

# PHOENIX



# RISING

## The Asian/Pacific Sisters Newsletter

The *Phoenix Rising* Staff invites our readers to a brunch on March 17th at 1:00 p.m. (see calendar listing)

All newsletter contributions should be sent to P.O. Box 31631 Oakland, CA 94609  
Deadline is the 1st of April

P.O.Box 31631, Oakland, CA

94604

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February/March 1990 • #32

### Interview with Yvette Fang

## Differently Abled, But No Limit on Life

by E. Lee/ M. Abbink

*The subject of differently-abled persons is something not often or openly discussed among Asians, and also within the A/PL community. Yvette Fang, 26, immigrated to San Francisco from the Philippines in 1979, and has been active in the A/PL community for almost three years. In the following interview, Yvette talks about her own experiences as a differently-abled person.*

E: What exactly is your disability?

Y: My disability is a neurological dysfunction. Basically, it means that my nervous system is not as super-sensitive to my brain commands as a "normal" person. My brain may tell my legs to walk but I can only get up and walk for a certain length of time and then I'll get tired and wear out, whereas my brain might still say "keep going".

E: How do you think the Asian community views you as a differently-abled person?

Y: I think they have a much harder time relating with me because of my disability. It's harder to break off this initial image of me as a person in a wheelchair and because of that I think maybe it's harder for people to come up to me because they have all these preconceptions of what a disabled person is and sometimes this stereotype is hard to break down. I know that the lesbian community is supposed to be progressive and all that, but I think it's hard to unlearn all these conservative values that you've learned as a child being raised in an Asian culture, and it comes out when a lot of people are dealing with me or facing me.

E: Do you think that the Asian community in particular treats you any differently?

Y: I don't know if Asian communities are more intolerant of differently-abled persons than other communities but I guess because I belong to the Asian community I have higher expectations of

being able to fit in quicker and so it's much more of a disappointment that that's not the case.

E: How has the Asian community not been receptive?

Y: I'm not saying that people haven't been friendly, that's not been the case, but I can detect a lot more reservation in terms of people actually making more of a contact than just a shallow "Hi, how are you?", and then walk away kind of thing.

E: At the Asian/Pacific Lesbian Network retreat (held in Sept. in Santa Cruz, CA), do you think that you were represented or do you think that you were isolated from the group?

Y: No, I wasn't isolated. Theoretically the whole place is wheelchair accessible. They could have found a better area, a better location I suppose, but I'm not faulting the organizers because given our limited resources this is the best that they can find and that's fine.

E: How old were you when you knew you were a lesbian?

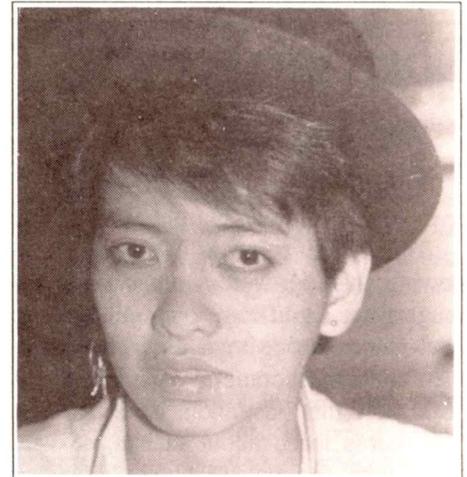
Y: I knew when I was three years old!

E: You too? (laughter)

Y: I guess when I was 23, something like that.

E: Do you think that coming to your lesbian identity was difficult because you are differently-abled, in Asian culture and in general?

Y: No, I think it's hard to come out, period. Maybe it wasn't as hard for me to come out as another Asian lesbian because I know that my family has been very open-minded about homosexuality or at least open-minded about alternative lifestyles, so I knew that I wasn't going to be disowned for coming out. There was still a lot of anxiety provoking situations when I



Yvette Fang

Photo by E. Lee

was coming out but I knew ultimately that even if they didn't accept it they wouldn't give me ultimatums.

E: Do you think it was hard for you to come out to begin with, to yourself, to the world, or are you out to the world?

Y: No, it wasn't hard because even before I finally accepted and was aware that I was having feelings and stronger attraction to people of the same sex, I've always had positive interactions with lesbians, they were just all white lesbians—I'd never met any Asian lesbian until I reached out. That was when I went to Trinity Ordonez's slideshow and got to meet everybody.

E: Do you feel a strong connection to other A/PL's now?

Y: Yeah. I have good friends that are Asian lesbians and there's a lot of issues I feel more comfortable talking to them with than straight friends or...

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## EDITORIAL

To my sisters,

You are my strength and inspiration. I see in you the struggle to fight and survive.

The pride of being A/PL's comes from knowing that our voices are strong, our thoughts are significant, our opinions are valid. Our existence is a reality. I have seen letters and articles come across my desk that speak more than just about being A/PL's. Your words teach about racism, sexism, chauvanism, colonialism, homophobia and challenge each one of us to be critical of ourselves and our society.

I want to invite each of you to contribute to *Phoenix Rising*. The next issue will focus on issues of importance to our Hawaiian and Pacifica sisters. Deadline for submissions is April 1st. June's theme will be "The Pride of Being A/PL's". Submissions are welcome from Asian/Pacific Lesbian and Bisexual women and their friends and family members. Deadline for the June issue is May 1st. All submissions may be mailed to the *Phoenix Rising* address. My apologies to those women who pieces are not used due to space limitations. We will try our best to include them in future issues. Please share your words, songs, poems, stories and thoughts with us.

Kolika O.

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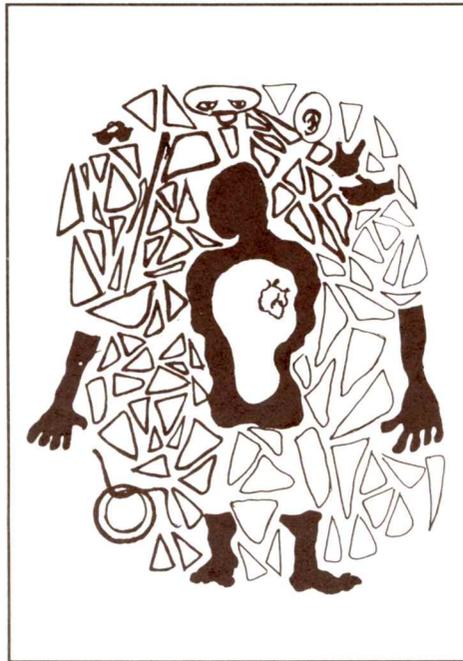


Illustration by H. Kwong

This issue of *Phoenix Rising* is dedicated to our differently-abled and bisexual Asian/Pacific Sisters.

See stories on Pages 1 and 3.

# PHOENIX The Asian/Pacific Sisters Newsletter

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*Phoenix Rising* is published bimonthly by Asian/Pacific Sisters. *Phoenix Rising* is staffed entirely by volunteers, and we strongly encourage all interested APL's to participate!!!

*Display Ads*: \$5 per column inch per issue, \$27/3 issues, \$50/6 issues. Medical and legal practitioners' license numbers must be provided for our files. Send ad, clearly printed or typed, to the above address.  
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# To Bi or Not to Buy, That is the Question...

by Patti Chang

I have put off writing this article on bisexuality for over one year for several reasons: I had difficulty in adopting the term of "bisexual" because that word has such confused and negative connotations in our community; I was not willing to deal with the probable repercussions at that time and; I was unwilling to put in writing that which I thought was a personal issue. So why now? Besides the fact that Kolika O. gave me little recourse, I realize that it is time to attempt to break down some of the barriers and stereotypes of alternative ways to live and love, for these stereotypes have caused and continue to cause many sisters pain.

The condition of loving or of being attracted to a man and a woman is one of the most stigmatized and categorized by both the heterosexual and the homosexual communities. The number of assumptions imposed on the individual who does love or is attracted to both members of the opposite and the same sex are so many, that it is almost easier to say what bisexuality is not, rather than to say what bisexuality is.

The tendency in the lesbian community is to pigeon-hole women who love members of both genders as being indecisive about their sexual identity and in a transitional phase along the evolutionary chain towards dykedom. Furthermore, the assumption is that if a woman chooses to form a sexual relationship with a man, that she is doing so out of the need to receive heterosexual perks and thus is stunted in her growth and development as a lesbian. The operative notion is that there is a preferred and superior sexuality—homosexuality—regardless of what those individual relationships may be. The end result of these stereotypes is a collective disdain for women who sleep with—let alone love—both men and women, and mistrust of their allegiances.

A major problem in both the heterosexual and homosexual communities is that relationships are often viewed solely in terms of sexual acts. Many in the heterosexual community perceive gays and lesbians as engaging in sinful, disgusting, and

abnormal sexuality. It is difficult for these people to think of gays and lesbians as loving, fulfilled, and healthy individuals seeking beautiful relationships. Similarly, many in the lesbian community denigrate and define women who sleep with men according to their perception of what sex entails between a woman and a man. The individuals or their relationships are not valued, because often the stereotype of sexual acts does not permit further investigation into who those individuals are or what their relationship is.

Bisexuality for me is a technical description of sexuality and technically, I am bisexual. However, my identity does not merely lie with the individual with whom I choose to sleep. I love women in a way that does not translate to the other gender and am committed to devoting my career and other efforts to ending the repression and oppression of women. Not all bisexuals hold my sisters and their struggles in the forefront of their thoughts and efforts and neither do all women.

Bisexuality is a label. It is a label which connotes for many in our community, a state of confusion. And there are women who are confused about attraction to both genders because they feel compelled by their friends, peers, and environment to make an either/or decision for simplicity's sake. This compelling interest of many in the lesbian community to have women "make up their mind" has driven sisters into another closet. Because I am one of the few "out" "bisexual" sisters, I have been approached in hushed tones at dances, at the Asian/Pacific Lesbian Network Conference, over the phone, and on dates with confessions by lesbians who have slept with, fantasized about, or are attracted to men. Tales of "even my best friends didn't know" or "we never left the house" come to the surface mingled with feelings of guilt and betrayal of and by a community that shuns or ridicules its "deviants."

It certainly must be recognized that being involved with a man is to receive heterosexual perquisites, but that desire for "het" acceptance is not the reason why I, or other sisters have chosen to be involved with men. (I don't believe that one has to sleep with the most disenfranchised of our society to feel their pain or to work for the end of their oppression.) Personally, it was despite the fact that I would be receiving heterosexual benefits that I have been involved with a man for six years. Wanting to be "politically correct," I had contemplated ending this relationship once I had realized I was "falling in love." It was not his qualities, character, integrity, or our relationship that I questioned, but rather how his being a man would impact on my being a lesbian in the lesbian community. My ultimate (albeit not easy) decision was to create what was for me a different reality and to refuse to conduct my life along the lines that other people have drawn as to what is or is not permissible. To have made any other choice would have been to betray myself.

While these reactions to our sisters may be understandable—given the fact that we live in a discriminatory society based on sex, race, class, age, disability, national origin, etc. and that labeling has also provided a source of power and strength to the lesbian community—they are not acceptable. It is not acceptable to condemn women for their choice of partners based on gender. It is not acceptable to create a situation where sisters are closeted. Our goal is to end sexual oppression, not to have a mandate over what that sexuality should be.

As we recognize the diversity in our community (no, we don't all look alike) it is important to understand and hopefully appreciate the differences between and among sisters. Taking that step is often difficult. It is easier to stick to notions based on stereotypes which may be sprinkled with past experiences. But taking that step is also a labor of love for your sisters and for yourself. ○

*continued from Page 1*

## DIFFERENTLY ABLED

**E: What do you do for a living?**

Y: I work in an agency that deals with physically and developmentally disabled adults, children, and their families. I do a lot of advocacy work, meaning that if the person is not getting what is rightfully theirs by the law, then we would advocate for them as their representatives to different agencies. Also, I'm a referral specialist.

**E: What do you think it was like growing up being differently abled, and knowing that you were different?**

Y: I have no points of comparison, because I've grown up this way, I've always been differently abled.

**E: Do you ever think of yourself as a person in a wheelchair, or do you think of yourself as just a**

**person?**

Y: You can't really separate it. This is me with a wheelchair y'know, part and parcel. If people want to interact with me or if they want to get to know me, they have to accept me as a disabled person.

**E: Do you think people feel more uncomfortable around you than you feel around them?**

Y: Obviously I would feel more comfortable with different people based on my commonality with them. If I'm with other differently-abled persons, then I feel comfortable in that they can relate with my frustrations of everyday life and struggling with accessibility, and then when I'm with A/PL's, our commonalities are cultural issues and dealing with the family and being out and all that. There's always different levels of relating to people.

**E: How do others treat you?**

Y: The way I look at it is that most people are uncomfortable because they're ignorant and they've never been around someone who is disabled and therefore they feel awkward. I guess it gets better because in terms of accessibility this city is gradually, very very slowly, getting more accessible but people with different types of disabilities are becoming more and more visible, and so I guess it's getting better, although to what degree I can't really say.

**E: How do you feel about the way you are viewed as a differently-abled person?**

Y: If they have curiosity about it, to not just hold it back. I think it would be better for people to come up to me and ask me things, better than having them speculate about the type of disability I have, or what kind of person I am, then I reserve the right to whether I want to answer it or not. ○

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# A Perspective on Asian American Feminism

by Alice Y. Hom

A few years ago, I visited Anna, my Asian American high school friend at Amherst, and we were discussing racial and gender biases. I had just read this amazing, perceptive book, [This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color](#), and I wanted her to read it. I was also trying to persuade her to take a Women's Studies course, but she would have none of it. I asked her why, and she said that she was not comfortable with feminism. I argued that her gender would play a major role in her life so she might as well learn more about it now rather than in the "real world," where the discrimination and oppression would be harsher. Anna related that she felt more discrimination on the basis of her race rather than her gender. I told her that she should not just look at it from the racial aspect because the gender aspect has the same impact. I see these factors as being interconnected and analogous. Anna told me she had to resolve her problems with race and ethnicity before she could deal with her gender. This made me realize that there are other women of color who are grappling with their racial identity. I am please to report that our lively debate struck a spark of feminism in Anna.

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**"It is my wish to have Asian American women realize that a feminist consciousness is needed in order for social change."**

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This whole debate made me think about other Asian American women and whether or not there is an Asian American feminism. Asian American women are slowly developing a feminist awareness, yet they are still less politicized compared to white women and other women of color because of cultural, racial, societal, and class barriers. These factors play major roles in restricting Asian American women from identifying with the feminist movement. It is my wish to have Asian American women realize that a feminist consciousness is needed in order for social change.

The long history of racism in the United States has made an impact on feminism. There are Asian American women who feel repelled by the racial composition, insensitivity, and lack of receptivity of some white women in the feminist movement. Thus Asian American women, like other women of color, have not joined the predominantly white middle-class feminist movement largely because issues that concern us are ignored. This is best illustrated by a poem entitled *Ms.* written by Janice Mirikitani, an outspoken Sansei poet who speaks out against racial, sexual, and class oppression.

I got into a thing  
with someone  
because I called her  
miss ann/hearst/rockerfeller/hughes  
instead of ms.

I said  
it was a waste of time  
worrying about it.

Her lips pressed white  
thinning words like pins  
pricking me—a victim of sexism.

I wanted to  
call her what  
she deserved  
but knowing it would please her  
instead  
I said.

white lace & satin was never soiled by  
sexism  
sheltered as you are by mansions  
built on Indian land  
your diamonds shipped with slaves from Africa  
your underwear washed by Chinese laundries  
your house cleaned by my grandmother  
so do not push me any further.

And when you quit  
killing us  
for democracy  
and stop calling ME gook

I will call you  
whatever you like. (Mirikitani, [Awake in the River](#)).

This poem carefully reflects the attitudes of some Asian American women who feel that white feminists do not fully understand or include issues and problems that Asian American women confront. These issues include racism, imperialism, and related concerns felt by Third World, poor and uneducated women. Another barrier to feminist involvement is the large number of Asian American women who are foreign-born and are more preoccupied with economic survival. The ethnic diversity of Asian Americans is one more factor in this equation of non-participation.

I, as an Asian American and a woman, cannot see how it is impossible to see the co-determinacy of race and gender. There is a tendency to create a false division between the issues of race, class, and gender. Women often feel that they need to make a primary commitment to one or the other. This is not a viable choice because race, class, and gender are inextricably connected and analogous. Ntozake Shange revealed the inherent problem in tendency to treat them as separate issues when, in answer to the question, "Which comes first, being a woman or being Black?" she replied, "I don't know honey, they both happened at the same time." (Shange, *verbal communication*, 1987). Obviously these issues cannot be treated as individual concepts.

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**I sometimes feel torn between fighting for Asian American rights in one movement and women's rights in another.**

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Merle Woo, in an essay "Letter to Ma," claims to be an Asian American feminist because the two terms are inseparable since race and sex are an integral part of her (Woo, p.142). Being an Asian American feminist does not mean separating oneself from non-Asians or men. Woo states, "Being a Yellow feminist means being a community activist and a humanist. It does not mean retaining the same power structure and substituting women in positions of control held by men. It does mean fighting the whites and the men who abuse us, straight-jacket us and tape our mouths; it means changing the economic system and psychological forces (sexism, racism, and homophobia) that really hurt us all" (Woo, p. 142).

I sometimes feel torn between fighting for Asian American rights in one movement and women's rights in another. This leaves me fragmented and mutilated. I do not believe that we have to place one loyalty over the other. The two are not at war with each other. There are problems within the Asian American community where feminist protests by Asian American women may be seen as a setback for the Asian American cause, destruction of working relationships between Asian men and women, and cooptation into the larger society. Asian American women cultivating feminist awareness should not be seen as a divisive tool to break the Asian American community, rather it should be viewed as part of a progression to humanitarian liberation for all in the United States. A poem by Tomi Tanaka entitled from a lotus blossom cunt exhibits one Asian American woman's desire for joint liberation.

As a race, Asian American men and women have faced much discrimination and oppression, but Asian American women must deal with additional hardships because of their gender. Tanaka calls for re-educating Asian American men and the community with a feminist framework.

so you come to me for a spiritual piece  
 my eyes have the ol' epicanthic fold  
 my skin is the ideologically correct  
 color  
 a legit lay for the revolutionary  
 well, let me tell you, brother  
 revolution must be total  
 and you're in its way  
 yeah, yeah I'm all sympathy  
 your soul and your sexuality has been  
 fucked over by Amerika  
 well, so has mine  
 so has ours  
 we chronic smilers  
 asian women  
 we of downcast almond eyes  
 are seeing each other  
 sisters now, people now  
 I'm still with you, brothers  
 always  
 but I'm so damn tired  
 of being body first, head last  
 wanting to love you when all  
 you want is a solution to glandular discomfort  
 that I thought I'd better say my say  
 Think about it, brothers

we are women, we are asian  
 we are freeing ourselves  
 join us  
 try to use us  
 and you'll lose us  
 Join us. (Tanaka, p. 109)

So far I have focused on racism and sexism, but there are other factors such as class and sexual orientation which also need to be looked at. Unfortunately, due to the limited time and space I cannot expand on these issues, but there are a few articles which interested persons can get.\*

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### Asian American women must realize how the multiple social constructs of class, gender, race, and sexual orientation affect their development of feminist consciousness.

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I hope that this has provoked further thoughts on issues concerning gender and race. Asian American women must realize how the multiple social constructs of class, gender, race, and sexual orientation affect their development of feminist consciousness. A demolishing of inequities and restrictions along many lines—class, gender, race, and sexual orientation—are needed to better the condition of Asian Americans. ○

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*Alice plans to be a graduate student in Ethnic Studies or Asian American Studies. She likes sleeping, eating, dancing, and working out and the list goes on. Her nicknames are Malice, Hamlet, Malibut, and Ace, but if you say "girlfriend," she'll probably turn around.*

## "A word or few about the G-spot"

reprinted from Good Vibrations Mail Order Catalog.

The G-spot, named and brought to public attention by the book of the same name, is a part of the female anatomy previously ignored in discussions of women's sexuality. It is an area of spongy tissue surrounding the urethra. When a woman is sexually aroused it swells to about the size of a quarter and can be felt as a firm area through the front wall of the vagina about two inches in. Some women can have orgasms with firm stimulation of this area. And some of the orgasms triggered in this way are accompanied by ejaculation of fluid through the urethra. This should be reassuring to those women who have felt embarrassed or abnormal when they "wet the bed" on orgasm.

Although every woman has this urethral sponge or G-spot, not all women respond in the same way to its stimulation. Some women find that G-spot stimulation feels no different from stimulation of other parts of the vaginal barrel. Others find it annoying or irritating to the bladder or urethra. We encourage women to experiment with toys specifically designed for G-spot stimulation (like the G-spotter or G-spotter Plus) or to try stimulating the area through intercourse or finger insertion.

## "Alice B. Toklas Award Dinner"

reprinted from *Lavender Godzilla*

Friday the 13th in October was a lucky day for GAPA (Gay Asian Pacific Alliance) as we were honored by the Alice B. Toklas Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club for our efforts in organizing the gay and bisexual Asian-Pacific community. Flanked by a standing ovation, Donald Masuda and Edward Lim accepted the award on behalf of GAPA. We were welcomed by a heart-felt congratulatory introduction from Community College board member Julie Tang. Among others also honored that evening were San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Harry Britt for his work on the Domestic Partners legislation and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi for her advocacy for PWA\* human rights.

\*Persons with AIDS.

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## "Rallies Mark Roe vs. Wade Anniversary"

Reprinted from *S.F. Chronicle*, Jan. 2, 1990.

About 300 pro-choice advocates gathered in Oakland January 21st to commemorate the anniversary of legalized abortion, cheering the woman whose lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court precipitated the landmark ruling.

"My concern is for the safety of millions of women if our freedom of choice is taken away," said an emotional Norma McCorvey, the woman called "Jane Roe" in the Roe vs. Wade suit against the state of Texas that ended with the controversial high court decision on Jan. 22, 1973.

More than 60,000 demonstrators are expected at the annual "March for Life" in Washington at what may prove to be the biggest anti-abortion gathering since the Supreme Court last year gave states limited power to impose their own restrictions on abortions.

That ruling brought a backlash when voters in some regions saw a threat to abortion rights and rejected anti-abortion candidates. An abortion-rights rally in Washington last November drew a crowd estimated by police at 150,000.

The National Organization for Women hopes to grab some of the television news coverage in Washington by erecting a "Women's Memorial" near the Capitol to depict the histories of six American women who died from illegal, botched abortions.

## "India Scraps Bhopal Settlement—Criminal Charges Sought"

reprinted from *S.F. Chronicle*, Jan. 22, 1990

Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh said yesterday that his government will scrap the \$470 million settlement reached with Union Carbide over the Bhopal gas disaster and pursue criminal charges and the \$3 billion originally sought

"We believe there can be no deal over human corpses," Singh told survivors of the 1984 catastrophe, which killed more than 3,500 people.

The settlement was accepted last year by the Indian Supreme Court and Singh's predecessor, Rajiv Gandhi.

# Lunar New Year Celebration

by T. Ng

More than seventy Asian/Pacific Lesbians and their friends welcomed the Year of the Horse by feasting at Sun Hung Heung Restaurant in Chinatown on Saturday, January 27, 1990. The meal was served in the usual Chinese traditional eight to ten course extravaganza that included popular dishes such as Peking Duck, Sweet and Sour Pork, and Fried Rice.

A raffle was held at the end of the meal. (Every guest was handed a ticket with a number as s/he entered the restaurant.) There were a handful of winners. Prizes included jewelry and battery powered massagers. While there was some fretting among those of us who did not have a winning ticket, for the most part, we were winners nonetheless. Seriously, how often does one have the chance to partake in a meal with so many other A/PL's?

After the dinner, a good number decided to invoke childhood memories by crashing a nearby carnival. Some adventurous souls tried their skills on a few games in (the vain) hope of winning a stuffed animal. And there were others who drowned themselves in cotton-candy-bliss.

A special thanks goes to the following individuals who put in a lot of time and energy into making the dinner a success: Terrie Chan, Kolika O., E.M. Wong, G. Yee, Julie Mau, H. Kwong, and Myrna Chiu. Thanks ladies for a job well done!!!

## Village Deli Boycott

By Ana B. Dorado

On January 21, 1990, I was assaulted by an employee (the brother of the owner) of Village Deli for using the restroom there then deciding not to buy anything. Sammy, the employee, grabbed me by the hood of my sweatshirt as I was going out the door. When I told him to keep his hands off me, he shoved me, then kicked me onto the sidewalk. I was helped by passersby, and I made a police report. I have followed up so charges will be pressed.

I ask that you boycott Village Deli (a door down from A Different Light on Castro Street), and please spread the word that we refuse to support violence against us.

# CALENDAR

## March

### 7 Wednesday

Asian American Int'l Film Showcase-  
Every Wednesday in March, AMC Kabuki  
8 Theaters, San Francisco. General  
Admission \$6.50 NAATA Members \$5.50  
Info: (415) 863-0814

March 7

7:00 p.m. Days of Waiting, Solo, Family  
Gathering

9:00 p.m. Chilsu and Mansu

March 14

6:00 p.m. Chilsu and Mansu

8:00 p.m. Monkey King Looks West,

China Diary

10:00 p.m. One Sunday Afternoon, The

Long Weekend

March 21

7:00 p.m. Mail Order, Halmani, Two Lies,  
Peering From The Moon

9:00 p.m. Surname Viet Given Name Nam

March 28

7:30 p.m. First Date

### 10 Saturday

Program-Women's Financial Information

Program, Building Your Money  
Management Skills. College of San  
Mateo. \$20 for entire series. Send  
registration to: S.I. of Burlingame, P.O.  
Box 481, San Mateo, CA 94401.  
Deadline is March 5. Info: (415) 348-  
5094

March 10

Record Keeping and Goal Setting

March 17

How Does Your Cash Flow?

March 24

Designing Your Cash Flow System,  
Starting From Scratch

March 31

Women and Insurance

April 7

Social Security and Other Public Benefits

April 21

Women and Investments

April 28

Legal Matters; Hiring the Professionals;

Review

### 12 Monday

Training-Become an advocate for battered  
women. Volunteer with Woman, Inc. to  
learn about domestic violence, crisis

intervention, options counseling. Women  
of Color and Lesbians especially needed.  
\$40 sliding scale. Call Jeanie for interview  
at (415) 864-4777

### 16 Saturday

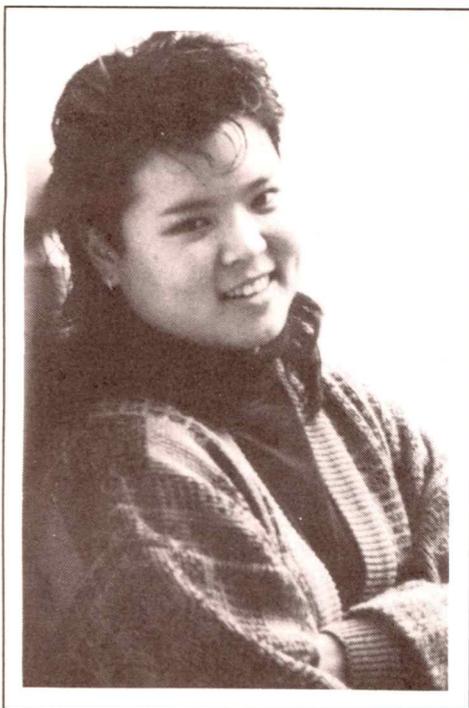
Modern Dance Performance-Executive  
Order 9066, June Watanabe Dance  
Company, 8 p.m. Programs also on March  
17, 18 at 3 p.m. Laney College Theatre.  
Call (415) 464-3543 for information.

### 25 Saturday

Film Series-Japanese American Women:  
Visions in Film 1-3 p.m. Oakland  
Museum. See 2/17 listing.

### 28 Saturday

Music-Hawaiian Night with Slack Key  
artists from Hawaii. Ledward Kaapana,  
Eddy Kamae, George Kuo, Willie  
Kahaialii and local Halau's. Oakland  
Convention Center, 10 Tenth St., Oakland.  
8 p.m. Tickets available through BASS  
Tickets. Info: (415) 762-2277



Julie C. Mau

Photograph by Maria Salazar

## Support the Women of Color Calendar!

Two young women have completed a  
calendar for and about Women of Color.  
Julie C. Mau, a San Francisco State University  
student and Maria Salazar, a legal assistant in  
San Francisco, photographed 13 Bay Area  
Women for "A Celebration of Colors, A  
Women of Color Calendar 1990. Both Mau  
and Salazar have donated their time and the  
women volunteered to pose for the calendar.  
Money raised from this private effort will be  
used to pay for production costs. Profits from  
this project will benefit community-based  
Women of Color organizations with an  
emphasis on groups that provide support for  
Lesbians of Color.

The calendars were typeset by Salazar,  
while Mau took the black and white  
photographs. The idea of putting together  
this calendar surfaced in October, but both  
Salazar and Mau put off the project believing

that it really couldn't be done. However, the  
idea of creating a calendar for Women of  
Color was hard to pass up. Salazar and Mau  
went ahead with this project to prove that a  
beautiful women is not a "blonde haired blue  
eyed" model.

In the calendar, one will find 13 women  
from various ethnic backgrounds covering  
all classes. Each set of photographs has a  
statement from the women. The calendar  
titled "A Celebration of Colors, A Women of  
Color Calendar 1990," includes the months  
January 1990 to January 1991. Already,  
plans are underway to produce a 1991 calendar  
which will include holidays from many  
traditions and cultures. For more information,  
one may call Maria Salazar or Julie C. Mau at  
(415) 255-9426 or write to Calendar, 2037  
15th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. ○

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on a dynamic issue of *Phoenix Rising!* (Issue #31). I thoroughly enjoyed the article written by Wahine Wilkinson, who I felt raised pertinent issues for us to address in our A/PL community. Wahine's courage in raising these issues is commendable and right on target. We must not allow ourselves to ignore the plight of Lesbians of Color who are not of our ethnicity, yet who have also experienced racial oppression. If we, Lesbians, are in the process of building a society based on equality then it means that we do not condone nor participate in a process that continues to impose its racist attitudes on anyone.

One of the most difficult and painful experiences that I personally have had was the moment I realized that I held within me internalized racism. Yet, it was also at that moment that I experienced a freedom to be able to confront and release this and strive to overcome other attitudes that had become part of me as a result of the assimilation process imposed on me from the day I first entered an educational institution at the age of five years. And just because we become aware of the junk stuff within us, doesn't mean that the assimilation process stops. We all know that like an oozing pus, it is everywhere in our society. Yet, we can make choices. Just as we must break the silence in other arenas such as alcoholism, incest and homosexuality, so too is it empowering to admit that we are not free of internalized racism. It is in acknowledging this "disease" within us that we begin to reclaim the power that is rightfully ours, and embark on our own healing process. Mahalo nui loa e Wahine a me ka po'e o *Phoenix Rising* for the insight on

the work that must be brought to the agenda of A/PL's.

The article written by Marilyn Abbink on the Dynamics of Color Conference was very informative, and I was elated to see that it received front page coverage, and that the real issues were not couched in polite terms as has happened in previous publications of *Phoenix Rising*. Marilyn's article was excellent and I do not want to devalue the fine work that she has done, yet she mentions two very dynamic women, Barbara Smith and Papusa Molina, and omits one of our own A/PL's who was significant in the success of this conference, MeiBeck Chung. This conference would not have made the impact it did in the A/PL and LOC communities were it not for the perseverance of MeiBeck. It was through her efforts with the assistance of another A/PL, Madeleine Lim, that the foundation for confronting racial dynamics was formulated. It is important, I feel, to bring the awareness to our A/PL community of those women whose courage and commitment can only serve as role models for the rest of us.

The structure to confront racial dynamics was not created overnight or after someone fell out of a tree; rather it was developed as a result of many agonizing experiences that MeiBeck personally confronted with the white women that she worked with in organizing this event. Although at times it was difficult for her to remain in the position that she assumed as a Tri-Chair, her commitment to overcoming racial oppression was the thread that held her to follow through and bring this conference to fruition.

As a voice of A/PL's, I feel that *Phoenix Rising* was remiss in not taking the time to

explore further MeiBeck's valuable contribution. I refuse to believe that there was a lack of awareness of this fact for the handbook on racial dynamics clearly states who the authors were and, throughout the conference, reference was made of MeiBeck as being the creator of this process. The racial dynamic process is a very significant document in the history of confronting racism, and we in the A/PL community must not ignore the fact that it was one of our own who created it. And if we do ignore this fact, what are we then saying about the way that we feel about the abilities of our own kind, or is this a clear demonstration of internalized racism?

Tita Julie's article on Papa (the indigenous Hawaiian name for the Earth Mother) was a gross reminder to me of the true forces in our world. In our everyday, rush-about busy world how often do we take time to pay homage to our Earth Mother? She gives so very much of herself to us; or do we forget that fruits and vegetables do not grow in those cellophane covered packages sold in Safeway stores, and that we have not yet learned to walk on water?

Much mahalo to Tacy for being so out there! Her contribution at the A/PLN Retreat at Santa Cruz was extremely valuable and enabled those of us who are Lesbian recovering alcoholics to identify with her feeling of empowerment! And here she is again. Right on Tacy!

Finally, a warm mahalo to those of you in Asian/Pacifica Sisters and *Phoenix Rising* for making Hawai'i and her issues visible. It sure feels good to know that at last we are not just a dot in the vast Pacific Ocean and that Native Hawaiians are still alive in the hearts and minds of many of you. Perhaps in your next issue, you may want to also include the Compact of Free Association that the nation of Guam is struggling with the U.S. government on, in an effort to prevent their experience from becoming similar to that of the Hawaiians.

Although my heart is overwhelmed with good feelings, I am overcome with the sadness of the blatant omission of any articles on our sisters of South Asia. While I realize the task of the editorial staff is overwhelming, is it possible to forward a note to sisters in D.C. and in Boston on the interest for articles about their people's concerns?

And wow! zowie! Honolulu finally has a feminist bookstore that opened just recently.

In closing, I once again congratulate the editorial staff of the *Phoenix Rising* for making it possible for sisters like myself to be able to stay informed of happenings overseas on the U.S. continent. One of the best gifts that I gave myself this year has been membership in the A/PLS, along with the subscription to *Phoenix Rising*.

Me ke aloha pumehana o Ku'umeaaloha ○

# JOIN US NOW

Asian/Pacifica Sisters is trying to set up a referral line to establish an ongoing resource for our community. Become a contributing member of A/PS, the organization for Asian/Pacifica lesbians, and help us continue our activities for the community! A one year membership is just \$15, and includes a one year subscription to *Phoenix Rising* (already a \$10 value), plus discounts on all A/PS-sponsored events during that year. What a bargain! (NOTE: Present subscribers to *Phoenix Rising* will receive a one-year renewal upon joining A/PS. Membership is open to all A/PL's.) Please make checks payable to Asian/Pacifica Sisters, and return this form to P.O. Box 31631 Oakland, CA 94604.

### Check the appropriate box:

- Yes! I'd love to join A/PS! Enclosed is my check for \$15.
- No, I don't want to join the organization at this time, but please enter my subscription to *Phoenix Rising*. Enclosed is my check for \$10 (6 issues).
- I'd like to subscribe for half a year only. Enclosed is my check for \$5 (3 issues).
- Please renew my present subscription:  
 1 year/\$10     1/2 year/\$5

Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

(optional)