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# PACIFIC RIM

M A G A Z I N E

## MIXED MESSAGES: EURASIANS IN WORLD ADVERTISING

THE TWO FACES OF FUGU | JOE WAI'S CHINATOWN | SAVING OUR SEAFARING HISTORY  
THE MAKINGS OF A MODERN BEAUTY QUEEN | SEX EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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# messages

## PRESIDENT

*Pacific Rim Magazine* spotlights a lot of different cultures, and it provides for us an understanding that allows us to work with people from those cultures in a better way. We need to do that at Langara College.

This fact assisted me in creating the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan for the college. There are two components in the plan: attracting students and making their experience here so great that they will want to stay. We must let them know they are special. Whether we teach classes, provide services or make policies, we must make students feel that we are pleased to do it.

Our students come from many countries, and we need to understand them as individuals. To learn about people from other cultures, we must pay attention to them. Ultimately, we must walk a mile in their shoes.

For example, the Japanese bow and offer you a business card, held with both hands. This is done out of respect and courtesy, which they value in their culture. But they might not value activities like debate. If class grades include participation marks, and are based on an assessment of students speaking up and debating, how does that potentially impact a Japanese student's grades? We must be aware of how students feel – and then find better ways to do things.

Langara has had a lot of success finding ways to help students feel special. For example, we started the Langara Plus program for International students. They receive a passport that shows workshops they've completed, classes they've attended and their volunteer activities. They can carry that passport along with them, and it gives them something extra to show people and to be proud of. That's an advantage for them, and it encourages people to come here.

With the new Strategic Plan, we will do even more to make our International students feel welcome. We aim to start on the right foot. Then we can walk that mile with confidence.

LINDA HOLMES, PRESIDENT

## PUBLISHER

Soon, Vancouver will be the hot spot in Canada's cold winter as it hosts the 2010 Olympics. Visitors from around the world will come here, enjoy the games, and experience the city and its ambience. This isn't the first time Vancouver has greeted thousands of international guests.

Some 20 years ago the city hosted a world's fair, Expo '86. The event drew visitors who had never before seen Canada, let alone Vancouver. Word spread about the city's magnificent mountain and water views, its livability and its friendliness. Soon immigrants streamed in from Asia-Pacific nations and found homes here. *Pacific Rim Magazine* celebrates them with stories about Asia-Pacific nations and our neighbours who come from them.

This year, the magazine celebrates the 10th anniversary of its partnership with the Publishing: Techniques and Technologies program at Langara College. The magazine took shape in 1989 with volunteers from Langara faculty and staff. In 1996 the Publishing program began, and in 1997 Publishing students produced their first *Pacific Rim Magazine*.

The students poured extra passion, creativity and diligence into this milestone issue. No matter where in the world you come from, please enjoy it.

ELIZABETH RAINS, PUBLISHER

## EDITORS

Nike. Coca-Cola. Gap. Starving Children. Pepsi. Baby Seals. Cheetos. Did you get that?

There are pockets of people trying to make a difference in the world, but their messages are often lost in a sea of commercial indifference. In an environment constantly assaulting us with information, it is easy to lose the meaning of things and become numb to issues that we might otherwise feel strongly about.

This year's Publishing: Techniques and Technologies class presented the editorial team with stories that reflected a world replete with mixed messages. From human rights abuses to destructive fishing methods, our writers presented these issues in a way that caught our attention. We hope you agree.

MELINDA JOHNSTON, EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
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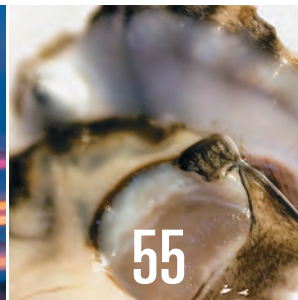
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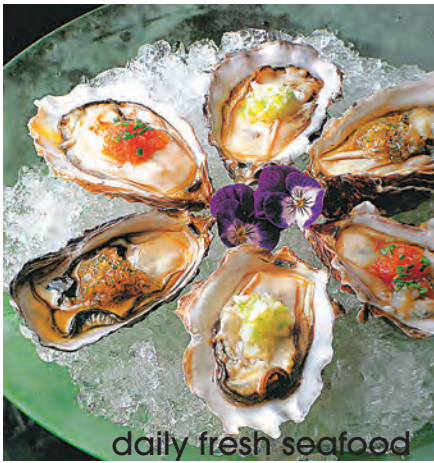
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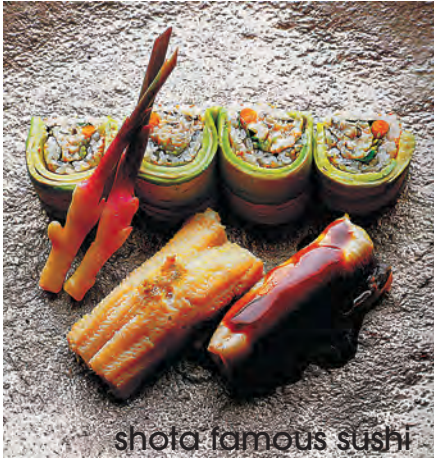
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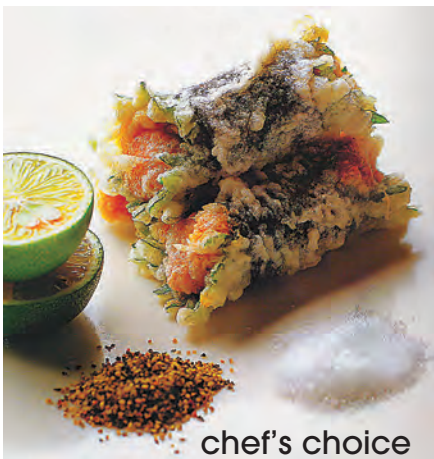


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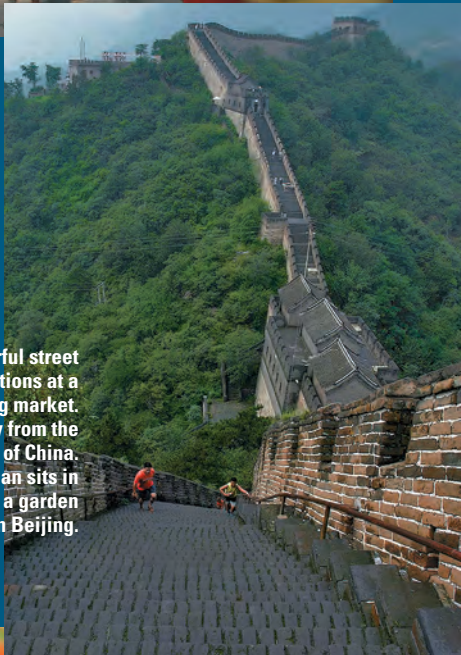
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# Pacific Treasures

Helpful facts for travel in the Pacific Rim



Top: Colourful street decorations at a busy Beijing market.  
Middle: View from the Great Wall of China.  
Bottom: Man sits in front of a garden in Beijing.



## CHINA

**Visa:** Required for Canadian visitors unless they are on a continuing international flight, hold tickets for a connecting flight or will remain at the airport for less than 24 hours. Travellers who want to leave the airport while awaiting transit must request a stopover permit from the Chinese border authorities at the airport. Travel permits, which are easier to obtain if part of an escorted group tour, are required to travel to some parts of the country, including Tibet.

**Climate:** Southern China is subtropical and tropical with short winters (January to March) and wet, humid summers (April to August). Although northern China also has hot summers (June to August), its winters (December to March) are cold. Flooding occurs during monsoon season (May to October) in central, western and southern China. Typhoons are common in the southeast coastal areas between July and September.

**Transportation:** Canadian and international driver's licences are not recognized in China. Taxis are easily accessible in all major cities, and for longer journeys there is a long-distance bus network. China also has an extensive railway network.

**Tipping:** Although not an officially recognized practice, tipping is becoming more common, especially in the tourism industry. However, it is not expected at many hotels and restaurants, as there is typically a 10 to 15% service charge added to the bill.

**Upcoming Event:** China will host the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

**Health fact:** Chinese people do not have Rh-negative blood so most blood banks in China do not hold it. Type O blood is also rare.

**Official Religion:** Atheism

**Legally Recognized Religions:** Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam

**Banned Groups:** Falun Gong and Zhong Gong

**Capital:** Beijing

**Currency:** Renminbi (RMB)

**Official language:** Mandarin

**Population:** 1.31 billion (2005)



# INDONESIA

**Visa:** Required for all Canadian visitors.

**Tipping:** Unnecessary at major hotels and restaurants that add a 10% service charge to the bill. Some taxi drivers include a service charge in their fare, otherwise a tip can be given.

**Climate:** Tropical with no distinct seasons. There are two different types of monsoons in Indonesia. Heavy rains characterize the western monsoon (December to March), and dry winds are brought by the eastern monsoon (June to September). The best time to travel to Indonesia is between April and October.

**Transportation:** Ferries are a major form of transportation between the islands. When on a boat in Southeast Asia, travellers must be cautious of pirate activity. The island of Java has an extensive network of trains, some of which connect to ferries that go to Sumatra and Bali. Metered taxis are only found in major cities and tourist areas. Bemos (minibuses) are useful for getting around small towns.

**Useful Phrases in Bahasa Indonesia:** Thank you is “Terima Kasih.” You’re welcome is “Kembali” or “Sama-sama.” Good morning is “Selamat pagi.” Good afternoon is “Selamat siang.” Good evening is “Selamat malam.”

**Travel Warning:** Foreign Affairs Canada advises against any non-essential travel to Indonesia. Recent reports suggest that terrorists may be planning attacks against foreigners in Indonesia. It is recommended that Canadian travellers register at the Canadian Embassy in Jakarta and remain in contact with the embassy throughout their travels.

Lake Batur wraps around the cone of Bali’s third largest volcano.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LONG

**Capital:** Jakarta

**Currency:** Rupiah (IDR)

**Official language:** Bahasa Indonesia

**Population:** 241.97 million (2005)

A traditional Philippine catamaran, or bangka, approaches Banana Island.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTINE MANGOSING

# PHILIPPINES

**Visa:** Not required for Canadian visitors staying less than 21 days.

**Climate:** In general, it is hot, humid and tropical. There are two major seasons: the rainy season (May to October) and the dry season (November to April). Typhoons are common from June to October.

**Transportation:** Renting a car isn’t recommended because traffic is chaotic and many drivers don’t follow traffic regulations. Jeepneys (buses originally made from American jeeps left over from World War II) are brightly-coloured, decorated with chrome trinkets and often overcrowded. Having knowledge of the area is advantageous when using this mode of transportation. Tricycles (motorcycles or bicycles with an attached sidecar) are also available. They seat four people, are widely available and are useful for short trips. Light Rail Transit (LRT) is available in Manila. Also, most of the islands that make up the country can be reached by ferry.

**Tipping:** Leaving a small tip, even at hotels and restaurants that add a 10% service charge to the bill, is customary.

**Geography:** The country consists of 7,107 islands, divided into three main areas: Luzon Island (North), the Visayas Islands (Central) and the Mindanao Island (South).

**Language History:** Pilipino was introduced in the 1960s. It is based on Tagalog, and is now used as the primary language of communication among speakers of different dialects. In 1972, the language was renamed Filipino. The vast majority of the population also speaks English.

**Capital:** Manila

**Currency:** Philippine peso (PHP)

**Official language:** Filipino and English

**Population:** 76.5 million (2000)

# VIETNAM

**Visa:** Required for all Canadian visitors.

**Tipping:** Not customary; however, it is becoming more common in major cities. Some restaurants and hotels may add a 5 to 10% service charge to the bill, so there's no need to tip. If this fee is not added, leaving a small tip will be greatly appreciated by the staff. Also, it is polite to leave a small donation after visiting a pagoda (a many-tiered tower erected as a temple or sacred building).

**Climate:** Tropical in the south and monsoonal in the north. Annual rainfall ranges from 120 to 300 centimetres and annual temperatures vary between 5°C and 38°C. Between June and December, typhoons may occur in the northern and central regions.

**Transportation:** In general, traffic is very disorderly and unpredictable. Buses are an inexpensive way of getting around, but they are often slow and overcrowded. Minibuses and taxis cost more but are also more comfortable. Although cyclos (pedal-powered vehicles), bicycles, motorbikes, scooters and cars are available to rent in most places, international driving permits are not valid in Vietnam and foreigners can be prosecuted and imprisoned for driving without a Vietnamese driver's licence.

**Pedestrian Tip:** In Saigon, don't wait for traffic to stop for you. Slowly walk across the street and traffic will drive around you.

**Cultural Tips:** When addressing a local, say his or her surname, then middle name, then given name. When addressing a businessperson, use Mr., Mrs., or Mme., followed by the person's given name. If you aren't sure how to address an individual, ask. When shaking hands, use both hands and bow your head to show respect. Also use both hands when passing something to another person. Avoid direct eye contact with strangers and never touch someone's head. Also, don't summon or point at people with your index finger.

**Religion:** Buddhism is the primary religion in Vietnam. There are also Taoist, Confucian, Hoa Hao Buddhist, Cao Daist, Muslim and Christian minorities.

**Capital:** Hanoi

**Currency:** Dong (VND)

**Official language:** Vietnamese

**Population:** 83.54 million (2005)

## Should you be worried about contracting avian influenza?

Since January 2005, human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) have been reported in Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and China. Singapore, which is currently free from avian influenza, has stockpiled antiviral medication to combat any potential outbreak. Note that there is no evidence that the avian H5N1 virus is easily spread from person to person.

## Precautions you can take to reduce your chances of contracting avian influenza:

Avoid eating undercooked poultry, eggs and egg products. Also avoid places where direct contact with birds and their secretions may occur. Practice food safety by washing your hands and making sure that eating utensils are clean. It is also recommended that travellers obtain a flu shot before travelling outside of Canada.

## How to stay healthy in a foreign country:

Keep your basic vaccinations up to date, carry extended health insurance and get a full physical prior to your departure from Canada. Clearly label medications and carry them in their original containers. To avoid digestive problems, ensure that all food has been well-cooked and don't use tap or well water for anything. Drink only purified water or commercially bottled pop or juice. Don't drink beverages that contain ice. Ensure that fruit juices don't have water added to them and avoid consuming unpasteurized dairy products. Also, look out for unsanitary facilities and poor refrigeration when purchasing food from street vendors.



Produce spills out of a street-side storefront in Hanoi's Old Quarter.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORY STEVENS

# Orchid ensemble

Vancouver musicians harmonize Eastern and Western influences to create their own unique sound.

ILLUSTRATION BY KEIKO LEE-HEM | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON HOSKINS | STORY BY JEFF SAWYER

**AS A CHILD IN TAIWAN,** Lan Tung, leader of the Orchid Ensemble, longed to learn the erhu, a two-stringed fiddle with an almost human voice, but it was a luxury her family couldn't afford. "I would stop and listen to music playing from other apartments, and hope that one day I would get to study [music]," Tung says.

The opportunity came when Taiwan required each school district to start a traditional Taiwanese orchestra. She continued her musical education at Taipei's Chinese Cultural University, and later at Capilano College when her family moved to Vancouver in 1994. Once in Vancouver, Tung played with local jazz and world musicians, exploring musical styles from Indian to Celtic.

Jonathan Bernard, originally from Montréal, plays the only non-Chinese instrument in the ensemble. While some of the percussion instruments he plays have Asian roots, such as metallic gongs and bells, he mainly plays the marimba, an African keyboard that is sounded by striking the wooden keys with a mallet.

Mei Han, the third member of the group, is one of the world's leading authorities on the Chinese zheng (a 21-string zither). A musician and scholar, she has earned two master's degrees in ethnomusicology and has performed in an array of musical genres. She often adapts traditional music from around the world for her zheng.

In 1997, the Orchid Ensemble met at the University of British Columbia. Han and Bernard were practicing for a performance when Bernard spotted Tung putting up posters for a concert. "I was immediately attracted to her, and I had to find some way of talking to her," says Bernard. He complained that the posters Tung was putting up were only in Chinese. Soon after, Tung, Bernard and Han began to collaborate, even though Tung had only been in Canada for two years. "I didn't understand about 40 percent of what she said to me," says Bernard. Despite the language difference, Tung and Bernard eventually fell in love. Now, eight years later, they are married.

The Orchid Ensemble's music, rich in Chinese heritage, uses influences from the Middle East, India, North America and beyond. They have toured all over North America, and have received grants from the

Canada Council for the Arts to study regional music in many parts of the world.

For *Road to Kashgar*, their latest CD, the ensemble commissioned pieces from local musician and composer Moshe Denburg. The Juno-nominated album was inspired by the Silk Road, an ancient trade route that linked China with the Mediterranean. Kashgar, a multicultural hub in China's central Taklimakan Desert, was an oasis on the road, bringing together different cultures from across Europe and Asia to exchange arts and goods. "The *Road To Kashgar* is based on Chinese classical music but is blended with Persian and other Middle Eastern sounds that represent the cultural influences that spread through the Silk Road," says Tung.

It is fitting that this contemporary world music group has chosen an ancient multicultural mecca as inspiration. Described by *The Georgia Straight* as "one of the brightest blossoms on the world music scene," the Orchid Ensemble continues to merge east and west, old and new, into timeless music. ■



Lan Tung makes her erhu sing.

# WHAT THE WEST COAST WEARS BC FASHION WEEK

STORY BY KEIKO LEE-HEM

**THE LIGHTS ARE LOW** and the music thumps incessantly. The gleaming runway charges a path through the well-groomed audience. The slick footage of larger-than-life models flashes above the audience, their confident footfalls reverberating in the viewers' chests. This is not Paris, London, New York or even Toronto. This is Vancouver, and this is British Columbia Fashion Week.

Vancouver is known for its natural beauty and outdoor lifestyle. But is it fashion-conscious? Now in its second year, British Columbia Fashion Week aims to become a high-profile event supporting and promoting Canadian designers, while establishing Vancouver as an important player in the global fashion scene.

Vladimir Markovich and Debra Walker might just have what it takes to introduce Vancouver to the glamour of stepping out in high heels. "We aim to make Vancouver the fourth stop on the

North American fashion week circuit: New York, Los Angeles, Toronto and Vancouver," declares Markovich.

Searching for the city's fashion pulse, Markovich noticed the strong, but underdeveloped, presence of local talent. Without an event like BCFW to attract the industry heavy hitters, local designers were not living up to their potential. Markovich and Walker strive to produce a world-class event that demands professionalism, not money, from the designer. "They [the designers] must have a publicist and, most importantly, an outstanding production and export-ready collection," states Markovich. "We are providing the vehicle – the designer just needs to pedal."

British Columbia Fashion Week was a powerful launching pad for the emerging designer Wanny Tang. "It's an aggressive industry," she says. "You have to get your name out there and

be seen – BC Fashion Week makes that possible."

Participants also get coverage through FashionWATCH.com, one of the largest international online consumer fashion magazines in the industry. CINCYN, a three-year-old fashion label in Toronto, also took advantage of the event. "We saw it as a chance to expand our client base," says designer Cynthia Florek. With several seasons of experience with East Coast fashion weeks, Florek and design partner Cindy Custodio were impressed by the organization and execution of the West Coast event.

The BC Fashion Week team sets an impressive stage for Canadian designers to present their latest collections to the world. With the fresh perspectives, impressive goals and clear determination of the BC Fashion Week creators, Vancouver is poised for a long overdue fashion revolution. ■



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# *Crowning Story*

THE MAKINGS OF A MODERN BEAUTY QUEEN

STORY BY DANIELLA SORRENTINO | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNY REED



Contestants in the 2005 Miss Chinese Vancouver Pageant.

**TUXEDOED AND SEQUINED** audience members watch as 10 young, beautiful women await the judges' decision on who will be the next Miss Chinese Vancouver. The audience erupts with excitement as the glamorous emcee smiles and coyly waves her all-important envelope. The girls stand in a row, their perfect poise and demure smiles camouflaging the fact they have been on their feet and under pressure since early that morning. The contents of the envelope will reveal which contestant has successfully exemplified the modern Chinese woman in Vancouver.

The traditional beauty pageant has almost become an anachronism in modern times. In an era of flagging interest, what makes the Miss Chinese Vancouver Pageant so popular, and so successful?

The 2005 pageant marked the 11th year that Fairchild Television of Vancouver has produced the show. Pageant organizer Vivien Louie believes the success of the Miss Chinese Vancouver Pageant is due to its organization, its role as a charity fundraiser and its strong reputation within Vancouver's Chinese community. The 1,000 audience members each pay upward of \$220 to attend the gala fundraising dinner and pageant, one of most anticipated parties on the Chinese social calendar. This year, the pageant will be aired live on the Internet to accommodate growing international interest. Together with a local television audience of about 150,000, the pageant is not lacking in people interested in the outcome of the glitzy event.

The excitement doesn't end after this one-night gala, as the newly crowned Miss Chinese Vancouver then competes for the Miss Chinese International crown. "The event has a solid background within the community because we have won four international titles [in the last five years]. Everybody has great expectations for the event and for the winner," says Louie.

The Miss Chinese Vancouver Pageant looks for contestants who preserve the icon of the idealized Asian woman, but with a western twist. "The ideal Miss Chinese Vancouver must be modern but embody Chinese culture and what the Chinese

culture is all about," says Louie. She explains that "traditional Chinese women are more subtle, more reserved." Miss Chinese Vancouver must maintain this traditional image but also accommodate western cultural values. "She will be confident, know what she wants, but innately understand her part within Chinese culture. She is in Vancouver. It is east meets west. She must be both."

The young women, some as young as 18, enter the pageant with a wide variety of backgrounds and expectations, but the pageant producers demand the same level of professionalism from everyone. "At the beginning, we show them the packed calendar... and the complexity of the production," explains Louie. "A lot enter just to have fun and then they see how much they have to learn." Fairchild Television has a lot invested in the winner of the event. The winner signs a professional management contract, which requires her to attend public events and charity dinners to represent the pageant. More than a beauty queen, she becomes an ambassador for the producers, the Vancouver Chinese community and potentially for the worldwide Chinese community.

It is seductive to imagine that behind the scenes, the 10 exquisite contestants fall from the grace they exhibit on stage with jealousy, sabotage and cutthroat competition. But the girls attest that the pageant is a far cry from another episode of the popular TV show, *America's Next Top Model*. "You are concentrating so hard on not making a mistake that you don't really think about yourself," says 23-year-old Crystal Li. "It feels more like you are a part of team creating a show." Performers, stage technicians, choreographers and the contestants all spend hundreds of hours preparing for the one night of the pageant.

In order for the team to create a successful show, the contestants make many personal sacrifices. Contestant Katy Fan says it is not unusual for them to train 60 to 70 hours a week. "I have given up everything for this," says Fan, "my school, my job – everything."

Li agrees that one of the biggest sacrifices is time. "It requires a big time



Kayi Cheung



Karen Liu



Crystal Li

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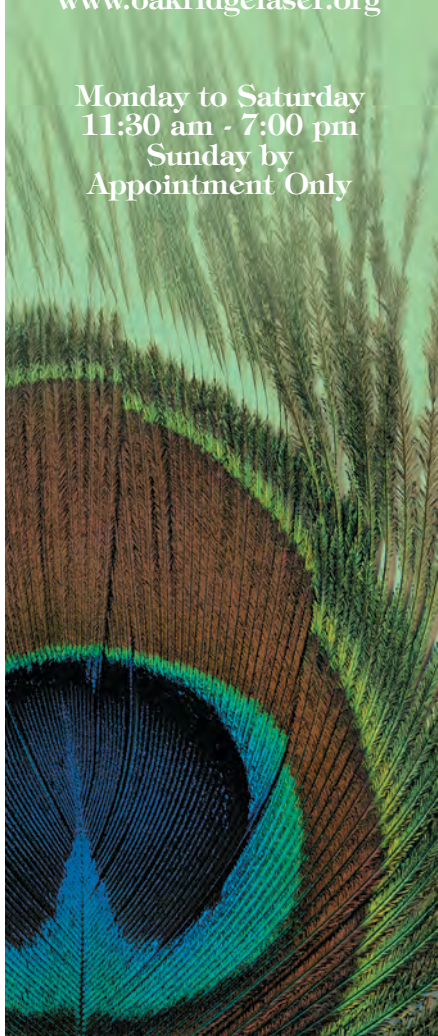
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commitment, you give up a lot... you need to push yourself [as it is] physically demanding.” Susan Wong, another crown hopeful, believes the catwalk training is the most challenging, sometimes requiring the contestants to stand for hours in cold rooms, wearing only light dresses and high-heeled shoes.

The intensive training prepares them for more than just the pageant. Lessons in public speaking, stage presence and personal communication provide the contestants with valuable skills that will assist them whether they walk away with the crown or not. “You’d be amazed at the transformation from when they first started,” says Louie. “They are so different now, their appearance, as well as personality. They have a lot more confidence now.” With hours of training in hair, makeup application and poise, Crystal Li notices that people on the street respond to her differently. As well, Li says her experience in the pageant helped her “communicate in different environments and be appropriate at all times.”

Both the contestants and the organizers disagree with claims that



**Crystal Li performs a dance for the talent portion of the competition.**

the pageant better,” she says. “The pageant here [in Vancouver] has a very healthy image. Other pageants

talk more about which girl is the most sexy, but here it is so much healthier.”

After months of preparation, is participating in the pageant worth the sacrifice? “Definitely,” says Li, “if any girl asked me, I would say ‘go for it.’ You do have to commit a lot of time, but you get so much out of it.”

On the lavish stage, Crystal Li

**“ AT THIS LEVEL,  
ALL THE GIRLS  
ARE BEAUTIFUL.  
IT WOULD BE TOO  
HARD TO JUDGE ON  
BEAUTY. ”**

the pageant is all about physical beauty. “At this level, all the girls are beautiful. It would be too hard to judge on beauty,” says Li. What is equally as important, she explains, is “how you present yourself, how [clearly] you communicate, how comfortable you are and how sincerely you answer questions.”

Louie confirms that the contest is not intended to be all about beauty. “I would like more people to understand

still has not moved, standing with one hand on her hip, the other held gracefully at her side. Her face reveals none of the tension evident in the rapt audience. Composed, professional and confident, “the new Miss Chinese Vancouver for 2005 is... Number 10, Crystal Li.” In the eyes of the pageant judges, she is a perfectly beautiful combination of east meets west. ■

**GRACEFUL FIGURES** gesture with eyes and hands, moving to the lilting rhythms of traditional Thai instruments. Their coy smiles and delicate movements convey meaning even though they speak no words. Costumes and head-dresses decked in gold and rhinestones speak of Thailand's rich history.

The characters seem straight out of an ancient story. Thai classical dance is often inspired by ancient stories such as the Ramayana, or even paintings, statues and temples. For now, these physical embodiments of ancient history are alive and well in Vancouver. Akkaporn Cooper and her daughter, Angela, form the backbone of Visions of Thailand, Vancouver's only Thai Classical dance troupe.

"Each movement carries meaning in classical dance pieces," says Angela Cooper, a young but accomplished Thai classical dancer based in Burnaby, BC. "Even though they may not be obvious to the audience, they are important to the choreography," she explains. Some dances are faster, Angela says, but most,

# THAI DANCE IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

especially the classical ones, are at a pace that allows for the meaning of the gestures to be properly articulated.

Angela's mother, Akkaporn, or Noy, came to Canada with her husband, Ken Cooper, in 1977. Trained in Thai classical dance, Noy encouraged her daughter to pursue it as well. She took Angela to Bangkok on several occasions to train at the highly regarded fine art department of Silpakorn University. Noy founded Visions of Thailand in 1996 with Angela and a small, but dedicated group of dancers.

Noy's passion for the dance is evident when she speaks of the performances and demonstrates movements. She has also amassed a large collection of costumes and instruments, many directly from Thailand. Nevertheless, she has not performed since 1977, preferring instead to propel her daughter into the spotlight and remain behind the scenes as a director.

Their combined passion and accomplishments are great, but finding enough dancers with talent and commitment is difficult. When Angela was young, the troupe grew to as many as 14 members, but now only eight full-time members remain. "You need a lot of people to put on a full performance," explains Angela. "Some ensemble dances can require up to four people, who will require a lengthy costume change before going on stage for the next performance."

With Noy's extensive costume and instrument collection, there is no shortage of resources for their performances, except for the performers themselves. With other obligations, it can be difficult to get enough people together. Angela herself is attending Simon Fraser University, and has less and less time to maintain her skills. "As long as there are enough people," she says, "we will keep performing." ■

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# Taka's Tale

## the solitary life of the temmincki golden cat

STORY BY ERIN WESTERMAN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM KING

**AN ANCIENT THAI LEGEND** states that a single strand of hair from a Temmincki golden cat protects the bearer from vicious tiger attacks. An entire village benefits from this protection if the whole pelt is burned. Temmincki golden cats protecting humans may be the subject of legends, but with a natural habitat threatened by rapid deforestation and poachers hunting them for their meat and bones, is anyone out there protecting the Temmincki golden cat?

Mountain View Conservation and Breeding Society is one place that's trying. Founded in 1986 by Gordon and Yvonne Blankstein, it is located on approximately 135 acres in Fort Langley, British Columbia. Mountain View specializes in breeding and raising exotic and endangered animals from around the world and is widely known for its work with wild cats. The

facility has several partners worldwide who aid them with the research and capture of these animals. Mountain View is also home to Taka, one of 13 Temmincki golden cats currently living in captivity and the only Temmincki golden cat in Canada.

Born at the Cincinnati Zoo in 1995, Taka came to Mountain View in 1996. Efforts have been made since then to find him a mate; however, Temmincki golden cats prefer solitary lives and can get extremely aggressive if forced to share accommodations. Adding to the difficulty, only four to five females live in captivity worldwide. As a result, Taka has yet to start a family.

The Temmincki golden cat is more commonly known as the Asian golden cat; its natural habitat being the deciduous and tropical rain forests of Nepal, Myanmar, China and Thailand. It is among the smaller species of wild felines, weighing an average of 25 pounds. Because of its small size, it has the unique ability to purr like a domestic house cat, an





ability larger cats do not possess. Its coat can be one of several colours, including red, brown, grey or black. All Temmincki golden cats have distinctive white stripes across their cheeks, forehead and around their eyes.

Like most wild cats, Temmincki golden cats feast on small rodents, hares, birds and insects. At Mountain View, Taka is given food similar to what he would catch in the wild. This is usually uncooked meat complete with bones and organs. Often, his food is hidden from him, a game he finds both frustrating and amusing. This activity causes Taka to use parts of his environment he may have forgotten. Other times he actively pursues rodents that have carelessly wandered into his environment. When Taka is not hunting for food he's conversing with the cats in surrounding pens and showing off his speed and agility to the people on tour at Mountain View.

Because Taka is a mature adult and because he has never been in his natural habitat, he will never be able to return to the wild. However, with places like Mountain View working to increase the Temmincki golden cat population, Taka may one day have offspring who get a chance at freedom. And when that day comes, hopefully the forests of Southeast Asia will pick up where Mountain View left off – protecting the Temmincki golden cat. ■



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## rebirth of the SILVER

# Ann

STORY BY CHRISTOPHER MILLIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICOLE LAFFIN

**THE SILVER ANN, A 33-FOOT WOODEN GILLNETTER, LIVED A HARD LIFE** fishing off the west coast of British Columbia. She battled the elements for years, but held strong until the day an electrical shortage caused her pumps to fail, sinking her at the dock where she was moored. When she was pulled from her watery confines she was piled up in the shipyard and left for several years. The city of Richmond acquired her in 2001, and donated her to the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society. For the next four years she sat outside Richmond Boatworks in the Britannia Heritage Shipyard, uncovered, filling with rain, buried in leaves, aging more with each passing season.

Now, two shipwrights and a handful of volunteers are restoring the *Silver Ann*. They are using the same techniques and tools that Sadajiro Asari used in 1968, when he built the boat for Richmond fisherman George Osaka. Asari, who once owned Kishi Boatworks on Richmond's Sea Island, was in his late seventies when he built the *Silver Ann*. Asari put a lifetime of boat building experience into her construction.

"The labour and craftsmanship to build a boat like this was pretty exceptional," says Colin Duffield, one of two shipwrights involved in the *Silver Ann* restoration. "It took [Asari] five months to originally build it. We've been working on it a year and a half now and we're not even halfway done."

The *Silver Ann* signified the end of an era for the Britannia Shipyards. It was the very last boat built on the site and when it was launched, 60 years of boat building history was launched with it.

The Britannia Shipyard is in Steveston, a small area at the mouth of the Fraser River, in the southwest corner of Richmond, British Columbia. In the late 1800s, Steveston became the largest fishing town on BC's coast and boasted the most canneries in the British Empire. Immigrants from around the world heard of the jobs available in Steveston. The city quickly became one of the

more multicultural places in Canada. European, Chinese, First Nations and Japanese people all gravitated to its fishing industry.

In 1917, the annual salmon run failed because of damage from the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Debris left over from blasting at Hell's Gate had blocked the river to the returning salmon. Many canneries closed and numerous fishermen moved away, turning instead to farming and mining. A few of the canneries converted into shipyards and a few of the Japanese fisherman who were trained boat builders stayed behind and began building boats of their own. By 1936, there were 16 Japanese boatworks in Steveston. Five of them, including Kishi Boatworks, were large businesses that constructed many boats each year. The rest were small, family-run boatworks producing one or two boats each year.

One such business was that of Otokichi Murakami, whose home and boatworks still stand today in the Britannia Heritage Shipyard as its

welcome and information centre. Every winter, Murakami built two oak-keeled and cedar-planked gillnetters with only a band saw, a combination table saw and planer, and a small collection of hand tools. Despite the lack of equipment his boats were always "guaranteed for life."

"He put a lot of time in," George Murakami, son of Otokichi Murakami, recalled in a 1992 interview. "He'd go in [to his workshop] in the evening and touch the wood, all the work he had done, and admire it. He had a pride in making boats."

The Japanese boats were built in a different style than other boats being built in the Lower Mainland. They were set up and planked onto temporary frames first and then the ribs were steamed and bent into place, right on the planking. "This made for a very tight and dry boat," explains Bryan Klassen, the Britannia site supervisor. "The story persists that Murakami always threw a handful of rice into the bilges of his boats as a guarantee. Dry boats equalled dry rice."

In 1942, during World War II, the Japanese population of Steveston was forced to leave and the boat builders lost everything they had spent decades building up. They were so highly regarded that even in their internment, many still built boats and had them shipped down to the coast by railway.

It's the pride and passion that builders like Murakami put into their boats that Duffield and his volunteers hope to bring to the *Silver Ann* restoration. "Older boats are better built. They have a nicer feel. They are better maintained," he says.

It is only fitting that the *Silver Ann* has returned to the Britannia site. "Britannia is a living museum where boats indicative of the West Coast fishing industry are restored," explains Anne Carson of the Britannia Heritage Society. "This is what we do." When the *Silver Ann* is fully restored she will be used as an ambassador for the Britannia Heritage Shipyard, as a fully working example of what she is, a classic gillnetter with a thousand stories to tell. ■

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# emerald in MARPOLE

building a new park to honour old memories

STORY BY **DARREN KOOYMAN**  
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JACK LINDSAY**  
 COURTESY OF **VANCOUVER ARCHIVES**  
 ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING BY **CURTIS LINK**

**IN MARPOLE THERE IS A VACANT LOT SMALLER THAN AN ACRE.** It is surrounded by a chain-link fence and is adjacent to a cinderblock building, a parking lot and the overgrown foundation of a machine shop. Near the centre of the lot, a patch of cedars shows root rot. This lot will soon be a park.

Gone are the houses on 72nd Avenue between Osler and Selkirk that used to belong to Japanese families who were interned during World War II. The park's design will pay homage to those former residents and will become a jewel in a neighbourhood deprived of green space.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, Japanese-Canadians who lived along British Columbia's coast were ordered to register with the government. By February 23rd, 1942, the relocation inland of all Japanese people began. Families were separated and their possessions confiscated. Homes and businesses were sold with the owners receiving much less than their fair market value.

Marpole found itself in the centre of these events. Within its boundaries there was a small but active Japanese community. Several Japanese families lived along Selkirk Street, and Marpole had a thriving Japanese language school. Some community members were part of the fishing industry and moored their boats on the banks of the Fraser River. Others owned businesses along Hudson Street, which at that time was a popular shopping area, attracting patrons from Richmond and Vancouver.

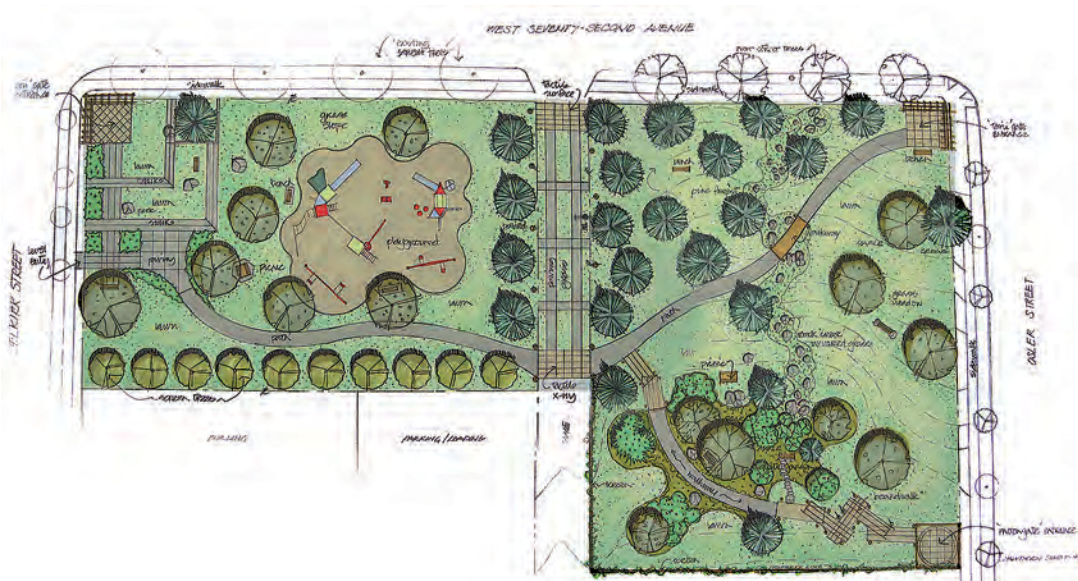
Today, Marpole covers 561 hectares and has a population of slightly more than 22,000. The area that will be affected by the new park covers the 22 blocks south of 70th Avenue between Oak and Granville Streets. It is an island of low-rise stucco walk-ups that replaced single-family homes when the area was rezoned for apartments in the 1960s. With only one park in the area and most families living in apartments, the importance of green space is clear.

It has taken a long time to get the park built. Vancouver city council agreed to purchase the land in October 1999 and two years later acquired the final parcel of land for \$3,363,000. Construction on the park will begin in the spring of 2006 with completion in the fall. The first public consultation about the park was held in June 2005. At that meeting there was a lively debate about including a public washroom, but after the group found out it would cost up to a third of the \$475,000 budget to build and maintain, the subject was dropped.

The consensus from the public was that the neighbourhood needs a playground for the large number of kids living in the area, and a quiet green space for older people to sit and relax.

It was also at this June meeting that Curtis Link, the Park Board landscape designer for the project, found the inspiration for his design when some of the residents mentioned the Japanese families who once had homes on the park site. He has been careful not to literally copy Japanese gardens in his design, but to use them as a reference. For example, a concrete walkway will allude to a boardwalk over a Japanese water garden.

The existing trees on the lot will be incorporated



into the design and new Japanese black pines will be planted at the north end of the park. There will be a dry creek running through the park with tall stipa (feather) grass suggesting flowing water as it waves in the breeze. Bamboo, rhododendrons and Japanese maples will create a garden area near the centre. Flowering pear trees with fragrant blossoms will partially line one walkway, and a torii-style gate will welcome visitors.

Link wants the playground to be as distinctive as the rest of the park. He is still searching for unique playground equipment, but he will include the ever-popular slide and swing set.

On an average day on the streets of Marpole, Spanish, Cantonese, Tagalog and Russian voices can be heard. People coming home from work pass others who are just starting their day. Customers gather for fish and chips at King's Fare Fish & Chips at Hudson and 73rd, and, as always, it's full by 7pm. Unfortunately, few of the Japanese who lived in this area returned after the war, and today they make up the smallest fraction of the neighbourhood's population.

The park on 72nd Avenue is not intended to be a memorial, but will be a nod to the area's history. Through community input and the care and dedication of a designer, this public park will be something more. As one resident put it, it will be "something that grabs your mind." ■



**December 1942: Children look in the window of a Japanese store, closed after the relocation of Japanese-Canadians.**

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# yuko nagasawa

## BROADCASTING DIVERSITY

STORY BY JODY QUINE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNY REED



### THREE MEMBERS OF THE JAPANESE-CANADIAN

community sit in front of carefully placed microphones in a 10 by 10 room at CHMB Radio. They are recording a new show called *echat Vancouver*. Tag Chi, the show's producer, sits strong and wise while the show's host, Yuko Nagasawa, teaches English to tonight's guest. Nagasawa has a young, sincere voice, full of pep and assurance. It's easy to see why she has also become a television personality. Her energy sparkles like a freshly washed penny you can't help but pick up because you know it's lucky.

Chi first discovered Nagasawa in 2000 while producing a show for CHMB Radio called *Radio NiPPON*. Nagasawa had recently returned from teaching English in Japan and was invited by *Radio NiPPON*'s host to record a 10-minute English section for the end of the show. The experience led her to volunteer at CHMB Radio and soon after she could be heard every week during *Radio NiPPON*'s English section. When the radio show came to an end the owners of CHMB Radio went on to develop Channel M, a locally owned and operated multicultural television station in Vancouver. They approached Chi about producing a new show for the station and he immediately thought of Yuko Nagasawa as a host for the show.

Nagasawa recognized the opportunity as a way to help mold the Nikkei community. "When I was a kid," she says, "the Japanese channel had so much: Japanese cartoons in Japanese, news, and all these little shows. Now it has slowly disintegrated into nothing. But now that there's Channel M, I have an opportunity to share that."

Her only concern was that it was television and not radio. Stepping out from behind a microphone and being in front of a camera would be a new and awkward experience for her. "[At first] I was totally not into it," she says. "I was nervous.

If you watch my shows in the beginning, I was completely reading off this little piece of paper." Now in her second season with *NikkeiTV*, Nagasawa has

become a pro. Her natural ability in front of the camera is clear.

*NikkeiTV* discusses what's new and hot in the J-POP (Japanese pop music) world, airs current videos and quite often interviews famous Japanese artists who are passing through Vancouver. The show is not only a show for Japanese-Canadians, but a show for all Canadians alike. Broadcast in Japanese and English, it also features a Japanese travel segment called *Explore Nippon* and the local news, which caters to the Nikkei community. The goal for the show, according to Tag Chi, is to "ease the understanding of Japanese culture, the country and the people."

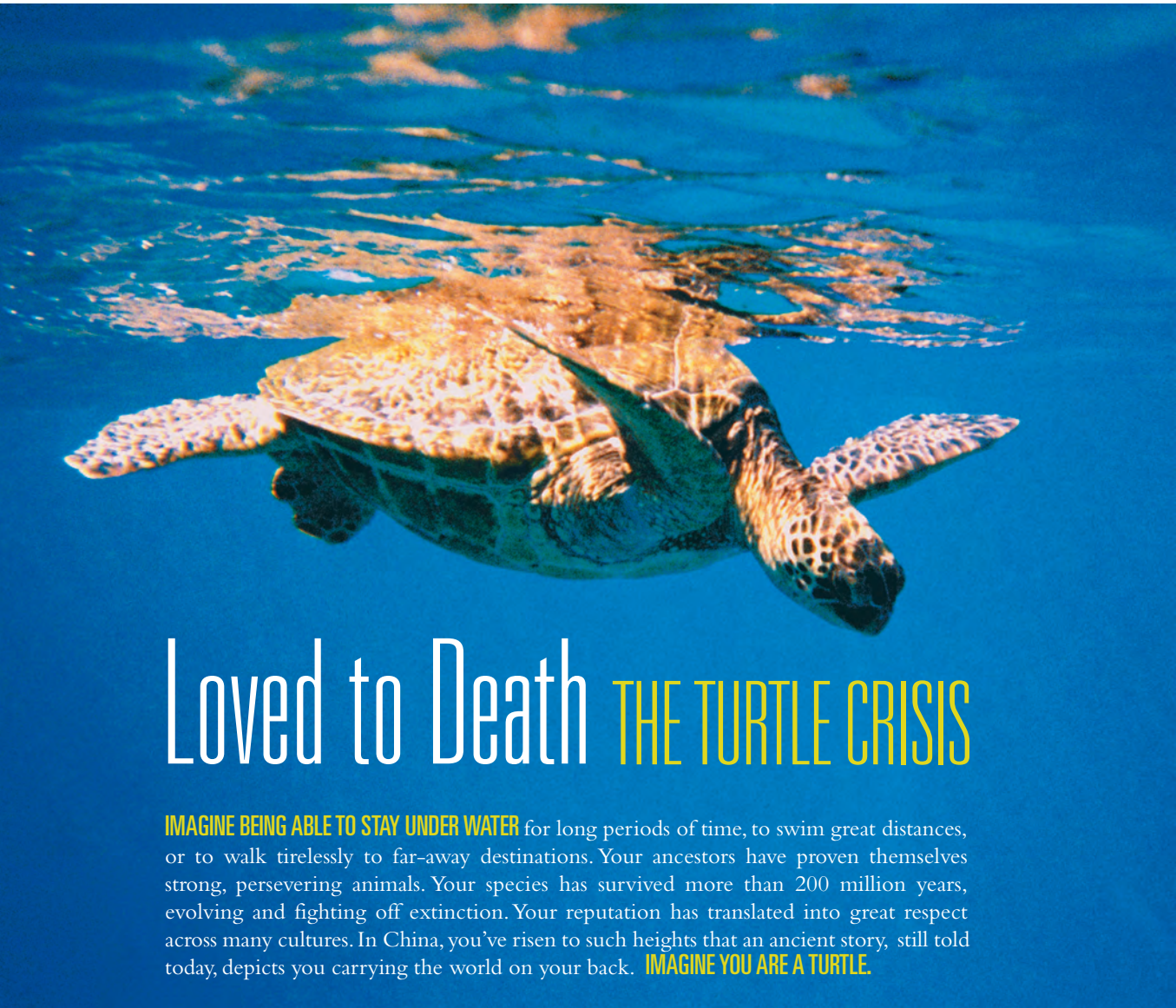
When the show first began, Nagasawa spoke mostly English in her segment. Then, she says, Channel M requested they use more Japanese in their format. This was because of a CRTC regulation that stated their show must be in no more than 20 percent English. Nagasawa struggled with this. "Why do we have a multicultural station and TV program if the people in Canada can't understand it?" she asks. "We are a local station and Japanese people will always know Japanese things. They know the language. You want to introduce and talk about your own culture for people who don't know about it. I mean it's a part of Canadian history now, Japanese people."

Tag Chi explains that, despite CRTC regulations, *NikkeiTV* has often beat out other programs airing in the same time slot on other local television stations. He thinks it's because they can be found lower on your television dial, but Nagasawa has her own explanation: "When people see something kind of rare, they stop."

Recognizing a need for more bilingual programming, Chi and Nagasawa also created *echat Vancouver*, an audio program available on the web. In a time of satellite radio, iPods and podcasting, *echat Vancouver*, a simple English lesson on the radio, now has devoted listeners in Japan, as well as in Canada.

With the support of a successful producer, radio and television shows popular on both sides of the ocean, and a personality people can't help but admire, it does appear that Yuko Nagasawa is indeed something kind of rare. ■





# Loved to Death **THE TURTLE CRISIS**

**IMAGINE BEING ABLE TO STAY UNDER WATER** for long periods of time, to swim great distances, or to walk tirelessly to far-away destinations. Your ancestors have proven themselves strong, persevering animals. Your species has survived more than 200 million years, evolving and fighting off extinction. Your reputation has translated into great respect across many cultures. In China, you've risen to such heights that an ancient story, still told today, depicts you carrying the world on your back. **IMAGINE YOU ARE A TURTLE.**

STORY BY ASHLEY TANASIYCHUK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE HOOD

Turtles are experiencing the 21st century as the most difficult years of their existence. Currently, they are being hunted to the point of extinction. The irony is that this hunting is not done out of spite by humanity, but out of admiration.

As early as the Shang dynasty (1523–1027 BC), it was believed that turtles linked heaven and earth and possessed the powers of knowledge and prophecy. To divine the future, turtle shells were heated to incredible temperatures and the resulting stress cracks were interpreted. It was originally said that the wooden columns of the Temple of Heaven in Beijing were set upon live turtles. To emulate this symbol of strength, endurance and patience, Chinese emperors demanded that the base of their tombs be carved like that of a turtle's shell.

Eventually, people came to believe that by eating turtles, they could acquire the intrinsic qualities that have enabled turtles to exist for millions of years. In *Turtle Conservation*, M.D. Jenkins writes, "In China, turtles are classified as a 'hot' food that strengthens the body during the winter. Eggs are believed to be aphrodisiacs, and turtle blood is thought to provide an energy boost." Rich with collagen, calcium and keratin, turtle shells have been used in medicines for centuries. Their skin has been used for leather goods and their fat for oil.

More than 150 nations have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), making it illegal to trade turtles and their products. Despite this, between 2000 and 2002, trappers in the United States exported 35 million turtles in order to meet the demands of illegal markets. The problem was brought to the forefront

on December 11th, 2001, when Hong Kong officials discovered 10,000 turtles crammed into four containers aboard a trade ship. Many of the turtles were dead. Among them were giant Asian pond turtles, Malaysian giant turtles and yellow-headed temple turtles, some of the rarest and most endangered species in the world.

Enforcing laws on trade is usually another challenge altogether. “Enforcement budgets are often so low that even the most willing customs officers cannot make a serious dent in the trade,” writes Ronald Orenstein, author of *Survivors in Armor*. “The borders between China and many of its neighbours to the south are sieves as far as smuggling of endangered species is concerned, and it is highly unlikely that any national or international regulation will stop the trade by itself.”

When placed in the context of Chinese culture, the threat to the continued existence of turtles seems all the more ironic. Philosophies and religions, thousands of years old, teach respect for all life and that all life is inextricably connected. Dr. Jan Walls, professor of Chinese language and culture at Simon Fraser University, demonstrates the importance of this. “Pluck one hair,” he says as he leans forward and stretches his arm out, “and it impacts the whole body.”

Alda Ngo, a Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner in Vancouver, explains that TCM respects the interconnectivity of all living things, and utilizes these connections to heal in a symbiotic way. She believes “it is not just about maintaining physical health; it is a philosophy to cultivate well-being in all aspects of life.” Ngo insists that we need to be equally grateful for all life, because it is, she explains, “life that supports life.”

Unfortunately, today’s issues usually revolve around business, rather than life and harmony. “Environmentalism is huge in China,” says Walls, “just not as powerful as the corporate and political [influences].”

Besides illegal trade, turtle conservationists are concerned about indiscriminate fishing methods, such as trawling, where turtles are being caught in huge nets intended for other sea-dwellers. Turtles are also being killed during dredging, a method of raking the seabed to deepen harbours and waterways. Turtles are just as vulnerable on land. Because they return to the shoreline to nest, the slow pace that has kept them in the race for survival makes them an easy target for anyone with quick feet and a hungry family.

When people who originally fished for subsistence were introduced to the market economy, turtles became more than a night’s meal – their meat, blood, eggs and shells became a means to an income. One turtle can fetch \$1,200 US, which is about three times the per capita income in a developing country. “Given such incentives,” writes Anthony Mecir for the National Wildlife Foundation, “Asian villagers comb forest floors, riverbeds, stream valleys and rice fields in search of the reptiles. Turtles are speared, netted, dug out of mud, trapped, tracked down by dogs and caught on lines using baited hooks or pins.”

Once people grow accustomed to hunting turtles as their primary means of income, it becomes a challenge to convince them of the damaging ecological impact of their hunting. It seems that accommodating both turtle and human life is the only way to resolve this global predicament.

The Sea Turtle Project, formed by herpetologist Todd Steiner in 1989, is an example of modern action in this direction. The project’s mission is “to protect endangered sea turtles in ways that make cultural and economic sense to the communities that share the beaches and waters with these gentle creatures.” One of STRP’s major accomplishments was pressuring Mexico to end its annual slaughter of turtles. Afterwards, they helped Mexico create alternate sources of

revenue from the loss of the sea turtle hunt. STRP also won several lawsuits that required nations exporting shrimp to the US to use turtle-safe methods in their practices, specifically, turtle excluder devices (TEDs).

Nadine Pinnell, outreach coordinator for the BC Cetacean Sightings Network, is blunt in her opinion about the turtle trade: “Hunting for food, eggs or shells is not a sustainable use of turtles.” Turtles only begin reproducing after approximately 15 years of life, much slower than the speed at which they are being trapped and killed. Because of this type of imbalance, notes Pinnell, the population of leatherback turtles has been crashing over the last 20 years.

Based at the Vancouver Aquarium, Pinnell and the BC Cetacean Sightings Network have created a place online and over the phone, where the public can report sightings of specific marine life, including sea turtles. The goal is to learn more about these creatures’ habits in the wild, and through that knowledge create better methods of protection. Pinnell also educates communities along the coast of British Columbia about the Canada Species at Risk Act (SARA), which promotes the safety and continued survival of turtles.

Organizations like CITES and SARA continue working to protect turtles through the regulation of trade. Projects like Sea Turtle Restoration are attempting to make the continued existence of both humans and turtles more viable. And the belief in life’s interconnectivity, as practiced in Traditional Chinese Medicine, gives a perspective to the crisis beyond dollars and profit. “All we can do is be responsible,” Alda Ngo says, “taking care of what it is we can take care of. In doing this, we are nourishing our destiny.”

The United Nations named 2006 the Year of the Turtle – a sign that this ancient survivor is gaining recognition and support at a global level. Perhaps it is a combination of all these efforts that is the only way to resolve the great irony leading to the turtle’s demise. Or perhaps it’s simpler than that. Love the turtle, but don’t love it to death. ■

**THE SLOW PACE THAT HAS KEPT TURTLES IN THE RACE FOR SURVIVAL MAKES THEM AN EASY TARGET FOR ANYONE WITH QUICK FEET AND A HUNGRY FAMILY.**

# DRIFTNET Destruction

STORY BY JODI BROWN

**IT'S EARLY NOVEMBER AND ALMOST SPAWNING TIME** for the immature chum salmon. He glides through Canada's northern waters with ease, unaware of what's in front of him, unaware that he will never reach his final destination. Without warning he is stopped by an invisible force. Nylon netting slices into his gill rakers. He fights for his freedom, but the netting is wrapped around him too tightly. His tail thrashes one more time, in vain. The struggle is over.

As illegal driftnet fishing continues in the North Pacific, marine mammal, fish and seabird populations decrease. It is the depletion of salmon stocks that is of concern to Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Canada and partnering countries of the United Nations' moratorium on illegal driftnet fishing are working together to combat illegal fishing practices by air surveillance. Yet fleets still slip through the laws and invade our waters with this deadly practice.

Hanging approximately 15 metres deep, up to 90 kilometres long and made of synthetic plastic webbing, the pelagic driftnet is deadly to the sea and bird population. It hangs like a wall of death. When the nets are no longer used for fishing, they are abandoned to the seas where they either sink or wash ashore, dragging with them the sea life that crossed their path. In the North Pacific Ocean, one salmon driftnet was found containing more than 90 dead

seabirds and 200 dead salmon in just one portion of it. Illegal fishing was halted in 1992 due to a United Nations' ban on high seas driftnet fishing. Canada, the United States, Russia, Japan, South Korea and several other countries also formed the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) to promote conservation of freshwater-spawning fish in the North Pacific Ocean.

Operation Driftnet, a project that began in 1993, was created through the NPAFC to search for vessels engaged in illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing practices on high seas waters, such as the North Pacific Ocean. Canadian and American air forces, in support of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, work in cooperation with the US Coast Guard, Japan Fisheries Agency, and Russian Federal Border Service. Three weeks a year, during spring-time, they conduct air surveillance patrols over a 4.1 million kilometre expanse of the North Pacific. Operation Driftnet has reduced IUU fishing in the North Pacific by 90 percent since its peak in 1998.

"IUU fishing is a global problem that demands global action," says Geoff Regan, Canada's Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Countries like Canada, the United States and Japan must continue to rally together on illegal driftnets. Failing to maintain this union means failing to sustain life in our waters. ■



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# *Not Your Mother's* Station Wagon

## MODIFIED CAR CULTURE AND CONTROVERSY IN VANCOUVER

STORY BY BENYONG | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL GRDINA | ILLUSTRATION BY JODI BROWN



**CRYSTAL BLUE HEADLIGHTS PIERCE THROUGH THE FOG AND SHADOWS**, gleaming like angry demon's eyes. A deep rumble roars from an enormous muffler that looks like it was borrowed from a spaceship. A rear spoiler so tall it could be used as a goal post looms over the back end of a shiny, sporty, import car. The sights and sounds of these low, loud mechanical beasts are common to anyone driving on Lower Mainland streets.

## MODDED CARS ARE NOT SIMPLY VEHICLES, BUT WORKS OF ART.

Getting up close and personal with a modified 2003 Subaru Impreza WRX.

Following the lead of auto-enthusiasts in Japan, a burgeoning subculture of modders has emerged in parts of North America, including Vancouver. Modding refers to the addition of aftermarket embellishments to cars, and can involve anything from adding slick paint jobs and window-shattering stereo systems to installing high-performance engines or engine parts. Although there are a great number of enthusiasts, this pastime remains mostly a mystery to the general public. Often thought to be synonymous with the dangerous street racers that have made headlines, car modders have been subjected to a reputation they may not deserve.

Over 40 percent of Vancouverites are of Asian descent. Amongst 16 to 24-year-olds, the love of fast import cars unites those from various cultural backgrounds. Contrary to popular belief, not all of them are street racers. For many, their cars are bigger and more expensive versions of the Hot Wheels toy cars they played with as kids.

From a hobbyist's point of view, modded cars are not simply vehicles, but works of art; a raw canvas through which enthusiasts can express themselves and create tangible extensions of their personalities. For the truly dedicated, surviving on a diet of instant noodles and canned ham is a perfectly acceptable way to save thousands of dollars toward a new set of wheels. In this modern context, "wheels" refers not to an entire automobile, but merely to a set of tires and rims. "A lot of people just want to build a sweet car they can cruise on the street in," says Ben Low, an Asian-Canadian from Victoria, BC, who has been an active enthusiast for six years. "Some people like their cars to look aggressive and in your face; others prefer a more clean and understated look."

While there are certainly people in Canada that adore cars and car culture, car modding is still largely an obscure pastime. Your neighbour down the street might have a project Mustang in his garage that he's been restoring for





It's all in the details. (Clockwise from top left): boost gauge, steering wheel, 17" rims, grill emblem.

the last five years, but due to the cost of modifying cars and the attached social image, the hobby remains inaccessible, and misunderstood, by many.

In Japan, on the other hand, cars and motorsports are engrained in popular culture. "There are just generally more people in Japan that view modifying cars as a lifestyle, compared to here where it's more of a trend," says Low. "There are 40-year-olds there that are still very much involved in the scene, whereas in North America, it's more the cool thing to do when you're young and not really socially acceptable anymore as you get older."

Street racing and its aftermath have caused the media and law enforcement to put an intense spotlight on anyone who doesn't drive a run-of-the-mill grocery getter. Police officer Jimmy Ng of Richmond, BC, was killed in September 2002, after being struck by a vehicle alleged to be racing. Since then, similar incidents have caused police to be increasingly vigilant. "I wouldn't say we're necessarily profiling Asians or modified cars," says Detective David Bruce-Thomas of the Vancouver Police. "What we are profiling is aggressive driving behaviour... when we're seeing people in the same kinds of cars swerving in and out of traffic and just generally driving stupid again and again, we're going to keep an eye out."

To combat this problem, police have taken the initiative by starting programs like Resist the Race, which was launched November 29th, 2005. According to Bruce-Thomas, this type of program educates enthusiasts about the dangers of street racing. They also facilitate opportunities to compete in sanctioned areas, such as the 1/8th mile drag strip set up recently at Mission Raceway in Mission, BC. Hopefully, this type of campaign will work to reduce the amount of reckless driving that occurs on Lower Mainland streets.

Like salt spray on chrome, street racing tarnishes car modding. With luck and the local police on board, the image of innocent car modders will be restored. ■

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A close-up, high-resolution portrait of a young man with dark, wavy hair and light brown eyes. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The lighting is soft and directional, highlighting the texture of his skin and the details of his facial features. The background is a dark, out-of-focus grey.

PETER SUN LOOKS EVERY BIT

# mixed messages

## EURASIANS IN WORLD ADVERTISING

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### THE PART OF A MALE MODEL

**HIS STRAIGHT, MEDIUM-LENGTH BROWN HAIR** falls casually to the side of his face, slightly shielding his almond-shaped, hazel eyes. Standing tall at 6'2", the lean and handsome Sun has been modelling for the past five years with John Casablancas International in Vancouver, British Columbia. Both in person and in print, there is a certain ambiguity to Sun's appearance. Looking neither completely Caucasian nor Asian, Sun sits somewhere in between.

At only 23, this half-Chinese, half-British model is in the midst of a successful career. Appearing in publications such as *Glamour* and *Nuvo* magazine as well as modelling for retail chains such as Urban Outfitters, Sun's success does not appear to be diminishing anytime soon. The demand for individuals of mixed ethnicity like Peter Sun in both print and television advertising appears to be increasing. What is the driving force behind this rise in the Eurasian face in advertising?

Tea Buechner, a talent agent at Vancouver Talent Management, says many commercial producers now ask specifically for individuals whose nationality is difficult to determine. "A lot of the people on my roster who are Eurasian do very well in auditions," she explains. As a scout for potential talent, it is Buechner's responsibility to understand where the advertising industry is headed to ensure her client's needs are met. "People are intermarrying, and I think that there's going to be a lot more [mixed race individuals] in the next generation," Buechner asserts. "There's going to be a lot of kids with multi-families, multi-dads and multi-moms, multiracial – and that's the market that's going to drive what gets made."

In 2001, Statistics Canada reported that 14,465 individuals in British Columbia listed themselves under "multiple visible minority status," while another 4,195 individuals chose the category "visible minority not included elsewhere." Today, the number of individuals of mixed ethnicity continues to grow as more and more people are becoming involved in interracial relationships.

STORY BY KRISTEN CASUMPANG | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL TOBIAS



Niven Pong, a Vancouver-raised model and actor, is a product of this type of relationship. “You grow up with the best of both worlds, but you are never really a part of either one,” says Pong, an individual of mixed Chinese and Ukrainian background. “I get asked, ‘What are you?’ a lot. People like to classify other people so they know how to react to you,” he explains. With an

Zegna, which depicted an assortment of Asian faces. Upon returning to Vancouver, Pong was asked to play a Chinese man in film roles. “Personally,” he says, “I don’t even think I look Asian at all.”

The idea of targeting as many markets as possible with a single image has been embraced by those in the advertising industry. In a

**“SINCE IT’S DIFFICULT TO DISPLAY MORE THAN ONE FACE IN OUR ADVERTISING, I TRY TO CHOOSE SOMEONE WHO IS NOT RACE-SPECIFIC.”**

current advertisement for Shangri-La, a luxury hotel and condominium development in Coal Harbour, Rennie Marketing Systems portrays an Asian woman in traditional Chinese dress, serving a man with racially ambiguous features. Appeal-

ing to two groups at the same time, the Eurasian face has the effect of not being too much of one or the other, allowing for more individuals to identify with the image they see.

imposing build and brilliant green eyes set off by his olive skin and jet black hair, it is difficult to pinpoint Pong’s ethnic background, something many people try to do. For example, while modelling and acting in Singapore, Pong was cast as Caucasian. “I was the whitest guy on set,” he says of a photo shoot for design house Ermenegildo

Likewise, Laura Stapleton, owner of Blue Magnolia Productions in Vancouver, believes that “advertising with mixed ethnicity models is simply



The faces of mixed ethnicity (left to right): Eric Mital, Keiko Lee-Hem, Nolan Percival.

reflecting reality.” Stapleton says, “Since it’s difficult to display more than one face in our advertising, I try to choose someone who is not race-specific.”

Nicole Whittle, an instructor in the Fashion Arts diploma program at Vancouver’s John Casablancas Institute, agrees that “if the market is demanding it, advertising is going to change.” Blue-eyed and flaxen-haired, Whittle spent much of the 1990s modelling in Asian countries, especially Japan. At that time, she explains, there was a huge demand for models with her look. A 1993 study on Japanese advertising concluded that, of 318 one and two-page colour magazine ads (from February and March issues of nine different magazines), 186 used Caucasian models. Between 1988 and 2000, Whittle noticed a distinct shift in the taste of advertisers. In the mid-’90s, she says, “It was like you were passé.” The market had moved on to a different look. This look was the combination of Caucasian and Asian characteristics available in the Eurasian face.

There is always the possibility that the current increase of mixed race individuals in advertising is also a fad that will pass. Marlaina Mah, a 23-year-old model of Chinese, French-Canadian and British heritage, takes a pragmatic approach. “As for being in demand, it’s hard to say. The ‘look’ comes and goes,” she says. Mah has modelled for the past eight years for such companies as Flosport and magazines such as Britain’s *J17*. However, she believes that the market in North America has been slow to include Eurasian models in its advertising.

Jen Chau, co-director of New Demographic, a diversity training company in New York City, offers workshops on issues surrounding mixed race identity and interracial relationships. Chau asserts that, “While it is a positive thing to increase visibility and see more mixed race people represented, all it amounts to is exoticification at the end of the day.... Mixed race people continue to be appreciated and valued for their physical attributes and do not get to have a voice.” Referring to individuals as “exotic” can seem harmless, and perhaps even flattering, but this may relegate these individuals to the category of curious objects. The objectified person may have desirable features, but does not get to have a voice. By focussing on beauty, as is often the case in advertising, the individuals behind the Eurasian faces may be overlooked.

In addition, Eurasians are being made exotic to both Caucasians and Asians, allowing for emphasis to be placed on their differences from those who are specifically one or the other. Unfortunately, this could put mixed race individuals into their own category, reinforcing historical attitudes that did not allow them a comfortable place in either community.

While the risk of labelling individuals of mixed ethnicity as “exotic” is a very real issue, using models such as Peter Sun may also reflect the reality of culturally diverse cities like Vancouver. It may also be “a great opportunity to strengthen ourselves as a society,” Stapleton contends. “It’s forcing the viewer to look at that person, maybe wonder what their background is, and then realize that it doesn’t matter anyway.” ■

17 YEARS AGO, HIS PALE ALE CREATED A SENSATION.



NOW, HE’S GONE AND DONE IT AGAIN.



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Before a lot of people even knew what a Pale Ale was, Stefan Tobler, Brewmaster at Okanagan Spring, created one, that to this day, is the most popular craft beer in BC. Now, he’s at it again with new Okanagan Spring IPA. A medium bodied Ale with a distinctive hop aroma. Chances are, your very first taste of this new India Pale Ale, won’t be your last. Cheers.

# Exporting Education

## Canadian Teachers and Their Jobs Overseas

STORY BY REBECCA FORD

**EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO**, Vancouver teacher Gail Brand packed up her belongings, rented out her house and said goodbye to friends and family. Unhappy with oversized classes and the politics of education in British Columbia, she decided to reinvigorate her teaching career in Asia.

Asia, with its rapidly expanding economies and emphasis on education, needs teachers, both experienced and new.

After considerable research, Brand accepted a position with the International School of Macao, in Macao, China. In accepting the position, she was joining an ever-growing band of Canadian teachers, valued for their training and expertise, heading to the region.

The international opportunities for teachers are bountiful with over 900 elementary and secondary international schools overseas and 5,000 international teaching vacancies each year. Smaller classes, flexible working conditions, economic benefits and opportunities for travel are proving to be powerful magnets, as is the very low income tax.

Contracts vary from school to school, but are generally similar to the one offered by the International School of Macao. It hires teachers for two years, and pays a bonus if they stay for the length of the contract.

“We hire top quality staff who hold valid teaching credentials and who love to teach,” says Neil P. Johnston, one of the founders of the Macao school. He said that parents in many parts of Asia want to enroll their children in high quality international schools. “A Canadian education is highly valued offshore. It is perhaps our best export. Canadian government, at all levels, should be more proactive in supporting Canadian international schools and the educators who work in them,” says Johnston.

Melanie Andrews is a newly qualified teacher who chose to go overseas. For her it was an opportunity to get her career off to a decent start. “New teachers find their lack of experience puts them at a real disadvantage [in BC] and actually stops them from succeeding in their profession. I also think that in Canada there is little support for the new teacher,” she says.

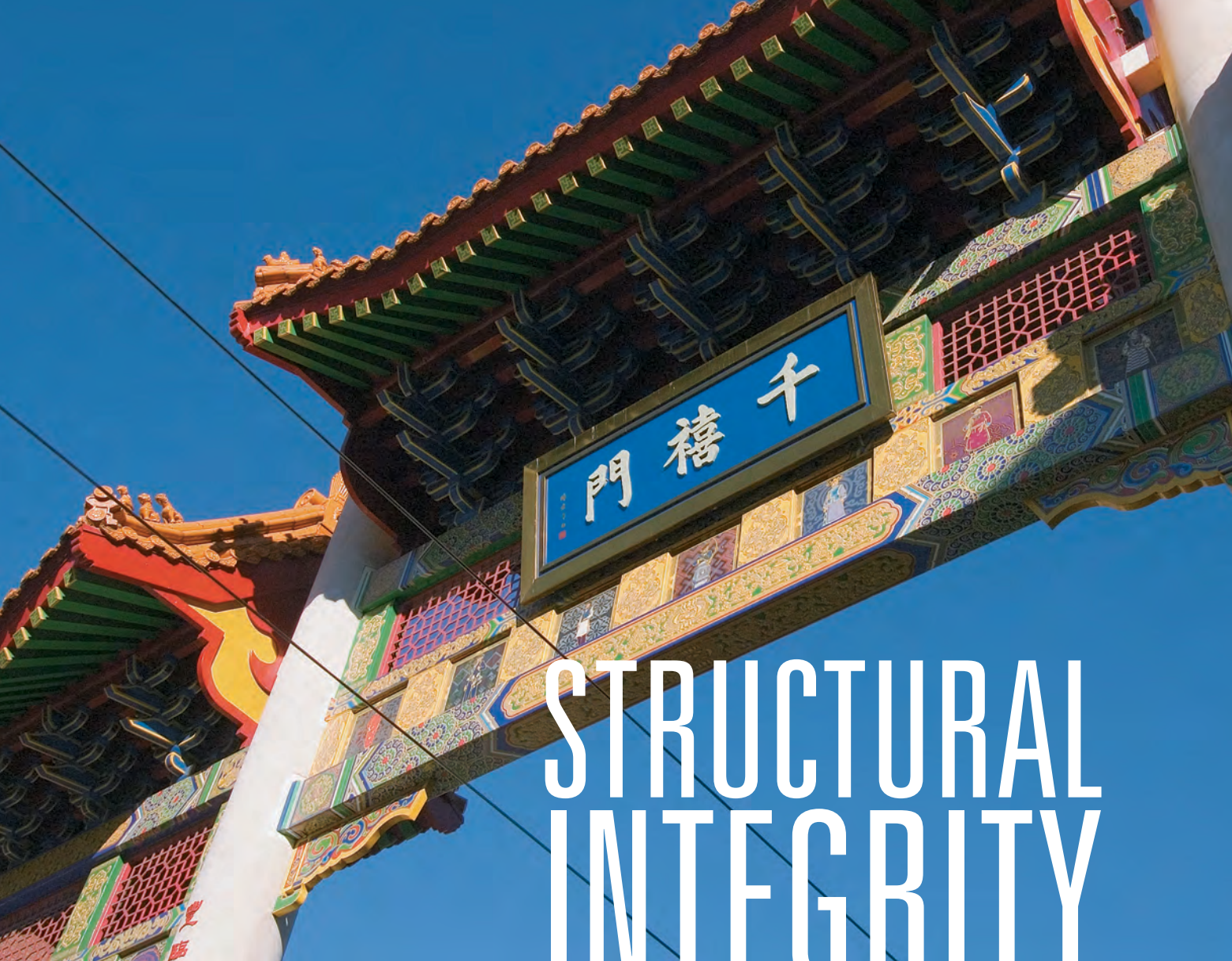
“I found there appeared to be a consensus among several [BC] principals who came to visit us to discuss job opportunities. As a new teacher, your best option is to go overseas,” says Andrews, now a grade two teacher at the Macao school. Had she stayed in Canada, she believes she would have waited a long time for a permanent position. “In most areas of BC there is a two to seven year wait to get a full-time position,” she says. “When applying for positions, I found I was often up against teachers with over 10 years of experience, with master’s degrees. By being here, in Macao, I am able to grow as a teacher and experience teaching opportunities that I would never have had at home.”

There is also a growing number of experienced teachers swelling the education ranks in Asia. Brand had been teaching in BC for over 16 years when she decided to move to Macao. “It is still hard work in Macao but there isn’t the bureaucracy of a school board to deal with, particularly in a small school like ours. In Vancouver, I would find my [mail] box in the office full of forms, stuff to deal with every day that really had little to do with the primary task of teaching children. All these things I had to deal with over and above teaching. I also had to be on more committees, many of them required by the school board,” says Brand.

“In Vancouver I had 31 grade six and seven students with little help for English as a second language, which many needed, plus other students with special needs. The support for these kinds of students was eroded until it became almost non-existent. I found that the idea of a child-centred education in Vancouver was definitely not a priority. It made me feel that my contribution was not appreciated,” says Brand. “Here, I certainly feel more appreciated by students, staff, administration and parents.”

There are a few drawbacks to working and living in China, such as the language barrier and the lack of teaching resources, but it is interesting to teach people of different cultures as well as to travel and meet new people. “Living in another culture really has its pros and cons,” Brand says. “However, in my case, I think the pros win. It is always fascinating, if irritating at times. And it doesn’t feel like work.” ■

**“A CANADIAN  
EDUCATION  
IS HIGHLY VALUED  
OFFSHORE.  
IT IS PERHAPS OUR  
BEST EXPORT.”**



# STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

## Architect Joe Wai

STORY BY JENNY REED  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM SCHELLE

**A SMILING JOE WAI WEAVES THROUGH A SEA OF CARDBOARD BOXES** as he makes his way into his future conference room, a room he is delighted to mention was once used as a prison cell in a movie. He points to a brick wall inside the room. “Those bricks aren’t even real,” he says. “They’re fibreglass.” It’s been three weeks since the move from Homer Street to his new office space in Chinatown and it seems Joe Wai couldn’t be more excited.

For the past 23 years, Joe Wai Architect Incorporated called Yaletown home. Now his firm is situated a few blocks from some of his most recognizable designs: the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Gardens and its new addition, the Hall of One Hundred Rivers; the Chinese Cultural Centre Museum and Archives; the Chinatown Parkade; and the Millennium Gate.

One of Wai’s current projects is the restoration of the historical Chinese Freemasons Building on the northwest corner of Pender Street at Carrall. His enthusiasm for the neglected building is infectious. “For as long as I can remember I thought it was a fascinating building,” he says. “About 35 years ago there was an opportunity to renovate it. The architect they chose left a lot to be desired, and the building gradually became vacant. It just so happens that the new owner, who I’ve known for a long time, has asked me to help him restore it.... It’s like a dream come true!”



Clockwise from left: Joe Wai, a detail of the Millennium Gate, the Chinatown Parkade.

Using archival photographs and working with city heritage groups, Wai plans to restore the building's lost details, including the columns that once adorned its exterior. "Ultimately, we're trying to get the essential spirit of the building and use it to make adjustments that fit our use today," he explains.

One side of the building's unique façade has Asian-style architecture with recessed balconies, while the other side has Victorian-style architecture typical of the early 20th century. The most important transformation Wai will make to the building is to its interior, which will be converted to seniors' housing.

The new owner of the Chinese Freemasons Building, SFU Chancellor Milton Wong, knew the building well. His father owned a tailor shop on the ground floor of the building for 50 years. Wong based his decision to hire Wai purely on sentimental reasons. "Quite simply, Joe is the only architect who cares about the significance of historical buildings in Chinatown," he explains. "There is no one else with his passion."

It may have been Wai's passion and sensitivity to his community that paved the way for his successful and prolific career, but it was as a young boy in post-World War II Hong Kong that he first found inspiration. Wai's father had the daunting task of reconstructing the family's pharmaceutical business after the passing of his own father and after the family's factories in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia had been destroyed in the war. "My dad hired an architect called

Mr. Lam, who was American-trained and somehow found himself in Hong Kong for a short period of time," Wai explains. "He didn't really have an office, so he worked in my dad's office."

Every school day, eight-year-old Joe Wai went to his father's office for lunch and soon he became friends with Lam. "He was such a nice guy. He showed me what he was doing," Wai remembers. He quickly became enthralled with the architect's work. "I couldn't believe it. He seemed to be having so much fun... the printing and the drafting lines; it was so beautiful." Although Wai didn't fully understand what it meant to be an architect, the seed was planted.

In 1952, Wai immigrated with his family to Vancouver. Initially, the Wais lived in the Strathcona area, east of Chinatown, but his father later moved them to Vancouver's west side. His grandparents remained in Strathcona. "I never really paid much attention [to Strathcona] until a few years later when we were told that my grandfather's house was being expropriated by the city," he says. The city was buying up the single-family homes in Strathcona for less than fair market value and they were replacing them with large public housing projects. Wai's grandparents had nowhere to go until the public housing was complete. Eventually, they moved into MacLean Park near Georgia and Union Streets, "a public house that was getting a lot of negative publicity for the social problems within," Wai explains. These events affected him profoundly and set him on the path to becoming the culturally and socially sensitive architect he is today.

Wai grew up still clinging to the desire to be an architect. After high school he enrolled in a six-year architecture program at UBC. "The school of architecture, in those days, usually had older and more mature students," Wai explains. "I was 18. At that time, the school was teaching the Beaux Arts style, which was the old school of

**"IT WASN'T JUST NINE TO FIVE. IT WAS EVENING AND WEEKEND MEETINGS. TRYING TO FIND THE BYLAWS TO PIECE TOGETHER THE PROGRAMS FOR FUNDING... IT TAKES A LOT OF MOTIVATION."**

teaching. You had to use a compass and construct roman letters, learn calligraphy and columns, and do a lot of math and physics as well." About halfway through his studies, Wai felt that he'd finally learned how to draw. "It was a real liberation," he says. And Wai never stopped drawing. As part of the "felt pen and tracing paper generation" of architects, he insists he has no need to move toward the computer-generated designs of today.

Like many young people after graduation, Wai spent a few years travelling around the world. The experience was an education in itself. He was fascinated by the variations between different groups of people around the world who seemed similar, but weren't. His travels helped him define his job today. "To facilitate what a neighbourhood wants," he says, "I think you have to take yourself out of it. I think, in particular, you have to look to other places, to different communities, to different cultures, to gain better insight into your own. There are some [architects] who perhaps look at things on a cultural basis. I don't mean cultural only in terms of concert halls and all that. Cultural, meaning urban design and what makes cities work – what makes neighbourhoods and communities work. Perhaps that's the area I fall into. You study not just your own community; you study many different communities. I find it fascinating how they work."

Upon returning to Vancouver, Wai didn't have to wait long to get to work. He discovered that Strathcona

was coming together as a community to protest against Vancouver's continuing expropriation of its streets. The residents formed an association called SPOTA, The Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association. Wai volunteered with SPOTA, feeling strongly it was something he had to do. SPOTA successfully convinced the

federal government not to level their homes. SPOTA also developed a program to preserve and rehabilitate the area, offering loans and grants for restorations. During this time, Wai designed and built small houses that "melted in" with the style of the neighbourhood. "They were so-called in-fill houses," he explains. "Very modest looking, non-state-of-the-art. There are about 50 of them."

Although fulfilled by his community work, Wai questioned the amount of time he spent arguing with bureaucrats compared to the time he spent designing. "It wasn't just nine to five. It was evening and weekend meetings. Trying to find the bylaws to piece together the programs for funding... It takes a lot of motivation," says Wai. "By the time I knew it, several years had gone by. We had these very ordinary looking houses; yeah, they fit in, melting into the neighbourhood and all that. But it's not leading-edge architecture. It's a lot of regulation, reinterpretation and dealing with authority. A lot of time is spent that way, as opposed to being Frank Lloyd Wright."

Joe Wai may have never found the time to be another Frank Lloyd Wright, but it's hard to walk through Vancouver and not see his work. His fingerprints are everywhere, especially in Chinatown, where his contribution is immeasurable. His approach to its revitalization is charmingly philosophical: "It has to have life breathed into it," he says. "It's like an old lady that is still elegant, as opposed to a corpse with lipstick on it." ■

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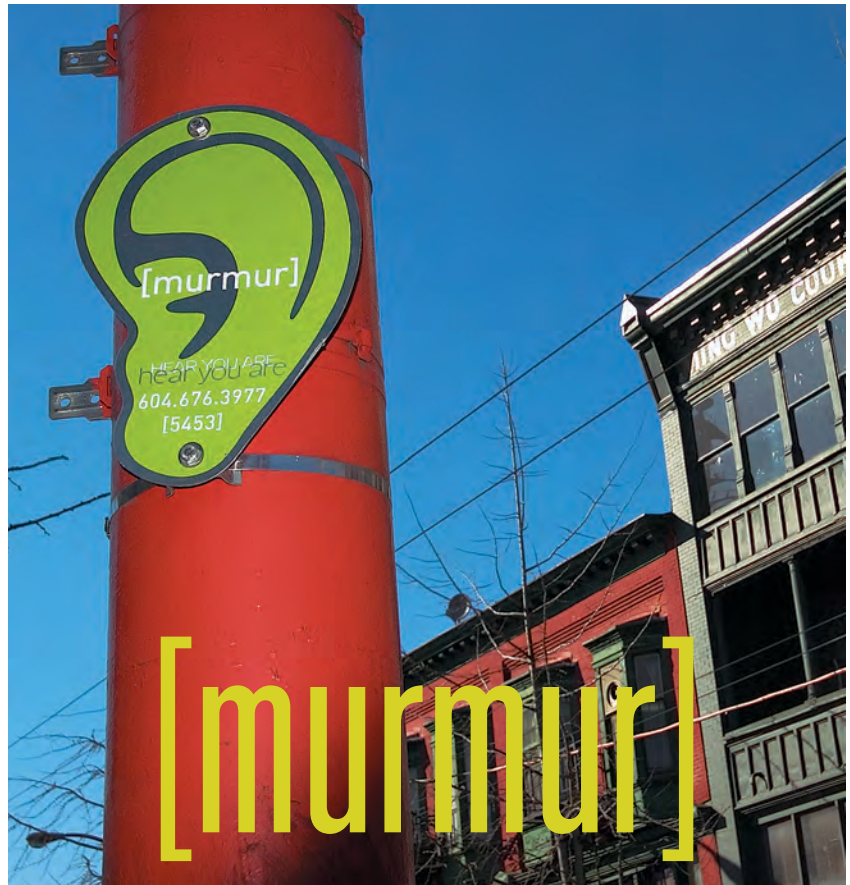
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A bright green ear marks a [murmur] story location in Chinatown.

## the continuous sound of chinatown

STORY BY CAROLINE SCHUTRUMPF | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM SCHELLE

If you're strolling through Vancouver's Chinatown and you're carrying a cellphone, you may hear a [murmur].

Listen carefully...

[murmur] is a public audio art project in Chinatown that's connecting people with places through the use of cellphones, telephones and the Internet. [murmur] offers a new perspective on Chinatown by archiving stories from a cross-section of people and making them readily available for any interested listener. And it's definitely not hard to miss.

Bright green ear-shaped signs mark story locations and display phone numbers anyone can call to hear a slice of Chinatown's history while standing where it happened. Whether you are a tourist wandering through Chinatown for the first time, or a Vancouver resident who has frequented the area for years, the experience of having the past whispered in your ear connects you to the place. Surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of the site, the history comes alive.

[murmur] was created by Shawn Micallef, James Roussel and Gabe Sawhney in Toronto in 2003. Since then, [murmur] has documented spaces in Toronto, Montréal and Calgary. On the West Coast, Chinatown was the perfect place for [murmur] because of the neighbourhood's rich and complex history. "It's seen several waves of changes," says Sawhney, "and will be changing a lot in the next few years." This makes it a perfect starting point for stories about generational and cultural differences.

"The challenge," says Sawhney, "is to convince people that their stories are valuable – many people are sure that their stories are too boring to be included.

Then, when they tell them, they do so really passionately and really well.”

Call the number at the corner of Pender and Taylor Streets and you can listen to Joe Wai, a prolific Chinatown architect, sharing a story about the introduction of a gated entrance to the neighbourhood in 1970. The entrance, he says, caused great apprehension in the Chinese community. Many believed

## SURROUNDED BY THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS OF THE SITE, THE HISTORY COMES ALIVE.

the gates reinforced the separation Chinatown had been created for in the first place, and that Chinatown’s evolution would be limited. “But things have changed tremendously in the last 20 years,” says Wai. “Chinatown is no longer isolated.” Instead, it has become a vibrant and integral part of Vancouver. With the introduction of Chinatown’s Millennium Gate in 2002, the gated entrance is now synonymous with Chinatown.

Rob Warren, the project’s Vancouver coordinator, believes [murmur] is important because it allows current generations to connect with their past in Vancouver. “[They can] access history in a space they may not know and may not use the way their parents and grandparents did.”

[murmur]’s future lies in other neighbourhoods with complex histories, such as Gastown, Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside. “[murmur] captures history in the neighbourhoods before it’s gone,” says Warren. “It can also be used in new developments to put those spaces into a historical context.” With high-rise condos springing up as quickly as mushrooms in the November rain – often on the sites of historical buildings – [murmur] can play an important role in preserving Vancouver’s history for future generations. ■

Stories can also be heard online at:  
[WWW.MURMURVANCOUVER.CA](http://WWW.MURMURVANCOUVER.CA)

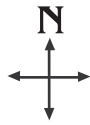
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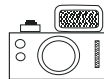
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# the two faces of

# FUGU

## Poison or Potential Medicine?

STORY BY NICOLE WHITTLE  
ILLUSTRATION BY JODI BROWN

**TRANSLUCENT SLICES OF RAW FUGU**, a fish the Japanese have been fascinated with for centuries, are fanned out on a Japanese serving plate. Its taste is subtle and its cost is extraordinary. Commonly known as the pufferfish, fugu is a delicacy. When prepared incorrectly, it can be deadly.

The fascination with fugu stems from a poison called tetrodotoxin, which lurks in its internal organs. Should a minute amount of the poison contact the flesh of the fish during preparation, the fugu connoisseur will experience a tingling, then a numbing sensation in the lips and tongue. For one adult, one to two milligrams of this neurotoxin is fatal, making it 1,200 times more deadly than cyanide.

In Canada, fugu has another face. A pharmaceutical grade of the toxin found in the fugu was recently administered to select cancer patients, those having not responded to other forms of existing cancer pain medication. This purified version of tetrodotoxin, known as Tectin™, was part of a palliative pain manage-

ment trial conducted by the BC Cancer Agency. For a small niche of advanced-stage patients, the trial produced significant pain relieving results.

Pufferfish, found in temperate and tropical waters, is one of the most poisonous species of marine life in the world. Tetrodotoxin, for which there is no known antitoxin, is found in five areas of the fish: the kidney, eggs, blood, eyes and brain.

Japan's Ministry of Health and Welfare began certifying chefs in the preparation of fugu in 1958. Yoshihiro Tabo, presently the Raw Bar chef at the Blue Water Café in Vancouver, BC, was certified in fugu preparation in Osaka, Japan, more than 35 years ago. His training was so intense that he was permitted only two days off a month, for three years. "Fugu is a unique fish, and

**"AS LONG AS THE  
POISONOUS AREAS ARE REMOVED  
WITHOUT ANY REMNANTS,  
THEN THE FISH IS PERFECTLY  
SAFE TO CONSUME."**

therefore the manner in which it is cut is different. It requires a totally different type of skill," Tabo says. He believes there is a misconception about the dangers of eating fugu. "As long as the poisonous areas are removed without any remnants," he explains, "then the fish is perfectly safe to consume."

Depending on the restaurant, the season and the chef who prepares it, fugu cuisine ranges from being relatively cheap to wildly expensive. In an elegant fugu restaurant in downtown Tokyo, Tabo and his wife once enjoyed a full course dinner served with Hire-sake (sake boiled with fugu fins) for \$1,500 Cdn each. Traditionally, fugu is prepared in two ways: as sashimi, sliced thinly and served with a spicy ponzu sauce; and as a hot pot, cooked in broth. The poisonous remains of the fish are disposed of in locked barrels, and then taken away as hazardous waste.

Still, fugu consumption kills between 50 and 100 people each year in Japan. There are some who take preparation into their own unskilled hands. And there are others who consume the poisonous kidney, despite the dangers. An amount of toxin equivalent to a few grains of sand will shut down the nervous system's electrical signalling, causing acute side effects that include speech impairment, vomiting and paralysis.

Knowing the potentially lethal nature of the pufferfish, it is not surprising to find out that it cannot be imported into Canada as food. According to Ken Lowe of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), "It is flat out against

the fish inspection regulations." The CFIA's biggest concern is safety.

Canada's appreciation of the pufferfish lies not in its taste, but in its possibility. As science looks for new medicines to cure disease and manage pain, significant research continues toward the development of nature-based drugs. The ocean and its vast amount of plants and animals are the basis for many medicinal discoveries. One such discovery is Tectin™, developed by Vancouver-based WEX Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Recent clinical trials tested the effectiveness of Tectin™ on reducing severe cancer pain resulting from chemotherapy, radiation and metastases. Tests showed that, after being injected twice daily for four days, those who responded to the drug had "pain relief from two to seven weeks," according to Pippa Hawley, MD, palliative medicine specialist, of the BC Cancer Agency.

Under the name Tetrodin™, tetrodotoxin was originally studied for the treatment of drug withdrawal. Through these studies, WEX scientists noticed that the main factor in its ability to relieve or eliminate withdrawal symptoms was its ability to reduce pain. Tectin™ is 3,000 times stronger than morphine without the same side effects. Unlike morphine, which acts on the brain receptors, Tectin™ works on the nervous system directly, closing channels and blocking the transmission of pain. One pufferfish contains a possible 600 doses of the drug.

Though preliminary trials of Tectin™ garnered positive levels of success, with almost three-quarters of the patients experiencing pain relief, the Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) recommended that testing of the drug be halted in early March 2006. Don Evans, vice president of corporate communications at WEX Pharmaceuticals Inc. believes the trial was stopped not because the drug didn't work, but because the "analysis [by the DMC] was based on the trends, and not on the individual."

Despite what the trends say, WEX Pharmaceuticals Inc. is moving forward, changing their strategy to focus on the study of Tectin™ in the United States, where there is a larger population and potential market. FDA approval would mean a great deal to financial backers and supporters of the drug. Although the final analysis of Tectin™ is pushed back a year or two, Evans remains positive. "There has been enough research in past trials that we feel confident this drug will be available in the future."

While the pufferfish may never find its way into Vancouver restaurants, WEX Pharmaceuticals Inc. will continue to work toward getting the pufferfish's powerful pain relief properties into the bodies of cancer patients everywhere. ■



## wisting in the wind

addressing sex education in a multicultural landscape

ILLUSTRATION BY KAREN HENDRY | STORY BY MELINDA JOHNSTON

**BECAUSE SHE WAS “A GOOD LITTLE BROWN GIRL,”** Rosy Deol says her teachers and school counsellors were hesitant to give her sex education information. Now, her bright blue hair contradicting the stereotypical “good little brown girl” image, Deol is the community outreach coordinator for the Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA). Deol, who is of South Asian heritage, is one of the few people delivering ethnically sensitive sex education in Vancouver.

Deol believes that there are two causes for the reluctance of some educators to provide sex education to students in visible minorities. Some educators are influenced by stereotypes, while others are worried about offending cultural sensibilities. Either way, children may not be getting the information they need to make informed decisions, either from school, or at home.

Parents, argues Deol, worry about their children, but don't know what to tell them. Sometimes, parents literally don't know the words, whether in their own languages or in English, because they weren't taught themselves. From silence, however, children may develop the idea that, “there's something wrong with it [sex]; there's something wrong with me,” she says. Ignorance about sexuality and healthy relationships can lead to risky behaviour, increasing someone's chances of contracting a disease or an unwanted pregnancy.

Deol believes that sex education needs to be coupled with anti-racism education. Negative stereotypes about different ethnic groups can affect a person's self-esteem, and can particularly hurt people in mixed race relationships. People who choose a partner outside of their ethnic group may be ostracized from their communities, making it difficult for them to find support if the relationship turns sour. It's even more difficult for homosexual and transsexual Asians, who may feel that they have to give up their Asian identities when they come out, because they do not feel accepted by their communities.

Susan Wong\*, a communications student at Simon Fraser University, experienced these issues first-hand when she brought home her first white boyfriend to her Hong Kong-born parents. Susan experienced prejudice from both sides. Her mother “judged him on racist, classist stereotypes,” she says, whereas the boy told her, “Your mother is a shrew, your father is a pansy.” The relationship failed.

Sex was not talked about in Wong's household. She learned about sex from *Melrose Place, Beverly Hills 90210* and the Internet before she finally learned a few facts at school. Susan believes that her mother is ignorant about sex. She says, “When mom found out my brother wasn't a virgin, she said, ‘Don't you bring AIDS back into this house.’”

Dr. Faizal Sahukhan, a Vancouver sexologist, helps multicultural clients reconcile the traditional values of their parents with modern Canadian culture. Many of his patients grew up in families where their parents turned off the television if the characters started kissing. They received no information about sex from their parents, but were still exposed to mainstream North American culture, in which images of sexuality frequently occur. Dr. Sahukhan knows of girls who are ordered to wear modest clothing, but who change their clothes when away from their parents. He has heard of a woman having her hymen surgically reattached before her marriage, because “she was afraid if she didn't bleed on her wedding night, her marriage would break up, and her family would be ostracized,” says Dr. Sahukhan.

In many traditional Asian cultures, sex before marriage is forbidden. This used to be common in Canadian culture as well, but now, “if a person has not experienced sexuality before marriage, they are looked on as abnormal [by average Canadian standards],” says Dr. Sahukhan. People growing up in Canadian immigrant communities who still adhere to traditional ways of life are torn between two different perspectives on sexuality. As Rosy Deol puts it,

\*Name changed to preserve privacy.

"The Asian community here [in Vancouver] is where the mainstream western community was in the '50s, in terms of sex ed."

Dr. Sahukhan explains that the different expectations of families and of society at large can lead to tremendous guilt. In families with a strong patriarchal structure, as is common in many Asian cultures, even adult children must continue to obey the head of the family. This can further exacerbate the guilt felt when adults try to make their own choices about sexuality.

"A person growing up in this culture does not understand where their parents come from," Dr. Sahukhan says, while "parents try to raise children without understanding where their children are coming from." He provides his patients with a safe space for communication, and helps them talk to their parents, and to their spouses, who may also have a different cultural background. To resolve conflicts, he believes, "communication is the key."

Dr. Sahukhan's advice to his patients in matters of relationships, sexuality and sexual orientation echoes the golden rule, found in one form or another in many major religions: "If you are not hurting yourself or others, there's nothing wrong with what you are doing," he says.

Currently, few community resources are available for ethnically sensitive sexual education. The North Shore Multicultural Society is helping to change that. The NSMS is in the

Romi Chandra, youth program coordinator at the NSMS, recognizes the importance of being respectful of the values of refugee and immigrant youth. He acknowledges that many of them come from cultures where outward expressions of sexuality, particularly homosexuality, are illegal. He tries to respect their cultures, while presenting Canadian ideas.

In addition to his work with the NSMS, Chandra also works with Condomania, an initiative of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Condomania trains youth as peer educators, and sends them to schools to talk about sexuality. Condomania gives 350 workshops a year, and 75 percent of its peer educators come from a refugee or immigrant background. Sometimes, program names designed to attract kids can horrify parents. Patricia Dubari, of the Multicultural Family Place, remembers trying to recruit some African and Vietnamese youth for Condomania five years ago. Their families heard the word Condomania and refused to let their children participate. Dubari laments the difficulty there is in finding culturally sensitive information. She says that there is a "horrible lack of health information in anything but English." This lack extends to all medical information, not just sexual education. "It's a big gap," she says.

Rosy Deol echoes Dubari's concerns. She knows of parents who have been appalled to hear of schools handing out condoms. They didn't

## "WHEN MOM FOUND OUT MY BROTHER WASN'T A VIRGIN, SHE SAID, 'DON'T YOU BRING AIDS BACK INTO THIS HOUSE.'"

second year of a program in which refugee and immigrant youth meet for several months and talk about problems they have adjusting to Canadian culture, including everything from sex to bullying. At the same time, a group of parents meet separately to discuss the same issues. In May, the two groups will meet to share ideas. Last year, over 70 people attended the meeting, eager to hear what the youth had to say.

understand that all sex education programs talk about abstinence, as well as safer sex. She knows that parents and grandparents are worried about their children, but don't know what to do. She says the main message parents need to get is that youth will listen, especially if parents take the time to explain their values. As it is, between the lack of resources in Vancouver and parents' silence, she says, "youth are left twisting in the wind." ■

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# generation lost

## THE HIKIKOMORI OF JAPAN



STORY BY **ASTRID ALSEMGEEST**  
ARTWORK BY **DARREN KOOYMAN**

**"WE CALL THEM HIKIKOMORI. THEY NEVER GO OUT,"** Tokyo college student Mayumi Masuda says frankly. She is referring to the growing number of young people in Japan who have mysteriously retreated into self-imposed exile. Ranging from children to young professionals, the hikikomori seclude themselves in their homes, refuse to attend school or work, and often speak to no one. In extreme cases they have been known to do so for years. Currently, there are over one million of these "hermit children" in Japan, and their numbers are growing. The hikikomori are symbolic of the increasing discord that is occurring between Japan's younger generation and the traditional values of their society. Though Japan remains strongly ruled by tradition, the nation is straining to remain relevant in a rapidly changing, contemporary world. Bridging the gap are Japan's youth, who are being asked to bear a stress like no other generation.

The hidden world of the hikikomori raises the question of why so many young people are currently unable to function in Japanese society. In a country where the subject of mental illness has long been taboo, the descent of so many young people into severe depression is at once disturbing and indicative of the need for change.

Japanese society has been known to place great pressure on children to succeed. "It's just a huge weight on people's minds," says Dr. Sharalyn Orbaugh, an associate professor of Asian studies at the University of British Columbia. "[There is the belief that] you really cannot succeed in life unless you come from a good university, and to get into a good university you have to go to a good high school, and to get into a good high school you have to go to a good middle school.... It starts very young."

According to Maurice Pinguet, in his book *Voluntary Death in Japan*, "School studies and rigorous [university] selection procedures become a crushing burden. Six hours in class are followed by two hours of homework, and often a few extra hours of night school. A child can be asked to work 11 or 12 hours a day for the sake of his future."

Mayumi Masuda completed a similar amount of studying for her college entrance exams, yet she suggests some people study even more. "If you want to get into the highest university, you can't even sleep!" she says jokingly. However, with the schedules many Japanese students maintain, her statement holds some truth.

In his book, *The Thorn in the Chrysanthemum: Suicide and Economic Success in Modern Japan*, Mamoru Iga points out that, "Japanese education aims at memorization for entering a university but not at developing the capability to solve problems in life situations." In 2002, the Japanese government introduced its relaxed education policy. A government initiative designed to reduce the high-pressure environment of the Japanese classroom, the introduction of relaxed education was also intended to introduce more creative thinking into the school system. However, many parents have not been supportive of the change. Many parents, believing the new system to be inferior, enroll their children in cram schools and extra lessons. While Japanese youth are being exposed to a different kind of education at school, they continue to be dominated by a society that insists on tradition.

Japanese youth have also had to adapt to a rapidly changing job climate. In 1993, an economic recession hit Japan and continues today. In the past, the Japanese could expect a job for life after finishing high school or university. A changing world means that the same opportunities no longer exist for young people. Many are left feeling disillusioned with a society that continues to place huge importance on one's position in the workforce, while at the same time not providing a person with job security.

The growing number of young Japanese people committing suicide is a cause for great concern. In feudal times, samurai soldiers committed seppuku, or ritual suicide.

Kamikaze pilots of World War II famously dive-bombed to their deaths. In more modern times, businessmen have been known to kill themselves as a tragic solution to debt. While suicides among older generations often carried overtones of honour and noble sacrifice, the suicides among today's youth reflect a sense of despair and loneliness. As Orbaugh says, "A lot of these people are not bankrupt; they're not causing serious problems to others... They just don't see much reason to live."

Many wonder if the increasingly isolated behaviour of some youth is the result of growing individualism in a society that has always supported the group mentality. Hiromi Endo, a 20-year-old Tokyo college student, explains, "I think that Japanese people like to hang out in huge groups, so people tend to take care of each other. On the other hand, these days the way people are living, they don't care about each other."

Orbaugh elaborates, "Japanese media are suggesting that in society, instead of being tightly woven together, and everybody having a group consciousness, everybody now is drifting free. Which, from a traditional Japanese point of view, is a very scary thing – that you're not anchored by all of these connections."

If Japanese society is indeed drifting apart, the effect could be devastating to Japan's position on the world stage. The country faces the monumental challenge of maintaining a link between a traditional past and a modern future. What remains to be seen is if it will be able to do so without sacrificing a generation. ■





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# the *Asahi*

## Breaking Barriers Through Baseball

STORY BY MELINDA JOHNSTON & MEGHANN SHANTZ

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF PAT ADACHI & THE KITAGAWA FAMILY

Vancouver Asahi player Nagi Nishihara at bat, Powell Grounds, ca. 1939.



**FIELD OF DREAMS. MAJOR LEAGUE. BULL DURHAM.** Baseball has written itself into the collective consciousness of North America, and our movies, songs and literature reflect this obsession. It is not that often, however, that baseball has affected the actual lives and self-perception of an entire community.

Before Jackie Robinson challenged professional baseball's colour barrier in 1947, the Asahi Baseball team, made up of Japanese-Canadians, helped break racial barriers in Vancouver. They provided inspiration to a community that couldn't vote, were barred from certain professions and had two strikes against them even before they stepped up to the plate. As the only non-Caucasian team in their league, the Asahi faced racism and much larger opponents, but consistently proved their sportsmanship and skill.

The Asahi played baseball from 1914 to 1941, when the attack on Pearl Harbor led to the internment of Japanese-Canadians living along the coast of BC. An exhibition at Nikkei Place honours the Asahi, their contribution to baseball, and the inspiration they provided to a community.

Nikkei Place is a Japanese-Canadian cultural centre in Burnaby, BC. It was built in part with money from the Canadian government's reparations fund for Japanese-Canadians interned during World War II and with money donated by the community. Nikkei is a term that describes Japanese-Canadians, and everything about Nikkei Place's design reflects the harmonious blending of the two influences. Outside, the garden is divided in half by a Japanese cedar. On one side of the garden, the plants are native to British Columbia. On the other side, they are native to Japan. The plants climb a gentle slope and overlook an oval of grass, like bleachers at a stadium. Inside Nikkei Place, the elliptical atrium reflects the outside garden. Two giant pillars dominate the space, one of BC red cedar, and one of Hinoki, or Japanese cypress. A diamond of tiles on the floor joins the two pillars, like two colossal runners poised at first and third base.

Tucked off to the right side of the atrium lies the Japanese Canadian National Museum, where the Asahi exhibit is housed. The first thing one sees upon entering the exhibit is vivid cut-outs of Victorian houses towering over a team of cardboard Asahi players. The exhibit, designed by D. Jensen and Associates, beautifully evokes early 20th century Vancouver and the area running along Powell Street, which was referred to as Japan Town. Japan Town, a self-contained community, was home to about 10,000 residents and was the place where the story of the Asahi began.

The exhibit presents this story through pictures, newspaper clippings and rare memorabilia, including a diminutive Asahi uniform, its original creamy white turned brown with age.

It was no surprise the Japanese community in Vancouver turned to baseball for recreation. Baseball had been taught in schools in Japan since the 1890s as a form of "moral discipline." The Japanese language has no word for sport. Instead, it uses the term for martial arts to fulfill this function. The practice of martial arts is well-known for its reliance on the ideas of honour, dedication and perseverance. The Asahi used these ideas to triumph over larger, stronger opponents and racist umpires.

One of the directors of the Asahi exhibit is a charming man named George Oikawa. His white hair is tousled, and his small, compact body bounces with energy. It is easy to see the baseball catcher he once was and the Asahi fan he still is. As he speaks of the Asahi's achievements, his friend Elmer Morishita, who is also a director of the exhibit, listens in. A smile is on Elmer's face and a bowl of popcorn is in his hand. George and Elmer have been watching baseball movies upstairs.

When George was a young boy living in Japan Town, he watched the Asahi play whenever he could. As he speaks of them, it is clear that the power of the Asahi went far beyond athletics. For the Japanese community, who lived along Powell Street for the first half of the 20th century, George says the Asahi, "meant everything. It inspired them. After being taunted all day, they could go to the baseball field, where a strike was a strike."

The Asahi were exceptional athletes, and eventually they gained the attention of the Caucasian press. However, the articles the press wrote still contained language that would be considered racist. One headline from the time read, "Japs and Grits in Contests. Little Brown Men and Young Liberals in Feature Battle Tomorrow" (The Vancouver Sun, 1926). The Asahi looked past the racist terminology and stayed focussed on the game. There was a camaraderie among the Asahi and their fans that went beyond stereotypes. By sticking to the rules and presenting themselves as a professional club, the team broke through the barriers of racism.

**"AFTER BEING  
TAUNTED ALL DAY,  
THEY COULD GO TO  
THE BASEBALL FIELD,  
WHERE A STRIKE  
WAS A STRIKE."**

The genius behind the Asahi was Harry Miyazaki, who coached the team from 1922 to 1929. Miyazaki's vision was a team that could compete with the larger, Caucasian teams of the area. At first, the team did not do well. Miyazaki felt that the best way for his players to compete with the larger Caucasian teams was to play smarter. He taught them to play with finesse. He taught them to use their size – and their wits – to their advantage. They learned to bunt, to pitch and to steal bases. According to George, Miyazaki invented the "suicide squeeze," in which players on first and third would start running before the batter hit, then the batter would bunt, causing the infielder to scramble after the ball and forget about the players heading for home. "That's all he worked on, fielding and the finer points of baseball," says George. As George stands beside the cardboard cutout of Harry Miyazaki, it is easy to see he is standing next to his hero.

In addition to inventing what the press termed "smart ball," or "brain ball," Miyazaki recognized the importance of early training, and started three levels of youth teams, beginning with children as young as nine. He became the most





Vancouver Asahi Club, October 3rd, 1915.

influential coach in the Asahi's history. From 1926 on, the Asahi won championship after championship, until World War II brought everything to a halt.

In 1942, Japanese-Canadians were moved to internment camps in the BC interior. Young George wound up in a camp in Kaslo. It was the same camp the pitcher and the catcher from his favourite team, the Asahi, were sent to. The players continued playing baseball in the camps, helping to raise morale. The games were played after church on Sundays, and the first boy to get to the game got to be the batboy. It was a position that usually went to George, the

**“BASEBALL WAS A VEHICLE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.”**

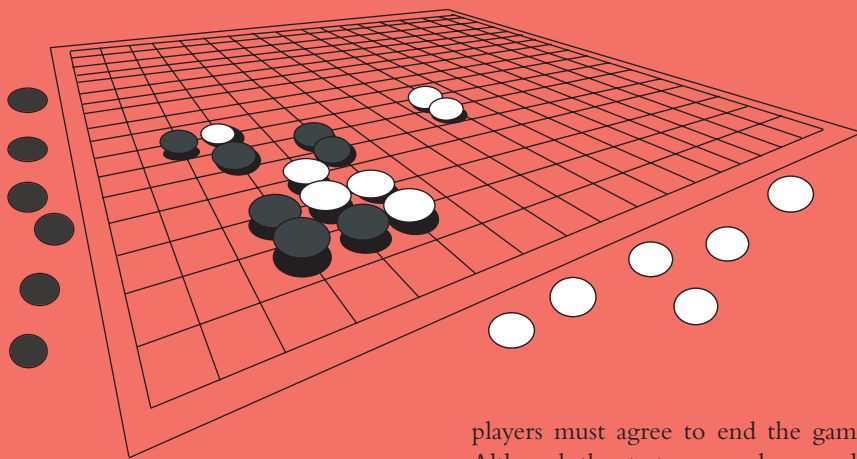
fastest runner. During these games George dreamed of one day becoming a catcher, because it was the catcher who got to wear all the great equipment.

After the war ended, everything did not return to normal for Japanese-Canadians. They were given a choice of moving east of the Rockies, or being deported to Japan, despite the fact most had been born on Canadian soil. “This was so funny to me,” explains George. “How could I go back to a country I had never been to?” George and his family were relocated to Farnham, Quebec, to a camp that had held German POWs during the war. This was in 1947, two years after the official end of the war, and the same year Jackie Robinson played in Montréal and won over the crowd.

For curator Grace Eiko Thomson, the Asahi exhibit “has nothing really to do with baseball.” Grace knew that the baseball fanatics around her were eager to see their heroes immortalized. However, she wanted the exhibit to explore the social implications of the Asahi. She also did not intend for the exhibit to be another demonstration about the injustices of the Japanese-Canadians’ internment. “Baseball was a vehicle to talk about what happened to them,” she says. “How they conducted themselves during this time is the real story.” The Asahi were an example of what could be accomplished by working hard and playing fair. They became an important symbol in the community, something that people could identify with. “These are the stories that really need to be told,” she says earnestly, her cheeks still flushed from a full day at a peace rally in downtown Vancouver. It is clear that Grace’s commitment to justice extends into the future as well as the past.

By playing fair – and well – the Asahi gained respect not only in their own community, but also in the larger community. Their accomplishments were recognized in 2003, when they were inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. In 2005, the BC Sports Hall of Fame followed suit by honouring the Asahi Baseball team.

Baseball is just a game, and the Asahi were just players. As George says, “a ball is a ball and a strike is a strike.” Sometimes, however, a baseball team hits one out of the park. That is what the Asahi did with their commitment to fair play and hard work. The Asahi were a powerful force in the community, levelling the playing field for generations to come. Says Grace, “Yes, this is what happened to them, they were interned, but this is what they did. That’s why they were wonderful.” ■



# get into GO

STORY BY MARTINE GAUTHIER  
ILLUSTRATION BY JODY QUINE

**RICH WITH 4,000 YEARS OF HISTORY,** Go is the second-most played game in the world. Known by several different names, including baduk, wei chi, weiqi and igo, Go is a sophisticated and strategic battle of black and white. It replicates modern warfare in which victory is determined by mass movements of troops, or, in this case, small black and white stones. Two players battle against each other, surrounding areas of the board to maximize territory while capturing any enemy stones invading their area. As in war, both

players must agree to end the game. Although the strategy may be complicated, Go has very few formalities.

The rules of Go can be learned in minutes, but the game can take a lifetime to master. It can take hundreds of games before a player will develop beyond a general understanding of this complex game. Beginners should play on a smaller board, with only nine horizontal and nine vertical lines, as opposed to the standard 19 by 19 grid. There are also handicaps to allow beginners to compete against more advanced players.

Some players are extremely serious about the game, engaging in long

matches that can last days. Others play for fun and can finish a game within an hour. Regardless of their style, good players must be patient and possess natural talent. Peter Chen, the president of the University of British Columbia's Go Club, says, "Those who will become strong are those who study hard, review their own games and take other players' ideas into consideration from an objective point of view."

Go is an intellectual masterpiece, imbued with thousands of years of history. Whether you play it as a hobby or devote your life to it, everyone can enjoy Go. ■

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## YUZHONG WANG

practices  
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in principles  
like truth,  
compassion  
and forbearance.  
She epitomizes  
peace and  
embodies  
the kind  
of faith  
that only  
the truest  
of believers  
possess. Yet,  
like more than  
100,000 other  
Falun Gong  
practitioners,  
she has  
faced a  
brutal abuse  
of her human rights.

### THIS IS HER STORY.

STORY BY DAVID LONG

Yuzhi Wang lived in Harbin City in northern China with her husband and son, and managed a successful import business. In 1998, one of her customers gave her a copy of *Zhuan Falun*, the spiritual guidebook of the Falun Gong movement, written by Li Hongzhi.

For many years, she suffered from an illness that caused spontaneous immobility in her legs, a problem that baffled both Western and Eastern doctors. As she learned about Falun

Gong and practiced the exercises, she soon noticed dramatic improvements in her health. Her illness subsided three months after starting Falun Gong. With such positive results, her interest increased and she began studying more diligently and practicing the exercises more frequently with her friends. "I felt cleansed of many negative thoughts and emotions that had been collected throughout my life. I felt my body and soul become healthy and harmonious like never before," Wang recalls in an article on FalunInfo.net. With a reported 70 million Falun Gong practitioners across 60 countries, she was far from alone.

Falun Gong is a form of qigong consisting of five meditation exercises. Central to Falun Gong is the Buddhist concept of "cultivation practice," in which practitioners try to let go of worldly attachments. Falun Gong (practice of the wheel of law) is also known as Falun Dafa (great law of the wheel of law).

# the persecution of yuzhi wang

Beginning in the '70s, China's leaders supported qigong exercise groups as a preventative solution to relieve pressure on the health care system. Falun Gong was initially accepted as a form of qigong, but then China changed its stance. In 1999, China, under the leadership of Jiang Zemin, initiated a campaign to stop the spread of Falun Gong.

While the government defends its persecution of Falun Gong on the grounds that it believes it to be a cult, the movement itself asserts that the government feels threatened by the group's soaring popularity. According to the Falun Gong, they have more members in China than the Chinese Communist Party.

The Falun Gong states that on July 10th, 1999, the Chinese government created the 6-10 Office, an agency responsible for the eradication of Falun Gong. However, the Chinese government denies the existence of the 6-10 Office. The government-sponsored Xinhua news agency began producing stories about Falun Gong members committing acts of immolation, suicide and murder. Yuzhi Wang and fellow Chinese Falun Gong adherents were under attack.

With little alternative, she and many others turned to

the state appeals office to petition against the government's position. They were shocked to find that the right to appeal no longer applied to members of Falun Gong. Ironically, the office dedicated to registering appeals became a detention centre, and she and the other members of Falun Gong were immediately arrested. The police ordered her to sign a pledge promising to cease practicing Falun Gong and to not return to Beijing, where she had gone to organize support for the movement. When she refused to sign it, the guards ordered the other inmates to beat her. She was eventually released, but it was not long before she was arrested again for printing flyers about Falun Gong. The police officers, intent on finding out who she was working for, beat her repeatedly. Again, she stood by her beliefs and was eventually released.

Undeterred by the actions of the police, Wang and a few other practitioners then distributed over 100,000 leaflets, an act the authorities did not take lightly. With a 50,000 Yuan (\$6,300 US) bounty for her capture, it was not long before she was caught. On July 15th, 2001, she was arrested for a third time while attempting to withdraw money from her bank and subsequently had her life savings of \$200,000 US confiscated.

In November 2001, Wang was sent to the Wanjia Labour Camp, a prison known

for its brutal treatment of Falun Gong members. She recalls daily beatings at the hands of the prison guards and other prisoners during her time there. She was forced to watch anti-Falun Gong propaganda for days without sleep, and often without the use of a toilet. She witnessed practitioners being routinely whipped and beaten into unconsciousness with electric shock batons, and was often subjected to the same methods herself. Like many others, she resisted with her only option: a hunger strike. In response to the hunger strike, the doctors would tie down Wang, and shove rubber tubes deep into her nose. They would inject a mixture of ground corn and water into the tubes, which caused excruciating pain and nearly made her blind. Other victims of this force-feeding died from the mixture entering their lungs. The guards even threw the female prisoners, naked, into the male prisoners' cells. There, they were systematically beaten, raped and taunted that if they died, it would be recorded as suicide.

## **IRONICALLY, THE OFFICE DEDICATED TO REGISTERING APPEALS BECAME A DETENTION CENTRE, AND SHE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF FALUN GONG WERE IMMEDIATELY ARRESTED.**

After more than nine months of torture, Yuzhi Wang was on the verge of death. Her nose was so swollen that the doctors could no longer force the tubes down it. Her eyes and nose were festering with pus, and she was immobilized due in part to the hunger strike that had lasted over 100 days. The guards, preferring that she didn't die in their custody, instructed her family to come and get her. "I felt as though I had just emerged from hell," she recalls.

Upon release, she resumed her practice of the Falun Gong exercises, and in time her body and eyes recovered. Anxious to avoid being sent back to prison, Wang left China to visit her family in the United Arab Emirates. Along the way she spoke to many people about the atrocities being committed by the Chinese government, attempting to counter the Chinese government's position on Falun Gong. With such a contentious issue, it was not long before someone reported her to the Chinese Embassy, which quickly made moves to have her deported back to China. Through the emergency efforts of Canadian Falun Gong practitioners and the Canadian government, she was granted a special visa in November 2002, to move to Vancouver to be with her son. "The rescue efforts of the Canadians probably saved my life," she said in a FalunInfo.net article.

Yuzhi Wang now resides in Vancouver, safe from the horror that she was once subjected to and free to speak openly about the conditions she and many others faced. To that end, she volunteers at *The Epoch Times*, an international newspaper whose mission is to "uphold universal human values, rights and freedoms." For her, it is about bringing truth, compassion and forbearance to the rights of Falun Gong practitioners and people everywhere. Principles that, in a perfect world, we would all live by. ■

I have driven past them hundreds of times in the past several years.



## beyond the blue wall falun dafa

STORY BY ASTRID ALSEMGEEST | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOMMY AU

**I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER** when they first appeared. Sometimes, I barely notice them as I speed past on my way downtown. Then there are times when I glance over, and see a lone figure sitting in a small shed on the sidewalk, unaffected by the rush hour traffic or the eerie emptiness of the early morning hours. The Falun Dafa have now been protesting in front of the Chinese Consulate on Granville Street for over four years.

The Chinese Consulate is located at the top of South Granville Rise, a bustling shopping strip on the border of Vancouver's elite Shaughnessy neighbourhood. From the street, one can only manage a brief glimpse of the second story windows that are hidden behind a lush curtain of evergreens and a foreboding stone wall. Little sets this building apart from the many other large homes in wealthy Shaughnessy, except for the massive blue wall that has been erected in front of it. "Stop Killing" is written in massive letters on this wall, along with countless other messages demanding justice for the practitioners of Falun Dafa being persecuted by the Chinese government.

Mansour Sedighi began this protest in the summer of 2001, after learning of the arrest and alleged murder of 15 female Falun Dafa practitioners by the Chinese government. Sedighi, a Falun Dafa practitioner since 1999, felt compelled to protest this brutal act. "I just wanted to do something. I got permission from the city, I got a tent, and I sat for 13 days in front of the consulate," he says.

As the Chinese government continues to be accused of human rights abuses, including the deaths of Falun Dafa practitioners, Sedighi's

protest has grown. It now includes between 20 and 30 people who continually preside over what has become an established camp outside the consulate. The protesters rotate in shifts of one or two people, 24 hours a day.

The protesters spend their time outside the consulate reading about Falun Dafa, practicing the teachings and meditating. "We oppose persecution in a non-violent way," says Sedighi. "We are very determined, and very faithful. The genesis of Falun Dafa is compassion. No matter how they treat us, we react with compassion."

The Falun Dafa presence outside of the Vancouver consulate is part of an international effort to bring awareness to the alleged abuses being committed by the Chinese government. It is Sedighi's belief that through their continued protest against the Chinese government, "many truths will come, and secrets will be revealed."

In the past several years, many governments and human rights organizations around the world have criticized the Chinese government's treatment of Falun Dafa. In 2000, Amnesty International proclaimed, "The international community cannot watch silently while these gross human rights violations are taking place. It must condemn these abuses and put pressure on China to take action to stop them."

Sedighi and many others will continue their vigil on the sidewalk of Granville Street for the indefinite future. The employees of the Chinese Consulate, as well as the citizens of Vancouver, will continue to be faced with a small, yet determined, group of peaceful protesters, patiently waiting for their message to be heard. ■



# HISTORY ON THE HALF SHELL

The Story of the Kumamoto Oyster

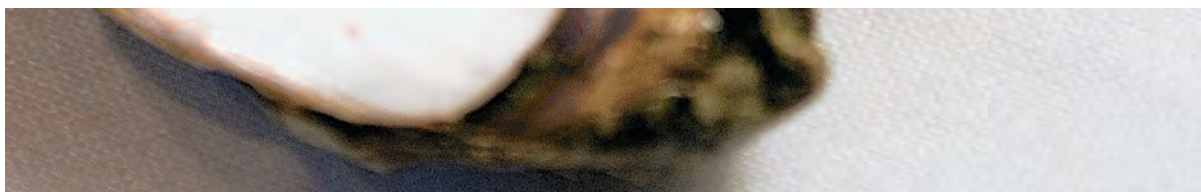
STORY BY ROMAN PIJANKA  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATIE GRAVESTOCK

**ACCORDING TO FUKUO OTA**, former director of the Nori Research Laboratory in Japan, the Kumamoto oyster has had “advantageous good luck.” The beach-hardened oyster was choked out of its native Japan by pollution, but history fortunately brought it to North America, where it continues to thrive. Now, market demand for the moon-coloured mollusc shows no sign of waning.

According to Ota, Kumamoto oysters had been farmed on the tidal flats of Japan’s Shiranui Sea since the second half of the 1860s, but they were not popular because the Japanese market preferred the larger, faster-growing Pacific oyster. The United States also

preferred the Pacific oyster. They began importing Pacific oyster seeds in the 1890s, when oysters native to the west coast of the US were being destroyed by waste from farms and sawmills. Colder North American waters made spawning difficult, keeping American markets dependent on imported Japanese seed until World War II abruptly halted Japanese imports to the US and Canada.

In October 1945, two months after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, General Douglas MacArthur asked the Japanese government to export 80,000 boxes of oyster seeds to the United States. This marked the



end of the wartime embargo on Japanese goods. Unfortunately, lack of manpower and low oyster stocks threatened Japan's ability to fill the order. Seeds from the little-known Kumamoto oyster were used to help fill the shipments.

The first test shipment of 30 boxes of Kumamoto oyster seeds arrived in Seattle, Washington, in 1946. Within eight months, Kumamoto oysters were produced. Their small, plump white bodies and fruity aroma attracted the attention of American oyster farmers and connoisseurs. Soon the Kumamoto became one of the top three Japanese oysters on the Chicago Stock Exchange, and was known as the Western Gem. Full-scale US production of the oyster followed in the 1960s.

It is fortunate that the Kumamoto was exported to the US when it was, because from 1932 to 1968 the Chisso chemical factory pumped mercury into the Kumamoto's Japanese habitat near Minimata, Japan. Mercury poisoning was named Minimata disease after

this disaster. It killed hundreds of people, disabled thousands and caused birth defects. It also wiped out the Kumamoto oyster in Japan.

Today, even though they still aren't grown in Japan, strict regulations and careful monitoring ensure the health of Kumamoto oysters grown in North America. At Joe Fortes Seafood & Chop House, in Vancouver, British Columbia, more Kumamotos are sold than almost any other oyster. Scott Pratico, executive chef at Joe Fortes, estimates that 35,000 to 40,000 Kumamoto oysters are sold annually at the restaurant. Unlike its flat-shelled Pacific cousin, the Kumamoto is a delicate but meaty, deep-cupped, beach-hardened oyster. This makes it one of the more expensive oysters on the market. Because the Kumamoto is a small, slow-growing oyster, taking up to five years to reach its typical two-inch length, cultivating it demands careful attention.

Typically, oyster seeds hang from racks on the ends of weighted nylon ropes. The racks are lowered into the

sea to keep them at the right temperature. Oysters grown this way are thin, brittle and irregular, and sell at a lower price. On the other hand, beach-hardened oysters are put in cages in a tidal zone, where they are constantly exposed to beating waves. This creates a smoother, thicker shell and a cleaner shucked oyster.

Kumamotos are best served on the half shell with only a splash of vinegar or a touch of lemon. Champagne, or white wines with a citrus component, such as Sauvignon Blancs or spicier Gewürztraminers, are the perfect accompaniment to the Kumamoto's delicate watermelon flavour. According to Scott Pratico, Kumamotos are the "Cadillac of oysters."

Not only is it in a class of its own among oyster connoisseurs, but the Kumamoto has also survived one of the greatest threats to our existence: pollution. Its survival is a reminder that what we savour and enjoy in life must be nurtured. As Fukuo Ota put it, "It's wrong to think that humans are superior to oysters." ■



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# Kalvin's Restaurant Ltd.

REVIEW BY MEGHANN SHANTZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHELLE CROSBY

**MY COMPANION AND I ARRIVED** at Calvin's Restaurant Ltd. at 6pm on a Saturday evening and, as usual, we were starving. A look of dismay crossed both our faces as we realized all the tables were full and our stomachs were empty. "Do you have reservations?" asked the smiling server. We hadn't thought of that. "Do you mind sharing a table?" she asked, still smiling. We hadn't thought of that, either. All at once, we were part of the merry din of voices and chopsticks against ceramic in the small restaurant at Victoria and 37th Avenue.

The restaurant had a sense of calm bustle: people ordering their meal in stages kept the two waitresses running, as did the rapid turnover of customers. Busy though the restaurant was, the activity was not so loud that it was impossible to carry on a conversation. The majority of the dishes we chose contained pork in some fashion, whether minced or diced, wrapped in dough or covered in sauce. First, however, a delightful appetizer of beef brisket in brown sauce took centre stage. The five-spice beef in Chinese pancake was ordered and came swiftly from the busy kitchen. Two thin pancakes, golden from frying and dotted with green onions, were wrapped around thinly sliced tender beef. The sauce on the meat tasted of hoisin and black bean and the whole arrangement tasted fabulously like Beijing street food. This, a house specialty, disappeared in short order.

The restaurant's menu was in English, but the descriptions did not give the reader much to work with, so the difference between dishes was hard to determine. "Pork with brown sauce" does not sound a whole lot different than "shredded pork with house sauce." Our waitress was very patient with our questions, even though others had arrived and were waiting for a table.

Next to arrive was the lily flower with pork sparerib soup, which was served in the huge bowl typical of Asian restaurants. The soup was like a savoury tea. Faintly

floral, coral-coloured buds swam in a transparent and equally delicate chicken stock. Nothing else besides the odd piece of pork emerged from under the bouquet of buds floating on the surface.

At almost the same time, won ton in chili sauce was placed in front of us. Eight boiled won tons were nestled in the bowl and covered in chili and sesame oil. The oil slipped off my chopsticks in fat drops and ran down my chin. The thinly wrapped pork took a backstage to the more colourful sauce that was in definite contrast to the gentle flavour of lily flower with pork sparerib soup.

Having assumed that the Chinese pickle and pork in handmade noodle would be a dry dish, we were surprised to see another soup, nevertheless, we were not disappointed. The massive bowl was filled to the brim with a rich broth perfect for chasing the Vancouver rainy-day blues away. When our final dish arrived, we started to panic, thinking we had ordered too much food. This one was loaded with Hakka-style eggplant and pork. I was pleasantly surprised by the substantial flavour in the thick, glazey mass and the addition of Thai basil. I was transported back to both Beijing and Thailand as I ate the dish over sticky, steamed rice that we scooped from an insulated, red plastic pail.

The restaurant's owner and main chef, Calvin Ku, offers up food with a bit more Taiwanese flair than other Asian restaurants in Vancouver. This fact is completely obscured as the restaurant uses "Szechuan" to describe its fare. It seems like advertising the Taiwanese would be a great way for Calvin's to separate itself from the pack. However, Calvin's Restaurant is not lacking for customers. With dim sum style pricing and a feel-good atmosphere, I will certainly return. I'll just be sure to make reservations. ■

**LOCATION:** 5225 VICTORIA DRIVE  
VANCOUVER, BC  
**PHONE:** 604.321.2888



# Hawker's Delight



REVIEW BY **JODY QUINE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WAYNE WEBB**

**MAIN STREET IS A FABULOUS CORNUCOPIA OF SIGHTS**, smells and sounds. Different shops and restaurants pepper the strip all the way from Broadway to 49th Avenue. Just south of King Edward on Main Street sits the Malaysian eatery, Hawker's Delight. What is it about this little shop that has people trekking from all over town to get there? With \$30 in my pocket, I headed out on a quest for something new.

Hawker's storefront shares space with the neighbouring Brazilian restaurant, but proudly displays **HAWKER'S** in large lettering above its windows. As soon as I opened the door, the delicious aroma of rich spices, curry and cooked rice wafted over me. My mouth immediately started to water and my stomach began to rumble. It was only 5pm on a Saturday afternoon, but all seven tables at Hawker's Delight were full and there was a lineup of hungry customers.

Eating Malaysian for the first time can be an intimidating experience so it may take a few minutes to decipher what you're actually looking for. The bright yellow and green room has photographs of menu items hanging on the wall, which include recognizable names that have made their way onto North American menus such as nasi goreng, spring rolls and gado gado. Lamb and beef curry are also available.

This oblong restaurant spends most of its square footage on the open kitchen. Seeing the chefs working side by side explains why the cooking area in a restaurant is often called "the line." The sounds of clanging metal spoons on metal pans, the thick chop of knives on wooden blocks and the voices of a small crowd can be heard over top of the eastern pop music piping out from the speaker system. The clientele ranges from mothers with chatty children to young couples, either on a date or just picking up food to go.

At the front of the line a very friendly woman took my huge order and pointed out that perhaps I was ordering too much food. "I just have to try it all," I replied. I ordered the earlier mentioned items as well as pork satays, a rice wrap and a prawn noodle bowl. Including my beverage, the total came to a mere \$30.76. As luck would have it, a table opened up right after I ordered and I did my best to gently muscle my way into a seat before somebody else grabbed the square pinewood table. On the table, a wooden cup full of forks, spoons and chopsticks kept the napkin holder and hot sauce company. It was comforting to know that no matter what my utensil needs may have been, there were options.

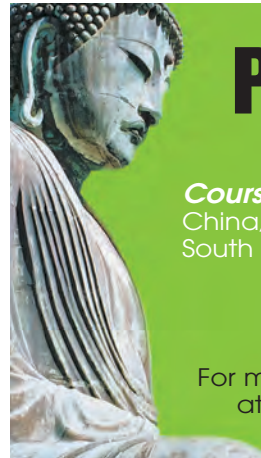
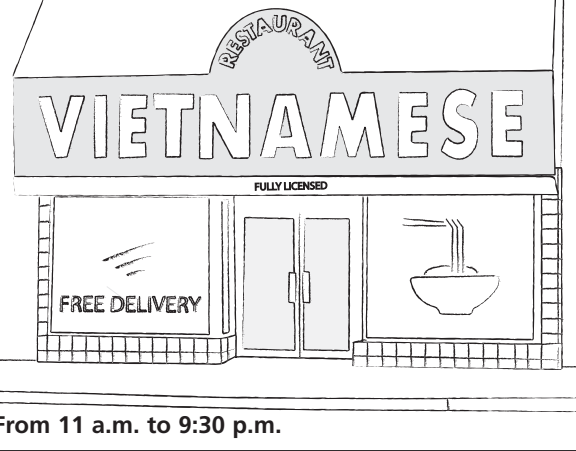
Stacks of plastic cups were at the front counter for self-serve water or complimentary Chinese tea. Instead, I chose a can of soursop juice from the small fridge, also at the front counter. Within ten minutes the food started to arrive, one and two at a time. The rice wrap, very similar to dim sum, was so delicate and tender it practically melted in my mouth. The spring rolls were some of the best I've ever had. The pork satays were so tender they must have been marinated in sweet and spicy flavouring. Under my teeth they slid right off the satay stick for a pleasurable experience. To top it off they were served with the most amazing peanut sauce I've ever tasted: peanuts lightly blended with spices and perhaps a touch of oil. I would return time and again for this peanut sauce alone. The lamb curry wasn't my favourite; however, it may be that I am more inclined to the Indian version of curry. In addition, the nasi goreng was also a disappointment. I found it somewhat boring and similar to the Chinese fried rice you would get in a mall food court. On the other hand, the gado gado was very refreshing. Covered in that fabulous peanut sauce, the bean sprouts, cucumber, carrots, green beans, turnip and tofu were mildly addictive. The prawn noodle bowl was a touch bland but still enjoyable. This item made me thankful that forks were on hand.

Of course there were leftovers. Lots of leftovers. The takeout containers at \$0.25 each are an inexpensive justification for exciting and delicious seconds. I trekked from North Burnaby to Main Street in search of a Malaysian experience. The definition of a hawker stand in Singapore is an outdoor or indoor food stall. I can see where this hawker's stand at 4127 Main Street in Vancouver got its name; after all, it is indeed a delight. ■

**LOCATION:** 4127 MAIN STREET  
VANCOUVER, BC  
**PHONE:** 604.709.8188

## Vancouver Vietnamese Restaurant

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# Royal Seoul House Korean Restaurant

REVIEW BY CORY STEVENS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHELLE CROSBY

**PRIOR TO THIS REVIEW,** I had never had the opportunity to indulge in Korean cuisine outside of Korea. So, when the chance came up to check out a local Korean restaurant, I jumped on it. What can I say? I'm a guy – I like food.

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, a friend and I walked into the Royal Seoul House Korean Restaurant. I felt like we had walked into a different world – a space designed to bring people into a new context, a new environment, a new adventure. And an adventure it was.

The interior of the room reminded me of a film studio. It was a large, open space with high ceilings that disappeared into the rafters. Surrounding the walls of the restaurant were private tatami rooms, each equipped with mats, sliding doors and gas burners set into the tables. The layout and design of the restaurant created a nice dimension to the space, allowing for both an open, casual experience and a more exclusive and intimate affair. Wooden flooring, benches, tables and trimming played with the minimalist wall decor, while traditional Japanese style “roofs” of blue tiles gave the feeling of being in an authentic environment. This restaurant aims to create a dining experience rather than simply serving up plates and turning over tables.

After choosing a private room, we were given tea and menus. When we were ready or if we had questions, we were instructed to press the service-buzzer that was installed on the table. The menu was extensive, covering both Korean and Japanese dishes. Although there were many options, I found little description of the actual items and had to ask for assistance when making decisions. I also learned that the restaurant specialized in meat dishes and therefore offered few vegetarian options. After much pondering and conferencing, we ordered the chicken and prawn plate, the stone bibimbup and a seafood pancake.



The seafood pancake arrived first: a large, pizza-shaped pancake/omelette served sizzling on a stone and wood dish. Cut into wedges by our server, it was served with a chili-soy-sesame sauce – a tasty, ample course (that also doubled as a quick next-day breakfast).

Next came the stone bibimbup, a traditional dish served in a hot stone bowl. Consisting of rice, carrots, mushrooms, sprouts, greens and meat, this dish was served with an egg on top and a spicy sauce on the side. I had enjoyed this dish before in Seoul,



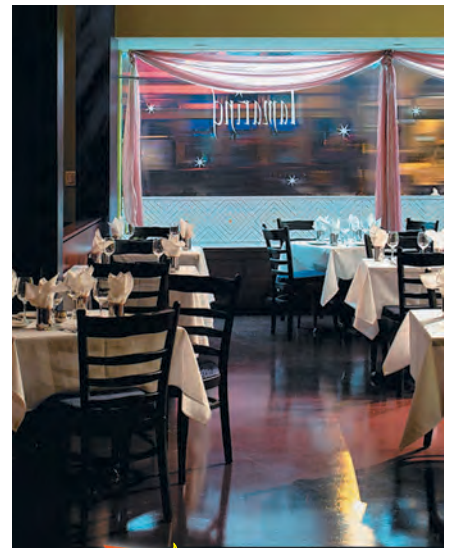
Korea, and found it worthy once again. The chicken and prawn plate, a platter of raw prawns and boneless chicken morsels that were to be cooked on the gas BBQ at the table, was accompanied by kimchi, bean sprouts, shredded daikon and cubed potato in a sweet sauce.

Overall, the food was tasty, made with quality ingredients and served in portions that were adequate for the price. The service was helpful,

attentive and polite. By the end of our late lunch, I felt that I had not only enjoyed a good meal, but had also allowed myself to become removed from the usual world around me – transported to another place, satisfied by experiencing something new, different and fun. ■

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# tai chi

## finding balance in busy lives



Anthony Lee Hem performs "snake creeps down" at Vanier Park in Vancouver.

STORY BY CORY STEVENS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CURTIS DAVEY

**WITH BREATHTAKING VIEWS**, a mild climate and a diverse culture, Vancouver, British Columbia, is hailed as one of the nicest places on the planet to live. Decades of immigration and travel between East and West have allowed Eastern influences to put roots in Vancouver. In an attempt to help find balance in their busy lives, growing numbers of people are turning toward Eastern teachings of health and simplicity. One such practice is the gentle, healing art of Tai Chi.

Originating in China more than 700 years ago, Tai Chi is the creation of Taoist sage Zhang Sanfeng. Tao, meaning "The Way," is the path of life guided by one's mind rather than body. Sanfeng's intent was to return health to the body, mind and spirit. After being perfected over time in the confined solitude of monasteries, Tai Chi began its spread outwards.

In 1970, Master Moy Lin-shin introduced the Taoist style to the western world and established The International Taoist Tai Chi Society, based in Ontario. His interest in the art was in its ability to be a vehicle to promote and restore health, a factor that separates it from other martial arts. The Society, a non-profit, volunteer-based organization, has since found a home in more than 500 locations worldwide.

"It's like one big family," says Rose Lamont, 52, a volunteer instructor at the Surrey branch of the Taoist Society. Practicing now for nearly 15 years, Lamont chose Tai Chi to get into better shape, and help combat the effects of multiple sclerosis. In addition to "keeping the aches and pains at bay," she found Tai Chi improved her balance and flexibility.

The Taoist Tai Chi set is comprised of 108 movements, performed in slow, gentle continuity, and with full attention on the health and spiritual benefits associated with the movements. To perfect the art takes commitment. The Taoist

set can take a new student three to four months to learn. "Beginners learn stick-man moves. Once the movements internalize, [the students] can begin to get the benefits from it. It's an internal art.... You need to feel it for yourself," Lamont says. "People often think that they can leave [the classes] after a couple of lessons and go off on their own, but you can't."

Anthony Lee Hem, a private instructor of the Chuan form, describes Tai Chi as a "personal, subjective experience." With more than 20 years of training in Shotokan style karate, Lee Hem has found Tai Chi to be a complimentary art. "It has put round edges to my straight lines, softness to my intentions," he says.

Lee Hem's friendly energy is a reflection of the importance he puts on chi, the universal force. The whole universe breathes, he says, and it's represented in the duality of the yin and yang: rest and movement, off and on, out and in. For energy to flow through us, we need to open up channels in our bodies to receive the flow.

Aside from promoting improved balance and flexibility, regular practice of Tai Chi addresses "muscle and joint issues, circulation problems, high blood pressure and arthritis. It is also an effective way to treat depression and reduce the chance of strokes," says Mark Kramarik, doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine and registered acupuncturist.

It has been said that you have nothing if you don't have your health. But are we doing enough to attain a healthy lifestyle? Are we working to find balance and understanding in our lives? Can we use the principles of Tai Chi to bring us into perspective, and allow us the physical and mental freedom we need? Maybe it's time we stop, just for a moment, and find a quiet space — just to be — in one of the most beautiful places on earth. ■



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