé

Am I "Oriental"?
Yin Yan Leung '90

For about two decades, the term "Oriental" has been the topic of debate concerning the theory behind it and its usage. Some of you may wonder, "What's wrong with 'Oriental'? Isn't it the same as 'Asian'?" For those who have ever called themselves, or called someone else, "Oriental," there are some interesting points to think about.

The word itself comes from the Latin "oriri" (to rise) and "orient" (place where the sun rises). One can point out that if the earth is sphere, how can we say that there is a place where the sun rises or sets (as in the term "occidental")?

This leads us to the fact that the influence of our global perceptions and, hence, our self-perceptions are from a Eurocentric point of view. To elaborate, our concept of the world stems from the origin of the English language by peoples inhabiting tiny islands off the western Euroasian continent and from those people of that region of the world, namely white European explorers, rulers, missionaries, etc. They were able to extend their concepts of the world on a global scale; take, for example, the inactment of Greenwich Standard Time (named after a London borough), used to separate the globe in 24 time zones, or the Mercator Projection, a widely used 400 year-old idea of distorting the global earth onto a flat map which, due to exaggerations at the poles, increases in our minds the size of North America and Europe.

These and our other perceptions of the world revolve around this Eurocentric viewpoint, making the terms "oriental" and "occidental" flawed. (On another note, one would not go around calling a person of European descent "occidental"). Furthermore, this viewpoint of East versus West excludes Native Americans, South Americans and
Africans. Even if one says, "I don't judge people by calling them 'Oriental,'" the term itself is essentially with some connotation.

Over the centuries, conceptions and misconceptions of Asian people and their native countries have developed various stereotypes of "Orientals." We were the "yellow plague" which had to be controlled by the Federal government with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882; we were the sinister Fu Manchus, mysterious and sexy Susie Wongs, venerable Charlie Chans, and other roles Hollywood typecasted us in. As "chinks", "japs", "gooks", or "Chinamen", we are viewed as cheap labor - taking over American jobs, or as sub-humans, whose lives were expendable and insignificant as shown in the waves of violence and persecution throughout history and to this day and age, not unlike the Black experience (this related issue is much more complex than can be discussed here). We are all "aliens" who have had to assimilate into the American mainstream one way or another to survive and "make it". But then we face a "Catch-22": how can we stop being "Oriental" in a society that has cemented us as foreign, "less than White", essentially, "Oriental"? We may have even grown up looking at ourselves as such.

Even with this phrase, we must still be conscious of the diversity of this growing population. Asian Americans make up over 20 distinct nationalities and ethnic group - each with their unique language, culture and history. Furthermore, within each nationality, there are differences in dialect, religion, educational and class background, etc. But we, as a group, still share a common experience in this country. Discrimination or violence against an individual affects all of us.

So in the end, we still have to call ourselves something. We are moving away from the negative and flawed "east versus west" connotation of "Oriental" (which I personally believe is a name for a food section in a supermarket or a kind of carpet), and are seeing that the term "Asian American" or even "Asian/Pacific American" can give a sense of unity and identificiation to groups with distinct differences and similarities. As Philip Tajitsu Nash points out, "as we strive for a more well-thought-out category for ourselves, let us strive to accept neither a position of inherent inferiority nor a position of Asian suprematism. Let us work together for a world where each of us can be accepted as human beings and judged solely on our individual merits, not on the basis of racial, national, or other labels."
Boston Asian Resources

There are several places in the Boston area which have information or resources for studying Asia or Asian-Americans. Here are reprints of self-descriptions of two such places, the Asian-American Resource Workshop (AARW) and the Chinese Culture Institute (CCI), both of which are in or near Chinatown.

The Chinese Culture Institute (CCI) is a non-profit educational organization whose primary mission is to bring Chinese humanities and arts to a broad spectrum of the public in an accessible format. By presenting exhibitions, lectures, classes and performances at our gallery and throughout the region, we hope to heighten awareness of and appreciation for the unique Chinese contribution to world culture. It is our belief that, in our rapidly shrinking world, East/West understanding and cooperation is not only desirable — it is imperative.

The Chinese Culture Institute is located at 276 Tremont street, Boston (next to the Wang Center and one block from Chinatown). Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 5pm. The phone number is 542-4599.

The Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW) was founded in 1979 by Chinatown community activists and Asian American educators who recognized the need for a community-based center of Asian American resources in the Boston area. Located in the heart of Boston Chinatown, the AARW is a non-profit, grassroots, membership organization dedicated to promoting recognition and understanding about the Asian American experience. As a resource center of Asian American history, culture, and issues, the AARW works to collect, produce, and disseminate literature, media resources, and educational materials about Asians in America through cultural programs, exhibitions, conferences, and on-going services for the community.

The AARW maintains the most complete library in New England on the Asian American experience, with books, journals, periodicals, and reference files about Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, and other Asian groups in America. The AARW distributes slideshows, films, filmstrips, and videotapes for use by schools, agencies, and community groups. Speakers from the AARW are available to present a variety of topics.

The AARW is located in Chinatown at 27 Beach st., 3rd floor, Boston, MA, 02118. Phone number (617) 426-5313.

The Day Before I Was Born

And here is tonight's news
(oh shit, not again)
for November 10, 1966:
(the roast is burned again)
in Saigon, the Vietcong attacked a first division patrol
(pretty bad, it's charcoal)
in Dautieng, Rev. Michael Quealy was killed
(like the smoldering bark on a tree)
while administering last rites to the dead
(and smells like a burnt body)
in Bonn, ex-Nazi party member Kurt Kiesinger
(and the gravy looks like outranged blood)
will be West Germany's next Prime Minister
(bubbling over a corpse)
in Norfolk, the first nuclear submarine, Nautilus,
(whose life was snuffed away)
rammed the aircraft carrier Essex
(too soon, and it is dried)
in D.C., Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said there was
(congealed bits clinging to the pan, which)
considerable evidence that the USSR is building & deploying
(after so much usage is as black as)
an anti-ballistic missile system
(the roast)
in Bangkok, Thailand is sending two ships
(which I'll probably have to start)
maned by 300 men
(all over again, which I don't have time to do)
to contribute towards the war in South Vietnam
(which means that)
in Cambridge, a letter signed by 2700 Harvard undergrads
(to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in apology
(for Chinese)
for unruly behavior toward him
(which will take a while)
on Monday was sent . . . He was forcibly detained
(and dinner will be)
by members of Students for a Democratic Society.
(late again, oh shit)
by Barbara Shapiro
Symbolism

At first
I didn't see it --
the heavy whiplashes
on the sparkling surface,
against the raft, and in it,
a boy and a girl.

Such a small size
I thought I knew
it seemed to indicate,
if not to embody,
physical awakening or
the expectation of pleasure.

At the Museum
of Modern Art, the curator told me
it was all aesthetic, an art term
you needn't store in the freezing compartment
of your refrigerator. It doesn't evaporate
or melt away like ice does in the summer.

I said I knew it.
In reality I saw myself outlining
the scene, a palette at hand, and scarabs of oil
ready to be held mortally by all the things
in the world. But the wonder was that with a lifetime
of scrutiny, it couldn't be more than painted air.

by pichet ongvasit

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Human Gestures

... a short commentary on Brandeis

I am walking back from my room, when one of my fellow classmates passes by me
-- an eye contact, a generous smile, and a "Hi, what's up?" What's up? . . . before I
could even say anything he passes. I despise this. It's simply annoying. Just on this
one particular day, countless people asked me that and then passed me by. I find it
useless to ask someone "What's up?" and then just pass him/her by. What's the use of
such a gesture? Nothing! It's just an unnecessarily long phrase to exercise one's
voice. Or maybe our society has just made it an acceptable human gesture on college
campuses. I think a lot of us would rather be greeted with an eye contact, a generous
smile, and a hand gesture. After all, doesn't body language account for something? I
mean, it serves its purpose of recognition. Do you always need to say or just utter
something when you see someone you know? Lunches, dinners, and evenings are
the time to get together and share your thoughts assuming that you do have something
to share.

It's absolutely acceptable if someone were to just offer me a nice smile and just say
"Hi!" It would make me feel good enough. But what's this nonsense about asking
someone "What's up?" and not caring for an answer. Shouldn't a question like that
require more effort? It's so easy just to smile. So my fellow classmates, don't abuse
this question. Smile and that, I think, is more than enough of a polite gesture. It's a
pleasant one and the message is clearer.

by S.K.
Here We Sit

Here we sit
Gazing at the world
Through dark blinders
Dreams of money, success, and fame
Race through our minds
Talk of material things
Cars, property, stocks, and bonds
No worry of starvation or
mere basic necessities
No thought of welfare, unemployment
No thought of anyone else
Somewhere
An old man is needing of warmth
In a cold, dark alley
Somewhere a frail child dies of
Hunger after he tries to suckle from
His sickly mother's breast
Somewhere an old woman from the lower East End
Dies in a nursing home
Nobody notices
For them there was no hope
No one cares
And here we sit
Gazing at the world
Through dark blinders
Ready to face the world

by Ella Gayoso

In the Leviathan

Now I know how Jonah must have felt
That big hand reached down and grabbed him by the neck
And he heard
Jonah I've got a job for you
But he answered
Lord, please I don't want Your shit right now
And G-d said
Jonah you don't seem to understand
Will you take it or shall I
Stuff it down your throat
But Jonah squirmed from between G-d's fingers and ran
And spat up later
Smeared with repentance and ambergris
And he went and did his thing in Nineveh
No doubt despising every minute
Yes I feel for Jonah
Instead of the whale
G-d pissed on me and flushed me down
Fighting no I won't I won't
Swearing oh fuck pushed back into my mouth
Hating it the whole way washed through sewage until
I emerged
Dripping wet and ugly
Into new light
Shuddering air into aching convulsing ready lungs

by Rachel Haas
There are So Many People in this World

In an airport she sits,
A woman from her assured, aloof manner
to her tall, matured figure
to her masterfully chiselled face.
Only the open, accepting eyes betray
the child still ruling her.
-There are so many people in this world-
stated so simply, eyes widening
to let in the bewildering images,
the sudden burst of fact.
A Japanese man listening to a walkman
A young woman in sweat clothes holding a newborn babe
A family where all the men, different ages and colorings all have the same noses and eyes.
Fifty or sixty people standing around bitterly complaining over their just cancelled flight to San Francisco
And all the people waiting for them there at the airport
And the people there waiting to go to Tokyo
And from Tokyo to Hong Kong
And from Hong Kong to Beijing
-China, oh my god, there are a lot of people in China.
-There are so many people in this world-
She tries to run, to hide from
This creeping knowledge
Clinging desperately to the evaporating notion
that she is not one of them.
As she sees herself sink into the vast sands of humanity,
the years do their irreversible damage.

by Loni Somogyi

I Tell You —

Follow that symphony
into the blaze
into the beelzebub
of crumbcakes
along the cold street
where I once saw
a dog lick the crumbs
off the pavement
because he was lost
in the red light district
of Boston
and there wasn't anymore
jargon about poetry
about poetry
about boisterous poetry
that happened
in a field of dried flowers
red sun flowers
fire flowers
setting in the evening
behind the horizon
of lightning bugs
in the ashes of
long past lovers
where I lay
in his arms.

by Fayne Fogel
Boosters

Jon,
Thanks for all the help. Keep up the good work!
PW

D.L.,
No more fish chowder, O.K.?
E.G.

Ko-7,
It is sooooo true!
JAM

V,
These long-distance calls are a drag!
Watch out for those toilet seats.
An Authority

Kitisak,
Have you seen Ginger lately? Should you decide to see her in person for advice, don't forget to --- your "raincoat" (and remember to read the directions correctly!!). By the way, It's machine washable !!

"Professor Agitator",
A piece of advice for you:
You better not get your "Japanese Teacher" mad.

VKO,
I like your hugs.
Cubby

Kiem,
Have you started learning Japanese yet?

Cheng,
"Hi, I'm calling for BAASA..."
PW

Bobby "Wild Hair" W.,
You don't talk to me anymore - let's hit a nightclub like the old days!
Karate Kid

VVV,
I wish I had had more time to talk with you this semester. Let's keep in touch.
Jacket-lender

BAASA,
It's been a great three year learning experience, but now, as soon as I figure some things out, I have to go. I only hope my efforts have not been in vain. I hope to see an active, vibrant BAASA when I visit next year. Much luck and prosperity in the future, and once again, thanks.
Jon M.

Jon, Yin, Ella, Ken,
Here's to a great year!
PW

V-ballers,
A... WA...!
V-ballers

C. "Forenza" L.,
Don't you hate making appearances? Five minutes earlier?
Ridgewood Pal

Cheng & Vi,
Will you still be soulmates?
Your Fellow Bostonian Graduate

Kitisak,
Eat it or get it out ...
The Usdan Rats

Jon,
We'll pay you to stay!
EG

Bey,
Someday I'll be,
Out near the sea,
In the Pokfulam Gardens,
Visiting Bey.
(Sing to tune of "Octopus's Garden")
Jonny Mac

Jon, Got any stuff for the newsletter?
Doc

Nguyen & Ching Ching,
"Hello! Can I come in? Can I?
Can I?"

Bey,
Where's my ice cream? "Saaaw-reee!!" Ni hao! Ja-ne!
Jon

BAASA,
Get Active!!
BAASA

Pete,
No new job as president. You've been doing it all along.
Treas.

Peter W.
Now that you've been "elevated" from VP to Pres, maybe you'll be able to spike the ball better.
Just Kidding

Ella,
Where is my money? Oh,... I got another one for you...
PW
Jonny Mac!
Thanks for all the help. Sorry for being cranky but you must be pretty used to it by now. Just..., just stop touching my head.

BC

Harvard,
We get you next time!
V-ballers

Hi Cheng,
Thank you for the gums!! Hope to see you more often next semester.

B. Wong
Hello, hello, I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello. This, of course, got its inspiration from "Hello, Goodbye", if you know what I mean.

JM

Ella,
Let's talk numbers. It's my native language. I hope your Treasuring has helped your fluency; there aren't a whole lot of us mathematicians, so we need to talk to some non-math people to keep from getting lonely.

JM

Fuji,
I think, I am confused... someone else's life just flashed before my eyes...

Karamazov Pak

Mr. Cho,
Where do you buy comic books?

K

Stramen,
Let's hear it for the Tl's...yep!.

J. Miller... yea!!! the H.P... yea!!!

Doc