

GENERASIANS

VOLUME 22

FALL 2023



WELLESLEY

COLLEGE

Dear Readers,

As the leaves paint the campus in hues of gold and crimson, and squirrels scurry around the Quad with their acorn treasures, it's unmistakably that time of the year again – Fall has graced Wellesley College with its captivating charm. Welcome back, everyone!

There's something magical about the fall season at Wellesley - from the kaleidoscope of foliage colors around Lake Waban to the aroma of fresh pastries from Claflin bakery gracing our dining halls in the morning. In this splendid season, it's a joy to witness the vibrant tapestry of events and happenings orchestrated by our incredible AAPI+ organizations. From the inaugural Night-in-Asia hosted by ASU+WASAC+SEASA, to WASAC's invigorating Desi Disco, to CSA's spectacular Mid Autumn Festival— our PAC orgs have once again woven together a rich fabric of culture, camaraderie, and celebration on campus.

GenerAsians Magazine is honoured to be a part of this pulsating energy. Our staff have been working tirelessly to curate an eclectic blend of essays and review pieces encapsulating the essence of our diverse community. From Wellesley campus life to personal reflections to insightful reviews of AAPI+ pop culture, this issue is a testament to the commitment and creativity of our contributors. We are so grateful for every one of you, our amazing E-Board and dedicated staff.

In the spirit of Wellesley's camaraderie, let's embark on this semester's journey together, uplift each other, and create spaces which embrace the kaleidoscope of identities within our community. Just like the unending discussions about the best dining hall breakfast (there's always room for debate... but Stone D stays winning (note: this is Ash's opinion, Jennifer begs to differ)), let's engage in conversations that enlighten and empower us.

At the same time, we recognize the unity of this campus against attempts to silence our voices. In the face of suppression, as a student community time and time again we have demonstrated our determination to stand against racism, colonialism, and Islamophobia. While the end to this struggle seems far beyond the horizon, our perseverance is what will drive our fight forward to a better present and future.

Together, please enjoy the fruits of our work this semester. Here's to new beginnings, bold aspirations, and a community that thrives on unity within diversity.

*With enthusiasm and warmth,
Jennifer Long and Ash He, Co-Editors-in-Chief*

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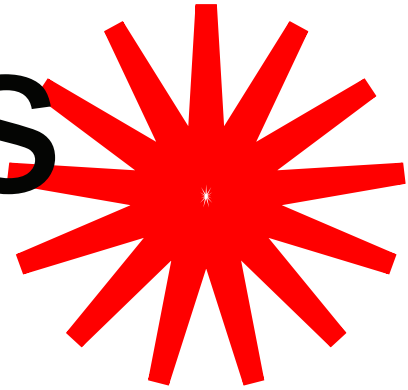
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W A D O

Friendship, Growth, and the Org's Future

W A D O

W A D O

W A D O

W A D O

Laura Chen '27

If you ever stop by KSC 202 on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, you'll likely hear the sound of squeaking sneakers and blasting music. This hubbub stems from none other than WADO, or Wellesley Asian Dance Org, a non-audition, student-run group for modern and traditional Asian dancers. WADO is going on its 11th year, and the org has hit a record number of sign-ups for this fall semester, which has brought both exciting and challenging organizational requirements to its E-Board.

WADO has always strived to be a welcoming club with a low entry bar, and Co-Social Chair Lina Hassen '24 experienced this firsthand when she joined in her spring of sophomore year. Lina grew

up in the Middle East and was looking to expand into a community that was different from her home, so when she saw SOLO by JENNIE of Blackpink offered as a workshop, she jumped at the opportunity. "The vibes are great, everyone is working together and having a good time. No matter how many people you meet, everyone is good friends," she says. Co-President Taylor Woody '24 also loves the inviting community of WADO. "There's no expectation that you need to dance, everyone is united by interest and you can meet other people more easily," she says. In comparison to Taylor's first year, when practices were limited to Zoom and no one was able to meet up in person, she expresses



joy that members can now make connections more easily than in the past, and that WADO feels more close-knit than ever.

For the fall, WADO is offering 4 dances: Shooting Star by XG, Super by SEVENTEEN, Ditto by NewJeans, and 白话文 by 刘宇. Leading a dance is not limited only to E-Board or experienced dancers, as all WADO members can volunteer and propose to lead a semester-long class for the song of their choosing. There are also opportunities to teach one-time workshops, and everybody is encouraged to apply regardless of their classical dance training. As Act Leader Liaison, Annie Chen '26 is in charge of organizing and communicating between the E-Board and Act Leaders, scheduling

weekly dance schedules, and organizing aforementioned workshops when there is expressed interest. "It's nice that E-Board isn't running the practices, Act Leaders are instead. The E-Board is also split into different areas, so organizationally work does not fall onto only one person," she says.

With the growing popularity of Asian dance within the Wellesley student body, Co-President Bernice Sun '24 notes that membership has doubled since her first year. Bernice and Taylor have been thinking about how to optimize the structure of WADO's big Spring Show so that all members get enough time to showcase their hard work. "It's been great that people are so interested, but this is the first year



Design by Hana Nagata



where there's been so much interest," Taylor says. In a similar vein, Annie has run up against Wellesley's 6-hour booking time limit for the dance rooms with the currently-scheduled 4 dances, having to resort to Alumnae Ballroom for workshops and other events. It has been tough trying to meet all requests, she says, but she is hopeful that WADO will be able to adapt to this welcome increase of student passion.

Considering that membership is so plentiful this year, the Spring Showcase is an event students will not want to miss. There will be guest performers, independent acts, and group acts like First Year and Senior dance which are voted on by the members who participate in them. Bernice and Taylor look forward to seeing all the performances and watching members' hard work come to life, and hope that all students who are interested in Asian dance will consider joining WADO for fun memories in the near future.



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ASIAN FOOD AT WELLESLEY?

Shen Tianyi '27

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Coconut Chicken Curry

Who doesn't love a creamy spoon of coconut chicken curry, paired with a bowl of hot, steamy Jasmine rice, with a rich coconut flavor melting off their tongue? This occasional dish appearing most commonly in the Bates dining hall is an absolute favorite of those we polled, and perhaps our larger Wellesley community as a whole. Sweet but mostly savory, its hints of spice bring us back to the taste of the other continent.



Being Asian is arguably about craving for the food half of the time. If you are a first-year like me, who is venturing into the dining halls trying to locate the best egg rolls, stir-fry, and pork chops served each week, you probably know how Asian food in Wellesley dining halls can give us a sense of comfort in our first months here. If you've been here for a while— well, either you've gotten completely sick of it, or you have some valuable insights to share as to where to find the BEST Asian food at Wellesley.

Either way, we decided to poll people ("randomly" through a volunteer-biased sample) for their top three choices of rice and their favorite Asian dish at Wellesley.



Chicken Tikka Masala

An absolute classic in Wellesley dining halls, Chicken Tikka Masala is ranked 2nd as sibs' favorite Asian dish on campus— and for a good reason. Rich and buttery, the boneless chicken marinated in yogurt and spice-infused tomato sauce makes for a comfort meal for so many near Lulu at dinner time and a staple of so many people's diets here.

Chicken Lo Mein

Tossed in chicken and vegetables, Chicken Lo Mein ties with Chicken Tikka Masala as the runner-up for people's favorite Asian dish at Wellesley. The thick, chewy noodles combined with a flavor of soy, added with juicy chicken and tender napa cabbage, fulfill craving stomachs.



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Rice

Steamed Jasmine Rice triumphs with a margin of 20% against Basmati and Fried rice (with and without egg). Although I personally love my fried rice, I cannot possibly conjure up an argument against steamed jasmine rice as it is the absolute foundation of my entire cuisine. No matter how the Asian dishes that dining hall offers changes, I find comfort in the existence of Steamed Jasmine Rice twice or thrice throughout the week.



Design by Ava Von Behren

SOME COLLEGE COOKING TIPS

Sammi Yim '27

Although I am personally a big fan of Wellesley's dining halls, I often find myself craving the comfort of a home-cooked meal, especially Asian food. Although trekking to Boston just for Asian food is an option, it can be exhausting and time-consuming. Cooking in the dorm halls sometimes feels daunting, but it doesn't have to be! Here are a few tips and tricks for easy dorm cooking – this is by no means an exhaustive list, but are suggestions meant to serve as inspiration. And most importantly, cook something delicious and have fun!

Ingredients

Going grocery shopping in the ville or Boston can feel like an ordeal at Wellesley, but the dining halls are full of foods that can be used as ingredients! You can get creative with any of the foods served, but I usually find the options at the salad bars to be easiest to use. For seasoning, I like utilizing the many spices and condiments available in the dining halls instead of going to buy my own – it saves both money and dorm storage space!

However, there are some staple ingredients I like keeping in my room, including packets of Korean dried seaweed (김), microwaveable rice, and instant ramen. I also love mixing rice and other random ingredients with bottled bibimjang (비빔장), a type of Korean sauce. I usually try to limit the number of ingredients I keep in my room, as it's easy to get carried

away, but these are some of my personal essentials.



It would be wrong to write an article about cooking in dorms without mentioning instant ramen! You can easily spice up instant foods such as ramen

by adding different ingredients, or by making your own sauce for the noodles. There are also many easy and quick recipes online for inspiration.

Materials/Supplies

Because of limited dorm space, objects that can either serve multiple purposes or are absolutely essential are ideal.

Owning a small pot or pan to cook in is helpful – I am fond of my yangeun naemi (양은냄비), a cheap aluminum pot most often used for cooking instant ramen. It is small and light, making it easy to carry around and store. It also heats up and cools down quickly, making it ideal for cooking ramen, although you can cook many other things in it. Small rice cookers or instant pots are also useful, albeit a more expensive option.



A cutting board and a knife can also be handy to own. A cutting board that is cheap and light, such as a plastic one, is most convenient to use. A small knife that comes with a plastic cover is also easy to use and safely store.

And finally, make full use of the microwave! Instead of simply cooking cup noodles or reheating leftovers, you can actually cook many foods in the microwave, including pasta. The internet has countless available recipes that are simple and easy to follow, ranging from chicken parmesan to snickerdoodle mug cake.



Design by Jasmine Chen '27

A SEARCH FOR HOME

*with tales told through Western Classical
and Chinese Traditional Tunes*

Cynthia Wang '24

On a chilly Saturday evening, Wellesley College hosted a faculty concert showcasing the music department's many brilliant musicians. From this awe-inspiring concert, one piece in particular resonated with me: Chinese tune on Bach Cello Suite No. 1 by Bach, performed by Professor Hui Weng on gu zheng, a traditional Chinese instrument known for its light timbre and lilting tone, and Professor David Russell on cello.

The moment Russell began, sighs of recognition swept through the audience – the Bach is a quintessential Western classical melody. When Weng joined, lacing delicate Chinese tunes with Bach's meditative progressions, I gasped in wonder. Here, the Western classical music I painstakingly practiced entwined with the Chinese traditional music that wove my dreams.

There is a constant push-and-pull within me, between my comfort in English and my accented Mandarin that a friend praised as "great for a foreigner"; between the student I am in my American educational institutions and the visa-holding tourist I am in China, the country of

my blood. As I fumble with this cultural Gordian knot within me, I cannot help but feel an indescribable anger while I observe the tensions between China and the West.

Travel with me to the Qing Dynasty when, in the Opium Wars from 1839-42 and 1856-60, the British and French pried an unwilling China up for trade, burning and looting our Yuanmingyuan (圆明园), once known as the "Garden of Gardens" (万园之园). Remember the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and join me in the 21st century where the advent of COVID-19 drove anti-Asian racism and hate crime to unforeseen heights.

Yet, even as I face these tainted histories with rage, I am overwhelmed with profound sorrow, for so much beauty could be found between our cultures. It is no exaggeration to say that blood, sweat, and tears have been poured into China's many classically-trained musicians and conservatories. For legendary Chinese musicians like Yo-Yo Ma and Yuja Wang, a love for music is a love for life itself. Music thus is a universal bridge for intercultural exchange, because "culture –

the way we express ourselves and understand each other – can bind us together as one world."

This was the mission for composers Zhanhao He and Gang Chen when they composed The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto in the 1950s. Known colloquially as Liang Zhu (梁祝), the piece tells the legendary Chinese love story between Shanbo Liang and Yingtai Zhu who, as in Romeo and Juliet, could not be wed, but were instead reincarnated as butterflies, souls united as one.

I grew up listening to this piece, as did my parents. From the street vendors' crackling radios to national TV channels, Liang Zhu was the soundtrack of our home. So how does this piece of Western classical solo work ring true for generations of Chinese peoples from all walks of life?

Inspired by tunes from the same tale told in yue ju, a form of Chinese opera from Zhejiang and Shanghai, composers He and Chen fiddled with violin techniques to mimic traditional Chinese instruments. Through the er hu's mournful sighs, the pi pa's powerful strummed chords, and the gu zheng's crystal-clear trills, the traditionally Western violin became a conduit to echoing a distinctively Chinese sound. At Liang Zhu's premiere, every single member of the audience, no matter age or trade, was moved to their core.

It was neither Beethoven nor Mozart that defined the beauty of Western classical music for everyday Chinese citizens, but rather this beautiful fusion of Chinese legend and Western art. Liang Zhu exemplifies the possibilities of cross-cultural appreciation. Could such music be the first step towards common ground between our cultures? Could we see eye to eye? Could home be found wherever I go?

One night, I walked out of a practice room in Wellesley's Jewett Art Center. The father of a middle-school-aged son who takes piano lessons here happened to be just outside the door. With one glance at me, he stood, immediately speaking to me in Chinese.

"Hello! Excuse me, are you a student here? And by any chance, are you from China?"

Can I really say that I'm from China? He surprised me, for none of my friends who were born and raised in China ever spoke directly to me in Chinese. Without a single shred of doubt, this stranger instantly affirmed that I do belong to my own culture. As I tentatively nodded, he brightened.

"You were playing Liang Zhu, weren't you? I haven't heard that piece since I was a boy back in China. I never thought I'd hear it again after moving to America."

His smile seemed to ache with nostalgia. He gave me two firm nods of approval.

"很好。很好。"(Very good. Very good.)

I struggled to speak. It's a such a simple phrase – the kind that my own father might chuckle in passing if I finished my entire bowl of rice without leaving a single grain behind. Suddenly, it felt as though all my ancestors had gently laid their hands on my shoulders. I do belong here, and I am home. Tears stung my eyes as my breath lumped in my chest like cotton. He tipped his head forward, smile lines at the corners of his eyes crinkling.

"Thank you for playing it. Truly, thank you."

Note: see page 37 or visit our website to read articles linked by Cynthia and listen to Weng and Hui's musical performances

Design by Jennifer Long

MY PARENTS' MUSIC TASTE IS SUPERIOR

MY CANTO & MANDO OLDIES PLAYLIST

Julie Zeng '27

Growing up, family road trips starred my parents belting out the choruses of 80s/90s Chinese music as its signature bass, piano, and drum-heavy sound permeated through the car. The songs weaved in both traditional and contemporary elements and featured the powerful voices of household favorites—the likes of Jacky Cheung, Anita Mui, and Andy Lau. I couldn't appreciate it then but as a teenager, I found myself longing for these "old style" Chinese songs again once the novelty of being on aux wore off.

During the summer of 2022, I deep dived into my camera roll and attempted to collect all the screenshots of songs I shazam-ed in the car secretly (because what could be worse than admitting I enjoyed my middle-aged parents' music taste). I even took a trip down memory lane by listening to other pre-made Spotify playlists. As I listened to the melodic tunes, I recognized the familiar songs from our car, my uncle's car back in China, and the singing reality shows that played in the living room. I have to say, Chinese people truly know how to enjoy emotional music, whether through the moving instrumentals or the sentimental lyrics. There was an indescribable nostalgia and yearning attached to each song as I felt the urge to cry, to laugh, and to dance. I realized, then, that my childhood as a Chinese girl was etched in the bridges of 夕陽之歌 ("Song of Sunset") by Anita Mui and the soft rock of Andy Lau's 一起走過的日子 ("The Days We Spent Together"). As I listen to the songs on repeat, my mind becomes filled with vivid scenes from riding on a speeding moped through Chinese city streets to chasing chickens in the lush village countryside.

This past summer, I traveled back to my hometown of Taishan in Guangdong, China after missing it for 7 years. There, I collected even more old songs from DiDis (Chinese Uber), other relatives' cars, park speakers, and especially my uncle's car!

I discovered that everything in my life had come full circle. The subtle shame that came with hearing these old-fashioned songs as a kid originated from the struggle of living in a small predominantly white town. A once stubborn and embarrassed child, my journey towards admitting my parents' music taste was superior paralleled the self acceptance of my Chinese identity during my teenage years.

Although my parents probably won't ever see this—Mom, Dad, thank you for introducing me to the songs that shaped your youth and eventually impacted mine. Now, my playlist stands tall and proud as a symbol of my growth, and I'm thrilled to carry on your legacy of sharing the music of our culture with others!



FOR YOUR LISTENING EARS

康定情歌 by 划紫玲

夕陽之歌 ("Song of Sunset") by Anita Mui (梅艷芳)

容易受傷的女人 ("Fragile Woman") by Faye Wong (王菲)

追夢人 ("Dream Catcher") by Fong Fei-fei (鳳飛飛)

心太軟 ("Too Softhearted") by Richie Jen (任賢齊)

惜別的海岸 ("Seashore of Farewell") by Jody Chiang (江蕙)

吻別 ("The Farewell Kiss") by Jacky Cheung (張學友)

別問我是誰 ("Don't Ask Me Who I am") by Linda Wong (王馨平)

一起走過的日子 ("The Days We Spent Together") by Andy Lau (劉德華)

月亮代表我的心 ("The Moon Represents My Heart") by Teresa Teng (鄧麗君)

PHOTO BY JULIE ZENG '27

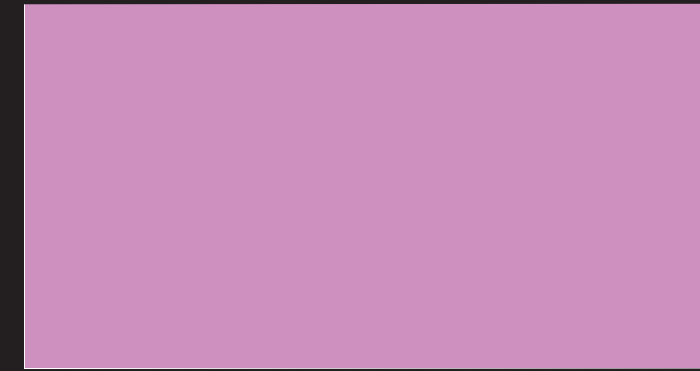


**"THERE WAS AN
INDESCRIBABLE
NOSTALGIA
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ATTACHED TO
EACH SONG AS
I FELT THE URGE
TO CRY, TO
LAUGH, AND TO
DANCE."**

Design by Julie Zeng

SIMU LIU AND THE TOKENISM DILEMMA

Skye Bulman '27



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Who is Simu Liu? You may have seen him in *Barbie*, with his slicked back hair and surfboard, as he hits the beach to fight his rival, stereotypical Ken (played by Ryan Gosling). Before this, Liu played Jung in *Kim's Convenience*, a popular Canadian sitcom that deals with questions of family loyalty, the first and second immigrant experience, and what "normal" looks like for those of Asian descent. Recently, Liu has faced controversy, for landing his role in *Barbie*, as the *Huffington Post* claimed that there were many other talented Asian male actors who deserved to be showcased. Now, this in itself isn't a point of contention. Who would argue that there aren't a plethora of amazing Asian actors more than capable of being showcased as a funny over-the-top gym bro, or, as Liu puts it, a "deliciously stupid" Ken? The problem with voicing this concern is that it's wrapped up in a layer of microaggressions that put Liu's race, rather than his acting ability at the forefront of peoples' minds.

Accurately representing Asian people within American media has been a struggle since the

beginning. Directors of non-Asian descent saw no issue with casting White actors in roles originally written for Asians, as seen in movies such as *"Madame Butterfly"* and *"Breakfast at Tiffany's."* The practice of yellow-face stemmed from ignorance about Asian people and Asian culture, and it was accompanied by type-casted character roles like *"Fu Manchu"* or *"Charlie Chan."* Asian-Americans were fed stereotypes and watered down depictions of their traditions, because movies and shows weren't made with them in mind. It's ironic to see that now that we're finally seeing some Asian representation within the media (even if it sometimes comes in the form of the "nerdy best friend" or "wise martial arts sensei"), these Asian actors who have beaten the odds and made it onto the screen are being criticized for being too popular. I understand that the issue is more nuanced, as the concern is that a single actor/actress will become the "go-to Asian" directors call when they have a role that requires it. But shouldn't this concern also be targeted at the producers, film-writers and directors

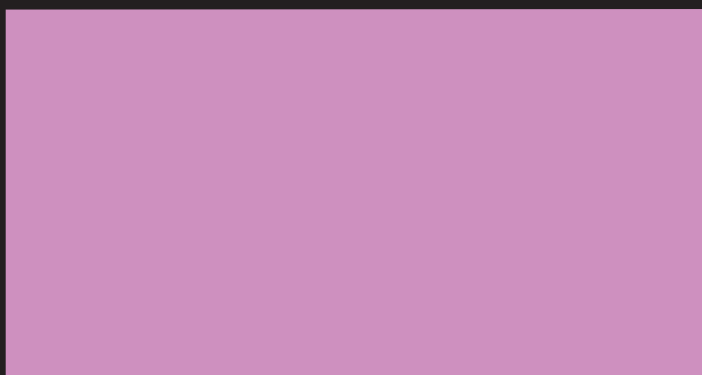
who continue to make movies that inaccurately or fragmentally portray Asian existence? What Simu Liu is being accused of is a problem that cannot be solved by calling out a single actor—it's a systemic issue within the film industry that we're still grappling with today.

On a more personal level, seeing someone who looks like me on-screen isn't life-changing. It's more of a pleasant shock, an unexpected nod to my existence that made me feel seen. But with it comes the sudden realization that what I'm seeing isn't "normal." Movies, especially those not curated towards an Asian audience, make White seem like the generic mold that represents all types of characters—from superheroes to everyday people. That's not to say that Hollywood hasn't improved, with the increase of movies like *"The Joy Luck Club," "Crazy Rich Asians,"* and the live-action *"Mulan,"* but it still has a long way to go before it can claim full inclusivity towards its Asian audience.

I'd also like to point out the hypocrisy that comes with accusing minority actors of token-

ism. Non-minority actors don't have this additional burden of proving that they're qualified for a role—most roles are made for them. And they don't have to act as spokespeople for their communities, somehow representing their entire race in a space where they weren't previously (and still sometimes aren't) welcomed. In fact, Disney CEO Bob Chapel previously called the first Asian-centric Marvel superhero movie *"Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings"* an "interesting experiment," to which Liu (who plays Shang-Chi) responded that it "is not an experiment." This idea that movies with Asian men as the leads are still shaky for Hollywood means that the reception that Asian actors get now is more important than ever. Blaming Simu Liu for the fallacies of the film industry is counterproductive to the goal of having more Asian representation, and tears Asian communities apart in the process. We should celebrate the inclusion and rise to fame of Simu Liu, as he gives us hope that someday all Asian actors will receive the recognition they deserve for their contributions to the silver screen.

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Design by Michelle Li

SAVING FACE: BOLD BUT NOT ENOUGH

Doreen Dai '27

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While we are bombarded with blockbusters like *Crazy Rich Asians* which is acclaimed as one of the first and only silver-screen representations of Asian Americans, an independent film that pioneered the field of Asian American film— *Saving Face*— is obscured from public view. *Saving Face* was released in 2004 and directed by Chinese American director Alice Wu (who is recently known for the film *The Half of It*). It is a queer rom-com that tells the parallel romantic stories of the daughter Wil and her pregnant mother Hwei-Lan.

Saving Face is boundary-breaking and bold in terms of challenging established tropes of Asian American narratives. In

Show/down time: "Race"; gender, sexuality, and popular culture, Nakayama sharply points out that in U.S popular culture, Asian American representation is often constructed as the Other to a center of white heterosexual masculinity (Nakayama). Nevertheless, in *Saving Face*, the position of white heterosexual masculinity is challenged not only by its realistic depiction of Chinatown life in New York but also by the bold narration of queer relationships. Two kinds of queerness are performed in *Saving Face*: First is the sneaky and cute lesbian love between Wil and Vivian; Second (which is usually ignored) is Hwei-Lan- a 48 years old widowed mom- 'son secret relationship and pregnancy with Xiaoyu who was one gen-

eration younger than her. Alice Wu cleverly weaves these two stories together with the concept of "saving face" – an obsession in Chinese culture with an ethical reputation of the family- that renders both Wil and her mother unable to openly express their queerness (both of their affairs would be seen as a disgrace by the rigorous grandfather). Although the cultural clash between traditional Chinese values and American individualism is thematized in this film, unlike the conventional narrative of irreconcilable intergenerational conflict, the cultural struggle in *Saving Face* is rather internal to the character, and it is communication and mutual support between the mother and daughter that reconcile their internal ambivalence. The scenes where Wil and her mother huddled on the sofa watching soap operas together and conversing about their life elevates their bond: Wil comes out to her mother with "Ma, I love you. And I 'm gay"; and Hwei-Lan also confesses her fear of motherhood and admitted to Wil that "You were different. You sprung from the womb already grown up." It is the heart-to-heart conversation that characterizes both women beyond their role of "mother" and "daughter" and evolves their relationship beyond the archetype of "second generation conflict theory" (T. Nguyen).

However, this film disappoints me for succumbing to genre legibility – media are expected to follow the established rules of a particular genre (Feng). Abruptly in the ending, the previously acrid and conservative- thinking Chinatown neighbors and the grandfather magically accept and

welcome the mother and daughter to the party. This cliché and saccharine rom-com convention of a happy somehow undermines the boldness of this film, drawing it back to this pro-assimilation trope by saying that once they discard these 'restrictive traditions' and adopt a more liberal mindset (that is more accepted by the American mainstream), they will be happier. I think it is better to end with an open ending at the bus scene allowing audiences to imagine the repercussions of their bold action rather than give a clear-cut answer that conspicuously fawns on the "coming-out" politics of queer liberalism. It overlooks the structural obstacles faced by the LGBTQ+ community as well as individuals' bodily autonomy.



Although Alice Wu makes the concession to genre legibility, overall *Saving Face* is still an important representation that boldly tears down the stereotypical archetype of Asian Americans in film. Maybe that is why *Saving Face* is only popular in a cult way within the queer community while not legible in the mainstream markets that were still penetrated by white heterosexual masculinity.

Sidenotes: I watched Alice Wong's 2020 film *The Half of It* before watching *Saving Face* – it was a frustrating realization to me that some scenes in *The Half of It* are exact replicates of *Saving Face*. For instance, Wil's interruption of her mom's unwilling wedding is repeated in *The Half of It* with Ellie Chu stopping Trig's proposal to Aster. It seems to me that conventions of rom-coms did restrict innovation and creativity in the narrative. At least that is the case with Alice Wu.

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Design by Tania Jimenez

TV SHOW REVIEW: THE STORY OF MINGLAN

Brianna Dong '27

The Story of MingLan is one of my favorite ancient Chinese costume dramas and one that I like to watch over and over again. Not only do I like it because the plot is interlocking and fascinating, but also because of the heavy historical color and the warmth, strength, and philosophy of life it brings me. In addition, it is a show that focuses on portraying female characters, and all the female characters, regardless of their roles, are vivid and three-dimensional.

Background Information

To understand this show, we first need to understand the era in which the story takes place, which is the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). In China's 5,000 years of history, the Northern Song Dynasty was the most economically, culturally prosperous, and politically enlightened dynasty after the flourishing Tang Dynasty. Therefore, you can often see many characters reciting poems, enjoying flowers and tea, riding horses, and playing polo in the show. Even the Chinese title of this show comes from Ru-Meng-Ling, written by Li Qingzhao, a famous female poet of the Northern Song Dynasty. This poem depicts a female's free and easy life in the ancient Song dynasty, which is MingLan and all the girls' ideal life. Maybe the author wants to hint that MingLan shares some similarities with the girls in the poem or Li Qingzhao. It is important to note how difficult it was for female poets to get recognition in feudal society thousands of years ago. Still, Li Qingzhao was recognized as the most talented woman of her time. But even so, the social status of women at that time was not comparable to that of modern society. For example, a man can have a wife and many concubines; the parents decided on marriage, only men could serve in the government and the battlefield, and only the daughters of prominent (wealthy) families could

go to private schools. Women had to be careful with their words and behavior and avoid having rumors spread about them in order to live a normal life. The show portrayed all the hardships of a woman's life at that time, but at the same time, it also showed a glimmer of hope under feudal oppression through its heroine, MingLan. In addition, the drama also explains the two coups according to historical facts and exhibits the food, clothing, housing, and cultural customs of the Northern Song Dynasty. Moreover, the plot is not clichéd because it focuses not only on the royal family's disputes but also portrays the stories between various ordinary families, allowing us to feel the warmth of family and friends in the show.



Synopsis

Sheng Hong, a magistrate in Yangzhou, has two sons and three daughters. His youngest daughter, MingLan, is a smart and intelligent girl. Because her mother is a concubine, she is unfortunately despised by her Big mother (Sheng Hong's wife) and another favored concubine. MingLan listens to her mother's dying exhortations, restrains her sharpness, and takes refuge under the care of her grandmother. During this period, she and Gu Tingye, the second son of the Ningyuan Marquis, went from being strangers to knowing each other, and the latter became an invaluable person in her life. Even with her grandmother's protection, the Sheng Mansion is still littered with overt and co-

vert attacks that threaten her safety at all times. In this process, Minglan is like a phoenix in fire, enduring insults and burdens, breaking through life's trials step by step, and using her strength to pursue justice in society and her own happiness. Everyone in the show is unique, with different personalities and virtues: the eldest brother is sensible and upright; the fifth sister is arrogant, naive, and cheerful; the grandmother is wise and courageous and can see things through, etc.

Lessons

The precise hierarchy of society at that time constituted a well-ordered hierarchy of superiority and inferiority that countless people could only actively claim or passively submit to. Whether one tries to sway the feudal ethical code or ends up being swayed by it, the result is that one's self is swallowed up by this strong social order. In the social environment where men are superior to women, MingLan can clearly recognize the importance of learning and try to resist the oppression and shackles brought to her by her identity as a woman. Although MingLan was taught by her mother from a young age not to be in the limelight in everything, Minglan always had the courage to stand up and speak out without hesitation when it jeopardized her family and friends. MingLan has been smart beyond others since she was a child, but she did not use her smarts to harm people or make profits, and all she has ever wanted since the beginning is a peaceful life. She preserved kindness, and her heart ached for every woman who suffered a rough fate in an unequal society.

This show also conveys a lot of life philosophies:

Don't live on others because no one can stay with us forever.

For a person to live too smoothly, it is easy to get lost.

Getting along with people ultimately relies on the lowest part of a person's character, which is how bad a person can be at worst.

In families with many children, parents should

be even-handed.

A person is subject to either long-term concerns or short-term troubles.

Marriage is not the only way out for women because there are many more important and meaningful things to do in the world than that.

The Highlight Of The Show

The costumes, marketplace activities, and mansion life in the show are all very much representative of the Northern Song Dynasty. Song Dynasty dress culture advocates simplicity, and the color is also plain and elegant, which is well presented in the show. The details of the street scenery inside are actually borrowed from Zhang Zeduan's "Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival," a genre painting of the Northern Song Dynasty, one of China's ten most famous heirloom paintings. The plot also mentions the management of the house, the taxation of the land, and the etiquette of marriage. Watching the show, I feel the family atmosphere is particularly rich, very warm, and real, especially in the Sheng family. From the opening scene of street vendors and charcoal strife to the gradual unfolding of the Sheng family's daily life, there is no shortage of warmth in the noisy days.

The drama focuses on the "family" level: Sheng family, Gu family, Qi family, and Shen family...so it is easy to feel empathy when watching them. Family, friendship, love, joys and sorrows, bit by bit, scene by scene, spread out as if this is not a "play;" this is life. Especially the relationship between grandmother and MingLan; they are not bound by blood but by real love. This show seems to focus on intertwined fights in the mansion, but in fact, it shows women's personal growth, thinking about love, marriage, family relationships, and the situation in the imperial court. It teaches us to be self-reliant and strong at heart, even when we are surviving in the cracks. It's so successful because it's not labeling the characters' identities, no longer sensationalizing and laying out a love fairy tale, but rather conveying some pursuit of love and freedom amidst popularized and delicate expressions.

Design by Doreen Dai

REVIEW: *MITSKI'S THE LAND IS INHOSPITABLE AND SO ARE WE*

Michelle Li '27 and Dan Lu '26

Japanese American singer-songwriter Mitski's latest album, *The Land is Inhospitable and So Are We*, is a declaration that she hasn't yet finished gracing the world with her art. The musician's emotionally resonant, unflinchingly vulnerable songs have attracted a cult following over the past decade, but her skyrocket to commercial success after 2018's *Be The Cowboy* left her more disillusioned than ever with the music industry and her place in the public eye. She explored these conflicts in the follow-up album *Laurel Hell*, whose upbeat, 80s-inspired synth pop contrasted its dark lyrics that seemed to foretell the end of her music career. Thus, *The Land is Inhospitable and So Are We* comes as a welcome surprise; the album is an understated yet triumphant return, combining her signature confessional lyricism and themes of longing and grief with a new, country-influenced sound.

In an interview with NPR, Mitski says that *The Land is Inhospitable and So Are We* is her most American album. When prompted to elaborate, she explains: "I'm always trying to figure out what it means to be American. But especially with this album, I think I'm trying to

reconcile all my various identities

with being American today." This theme of belonging and achieving the ideal American identity has been especially prominent in her older works, such as the critically acclaimed "Your Best American Girl" and viral hit "Strawberry Blond." Both songs depict struggle and yearning for something she can seemingly never achieve. In this interview, however, Mitski concludes by saying, "I almost feel like a majority of Americans are actually other, and that's kind of what makes America what it is." Through this statement, she makes peace with the various facets of her identity and accepts America as what it is—a persistent struggle for hope. Mitski illustrates this in both the sonic and lyrical landscape of her new album—through depictions of nature and the literal landscape, the religious underpinnings of morality, to the love and resilience that ultimately shines through.

The first and most notable thing is the title of the album. After all, the land itself is the most immediate and concrete manifestation of America. So what does it mean for it to be inhospitable? The second song in the album, "Buffalo Replaced," carries an intense beat that feels mechanic and similar to the chugging of a train. This sonic element fits with the overall theme, as the chorus goes: "Freight train stampedin' through my backyard / It'll run across the plains like the new buffalo replaced." This description of before and after Western expansion undeniably alludes to the development of America, the process of land being stolen and transformed.

Mitski begins the song by saying, "Mosquitoes can enjoy me, I can't go inside / I'm suckin' up as much of the full moon, so bright." Already, there is a sense of hostility—the mosquitoes that feed on her and suck on her blood are an obvious source of discomfort. However, she is also engaging in parasitic behavior by absorbing the moonlight. Despite the inhospitality of this land and its creatures, she draws energy from the moon, a celestial object unmoored from the land which harms her.

The dichotomy between land and sky is a consistent theme found throughout the album. In "When Memories Snow," she uses the image of snow as a vehicle to encapsulate her memories. Despite coming from the sky, snow clusters and takes form on land. She views this piling up of memories, or snow, as an inconvenience, since she must "shovel all those memories / Clear the path to drive to the store." Snowed-in by painful memories, she must learn to repress them in order to carry on with her life. Even when the snow melts, she can't escape it, exclaiming that "when memories melt / I hear them in the drain pipe / Drippin' through the downspout / As I lie awake in the dark." The snow, which is attached to the land, is a hostile force that she ultimately seeks to avoid. By contrast, in her hit single, "My Love Mine All Mine," she turns to the sky as a source of comfort and love. She confides in the moon, addressing her as "a hole of light / Through the big top tent up high / Here before and after me / Shinin' down on me." Through these descriptions, the moon is portrayed as watching over her with the metaphor of a tent, signifying a form of shelter. If the moon provides a safe haven for her, then the land is suggested to be the source of malevolence the sky protects her from. Overall, Mitski references the land to express discomfort while turning to the sky, particularly the moon, as a source of strength and comfort.

Religious themes feature significantly in the album, further contributing to its American character. Christianity, in particular, has been

intertwined with America's culture and history since the settler-colonial nation's founding, more often causing strife than acting as a guiding light of morality. These songs reflect that; Mitski paints a bleak landscape where religion is no refuge and God is no savior. In the brilliantly written, heart-wrenching lead single "Bug Like an Angel," the narrator drowns in addiction and false promises, futilely looking to the divine for relief. The angel in question is only an insect trapped at the bottom of her tipped-up glass, a delusion of her alcohol-addled mind. The gospel choir that backs Mitski feels ironic in the context of the narrator's drunken loneliness, then taunting as they remind her that her broken promises will "break [her] right back." Even her self-reassurance that "the wrath of the Devil was also given him by God," that her suffering was ordained by some higher power, offers little solace.

Finding that the divine offers no escape from the pain of being a living, feeling human, Mitski instead turns to the Devil: "The Deal" is a Faustian fable in which the narrator is desperate to sell her soul away—not for the typical reward of talent or fame, but simply because continuing to live with it is too difficult. However, her actions leave her as "a cage," feeling only more trapped; there is no escape. Mitski's hopelessness turns to resignation in the devastating penultimate track "I'm Your Man."



Design by Eunice Zhang

In the song, she is a masculine "god" figure in her relationship, constantly hurting her lover who still venerates her; this hints at religious power dynamics linked to patriarchy. Ultimately, she accepts "judgment by the hounds" for the harm she has caused. Upon this confession, the song's hushed acoustic strumming dissolves into a twilight soundscape of canine barks, choral chanting, and finally a chilling animal scream, tying back into the land and leaving the listener with a haunting image of the narrator taken to a sinner's fate.

Despite the confines of the land and its stifling religious underpinnings, this album is ultimately about love and resilience. The first example of this is the aforementioned "Buffalo Replaced," where in the second verse Mitski introduces a personification of her hope who is "blind with no name." Despite these qualities, she "shits where she's supposed to, feeds herself while I'm away / Sometimes I think it would be easier without her / But I know noth-

ing can hurt me when I see her sleepin' face." Even though this hope is blind and cannot understand the devastation around her, she continues to sustain herself and the speaker, who views her as a liability but also as a vital source of strength. In her closing track, "I Love Me After You," Mitski describes several acts of physical self care—from "spritz[ing her] face with toner" to "splash[ing] water on [her] neck." In the second verse, however, she comes to a transformative realization, saying, "Streets are mine, the night is mine / All my own / How I love me after you / King of all the land / I'm king of all the land." Powered by this delicate love for herself, she reclaims the land which has caused her so much pain and turmoil, ultimately declaring herself king. The Land is Inhospitable and So Are We ultimately culminates in this act of self-acceptance and veneration. Mitski recognizes that though the land is inhospitable, she still has agency—to hope, to love, and to persistently exist.





PETER DO BRINGS A NEW VISION TO HELMUT LANG'S S/S 2024

Anika Sridhar '27

In May 2023, designer Peter Do was announced as the new creative director of Helmut Lang. Born in Vietnam, Do immigrated to suburban Philadelphia at 14. Do received the LVMH Graduate Prize in 2014 and trained under Phoebe Philo at Céline. Do launched his own label, Peter Do, in 2018, and staged the label's first runway for the spring 2022 season at New York Fashion Week.

After his new role was announced, Do stated that he still planned to work with his own label. His work at Helmut Lang, however, would take on a new focus, particularly in introducing the brand to a new generation.

Helmut Lang is the eponymous brand of Aus-

trian designer Helmut Lang. Do has cited Lang as one of his influences, with the two designers sharing interests in deconstruction, androgynous design, and the rejection of viewing fashion designers as celebrities.

Do's Helmut Lang debut was during the spring 2024 season at New York Fashion Week. Do avoided creating exact replicas of pieces from the Helmut Lang archives, opting to instead move the line's vision forward while also maintaining the brand's ethos; Do used elegant tailoring and fabrics to create multipurpose, utilitarian pieces for everyday wear, a core tenet of both Lang and Do's work.



Do collaborated with Vietnamese-American writer Ocean Vuong for the show, titled "Born to Go." Vuong wrote a poem centered around the queer Asian-American experience. Stanzas were written in both Vietnamese and English, and the poem was printed on the floor of the runway. Lines from the poem were also found on some of the garments in the collection.

The collection was mostly made up of a black-and-white color scheme, with notable splashes of fuschia and taxicab yellow. The yellow paid hom-

age to Lang's practice of advertising with New York City taxicabs. Additionally, seatbelts were used as belts, sashes, and stripes on some pieces. The use of seatbelts represented the sense of freedom cars provided Do's family with after moving to America.

"Growing up on a farm in Vietnam and going to Philadelphia with my mom owning a car...the luxury to be able to get in the car and have the freedom to go where you want was something that everyone was taking for granted, something that I felt was truly luxurious. I want Helmut Lang to be that vehicle of freedom for people, in the same way I discovered with cars," Do told Wallpaper Magazine.



Design by Karen Xiao

AMERICA2KOREA: THE RISE OF THE GLOBAL K-POP GROUP

Karen Xiao '27

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Upcoming American girl group VCHA is already branded as the world's next super group. Consisting of members Lexi, Camila, Kendall, Savanna, KG, and Kaylee, this project was created as a result of America2Korea, or A2K, a 2023 American reality competition show hosted by JYP Entertainment and Republic Records. The merger between these two internationally renowned record labels helps facilitate what JYP founder J.Y. Park considers "globalization by localization", but what does this mean?

America2Korea seeks to break traditional stereotypes surrounding intense and exclusive K-pop training programs by providing young American vocalists, rappers, and dancers with a unique opportunity to experience the K-pop system. Specifically, Park explains that the original goal of this show was to create "the first American artist made out of a K-pop system." Unlike American artists who seemingly blow up overnight on social media, the K-pop industry has created a very systematic approach to developing young artists through years of rigorous and specialized training. Specifically, this training focuses on vocal and dance coaching, Korean language classes, and etiquette training on social media. This way, it seems like the K-pop industry almost has an algorithm designed to guarantee fame and A2K aims to apply this strategy in America through their audition and training schedules.

"the first American artist made out of a K-pop system."



Throughout a total of 22 episodes streamed on Youtube, A2K follows a handful of hopeful young female contestants ranging from ages 13-18 on their journey to be selected as members of the final group. In the first phase of the show, J.Y. Park held auditions in five cities around the United States where contestants were required to prepare at least 2 songs for short singing and dancing auditions. If a contestant passed their audition, they received a necklace with four empty slots to be filled in later stages of the show. Moving on from auditions, the contestants spent 6 days at LA Boot Camp where they were evaluated on 4 metrics: dance, voice, start quality, and character. For each metric, the contestants had the possibility to win a stone for their necklace pendants and any contestant who received all 4 stones were guaranteed to move onto the next stage.



In the final stage, the remaining contestants flew from LA to Korea to attend the official JYP Training Academy where they once again faced many different challenges and evaluations that would ultimately determine the final group lineup. These evaluations included individual, team, and

attitude evaluations. During this stage, any contestant who ranked last out of all contestants for 2 evaluations would be eliminated. At the end of this stage, the final group lineup was announced in a very heartfelt season finale where Gina and Cristina, two fan favorites, were unfortunately eliminated.

"VCHA has the potential to become the world's next biggest international girl group."

Despite the emotion-packed ending of the show, there is no bad blood between any of the contestants as they were not only able to improve their talents, but also form friendships and bonds that could last a lifetime. Many eliminated contestants have publicly supported VCHA and its members, and Gina even released a brand new single and music video just hours after the premiere of the last episode to showcase her passion and talents outside of the show.

As K-pop keeps growing in popularity in Western culture, there is no doubt that VCHA has the potential to become the world's next biggest international girl group. Their diverse backgrounds and passion for performance will undoubtedly play huge roles in their journey to global stardom and who knows? In a few years, we might see VCHA follow BLACKPINK as the second K-pop group to headline Coachella.

Design by Laura Chen

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JUSTICE FOR JAAHNAVI

Ariana Rashid '27



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To her family members, she was a "beloved daughter". "A brilliant student with a promising future". To her classmates and faculty members she was a "bubbly personality" who was always engaging with her community and making new friends. Those who knew Jaahnavi all voiced the immense value, warmth, and radiance she brought to those around her.

On January 23rd, 23 year old Jaahnavi Kandula was crossing the intersection of Dexter Avenue North and Thomas street in Seattle when a police van driving at 74 mph in a 25 mph zone hit her, throwing her body forward approximately 100 feet. The officer driving, Kevin Dave was on the way to an overdose call when he was speeding towards the intersection. Jaahnavi was left with life-threatening injuries and rushed to a nearby medical center where she was pronounced deceased the following morning. Jaahnavi Kandula was a 23 year old graduate student who had traveled to the United States in 2021 from Andhra Pradesh, India to pursue a masters degree in Information Systems at Northeastern Univer-

sity 's Seattle campus. Jaahnavi's tragic and unjust death left an unfillable void in the lives of her loved ones and led to multiple demands for justice from the public.

However when the Seattle Police department released a 2 minute video clip 8 months later of Officer Auderer's comments the night of Jaahnavi's death, the injustices, anger, and sorrow were amplified even more. Officer Auderer was a "drug recognition expert" who was called to the crash site to run tests and determine Officer Dave's sobriety. When on the phone with his SPOG president Mike Solan, Auderer's body cam picked up on a conversation revealing comments made of Jaahnavi's death that can only be described as abominable and distasteful. Officer Auderer is heard laughingly stating that Jaahnavi was a "regular person" who had "limited value". He also says "Yeah, just write a check. Eleven thousand dollars...She was 26 anyways."

The insensitivity of the officer's comments speaks volumes to the world as it engendered not just na-

tional but international outrage. Voices were raised and people began to mobilize. The Thursday following the release of the video, SAARPR - the Seattle Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression - organized a rally near the crash scene to demand justice for Jaahnavi and call for action. About 200 people showed up, chanting and holding signs displaying messages such as "jail killer cops" and "End police terror". The Consulate General of India demanded an investigation and consequences for the officers involved in which the Seattle community police commission responded echoing the need for investigation.

The Seattle police officers guild shortly after released a statement in response to the public unrest of the video. "Without context, this audio is horrifying and has no place in civil society... The

video captures only one side of the conversation. There is much more detail and nuance that has not been made public yet." It was also stated that Officer Daniel Auderer had himself taken steps to take accountability and submitted a statement to the Seattle Office of Police Accountability claiming that he and President Solan were actually mocking the legal system and what lawyers would say in this situation. "Without context the comment is insensitive to the family of the victim when in reality I was involved in conversation regarding the calluses of the legal system \. At the time I had no idea who the victim was."

However despite Auderer's statement, the video remains unbearable to watch for the world and especially for the loved ones of Jaahnavi. "It is truly disturbing and saddening to hear insensible comments on the bodycam video from an SPD officer regarding Jaahnavi's death...Jaahnavi is a beloved daughter and beyond any dollar value for her mother and family. We firmly believe that every human life is invaluable and should not be belittled, especially during a tragic loss," said the 23 year old's family. The injustices of her death and

the crudeness of the comments made by Officer Auderer has hit home for the South Asian community. Jaahnavi came to the United States to pursue her masters degree and help support her single mother back home in India. Her story is a similar one to many other immigrants and first generation students in the United States attempting to pursue the "American Dream". She was set to graduate with her masters in December. US Rep Ro Khanna spoke out on Twitter referencing his fathers immigration to the United States directly speaking to Officer Auderer, "Mr Auderer, the life of every Indian immigrant has infinite value." The idea that one's life has more or less value than another is abominable and is a dangerous mindset that has cost the lives of a heartbreaking number of members from marginalized communities.

"The idea that one's life has more or less value than another is abominable and a dangerous mindset that has cost the lives of a heartbreaking number of members of marginalized communities."

Officer Daniel Auderer has been "administratively reassigned to a non-operational position" and has been benched from active patrol. However, more must be done. Justice for Jaahnavi should not be equated with a one stop solution. We should not stop fighting. The death of Jaahnavi Kandula and the dehumanizing comments made that night has illuminated a larger problem plaguing South Asian, immigrant and other marginalized communities. Underlying racial and ethnic bias

in institutionalized systems has long infiltrated the United States dating back all the way to the creation of the country. In a year, Officer Auderer and Dave will more than likely be back to routine, while Jaahnavi's family and friends will still be mourning the loss of a beautiful soul. The impact of Auderer's words will still sting the South Asian community, reminding us of the "limited value" that society has decreed for us in all aspects of life. Justice is a tumultuous process and is never easy nor straightforward. Keep using your voice to keep Jaahnavi's spirit alive and remind us that there is still so much more work to be done.

Design by Skye Bulman

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EAST ASIAN BEAUTY BRAND &

Jasmine Chen '27

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1



Flower Knows is a Chinese makeup brand that is committed to creating dreamy and “fairy-tale-like” makeup, especially with the packaging of their products.

Unicorn Embossed Blush: Shade 01 Snowy Pearl

\$26.00

This blush has such a glamorous and delicate packaging, with an embossment of unicorn patterns. The powder itself is super fine and soft, making it easily blendable and very buildable! This is a light, soft pearl pink shade, which would give you that perfect frosty snowy look in the winter!

Have you ever seen those “Asian beauty products” on Tik Tok?

Or, have you ever tried a Western makeup or skincare product only to realize that it does not suit your skin at all?

In today's beauty industry in the United States, Asian beauty products are significantly underrepresented. Although we might see more Asian beauty products or beauty trends on social media, these products deserve more attention!

Today, we are highlighting some of our **favorite Asian beauty brands** and their products.

Kaleidos is a Chinese makeup brand that believes in free and creative self-expression through makeup. The name Kaleidos comes from kaleidoscope, which symbolizes the fluidity, evolution, and diversity of beauty.

Quad Palette: Black Jasmine

\$22.00

This is the most pigmented eyeshadow I have ever used!! Although this color palette might not be suitable for everyday wear, it would work best for a smokey eye look (I used this for my Halloween makeup and it looked so good!!!). The glitter is super pigmented as well and will literally make your eyes as shiny as a disco ball! Its packaging is delicate and well-detailed, with the palette decorated with lace butterflies.



2

PRODUCT RECOMENDATIONS

KissMe is a famous Japanese makeup brand. If you know a little about Asian makeup products or have done some research, you have definitely heard about this brand. It is famous for its mascara and eyeliner, which are affordable, high quality, and super easy to apply!



3

Heroine Make Prime Liquid Eyeliner Rich Keep

\$15.00

My go-to eyeliner! I simply cannot live without this product. It has a fine tip that allows for easy and smooth application. Furthermore, it is very long-lasting and doesn't budge or smudge over time! Did I mention that it is also waterproof?

3ce Stylenanda is a South Korean beauty brand established in 2004, aiming to make creative makeup. Not only do many Korean celebrities and makeup artists love this brand, but it has also expanded beyond Korea to other Asian countries as well. It is known for its eyeshadow palettes and blush – a lot of beginner's first eyeshadow palette is from this brand because you can never go wrong with it!

3CE Multi Eye Color Palette: #SOME DEF

\$40.00

This eyeshadow palette is the perfect combination of color. Every shade is useful for everyday wear, unlike some palettes where only two colors can be used for everyday looks. Moreover, the quality of the powder is also high and fine!



4

Romand is a South Korean brand founded by a Korean beauty influencer Saeron Min, commonly known as Gaeko. Aiming to bring out the natural beauty of oneself, Romand's products are ideal for “no-makeup” makeup looks. Their products are also very affordable with good quality.



5

Juicy Lasting Tint Bare Juicy Series 22 Pomelo Skin

\$17.90

This is my holy grail lip product! When in doubt, I use this lip tint because it goes with every look. It gives you the best, natural lip color and juicy lips for an everyday look without being too much.



Laneige is one of the most renowned South Korean skincare brands in the United States. Its name is the French word for snow, “la neige.” Even if you think you have never heard of this brand, you have definitely seen their Lip Sleeping Mask, which is one of the most viral products from Laneige and super easy to apply!

Water Sleeping Mask

\$32.00

This sleeping mask targets dry skin and ensures deeply hydrated skin after use. You can apply a thick layer of this mask before bed, and once you wake up, you will have the most glowing and hydrated skin! Personally, I like to use a thin layer of the mask as a moisturizer, which works wonderfully as well!

Design by Summer Rose Sutanto

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Restaurant Review:

Jasmine Chen '27

LAUGHING MONK CAFE WELLESLEY

90 Central St, Wellesley, MA, 02482



Ambiance: 10/10

As soon as I walked in, I could feel the great ambience with the dim light and music. The restaurant felt really exclusive. The inside has only about five tables and a bar table by the sushi chefs, where you can watch your sushi being made right in front of you— omakase-style!

Food: 8/10

They have an assortment of Asian cuisines, primarily Japanese and Thai. My friends and I ordered some rolls, sushi, chicken satay, pad thai, pineapple fried rice, and Thai green curry.

The presentation of our dishes was absolutely amazing, especially the rolls. The sushi tasted fresh and the rolls were really saucy and had great flavors! The pad thai was particularly delicious! I have been craving it ever since. It was perfectly seasoned and garnished with crunchy peanuts and lime. The fried rice was okay. The Thai green curry was a bit too spicy for me, so I didn't have that much of it, but my friends all loved it! It was super rich and creamy, perfect for topping on some hot, steamy rice that came with it.

However, I do have to take off some points because my friend told me that their Tom Yum soup did not taste authentic at all, so we ended up not ordering it.



Cost: 6.5/10

For a party of four, it came down to around \$30 dollars per person, which is not too bad. However, if you decide to come here by yourself, it could be a bit pricey, especially for the sushi.

Tips:

Because of how crowded the small restaurant can get, I recommend making reservations in advance (for their omakase service) or arriving early and making backup plans. We went on a Tuesday night and still had to wait for 15 minutes.

It's the perfect place for a date or a girls night-out because of its exclusivity, but it wouldn't be so affordable if you are coming by yourself. So go with some friends if you can!

Image credits

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What's Your Favorite Food at Wellesley?
<https://www.tablefortwoblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/chicken-lo-mein-recipe-photo-tablefortwoblog-4-scaled.jpg>
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<https://cookingformysoul.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/coconut-rice-feat2-min.jpg>
<https://images.vexels.com/media/users/3/248821/isolated/preview/ac1892a43f17c630c7fb17a131a2da13-noodles-asian-food-bowls.png>

My Cantonese and Mandarin Oldies Playlist
<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0849340/>
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Simu Liu and the Tokenism Dilemma
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