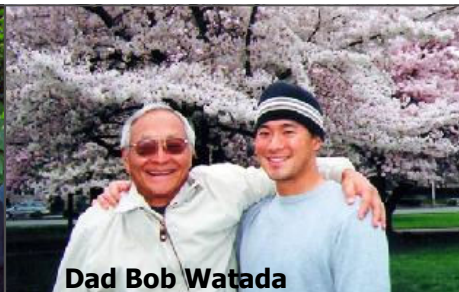




Dedication to Lt. Ehren Watada



Mom Carolyn Ho



Dad Bob Watada



Ehren Watada was the first commissioned officer to publicly say the war in Iraq was immoral and illegal and to refuse to go. He had enlisted after 9/11 because he was willing to fight for what he believed was the freedom and democracy of his country. When he became convinced that Americans had been lied to in order to attack a country that had nothing to do with that terrorism, that we were killing innocent people, violating the Geneva Convention, and that American soldiers were dying in an unjust war, he asked to be able to resign or to be sent to Afghanistan where al Qaeda is believed to really be. The U.S. Army refused. He was told if he did not go he would be charged with refusing deployment. Watada chose trial and possible imprisonment instead. When he publicly spoke about his beliefs at anti-war events, he was also charged with conduct unbecoming an officer. This raised a new issue. Does putting on a uniform mean one loses the constitutionally protected First Amendment right of freedom of speech? Are we fighting 'to bring democracy' to others while losing our own freedoms?

As we were putting together this AAJ issue with a theme about life changing decisions that we each make, we knew that our decisions were small in comparison to the decision Ehren Watada had made. During the final week of layout, his trial began. Each day we read how the government was refusing to let him discuss his beliefs or to bring expert witnesses to discuss the war's immorality and illegality. We assumed, as did everyone including Watada and his family, that he would very quickly end up imprisoned. Instead, we were jubilant when just as quickly, the U.S. Army judge declared a mistrial and the government's case was in disarray. We chose to dedicate this issue to the man the non-profit media organization, Truthout, called a "true leader of men." Truthout gave Ehren Watada its first Freedom and Democracy Award. Below is some of what Truthout's Director, Marc Ash, wrote about him. See www.truthout.org for the full text.

"Perhaps most importantly, he has reminded us that the most courageous battles are often not fought with a gun, but with resolve. No falsehood stands as a greater affront to civilization than the notion that people can be made democratic by the use of military force against them. At its core, democracy is based on non-violent dissent... Watada has given us a rare demonstration of the true power of democracy - by choosing resistance to an unjust war, rather than silence and complicity. ...War in America rages too. The war here is for freedom and democracy, as surely as any war ever fought... Our battle, like any other, needs leaders. The U.S. Army trained Lt. Watada to be "a leader of men." He is leading the men and women of our armed services in speaking out... He is inspiring Americans who are struggling to make real the promise of freedom and democracy in this country."

The Americans at the AAJ are proud of Lt. Ehren Watada. The Asian Americans are doubly proud. AAJ salutes him for continuing the long and hard but dedicated tradition of Asian Americans fighting for American freedom and democracy. Thank you Lieutenant Watada!

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers:

Life changes, trivial or profound, affect us more than we may have bargained for or even dared to dream about. College especially marks a period of great transition within our lives. As we travel further along the road of young adulthood, many of our number make mistakes and gain wisdom, others fall further from grace, some of us get lost in the midst of having to make decisions about our futures, and others charge straight ahead, confident and optimistic about all their endeavors. This issue of the Asian American Journal is an expression of the life changes that impact us on a daily basis. We offer our memories, our hardships, our pains and realizations, in tribute to the millions of internal struggles that go unrecognized and unvoiced as we all strive to make sense of who we are and what we are trying to accomplish for ourselves and for our generation.

Mai Luong

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Inside and Rear Cover

Life Changes: The Seasons at SBU in Photographs

An Immigrant's Story

by Jin Woo Cho

I was born in Korea and lived there till I was seven. I moved to the States and lived here for three years because of my Dad's job as a banker in the foreign department of a Korean bank. I used to live in Queens, but my place was on the border between New York City and Nassau County. I do not remember much of the old days but my memory of the place, and thus the US, was a relatively quiet town not far away from the busy city. After three years my family went back to Korea. I lived there until I was 17 and then we moved back to America again. This time my family came back for good. My Dad did not see any vision in his job and he wanted to provide my brother and I with an opportunity to experience something better. My family is a case model of people pursuing the American Dream.

I lived most of my Korean days in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. About a quarter of the whole population lives in Seoul, home for about 10 million people. The whole city is like Manhattan. As the capital it is the center of everything: politics, business, education, you name it. Note the word education. If you want to get a good job, you need to get good grades throughout your schooling, go to the best college. That meant some intense competition and stress over schoolwork. Ever since middle school I was forced to study hard, attend prep courses, and do well in exams. Every number in your rank and test score mattered. The day that everyone dreaded the most was the day when we receive our grades on a slip of paper along with the rank. I would have to get ready for some serious scolding and ass kickery if my average fell below ninety.

But I also had a lot of fun while I was in middle school – playing soccer. Soccer was and still is the national sport of Korea and almost everyone was into playing. During recess the whole school would be out in the field playing soccer through rain or snow – I even remember

from the pressure. The stress over grades got worse in high school. I went to a public high school in southern Seoul well known for smart kids and zealous parents harassing their kids to do well. I had to keep up with my grades as well as prepare for the college entrance exam, which you must take during the senior year of high school to get into college. It is equivalent to the SAT exam here except the difficulty and intensity is about that of the MCAT exam. Unlike the SAT, the test is offered only once a month so everyone is extremely tense during that day.

In fact, the whole country is affected by this national event. Companies even allow employees to come to work late to decrease traffic congestion so students will not be late to the exam. It is not uncommon to see students on a police motorcycle, sometimes even an ambulance, because they woke up late or had a medical problem on the day of the exam. News of students committing suicide after the exam because of low scores became so commonplace that people stopped caring.

Looking back, the thing I remember most was always studying and chronic fatigue because of the lack of sleep. My memory of Korea, especially the high school years, is not pleasant because of the pressure of doing well. It seems like I am only writing negative things but it is really hell for students to survive in Korea. But it did give me one advantage. The experience of studying hard and the habits I developed have benefited me in the long run. I have a strong work ethic and I accumulated a lot of knowledge. This made the transition from Korean life to American life much easier.

My paper chase life faced a major change when I learned that my family was moving back to the U.S. again. I had decent grades but they did not meet my parent's expectations or my own. I had personal problems with school life in general. It seemed like school and studying had been eating me away. I quit high school about a month before leaving Korea and had that time to think about where my life should go. I decided my life should be

"I was relieved that I was getting out of a premature rat race."

playing in a hailstorm. I still do not know how it was possible, but there would be ten different games happening at once - 10 soccer balls flying around - hundreds of kids. It was the epitome of a group activity – our one release

balanced between studying and something that I really wanted to do. I had been caught up too much with studying. It was not something I thought I had an option about because the goal was forced on me by family, friends, and national custom. I was relieved that I was getting out of a premature rat race. Anything different from that was fine with me and I wanted to make my new life better.

The reality of the United States was not all that

different from the image I had in my mind. Our new house nicely fit into the quiet suburban block that I used to live on ten years before. Even the school did not look totally strange to me because it was similar in style to what my old elementary school used to be like. It seemed to me that my life was going to be a bit different from the cultural shock other immigrants experience. I even allowed myself to underestimate the intensity of school because I did not have much trouble communicating in English at that point. But I was about to learn the differences and find out the hard stuff slowly and gradually. It was something I could not see but gradually came to realize.

My guidance counselor was showing me around the school during the morning of my first day of high school. We were still walking around the hallway when someone whispered in her ear. She gasped in disbelief and fear. She calmed down and told me to go back home and turn on the TV. I had no idea what was happening but soon found out. I saw the two towers engulfed in flames and watched as they collapsed shortly after.

The 9/11 terrorist attack affected my life profoundly. It changed the entire course of my status as an immigrant. The day after 9/11 I was introduced to other Korean students by their ESL teacher. We left school together and as we went through the parking lot, a group of white kids with baseball bats surrounded and yelled racial slurs at us. I just ignored them and walked away but the other Korean guys, who I found out years later were part of the Korean 'mafia', became really angry. They got into a big fight. Even though some of the white guys who instigated the whole thing were prosecuted and punished, I thought it would not be all that easy to live here.

Fortunately for me, school itself was not a big problem. It was definitely less work compared to my previous life as long as I understood English. Making friends came naturally after that. I was one of the few Asian students in a predominately white student body. People approached me with curiosity and asked me a lot of questions. So in response I did pretty much the same thing I am doing right now - telling how life used to be back there and comparing that to my life after I came to the US. Although the school was white and I knew many white people, I could not help myself feeling more attached to the minority kids in my school. Even though they were not Asian, since they were first generation too, they understood the situation I was in. It did not take long, however, to feel the cultural shock. It was really awkward for me to walk in the crowded hallway during the three minute break passing by couples making out in the hallway. Students showing affection in public places, especially in school, was unimaginable in

Korea. It was the same with some of the student's attitudes toward class and teachers. I could not believe kids were talking back to their teachers, blatantly not paying attention in class. It felt like part of me was being ripped apart when kids were crumbling perfectly clean scrap paper to throw at other kids. It was quite an obvious difference from how I had been brought up - respect elders, act formal in public places, and conserve resources. I eventually became used to it. Time is the remedy for all.

School here was a lot of fun for me. The best example of that would be my experience being in the school orchestra. I used to have violin lessons during my short stay here as a young child but stopped altogether when I moved back to Korea. I simply did not have enough time to do it. I enjoyed my long-lost hobby and started practicing a great deal. My friends in the orchestra and I organized a chamber group and we played occasionally for

“It felt like part of me was being ripped apart when kids were crumbling perfectly clean scrap paper to throw at other kids.”

the local community. In my senior year I became the concertmaster of the school orchestra. I could not believe it when I stood on the podium directing the whole orchestra. It had been only two years since I picked up the violin again. I went on to join the university orchestra and I still take lessons today.

I enjoyed a lot of other things. I came to appreciate reading different kinds of books that I never had a chance to read because they were not directly related to my studies. I picked up the hobby of drawing when I started taking an art class. I like the way school can be a source of self-development as well as having fun, and that is true even now as a college student.

I do not think I miss Korea that much. I miss my grandparents, my relatives and friends, and the places that I used to live. But that has not bothered me too much because I was having too much fun in the States. Although I am still proud that I am Korean, I have to acknowledge that the quality of life as a student is much better in the United States than Korea. In my opinion, this land truly has been a land of opportunity. Although my life as an immigrant has not been easy in terms of the financial situation of my family, I am not discouraged: where there is will and opportunity - there is a way.

BackgroundCredits

911research.wtc7.net/wtc/history/index.html

Moral Decisions

by Yina Chun

During one of my philosophy classes my professor made inquiries to the class and got the following responses:



“What are you doing here?”

“... to earn an education, to get a degree.”

“Why do you want a degree?”

“...to find a good job and make good money.”

“Why do you want money?”

“... to live a comfortable life.”

No, he didn't go as far as to ask why would you want a comfortable life, but I did ask myself: why do they want money? Money is only materialistic matter that won't matter when it comes in competition with love, ideas, and action. Yes, that sounds idealistic because money is tradable and real, yet money wouldn't exist if there isn't the means for it to exist. Anyone can live a comfortable life with money, but you might as well throw it all out if you're not going to spend it on bettering humanity.

kato-tohanan

Young people grow up with the hunger for money, for an education, not because they want the education, but so they can earn more money. If you want money, you need a degree

and if you want more money you need a fancier degree.

I personally don't share the same beliefs about money and education as others. I'm simply outraged at those who can carelessly spit out their life decisions based on money. So many people aspire for degrees in biology, chemistry, business, and political science. But many stumble on the questions of what they really want to do with their degrees and what they really dream for in life. When people make life-changing decisions, they need to have deep reasoning that will validate those decisions.

truth

Your college education will hopefully lead you to a position that will guarantee a comfortable life. But what that means is up to you. You have to ask yourself - “what do I want from life and why” - and find an answer that will enrich not just yourself but also the world.

Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something.

- Henry David Thoreau

The most pitiful among men is he who turns his dreams into silver and gold.

- Kahlil Gibran

Calvin & Hobbes



Bill Watterson

'the long and winding road...' finding what fits who you really are

by Chetan Prabhudesai

Why did you come to Stony Brook?

Well, the short answer is that I had a National Merit Scholarship, which covered my tuition, room and board, fees, etc. I had a free ride here, and it was a pretty good school that just happened to be not too far from home. To hear the long answer, you have to know a little bit about me. As most Stony Brook undergraduates know from Facebook, I received a score of 1570 on my SAT. I also had very high ACT and SAT II scores. I've always been good at standardized tests because I have a good understanding of the questions themselves, even if I don't always know the answers. That doesn't come from courses or tutors, it comes from reading things. Anyway, I was always an underachiever when it came to actual grades. I almost got kicked out of my school's National Honor Society, even though I was one of the officers.

Nevertheless, I was accepted into thirteen of the seventeen schools I applied to. I don't know why I applied to seventeen schools but I've always liked having choices, even though I dislike picking them. But I was all about prestige, which is why my top choices were Johns Hopkins and Cornell. It sounds silly now, but I was convinced that going to a big-name school was the easiest way to prove how smart I was. But as much as I like Baltimore and its Inner Harbor, Hopkins was 30 grand a year for tuition alone. Cornell was cheaper because I would be going to the state-sponsored part to study "Agricultural and Biological Engineering." Well, I didn't want to study that. So I chose Stony Brook. I was rejected from the Honors College. I still don't know why.

What was your major or plan of action as a freshman and why did you set upon that path?

I was originally a Biomedical Engineering major. It doesn't make too much sense to me now as to why I chose that path, because at this stage I dislike both Biology and Physics, the foundations of the field. However, in high school, the reverse was true. Not only did I want to do something in the sciences, but engineering was appealing because it seemed like a good fit for my personality. So I chose Biomedical Engineering.

Who influenced your career path choices?

It sounds stereotypical, but my parents did indeed push me towards the medical field. When I say

"medical," I mean becoming a doctor – my parents wanted me to go to India for medical school, where no undergraduate degree is required, thus saving both time and money. Another option would be a BA/MD program, one of which, at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, I think I was accepted to. This was a nice compromise between going to medical school (which I was actually considering at one point) and following my own path.

When did you know Biomedical Engineering was not for you? How did your parents react?

Well, the story is pretty famous now, but I didn't do so well my first semester, and I knew something had to change. I enjoyed my one and only BME class, but I didn't do so well in it, and I knew things would only get harder from there. My parents were desperate for me to do anything to avoid that situation again, so together we agreed that I would take assorted classes - one business, one computer science, etc.

There's a major here called Information Systems, which combines Business and Computer Science. It's really interesting, but I found that anything CompSci-related just wasn't for me. In fact, I still enjoy the field of Biomedical Engineering, although I am no longer interested in pursuing it as a career. I would certainly recommend it to anyone who wants a cutting-edge major, because it brings you to the forefront of new advances in healthcare. If you want to be a doctor, you will learn about medicine, but you will also learn about technology. It's certainly not for the faint of heart, however.

I could say that I overestimated my ability to handle the work, and that's one of the reasons I am no longer in the major. But the reality is that it was not that I was not able to do the work, but I didn't even try to do the work. If I started over, I probably wouldn't do too badly at all.

What are you doing now? How is that different from what you were planning on doing before and how did you reach this decision?

I am looking to graduate Stony Brook University with a double major in Business Management (with a concentration in finance) and Economics. It sounds completely different from what I was doing before but the financial field also requires a lot of intellect and critical thinking. I think it's a good fit for how I think. I don't know how I came up with it, but it sounds like a brilliant idea now. We'll see how it goes.



The Yellow Wallpaper

I am enclosed in this splattered,
old wallpaper

It has turned yellow with age
And I am aging

I breathe heavily sometimes
As the dust and dirt clogs up the inside
And I keep its moisture with my passing tears

It's a forsaken room with an empty bed
The crowds are jubilant downstairs
And out there, drinking fine tea and fine liquor
I can hear the laughter and imagine those
Quenching smiles on their faces

The world's caged me in
The night is drunk tonight and not
A single mind can make proper judgment
Not a single mind can remember the past
The moments when I existed out of this room,
Out of this yellow stained paper décor

I learn to live in here
I learn to breathe in here
Behind the yellow wallpaper
Behind this rapidly passing time
Just waiting...and waiting...

I hide behind these passing years
Yearning for a way to come out
And perhaps someone will have the
Decency to tear this yellow paper down
And repaint the foreclosing wall with
A nice splatter of peach bright paint

I creep behind and follow my shadow
In the dimly lit room lit by a 40 watt bulb
Enclosed by an off white lamp shade with
Decaying fringes all tangled at the seams

They're so unaware of the living attire
Upstairs; this bedroom is my falling sanctuary
I hide behind this wallpaper making muffled screams,
Trapped in my own demise

I'm in sobriety, in my lurking mind
Absorbing masses of pains succumbing
To my delicate heart like pins and needles,
Sticks and stones

TOWER TO HEAVEN



With poetry, we put into words the majesty of what our senses feel and thus poetry is synonymous with beauty. Wonderful architecture then is the poetry of a space. With its visual words it creates a rich artistic environment that captures our sensual feelings. Those visual words are also the musical notes of a symphony played for our eyes. The rhythmic variation of the patterns of the brick and the contrasting strength of the massive gray walls are the adagio movements, graceful curves that become a rapid succession of angles are the andantes, the sudden bursts of vibrant reds the allegrettos. Great architecture contains the best elements of poetry, music, and art. P.H. Tuan's design of the Charles B. Wang Center achieves just that: Li Po and Shakespeare in a Tan Dun contemporary composition - the canvas of a poetic masterpiece - the architect's Mozart for our eyes.

Born in Shanghai but Western trained and with a deep religious faith, Tuan gives his designs elements of God's natural beauty. Also Shanghai born but US raised, Wang's intention was cross-cultural understanding. Tuan brings in the historical elements of their Eastern heritage with the Western heritage of their faith to accomplish that cross-cultural understanding architecturally. While this article describes the Tower, the Center's expansive interior is meant to evoke the feeling of one's spirit being uplifted as in the great cathedrals, and the architectural combination of the two was meant to show the unity of humanity under God.

The pagoda is common to most Asian countries. A multi-storied design used for religious purposes and later as a watch or water tower, it began in India as the 'stupa' where relics of Buddha were kept. India's Great Stupa of Sanchi, dating from 250 B.C.E., is the oldest existing one. With the spread of Buddhism the pagoda traveled eastward. Tuan knew that to include this historical heritage, the Wang Center would need a pagoda. But the Burmese 'zayda', Indian 'stupa', Chinese 'ta', Indonesian 'candi', Laotian 'chao fa', Thai 'chedi', Nepalese 'chaitya', Cambodian 'Khmer-Prang', Singhalese and Tibetan 'dagoba', had each taken on the flavor of those cultures and after 2000 years were no longer exactly the same. Tuan had to incorporate their similarities and differences. So rising 80 feet over the Wang Center is a modern sculpture that does just that.

Known as the Tower to Heaven because from inside you look up to infinity, it is a concept both ancient and modern. Four poles hold seven layers of holographic panels, each layer eight sides in an octagon. Traditional pagodas are always an odd number. The poles reach into the sky just as the rooftop poles of Balinese 'puras' and Japanese Shinto shrines do. The tower is the shape of the Ba-Gua, the 8 trigrams of the *I Ching*. The circle formed within it is the yin yang. Each trigram has a corresponding element, compass direction, number, season, and time of day. *Li*, the octagon side above the main gate, represents south, 9, laughter, beauty, and fire. The panels change color with the sun so the whole pagoda, or one vertical row at a time, can be any shade of gray, shimmering silver, blinding reflective silver like a mirror held to the sun, mint green in a lightening storm, and with the rising and setting of the sun - pink, orange, gold, purple - even metallic baby blue.

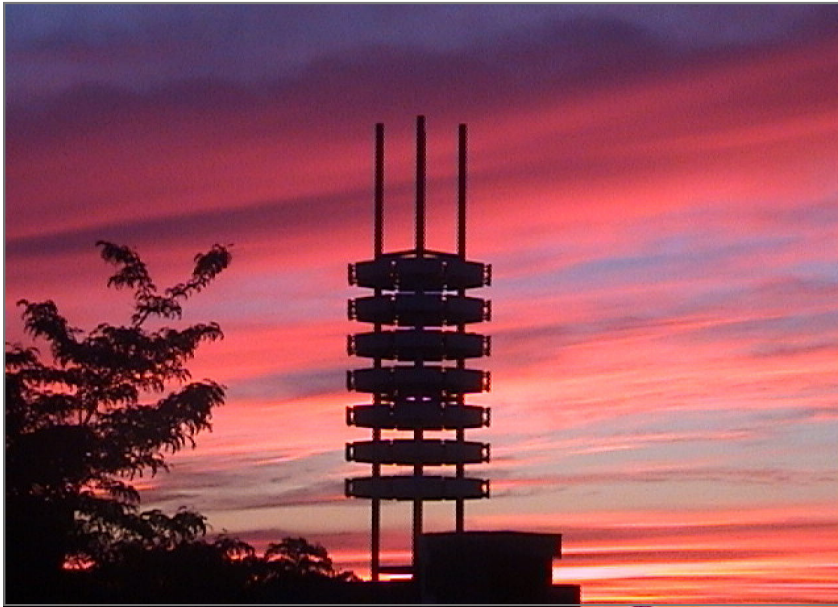
Today the horizon of every city is filled with modern pagodas. What is the Empire State Building but a pagoda with an elevator. As the pagoda united the East in antiquity, in modernity it is the pagoda in skyscraper form that unites the world. Thus it is the perfect architectural design for what the Wang Center hopes to foster - a uniting of East and West.

by Ja Young

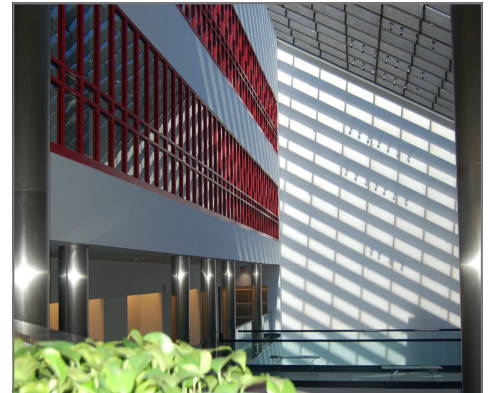


Charles B. Wang Center





Celebrating Asian & Asian American Cultures



Asian & Asian American Student Cabinet to Cabinet Social 2006-2007



Each year [AA]2 AA E-Zine brings together the cabinets of the Asian and Asian American student clubs and organizations at Stony Brook U.

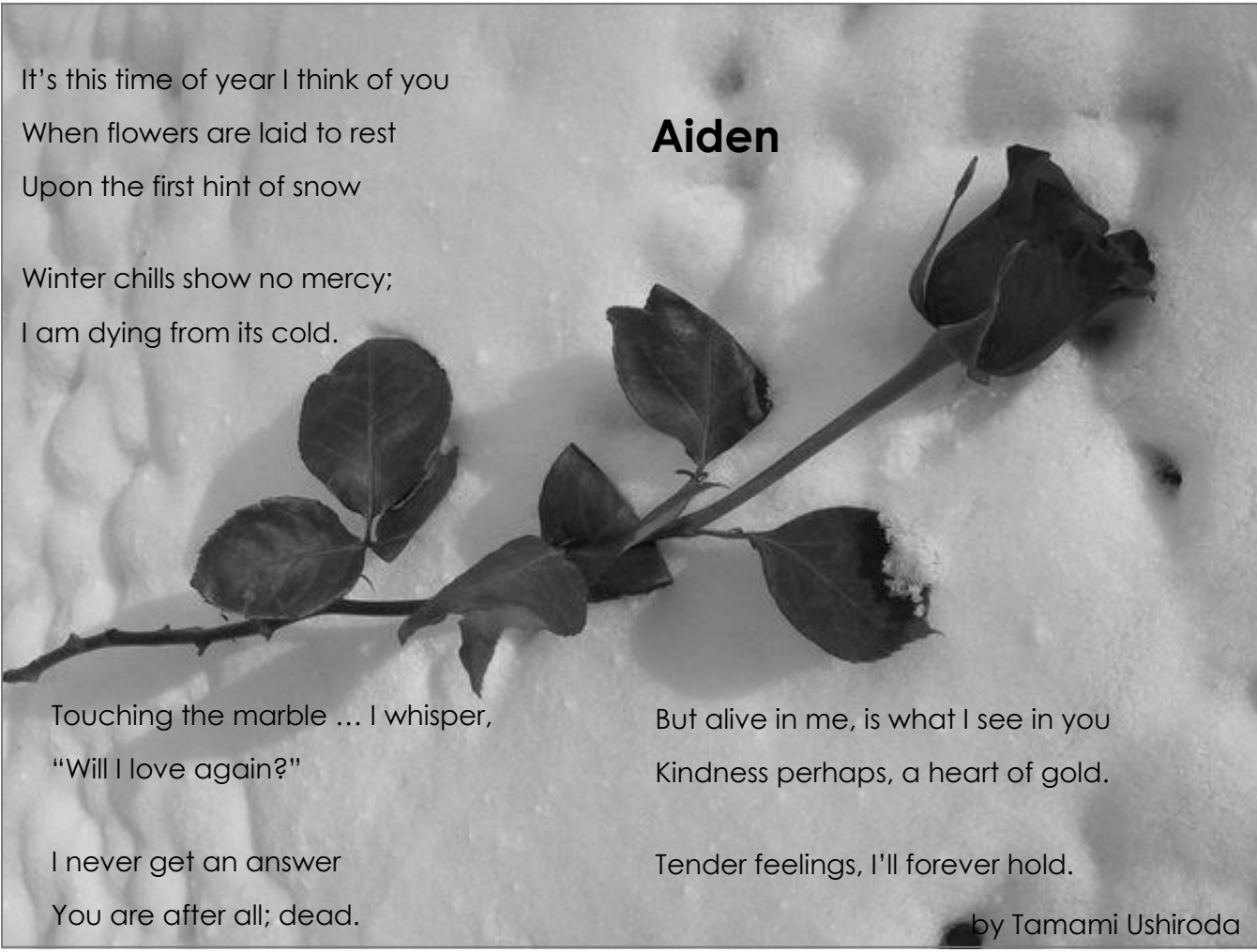
While the rest of the campus stereotypes Asians as a monolithic group, this is an opportunity for student leaders who may never come in contact with each other to meet their peers at a night of good food and conversation.

There are almost 60 Asian interest groups including traditional cultural ones, media, sports, fraternities, sororities, and performance groups.

For many good laughs, icebreakers like The Human Knot really do work. And instead of name tags, each person is given the name of someone they must find and each learns about the other. Zaniest of all is Speed Naming. The winner not only knows each person's name but their club and beats his opponent by saying both first.

The dream is that instead of one night a year, someday clubs will have their own shared space where they can meet daily and really build a dynamic and interactive community.





Aiden

It's this time of year I think of you
When flowers are laid to rest
Upon the first hint of snow

Winter chills show no mercy;
I am dying from its cold.

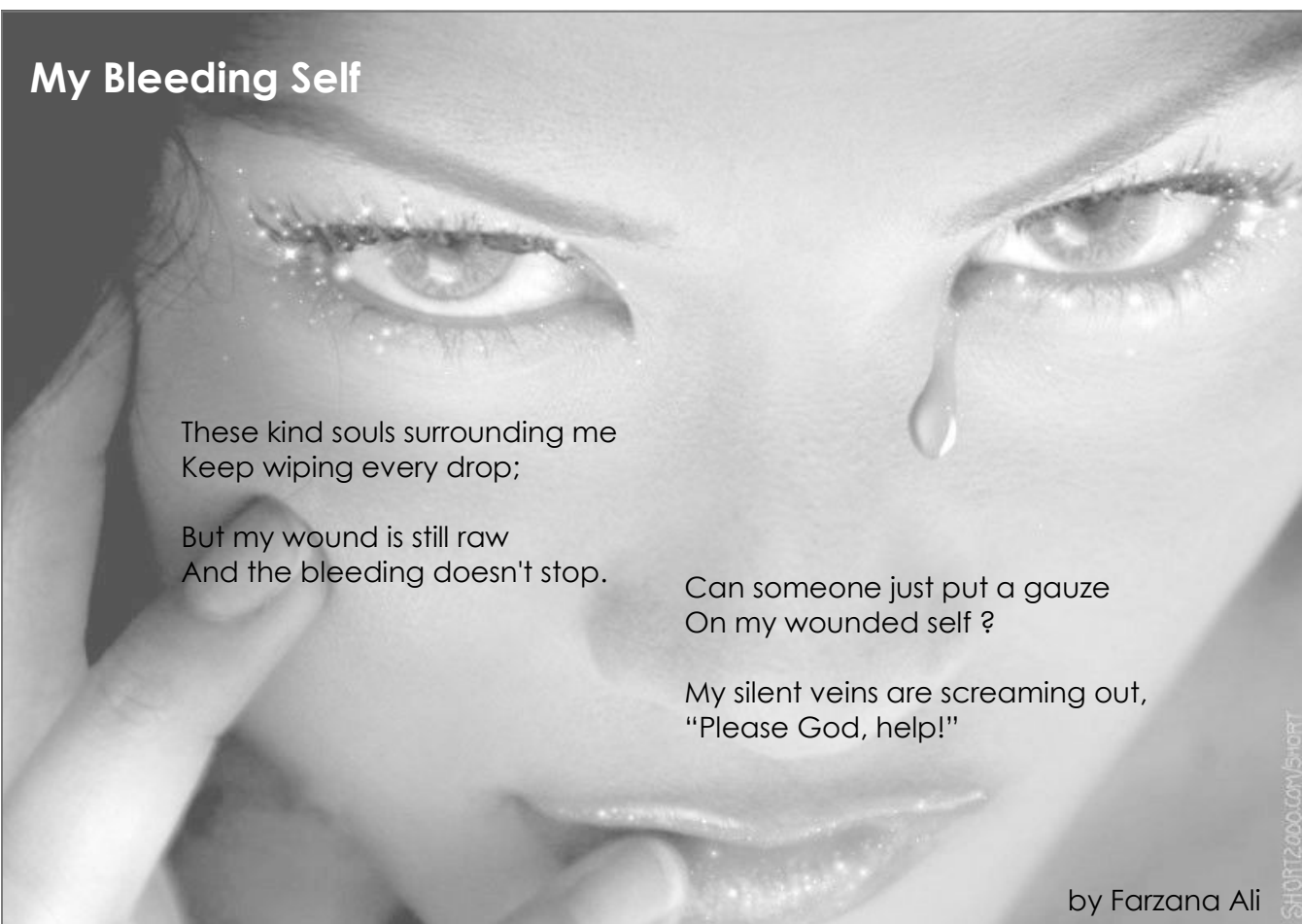
Touching the marble ... I whisper,
"Will I love again?"

I never get an answer
You are after all; dead.

But alive in me, is what I see in you
Kindness perhaps, a heart of gold.

Tender feelings, I'll forever hold.

by Tamami Ushiroda



My Bleeding Self

These kind souls surrounding me
Keep wiping every drop;

But my wound is still raw
And the bleeding doesn't stop.

Can someone just put a gauze
On my wounded self ?

My silent veins are screaming out,
"Please God, help!"

by Farzana Ali

SHOBT2000.COM/SHORT

ASIAN INCOGNITO

by **Brittany Bascetta**

It happened to me slowly, without me ever realizing it. It only occurred to me one afternoon as I was having lunch with a friend of mine from our freshman year at Stony Brook. We began to reminisce on the "old times" and our old group.

The structure of our group has changed somewhat since the beginning, however the core group has remained the same. As we were talking we joked at the fact that our group of friends were each some form of Asian. I blurted out, "Yeah, poor Adam is the only white guy." My friend looked at me quizzically and finally reminded me, "Brittany, you're white too."

We listed a few other white people that are associated with our group of friends, but the list was not extensive. That was when I realized that I didn't consider myself white. I somehow changed into another ethnic group. But when did it all begin?

I am not a stranger to being the "minority" in a group of friends. I grew up in a fairly diverse town. I recall my elementary school being primarily white, yet both Junior High School and High School as mixed.

My friends in high school were from various backgrounds. In fact, we would often joke that we were "anti-demographic." We had more "ethnic" friends than white, more Jewish friends than Christian, more homosexual friends than straight.

In fact, I wouldn't consider my high school at all typical or ordinary. We weren't segregated into the stereotyped groups like in the high schools you see on television or in the movies. We all were friends with each other-the jocks, the nerds, the rejects, and the theater kids. No particular group was ever discriminated against.

For my high school graduation party, I had friends from all over the globe in my own backyard. One of my father's friends

asked if I was trying to recreate the U.N. or to make some political statement by associating with so many different people.

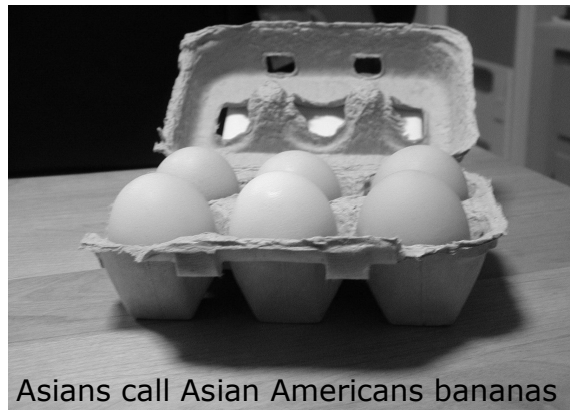
I definitely contribute my experiences in High School to my ability to accept various cultures. Moreover, learning about different people and their backgrounds intrigues me.

Still, despite the fact that I had these experiences in High School, I still considered myself white. I must pinpoint my newfound identity to my Stony Brook friends, who have shaped and molded me more than my friends in the past.

Ironically enough, from the outside this group seems like the least diverse group of friends I have ever had. Everyone is Asian! Yet, each person is from a different Asian country, so on the inside each person contributes something different from each of his or her cultures.

By learning from each other, we have all grown up together from naïve students just out of high school to young adults ready to take on the world. I have learned a great deal about life in general from my friends and have adopted a new philosophy that is complimented by each of their ideals.

Maybe that is why I believe that after 3 years of having a group of Asian friends I can say that I am no longer white, and that I have transformed into an Asian.



Asians call Asian Americans bananas and Twinkies - yellow on the outside and white on the inside, but this is Brittany.

Ciao Italia!

by Maria Ng

For a lot of people, going to Italy would be the ideal way to spend the summer. This is exactly what I did. For the entire month of July I lived in Rome, making occasional excursions to the other areas of Italy. I spent this month exploring another country, absorbing a different culture, interfacing with new people. It was a trip I will never forget, one where I was able to have as much fun as I learned.

This was not a vacation or some backpacking expedition, however. Rather, this was the Stony Brook University and Westchester Community College sponsored summer study abroad program in Rome. There might be skeptics that question the sense in participating in a study abroad program when they can just take an individual vacation and not have to have the hassle of worrying about courses and grades. But the reason for my wonderful experience was not due to the fact that I was simply in Italy; it was the people that I met in the program and the teachers that took it upon themselves to show us around Italy.

The courses themselves added rather than took away from the experience. All of the classes were based on Italy's culture, economics, and history. By being in the country that we were learning about, it was possible for the teachers to add to the classes by introducing lecturers we would not have been able to secure in the United States.

On site visitations were incorporated into the courses too. For example, in my art history class, I was able to see the actual sculptures and paintings we were talking about rather than just looking at a picture in the book. Being able to see the actual pieces brought the subject to life and intrigued me a lot more than any art history class would have without this on site experience.

Italy was an amazing country because I knew what I was looking at. Like many people, I traveled to other parts of Europe after the program, like England and France. However, none of the other countries held the same interest for me as Italy even though I had the same initial interest in these countries at first. This was because I understood the significance of what I was seeing in Italy. I wasn't just looking at some sculpture or structure because

a tour book listed it as the "Top Ten Things to See in...." My interest in the places were my own and genuine.

Once in Rome, the Italians were like most populations. Not everyone was polite, but generally people were well mannered. No one experienced any outright discrimination due to their nationality or even ethnicity. In fact, a lot of Italians seemed willing to carry on a conversation. This was pretty uniform in all parts of Italy that we visited.

These excursions to other parts of the country included going to places like Venice, Florence, Padua, Assisi and Capri. Italy was absolutely amazing. I received a lot more from this trip than I had bargained for. It is incredible to be able to visit a completely different country without being completely lost, not even in terms of directions but in terms of being lost within their culture or their history. The classes and teachers were a big help with that.

Study Abroad

Stony Brook University offers a wide selection of study abroad programs in many different countries on four continents. One can travel to China, India, Italy, France, Spain, Tanzania, Japan and Russia in the summer and during the winter, students can enjoy the hot weather in Jamaica or visit Poland or Rome. The fall study abroad program allows students to visit Madagascar to learn about its people and wildlife and the spring semester offers newfound experiences in Australia or New Zealand.

Any number of classes ranging from business to art history are taught by Stony Brook University faculty. Students are still registered as Stony Brook University students and their grades will count towards their GPAs. The application forms, instructions and additional information can be picked up at the Study Abroad Office in the Library and they are also available online. Students are not required to have any foreign language proficiency.

Study Abroad Office
Melville Library, Room 5340
(631) 632-7030
<http://ws.cc.stonybrook.edu/studyabroad/>

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AA E-Zine & SBU AA E-Zine!

www.aaezine.org for off campus news & events

www.aa2sbu.org/aaezine for on campus news & events

Online-news, events, photos, and videos focusing on the Asian and Asian American Long Island/metro New York Community.

Free! Each week a link is sent to your inbox via Yahoo Groups (no spam or junk ever!). Sign up in the left column of the Zine or send an e-mail to aaezine@yahoo.com.

For SBU students: Zine started in 2002 - join the first weekly Asian American college 'paper' in the country! Hard copy is published in the SB Press. Events are videotaped and put online. Volunteer or earn credits. We will train you. Learn Quark, I-Movie, and more.

All Welcome! Alumni & community members too! Editors, journalists, columnists, essayists, poets, researchers, cartoonists, photographers, videographers, and media techies! Learn video editing. Show the world your creativity!

SBU Campus Office: Union Room 071 (631) 632.1395

Off Campus Mail: P.O. Box 4095, Stony Brook, NY 11790

Weekly meetings open to all! Fridays at 4:30PM, SB Union 071

AAJ : Asian American Journal

Bi-weekly meetings open to all! Fridays at 5:30PM, SB Union 071

Submissions Guidelines

AAJ welcomes submissions from all backgrounds, Asian and non-Asian. However works that bear relevance to Asian American issues or the theme of the upcoming issue will have priority. All work must be in digital format. We accept poetry, essays (fiction and non-fiction), artwork, etc. Please send your material as an attachment to aajsbu@gmail.com.

AAJ Spring 2007

Part of who we are as individuals includes those who have (or have not) been around to teach and nourish us with their own versions of love. Please tell us about the special bonds that have influenced you in any way using the mediums listed above. The next issue will also include submissions unrelated to special bonds but they will be the main theme.

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AAJ Online: www.aa2sbu.org/aaaj

*Kindness in words creates confidence.
Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.
Kindness in giving creates love.*

– Lao Tzu

I hope kids feel there is a lot we can do, that there is a bigger world out there that's important, not just tomorrow's test.

- Charles B. Wang

*The fragrance of flowers spreads only in the direction of the wind.
But the goodness of a person spreads in all directions.*

Chanakya

*If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain.
If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees.
If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people.*

Chinese Proverb



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www.stonybrook.edu/ugadmissions/china/



Medical School Madness

Pre-Med to Pre-Law

by **Mai Luong**

The majority of 'my life' articles that I have seen by pre-med Asians have been about how they came to be pre-med or how the majority of Asian parents want them to be pre-med or pre-law, thus achieving one more part of the American dream: money, job security, and well-educated and successful children. Successful and rich are synonymous. Asian parents want their children to be wealthy so they push them to study hard to be at the top of the class, go to ivy-league schools, and then professional schools. The complaint of young Asian Americans is that they're forced into it by guilt and pressure, though often they claim to want to 'help others' rather than admit that.

The fact is this story is tired and old. Young people, including myself, need to stop choosing majors based on what others want from us and instead pursue our passions. I asked several people why they were struggling with pre-med and killing themselves over classes they're not doing well in. As much as we wish, the majority of the model minority students are not science and math geniuses. Many of them did not really know why they wanted to be doctors. Often those who say they want to 'help people' are the most selfish and self-centered about their time in order to enhance their ability to get into med school.

And while 'helping people' sounds nice, the reality is that there are a lot of other jobs that let people 'make a difference' and 'help people', where success is not defined by the size of income. Why do we honestly want to be doctors? Some want to do it for the money, some for the prestige, some to satisfy their parents, and others do it for personal reasons or a mix of the ones already stated. 'Helping people' is a nice public face that just comes along with being a doctor.

I understand that being a doctor is difficult because of all the time and hard work people put into it on the way to, during, and for many years after medical school. But at the same time, how many people do you know would take pay cuts and work double shifts to work for inner city hospitals and in poor countries that are in dire need of trained medical staff? How many would really take nothing in return for treating people who have no means but many serious health issues? Not enough. This is for those who want to really 'help other people' and 'make a difference' but have no idea what to do other than be a doctor or some equally high paying health care professional just because of upbringing and societal influences.

I used to be pre-med and I struggled through organic chem and physics. I wanted to be a doctor because I wanted to do more for my community, not because I was passionate about science and

medicine. I did well enough that at this point, I know I have a good shot at getting into med school. But at some point you have to accept that even if you have spent the last ten years dreaming about something, you can't go through with it if you feel that it's not really what your heart wants to do, if there is something else that will be even more fulfilling though not as high paying.

Somewhere along the line your perceptions have changed with maturity. Don't do a career because everyone expects you to do it, or because you already took all the classes and you feel like you are throwing away years of study. You do not want to spend the next fifty years getting up every day to do something your heart has no passion for.

Other altruistic career options if you're truly passionate about public service and you're not focusing on making money include the traditional ones you have heard of - teaching at inner city schools, joining the Peace Corps, and social work. But there are other fields that you can consider too.

My first real step into the non-pre-med realm was when I found a CUNY Law School pamphlet. I learned CUNY Law has a three-year program designed specifically for those interested in serving others and not the prestige or making millions. Students spend their third year in one of the school's six law clinics helping those who cannot afford legal services. I spoke to one student, a Stony Brook alum, who said that he was able to help parents bring their children to the U.S. at the school's immigration clinic.

There are other law schools that have public service programs as well. You can spend your career helping on an individual scale - assisting the elderly, victims of domestic violence, immigrants, and the less fortunate. You can also practice on a grand scale by working with other like-minded individuals to change health care laws to benefit everyone, amend international policies that only profit the wealthy and injure the impoverished, spread compliance of international human rights, or revise / devise global environmental policies.

There are law firms and schools that offer summer internships or programs in these fields so you can experience first hand what public service and 'helping people' can mean for you. The Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Legal Aid Society are just three examples of programs and volunteer opportunities that you can find online.

If you define happiness by more than a dollar sign, don't settle for what others want you to do if your heart's not into it. Success and satisfaction in life does not only come with a medical degree.

Life Changes : The Seasons at Stony Brook University

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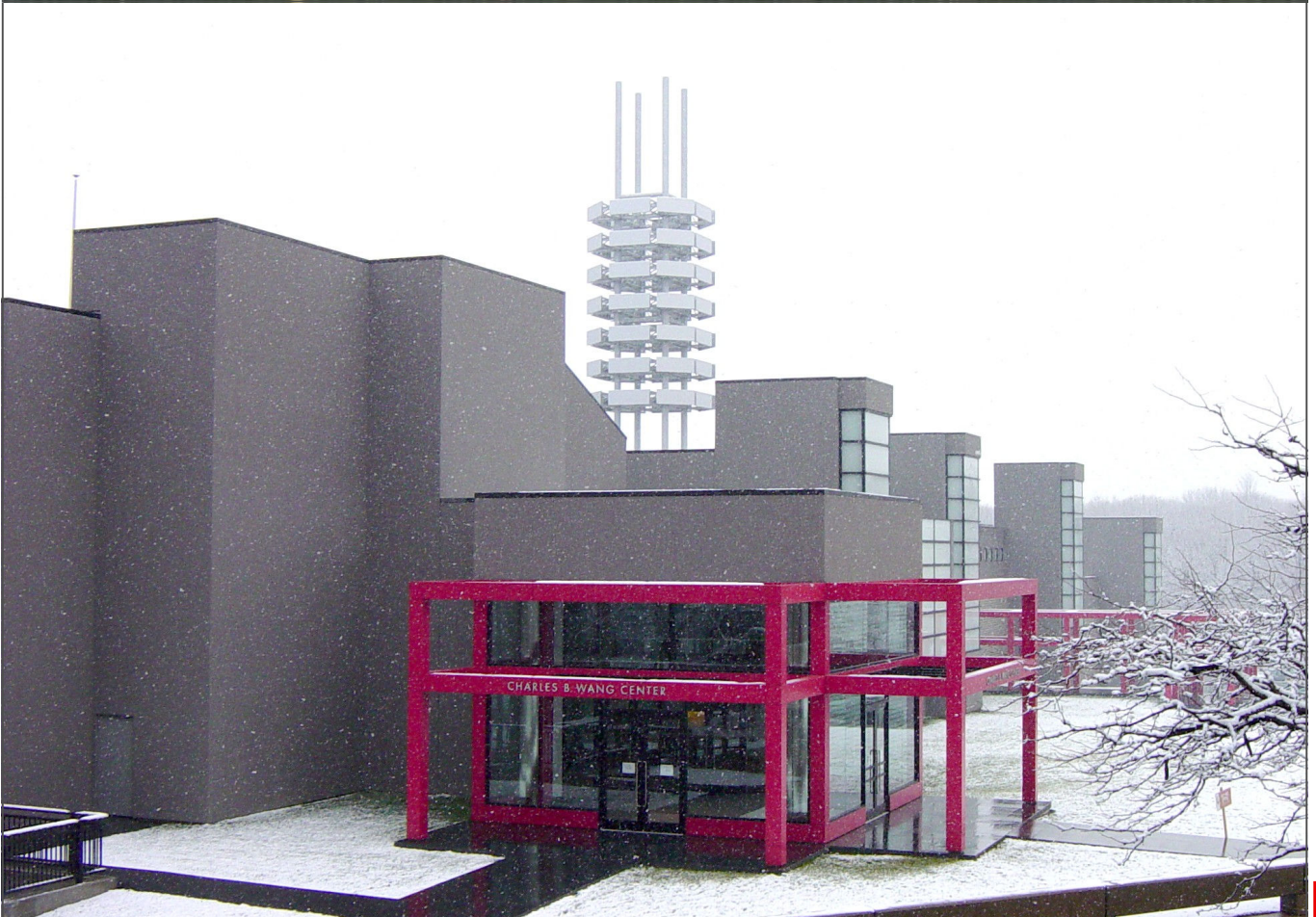
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