

PersuAsian

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Asian Beauty



Newsmagazine for the Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York

MISSION

The mission of Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York is to provide a safe space for gay, bisexual and questioning men and transgendered people of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. Founded in 1990, GAPIMNY seeks to empower GBT APIs through a range of social, educational, cultural, and political activities, and we have welcomed the opportunity to work in coalition with other community organizations to help educate our communities (the API ethnic communities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered communities) on issues of race, sexuality, gender, and HIV/ AIDS.

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Fall into Autumn!

The past few months have been quite interesting and there certainly has been a whirlwind of activities surrounding GAPIMNYites. It seemed as if everywhere you turned around, people were saying, "There goes that GAPIMNY group again!" The parties, the outreach campaign, the parties, the Pride parade, the beach, the mountains, and also the media coverage!

And now it's time for Fall. Time to go back to school and study hard, but don't let it be all about studying. You need to have a social life once in a while so make sure to check in with GAPIMNY for the many activities. For the fifteenth issue, we have put together articles and photos of all that are Beautiful and Asian! The results of the list-serve survey on Asian Beauty came up with some of the most gorgeous API's that ever graced the pages of PersuAsian. Not to be outdone, we also had our first-ever fashion shoot at Jones Beach, which is also featured in the upcoming pages. This, along with Beauty-related articles and the regular columns make for an exciting Fall issue.

After reading this issue, get yourself ready because it's time for school!

Happy Fall,
Stan and Lance



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PersuAsian is a forum for the ideas of individual gay men and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GAPIMNY. If you would like to help out (i.e. write articles, take photos, etc.), have any comments or suggestions, please write us at persuasiannyc@yahoo.com

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Japan (Gay.com, August 7)

Japanese HIV Rates Rise in Young People

Teen-agers and adults in their 20s account for nearly 40 percent of all new HIV infections in Japan, according to new Health Ministry figures, which also suggest unsafe sex is the contributing factor. While overall HIV infection is low in Japan, there is a disturbing rise in cases among the young due to lax condom use, say officials, who also cited an increase in unprotected gay sex. A record high 621 people were newly infected with HIV last year in Japan, an increase of 34 percent over 2000, said ministry official Makoto Iwakura. Of those new cases, 525 were Japanese nationals — with about 40 percent being teenagers and people in their 20s. The remainders were foreigners living in Japan. To boost awareness of HIV, the Health Ministry has broadcast TV commercials under the slogan “Stop AIDS” that feature national soccer team goalkeeper Seigo Narazaki, a star of the 2002 World Cup hosted by Japan and South Korea.

New Zealand (Planet Out, August 16)

TG Woman Disguises as a Policewoman

A New Zealand transgender woman has been sent to jail this week for impersonating a policewoman. Ana Williams, 22, went to Onehunga police station and stole a policewoman’s uniform, handcuffs, pepper spray and a police car. Williams proceeded to drive around in the police car, ordering officers around and taking calls on the radio. She was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison for a series of crimes committed over three months, reported the New Zealand Herald. She had also stolen cars from outside hospitals, posed as a doctor at a motel, left without paying the bill and stolen a car after pretending to be a car park valet.

Singapore (Fridae.com, August 2)

Singapore LGBT Community Celebrates Pride

Despite initial concerns that there may be government resistance to a 2nd Nation party, more than 2500 people including visitors from the region gathered in Sentosa for Singapore’s second pride party. More than 2500 people gathered in Sentosa, Singapore last night to come together as a community to celebrate the country’s 37th birthday. Nation02, is widely recognized as Singapore’s coming out party since the first time it was held last year. Despite initial concerns that there may be government resistance to a 2nd Nation party, organizers are pleased that it has gone on without a hitch and view it as a significant milestone for the LGBT community which is on its way to gaining acceptance from the government and society at large. Attendance at this year’s event drew higher numbers than the last with close to 500 visitors from the region mainly originating from Hong Kong, Thailand and Taiwan.

Vietnam (Bay Windows, August 8)

Internet Fling Leads to Murder

A 19-year-old man in Vietnam who discovered that the girl he had been flirting with online was really a 14-year-old boy killed the youth July 14. Tran Quoc Dung was arrested for stabbing Nguyen Bui Linh outside an Internet cafe in Vinh City in Nghe An province, said Agence France-Presse.

India (BBC News, June 30)

Indian HIV Could Pass South Africa

The number of HIV and Aids cases in India is likely to overtake even South Africa unless action is taken, says an expert. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAids, said that within a decade there could be tens of millions infected with the virus in India. However, he said that the scale of the crisis would not match the horror and devastation afflicting sub-Saharan Africa. “I hope that one day influential religious leaders, cricket players, film stars speak out about AIDS,”

You are so Beautiful To Me!

The votes are in and here are the results of the PersuAsian's "Beautiful Asian People" poll that was sent through the GAPIMNY list-serve! Sure there's inner beauty, but the purpose of this survey was to only capture true physical beauty, and with so many beautiful Asians to choose from we had to set ourselves a limit! We received so many responses and we were forced to go through the difficult task of narrowing it down to 19 beautiful men and women whom you simply fantasize about, idolize, worship or whatever! As the saying goes, "Beauty is only skin deep." We hope that you agree with the results! Enjoy!

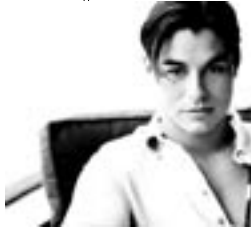
Lucy Liu — Actress,
Chinese American



Brandon Lee — Porn Star,
Chinese American




Julio Iglesias, Jr.
— Singer, Multiracial
(Filipino)



Tia Carrera — Actress,
Filipina American



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said Piot. The huge population of India means that while the number of cases is massive, the proportion of adults affected is tiny in comparison. There are currently 3.8m infected adults in India, compared to 4.7m in South Africa. However, this is just 0.7% of the population, compared to 20% of adults in South Africa. The Indian government has launched a nationwide program to prevent the spread of the disease. 



Zhang Ziyi
— Actress, Chinese



Van Darkholme
— Porn Star,
Mutiracial
(Vietnamese)



Patiparn
Pattaveekarn
— Pop Star, Thai

Christy
Cheung
— Actress,
Chinese,
Hong Kong



Jeric Raval
— Actor, Filipino



Oliver Tan —
Actor, Biracial
(Chinese)



Rick Yune
— Actor/Model,
Korean American



Hideaki Takizawa
— Singer, Japanese



Parvin Dabas
— Actor, Indian

Russell Wong — Actor,
Multiracial (Chinese)



Enrique Iglesias
— Singer, Multiracial
(Filipino)



Ming-Na Wen
— Actress, Chinese American

Cristina Garcia —
Model, Filipina



Mark Dacascos
— Martial
Arts/Actor,
Multiracial
(Filipino,
Chinese,
Japanese,
Hawaiian)



Dean Cain — Actor, Mutiracial (Japanese)

BEAUTY IS ALSO CULTURE DEEP

By Ed Sangalang

You moisturize daily. You tone. You exfoliate. You go the gym. You dye your hair brown, blonde or red depending on the week's weather forecast. You even use colored contacts to match the newly dyed hair. And if you're not still happy with all that, you decide to go under the knife. Because you have plenty of moolah to pay the surgeon who can give you a rounder pair of eyes, pointed nose, pronounced cheek bones and a tummy tuck to boot. All this you do in pursuit of what you think is the standard of beauty.

Don't get me wrong. It is neither crime nor grave sin to do any of that. Some will argue against going through physical alteration and perhaps judge you as being vain, shallow, hollow and narrow. But you think applying some changes is good for you. It makes you feel good. As a matter of fact, change, be it physical or otherwise, can be a good thing. It can be beneficial to your well being. It's one way to cope with the ever changing and complicated world that is gay life.

But try as you might to undergo physical change, there are things that remain unchanged no matter how much anatomically different you have become. I could think of three constants that stay the same and can stand up to even the most extreme physical alteration one has had undergone. One is your genetic make-up. Like it or not, biology

sets you for life. Except genetic engineering of late is changing the tune on that. Second is your individual personality. If biology dictates much of your general anatomy and physiology, psychology says just about everything that relates to your personality and behavior. Third is your cultural identity.

Some of us were born and raised elsewhere. The Asian-bred and émigré among us grew up in a culture different from the American culture we live in now. We did not get here devoid of a culture to absorb another. We are not sponges that suck up any liquid that touches it. We have a way of life unique to us and brought it over when we crossed the Pacific. Notice how often you found yourself longing for a rice dish when all you consumed all week was sandwich and pizza. How much you savor a trip to Chinatown despite the unrelenting crowd just to buy Asian goodies you enjoyed devouring as a child. How you delight in seeing local celebrities, movies and shows back home on video or DVD, sometimes on cable TV, even if they are not of the Hollywood type and caliber. How you enjoy musical and cultural events that highlight your own national and ethnic identity. And how often you gravitate towards people of the same language and background. All this is manifested naturally because of a lingering cultural identity that one cannot erase easily. Even for the American-born and -bred. I have seen a number of second generation Asian Americans seek out and look up to their parents' cultural heritage especially when they reach adulthood. In America when one can easily get lost among the racially and ethnically diverse multitude, one is compelled, at one point in their lives, to seek and put up his place and identity in the crowd.

Dear friends you may have inundated yourselves with all the beauty regimens from Clinique to fancy diets, from gym workouts to plastic surgery in order to look like everyone else. But have you thought perhaps there's more beauty in being different. Just imagine a world where everyone looking the same. It is bland, boring and ghastly soulless.

You have heard it many times before but it is worth repeating it. *There is beauty in difference and being different is beautiful.* And that difference lies within you.



The inner-you does not only include your natural physical self and personality it is also that culture you have absorbed in you. And one should not hide the natural individual inside gifted with a unique and distinct culture. In fact we should take the opportunity of showing off inner beauty that is our culture.

A parting word. The next time you attempt to change your outer and even inner self, always remember some things just never change. Not recognizing that can be very ugly. And you might end up being slighted with a rebuke that goes like this:

*I look at the trees.
Pretty. Then I look at you.
I look at the trees.*



Shanghai is Beautiful and Fun!



By J.P. Gan

Iwent to Shanghai last spring for a vacation, and I had an even better time than I expected. It's a scary thing, traveling alone to a city you have never been before, where nearly no one speaks your language. I was told a lot more people speak English in Shanghai than in Beijing. That may be true, but if a lot of people in Shanghai do speak English they must have been in a different part of town — I met very few Shanghainese who could speak anything but Putonghua. Luckily, I know enough to get by (things like, “Ni hao,” “wo shi meiguoren,” “cesuo zai nar,” and “wo ai ni”). It sure is not like Hong Kong, where everyone seems to know

at least a few words of English, and most young people are fluent.

Shanghai is so beautiful, with lots of old colonial buildings, especially along the Bund. I did a lot of walking and exploring, but I'll stick to the fun parts of the trip!

I had met a guy over the Internet who offered to show me around the city. He is a doctor, kind of chubby and sweet and speaks perfect English. We agreed to meet in a park that is famous for being a gay fishing pond, located by Jiu-jian Road and Han-kou Road. I got there early, and within about a minute there was group of 6 or 7 guys standing around me, wanting to meet.

Most of them, I knew, were money boys, so I was very careful. None spoke English, but I managed to communicate in my Putonghua baby-talk. “Wode fandan zai Pudong. Wo jia zai Xiangang. Wo shi san-shi-qi sui. Ni shi Shanghai ren ma?” The strangest thing was that all of them wanted to run their fingers over the hairs on my arms, and at one point four guys at once were stroking my forearms with their fingertips, as though my arms were so exotic. Finally my friend arrived, and we left the park.

I had a list of places I found on the Internet, and though my friend wouldn't go in with me, he was nice enough to take me to the doorway. The first place was a public bath house called Da Guan Yuan at Beijing Road and Xizang Road. (I found out about it at the Utopia and Yawning Bread web sites if you want to learn more.) This place is HUGE, and unlike anything I have ever seen. It is nothing like a Hong Kong sauna. Admission was only 10 yuan. The first thing you see are rows and rows and rows of lounge chairs with naked men lying down. Some are talking, some are having a foot massage, some have tiny little hand towels over their genitals, but there is very little modesty at Da Guan Yuan. As soon as I walked in, a silence fell over the big lounging room, and heads turned and looked at me as though I were from another planet. As I walked to my locker, a few people ran over to me. “Why you come here?” one older gentleman asked me. I smiled and said, “I want to see everything in Shanghai.” Just like at the park, guys reached over as I walked by and felt my arms. I walked to the shower area behind the lounging room, and guys began to get way more aggressive. They probably ranged from 25 to 50. Most did not interest me, but I smiled at them anyway. I went to the lounge area and looked over the crowd. I spotted a guy who was my type lounging there, a 22-year-old guy from Beijing who spoke only a few words of English. I sat next to him, our hands met, and we held hands until I left. I got a foot massage for 30 yuan (very nice, a little painful) as we held hands, and then we showered together and left. I

bought him a nice dinner (Shanghai food is way spicier than Cantonese!) and we took a taxi back to my hotel. He was so sweet, and we had a great time. That night he took me to a bar called Er Ding Mu near the university. It's three stories and quite nice, and the bartenders and staff are gorgeous.

A couple of days later, I went to another place I found on Yawning Bread called Lian Bang Yu Shi. This place is real hard to find, and if you go you should print out the map on Yawning Bread. You have to walk through a hair salon to the desk, and there is no sign. This place is absolutely wild. It is more similar to a sauna than the bath house, but it's more discreet. After you pay your 28 yuan, they give you a little shirt and pair of shorts, kind of like pajamas, and a key. The lockers are in little rooms, each with three beds. As I walked down the hall looking for my room, guys shouted out as I passed their rooms, “Hi” and “Come in.” They were all wearing their little shorts and shirts. You can only imagine what happened next.

During my last day in Shanghai, and I didn't have time to do very much. So I decided to go to a straight place in Pudong that I read about on Utopia (forget the name). It has all these different baths to soak in, like birch and ginseng and traditional Chinese medication. It's really beautiful. They also give a great body scrub and 45-minute massage, all for 148 RMB. I was very lucky, because as I arrived so did two incredibly handsome boys, probably between 18 and 20. They had absolutely no inhibitions about being naked, and they were jumping around, splashing each other and playing in the water... I couldn't take my eyes off of them. We talked in the steam room, and they told me they were students but had never studied English. Such sweet smiles, such beautiful little butts, and smooth bodies. I will never forget watching them and thinking how sweet and how beautiful they looked as they went from pool to pool, and as they lay down on the lounge chairs and stretched. Beautiful eye candy, and a perfect way for me to end my trip with happy memories! PA

Race and the Politics of LGBT Communities of Color

By Pauline Park

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people of color face multiple oppressions based on race, ethnicity, language, national origin, and citizenship status as well as sexual orientation and gender identity, and we are marginalized both within the white-dominant LGBT community and within our own ethnic communities of origin.

Within the LGBT community, we are often challenged when we form limited-membership organizations. I had to deal with charges of ‘reverse discrimination’ when I co-founded Gay Asians & Pacific Islanders of Chicago (GAPIC) in 1994, when I co-founded Iban/Queer Koreans of New York in 1997, and again when I served on the steering committee of Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York (GAPIMNY) in 1998-99. In October 1998, when I invited a leading gender activist to attend TransWorld I (the first conference by and for transgendered people of color), she denounced it as “racist” because we decided to invite only people of color as guest speakers, though the conference was open to everyone. Out People of Color Political Action Club (OutPOCPAC), founded in the spring of 2001, may have to defend itself against similar charges.

The source of such accusations lies in a confusion between individual- and societal-level agency. Many Americans understand racism as an individual-level phenomenon. And it is true that there are not only white racists, but racists in communities of color, but those communities - at least in the United States — lack the same degree of access to institutional power to enforce institutional-

ized racism. There is a fundamental difference between all-white private clubs whose members represent a wealthy elite and organizations of color formed to empower their members. That difference resides in an asymmetry of economic and political power between the white majority and ‘minorities’ (who now constitute the majority in New York City).


But just as we need to address issues of racism and ethnocentrism in the LGBT community, we need to address issues of homophobia and transgenderphobia in communities of color. Unfortunately, very few queer POC organizations actively pursue public education on such issues in their communities of origin. For example, there is not a single queer API organization in New York City whose primary focus is on addressing issues of homophobia and transgenderphobia in API communities.

The impediments to such work are considerable. Many queer POCs come out in the white-dominant LGBT community but not in their own ethnic communities; our invisibility produces its own asymmetry of power in our communities. A few years ago, I suggested at an Iban/QKNY meeting that we march in the annual Korean Day Parade. Anxious members quickly shelved that suggestion in favor of marching in the annual Pride Parade. In truth, it would have been difficult to put together a contingent to march in the Korean Day Parade. Even if we had gotten the permission of the Korean American Association of Greater New York, we would have needed a minimum of three or four Korean-speaking individuals who were ‘out’ to everyone (including parents) to handle relations with the Korean-language media.

Mention of homophobia in communities of color sometimes provokes an insistence that they are no more homophobic than society as a whole. An even more difficult topic is racism within communities of color, something that some queer activists of color are reluctant to address. At a recent LGBT conference, one transgendered woman of

color went so far as to assert that people of color could not be racist, at least in the United States. I wonder what she would have thought of the Korean woman who approached me a few years ago in Chicago looking for help in flagging down a taxi, but who insisted that she didn't want a black taxi driver.

We have to recognize that there are real tensions between and among communities of color, and these must be addressed honestly and forthrightly in order for our communities to move forward together with a progressive agenda for social change. Unfortunately, in

their zeal to stamp out racism in the LGBT community, some queer activists of color end up rearticulating a version of the discourse of the Noble Savage, one in which all queer people of color are progressive and anti-racist activists. What we need now is not an update on Rousseau's virtuous barbarian, but rather, honest and sincere dialogue. We must recognize that racism and ethnocentrism — just like homophobia and transgenderphobia — exist in every community and every society, and we have an obligation to address bigotry in all its forms, wherever we may find it. 

the NeXt GenerAsian: Giving Asian Youth a Voice!

by Asian Youth Anonymous

The halfling, Frodo, survived, his task completed, the ring, which could “bring them all and in the darkness bind them,” had reached the elven haven. But what lay ahead?

Michael, couched beside me, obstructed the TV by leaning over, kissing me. When his lips meet no intimacy in mine, he immediately withdrew. I dreaded it while it was happening and ignored it for a full 4 seconds after it happened. One Mississippi... Two Mississippi... Three Mississippi... Four Mississippi.

“Sorry, that was stupid.”

“It's OK,” I replied. (Keep watching the movie and pretend like it didn't happen).



Young Frodo unbuttons his shirt to try on his Uncle Bilbo's gift. We see Frodo's chest slowly being exposed, and with it the ring of power. Bilbo, longing to be reunited

with his “precious,” reaches for it. Frodo covers up. Denied, Bilbo lunges, demon-faced and hissing, then quickly diminishes, shamed.



Months before, after watching Lord of the Rings in the theatre, my friend had pointed out the sexual undertones of this scene. The exposed chest of the young man. The older man desiring something of the younger. My friend's insights into the sexual nature of the scene now surfaced, afloat on Michael's kiss seconds past. (Or was it minutes past?)

Since Michael's kiss, his apology, and my OK, we had been silent.

(Should I tell him how funny it was that he kissed me and retreated right before this scene in the movie? Explain the sexual overtones and parallels I saw to our situation: older mentor going after younger mentee?)

Probably not. Bad idea. Reassure him.)

I placed my hand on his knee and gently rubbed. “Really, it’s OK, don’t worry about it,” I assured.

It’s been a week since that visit to my high school math teacher, Michael. Having just graduated from college, transitioning, I wanted to chill, catch up, and seek guidance. Michael’s kiss disoriented me, he was the first (gay and Asian) mentor I had, accompanying me through my high school identity crises. He allayed my turmoil with his past perseverance through similar experiences. But now he reinforced the lame shit I didn’t like, shit like: “why don’t the people I find attractive, find me attractive? Do I only attract scuzzy older men?”

Reorienting myself, something about that experience granted me a peace. It was easier to let go. To see the illusion in my obsession over certain guys (love you all). To remind myself that I don’t have to take the road less traveled, or the road more traveled, I can make my own way through the forests, accompanied by friends and loved ones (machetes, and chainsaws). How my high school math teacher coming on to me did that, I’m still trying to figure out.

Well, this was written with the spirit of giving Asian youth, especially queer youth, a voice. It can be tough but it’s good to look out. . . Support, role models, friends who don’t want to get in your pants, friends you want in your pants, are all good things. Get in touch if you want to start something. Looking for funny, smart, stupid, radical, writers, poets, artists, comic enthusiasts, whatever to put something together to print and distribute! Why do I always do things in the middle of the night? PA



Yesterday he was Here, But Today he is Gone. . .

By Joey H. Nguyen

I received a phone call at work today from an old friend, saying Dien had passed away due to a drug overdose. I am shocked, I was in disbelief, and still am. Dien went to Amsterdam on a brief vacation to “get away.” Aside from Vietnam, Amsterdam was probably his favorite place to visit.

Dien Nguyen was the first friend I met when I first started to search the web for information about my “Queer World.” I was trying to find my niche. . . so far from where I was. It is so ironic that I was supposed to hang out with Dien before he left for vacation, but I couldn’t (or didn’t) find the time. We planned to get together when he came back. I wanted to be a better friend. I wasn’t much of a friend in the past because I did not think he fit into my category of what I called “normal.”

Now he is dead.

Now I know how the family and friends of September 11’s victims feel. Life is too short. Live your life the best you know how, but make your decisions wisely. Life is not just today and tomorrow, but many days to come. Don’t be selfish — there are friends and family who care about you. If you think your family and friends will not shed a tear in the event of your death, you are wrong. You might not see their tears, but they will come.