

# PACIFIC RIM

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Volume 2

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Issue 9

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2007

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# messages

In this issue's cover story, former lieutenant-governor of B.C. David Lam encourages people to plant cherry trees. This reminds me that like those beautiful trees, good ideas should blossom. A good idea that is blossoming at Langara College is the commitment to making the education here sustainable.

Sustainability means lots of things: how we treat the environment, how we look at the courses we offer, the way we relate to our students as individuals who are important to us. The Langara College Board is concerned with these concepts, so it has created a governance policy on environmental sustainability. The policy strives to minimize the impact we have on the environment and to promote a healthy respect for the environment among our students. It also directs the way we plan our physical spaces.

Our new library is a demonstration unit for this. The building has received a Holcim Foundation Award for Sustainable Construction and is moving toward LEEDS (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Certification, which is the second highest recognition for environmental sustainability any building can receive.

I'm proud of the library because it not only embraces sustainable design but also because it's esthetically pleasing, like this magazine. Being in that building is like living inside a sculpture. It's conducive to study. It's a really healthy environment.

The concrete roof has a wave that captures prevailing winds that come across the area. Wind tunnels open and close the windows to cool the building. Scalloped bulkheads beneath the roof hide radiant pipes, so instead of seeing the environmental systems, you see lots of curves. There's even a bamboo garden that's glass enclosed. The building is not just four square walls. It is a flowering example of sustainability.

Construction on the library will continue into the summer, and then the community will be invited to a big celebration. In the meantime, let's relax under a cherry tree and read this issue of *Pacific Rim Magazine*.

Linda Holmes, President

Sometime last year, Paul Sunga, director of international development at Langara College, came up with the idea that the college should earnestly encourage its employees and students to become environmentally conscious. He began to discuss the idea with colleagues. Out of those discussions grew Transforming Langara, an initiative that aims to make the college sustainable, environmentally and socially. A steering committee was born. Next came a series of seminars and "brown bag" lunches on key environmental topics. Participants discussed ways to convince the college and its people to do such things as offer a 100-mile diet (eating only what's produced nearby) in the cafeteria and bicycle to Langara rather than drive a gas gulping, carbon-belching vehicle.

Another of Transforming Langara's goals is to introduce environmental topics into curricula. This issue of *Pacific Rim Magazine* is doing that. Students in the Library Technician program, under the leadership of instructor Ann Calla, researched environmental problems and successes in Pacific Rim countries. The editors of *PRM*, all students in the Publishing program, worked on shaping the reports into Environmental Yardstick pages. Our art department, also Publishing students, gave the pages graphic appeal.

And here you have it: the first issue of *Pacific Rim Magazine* to take an in-depth look at the wide scope of environmental issues in the Asia Pacific. Many Pacific Rim countries are dealing with horrendous environmental degradation. Some are tackling their problems with aplomb. Some are doing too little, but hopefully it is not too late — for them and for our planet. Please read the environmental pages and think about how we can all do better.

Elizabeth Rains, Publisher

Our role as editors was to take seemingly unrelated articles and create a cohesive whole. The Publishing students submitted the pieces in the fall semester and as we shaped and fine-tuned them, we found balance among the ideas. *Pacific Rim Magazine* 2007 showcases the diversity of cultural identity.

This need for balance also exists in the environment; people unavoidably affect those around them. We are all interconnected. Forest fires in Indonesia have created air pollution in neighbouring countries, the absence of peace between North and South Korea has produced an economically pristine habitat in the demilitarized zone, and increased consumption of natural resources worldwide is resulting in higher toxic emissions and depletion of the earth's riches. Within each article lie these values of interconnection, from the gift of cherry blossoms, to nations collaborating to develop environmental practices. We need to focus on improving and maintaining these relationships, as we have learned through production of *Pacific Rim Magazine*.

We hope readers will be able to appreciate the content we have presented. Our mission was to provoke thought and discussion while expanding the reader's knowledge. Perhaps these ideas will spark new initiatives in your own community.

Monica Miller, Managing Editor  
Meryl Howsam, Associate Editor  
Rachel Burns, Features Editor  
Rachel Reid, Food Editor



COVER PHOTO by Kevin Lanthier

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## FEATURES

- 08**    **Against the Grain**  
*Admiring natural and timeless ideals in Japanese furniture*
- 25**    **The Precision of Beauty**  
*A new look at double eyelid surgery*
- 32**    **Decorating Vancouver**  
*David Lam's blossoming vision*
- 46**    **The Language Map**  
*Documenting the world's words with the Rosetta Project*
- 59**    **Elements of Tranquility**  
*The art of Japanese Zen gardens*
- 

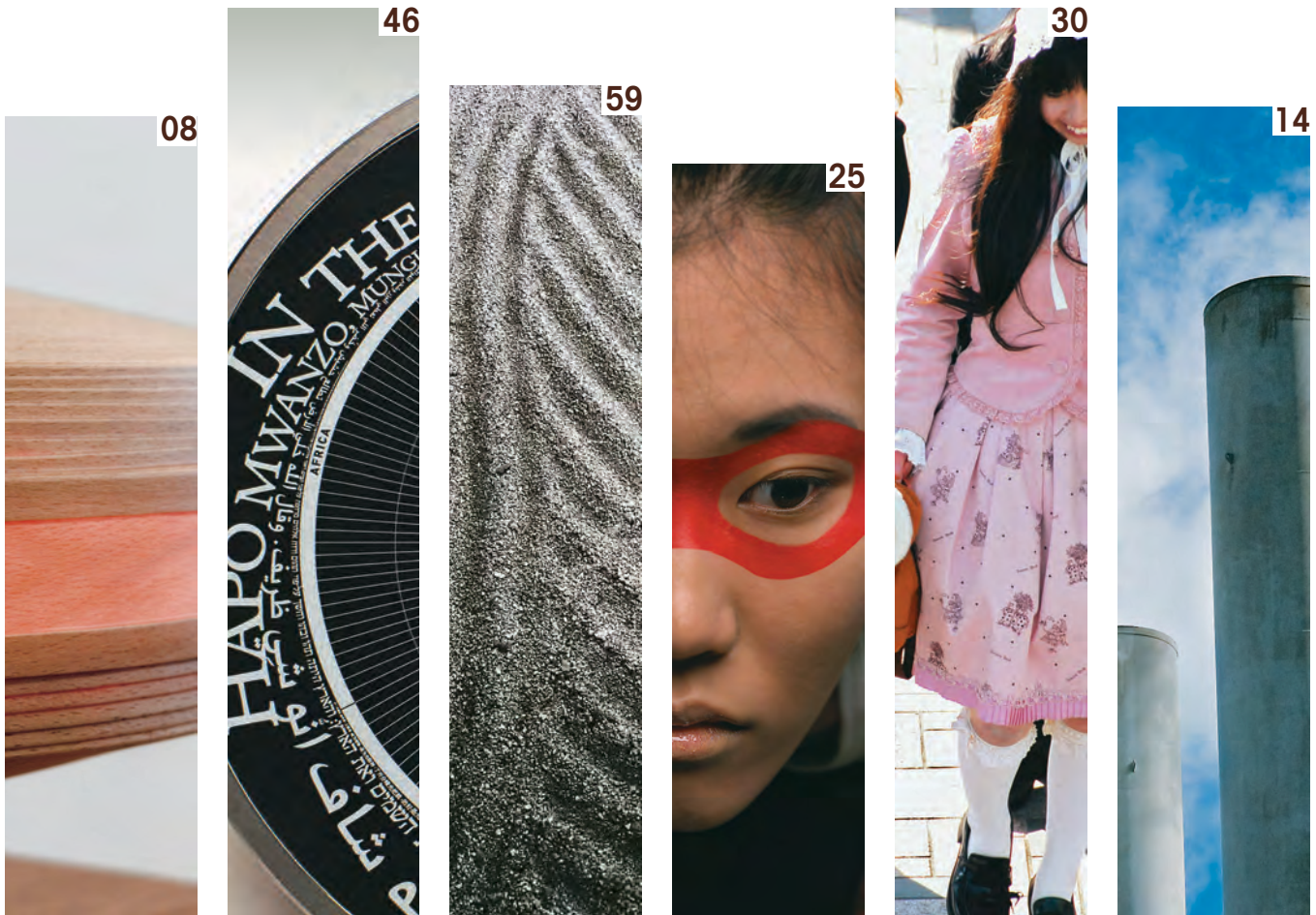
## arts

- 23**    **Learning by Ear**  
*Balinese music by Gamelan Gita Asmara*
- 28**    **An Open Stage**  
*The Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre breaks cultural barriers*
- 30**    **Harajuku Fashions**  
*Displaying diverse styles from one Tokyo district*
- 39**    **Paying Homage to the Instruments**  
*Rare 18th century instruments lent to The Borealis String Quartet*
- 49**    **Cracked Up!**  
*Egg-themed art by Junichiro Iwase exhibited in Vancouver*
- 58**    **A Taste of Success**  
*Singer Anne Fernando's story*

## culture

- 12**    **Fight in Flight**  
*The aerial tradition of kite fighting*
- 20**    **A Stronger Community**  
*Harmony through the martial art of aikido*
- 40**    **For the Love of a Donut**  
*Tim Hortons and Mr. Donut — cultural icons*
- 44**    **Fitness and Friendship**  
*The BC Outdoor Recreation Club invites all to participate*





## social issues

- 14**    **Initiatives in Chinese Mills**  
*Reducing the environmental footprint*
- 24**    **Organ Transplants in China**  
*Allegations arise of unethical medical practices*
- 42**    **Peril in the Jungle**  
*Palm oil plantations put Indonesia's orangutans in danger*
- 50**    **Letting the Dogs in**  
*Cafés in the Asian-Pacific have let pets in their doors — will Vancouver?*

## departments

- 03**    **Messages**
- 18**    **Environmental Yardstick**  
*How do Pacific Rim countries compare?*
- 36**    **Flavours of Vancouver**  
*Restaurant reviews*  
*Cabin 5555*  
*Red Door*  
*Kitanoya Guu*
- 55**    **Travel in the Pacific Rim**  
*... Did you know?*
- 62**    **Final Word**



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# against the grain



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STORY by Bronwyn Kent  
PHOTOS by Felix Wong



furniture its individuality. Pieces are kept very simple; designs tend to steer away from the ornate, keeping them practical and reflecting the natural materials from which they come.

This design concept lies in the system of *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi* is the quintessence of modesty and humility and is a reaction against austerity and pretension. *Sabi* is the maturity that can only be attained after years of wear and existence. Together, they form the balance and unity found in nature. Asymmetry and natural

an element of nature can one achieve *shibui*. Subtlety of one's possessions was integral to the lives of the merchant class during the Edo period (1603–1867). As the 'lowest' of class in Japanese society, they had to find ways to adorn their possessions and goods without looking as though they were trying to overstep class borders. Although this is no longer applicable today, the idea is still an important factor in the design.

Cromie says the mood and lighting of pieces directly influence the atmosphere and warmth. Only the finest woods are used, and are finished with a coat of natural lacquer to bring out the beauty of the grain. This, mixed with the perfect lighting, can create tremendously comfortable surroundings. In the Kozai gallery showroom, the furniture and lighting create a cozy feeling that makes you want to reach out and touch every piece.

The colour of the wood also plays a big part in the feeling of a piece of furniture. The types of wood finish cause the differences in colour. For warmer tones, lighter woods such as eastern maple or elm are used. For darker pieces, walnut or rosewood could be used, but the natural texture shows through. Painting the wood is not common practice, since in some box stores particleboard is painted and sold for low prices.

The Japanese have revolutionized joinery for furniture-makers worldwide and are well known for the complexity of joints. Without the use of nails or pegs they have achieved impeccable structure and design, using intricately carved joints. Very



Above: Bucano table light creates a soft amber glow

few rigid joints are used compared to North American and European design. Traditionally, due to the threat of earthquakes, typhoons, and other natural hazards, joints were built to absorb shock and withstand severe circumstance.

"Japanese furniture fits in perfectly amongst traditional West Coast homes and even enhances the look amongst the eclecticism," explained Ashley Nelson, an interior designer on Vancouver Island for over 12 years. Nelson has experienced an increased demand for Japanese-style furniture in the past few years.

In keeping the furniture as natural as possible, designers let nature speak through the medium. "The question of beauty is reduced to the elements of grace and utility, devoid of novelty," said Gary Kent, a local woodworker who, throughout his career, has been inspired by Japanese design techniques. It is no wonder that Japanese style is 'in' among designers, artists, and consumers alike. It may seem simple in appearance, but it is aesthetically deceptive. It represents great craftsmanship of the furniture maker and nature itself, and transforms each piece into a work of art. **PRM**

“Japanese furniture design, in both rural and urban areas, reflects an inextricable link to the raw beauty of nature.”

forms provide contrast against modern society and our manufactured world, allowing and celebrating imperfections. This provides a refreshing change from obsessions with ornate and faultless beauty.

The Japanese name for subtlety and simplicity in design is *shibui*. It is described as the height of beauty that makes you want to look twice but leaves you unable to explain why. It possesses a natural element and magnetism that cannot be explained. Only by combining superior craftsmanship and material with

Below: Edge of Hokkaido table





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# fight in flight

duelling kites: an aerial sporting tradition

Every second weekend in June at the Pacific Rim Kite Festival in Vanier Park, Vancouver, competitors take a new flip on an ancient tradition — kite fighting. Unlike traditional kite flying, with images of whimsical people wearing syrupy smiles and calmly flying kites under gentle breezes, kite fighting is a full-fledged competitive sport. The only similarities

between the two is in the skill and kaleidoscopic brilliance: an artisan's fine-tuned work grazing the skies while the kiteflier extorts and manipulates the strings with complete mastery.

Keeping a kite afloat, as well as multi-line use, performing tricks, and indoor kiting, are all portrayals of kites in the realm of sporting. Kite fighting differs from these sports, however, as it is often in teams and involves fierce competition. Competitors attempt to either

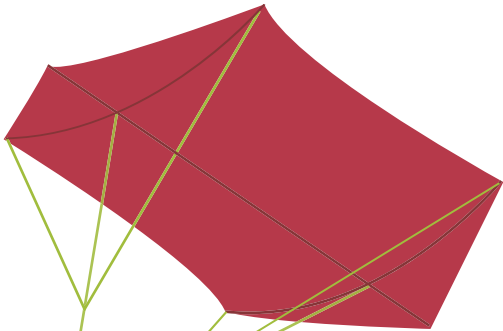
cut their opponents' lines out of the sky or tip their opponents' kites off-balance, sending them crashing to the ground. The last kite flying is declared the winner.

This type of flying can be seen around the world, from Afghanistan to Hong Kong, from India to Japan. Different countries and cultures have various approaches to the sport: single competitors in Canada rely on the sharpness of nylon and their skills to deftly maneuver, while competitors in Pakistan affix sharp objects to their lines, such as shards of glass, for more effective cutting.

According to Nigel Spaxman, kite enthusiast and participant in the British Columbia Kite Association's annual kite festival in Vanier Park, kite fighting with added 'weaponry' creates a dangerous sport. "Many people have died or have been hurt from left over lines," he stated. Although he has been a participant in the festival, he declines to compare what goes on in Vanier Park to

STORY by Rachel Burns  
ILLUSTRATIONS by Fiona Kerr

“Competitors attempt to either cut their opponents’ lines out of the sky, or tip their opponents’ kites off-balance, sending them crashing to the ground.”



the traditional *Rokkaku* style found in Japan. Rokkaku, coming from the Japanese word *rokku* for ‘six,’ is a visual aid in defining which kites are fighter kites — they are mostly six-sided.

Within Japan itself, there are many kite fighting styles and festivals. Shirone boasts one of the largest kite fighting festivals in Japan, a tradition dating back to 1740. The fighting is held at opposite banks of the Nakanoguchi River. The kite itself is not a standard size; it is over five metres wide, seven metres high, and weighs approximately 30 kilograms. In addition, the cost of creating one of these kites runs upwards of 1,500,000 yen (roughly \$15,000 Canadian dollars). A kite of such enormity requires more than one person to control it; thus teams are formed, and they engage in battles on the riverbank.


Japan’s festivals have rich stories behind them, dating back centuries. The Hamamatsu Festival, for example, was created to celebrate the birth of the first son of the Lord of Hikuma Castle. A large kite in the name of the heir was flown for the festivities. After this inaugural flight, kite fighting has also taken place with special fighter kites being brought into town, measuring 1.5m–3.64m. These kites are called *machijirushi*, as a large ‘mark’ of each town block is painted on its own kite. In Japanese, *machi* is the word for town, and *jirushi* is the word for mark.

Up to 50 men, wearing clothing designed for the occasion, pull their town’s kite string, which is generally made of hemp. With similar yet larger-scale aims, as in the kite fighting described earlier, each town tries to cut the other out of the sky by using its lines. The festival is intensely popular and is said to have over two million attendees.

The British Columbia Kitefliers Association Pacific Rim Kite Festival has been going on for approximately 25 years. It is a loosely-planned event, keeping a casual atmosphere and avoiding unnecessary organization from its over 80 members. In addition to the kite fighting, there are many other festivities involved. Hundreds of families turn up each year and witness sights such as Ray Bethell’s mutli-line flying, and may try their hand at making their own kites from one of the booths on-site. For only two dollars, children learn how to create their own kites from nylon string and plastic bags. A public address system plays music to accompany the aerial-themed events. “People often dress to match their kites,” said Spaxman. Keeping ‘in line’ with the light-hearted fun of the events, there is no judging for any performances. The only real competition is the Rokkaku kite-fight, Vancouver-style.

Kite fighting at Vanier Park is a solo mission, with no teams present. Since the object of Rokkaku is to make the kites crash, most do not use

their best kite for fighting, as it may get torn or ripped. It is especially upsetting to see a creation ruined, since over three-quarters of the members design and build the kites themselves. To create enough friction for cutting, the kite strings are made of nylon, or occasionally Kevlar, both being extremely conducive to the sport. Although no one attaches any sharp devices or cutting implements to their lines, occasionally there are subtle acts of aggression. “Sometimes people will tackle, but that’s against the rules,” remarked Spaxman.

Rokkaku style battles seem to be a crowd favourite at the BCKA, drawing a large proportion of the festival’s spectators. Attend a local version of traditional kite fighting: June 9–10, 2007 in Vanier Park. 

For more information, visit <http://www.bcka.bc.ca/Events/PacRim.htm>



# initiatives in chinese mills

reducing the  
environmental  
footprint

STORY by Ginger Erskine  
PHOTO by Kevin Lanthier

From pencils to purses, the notorious 'Made In China' label is gaining momentum. The nation of China has quickly risen to the top of an ever-competitive production industry within an extremely brief timeframe. Rapid modernization is apparent all over China; progress that developed over a century ago in the West is now exploding on the Asian front. As the environmental costs of such rapid expansion became evident, IBM Canada Ltd., SNC-Lavalin Group Inc., and ESSA Technologies Ltd. formed a group to brainstorm a Chinese production pollution solution.

China opened its doors to the free market in the mid-1990s, inciting a dramatic culture change. Since then, American outsourcing and manufacturing has boosted China's gross domestic product beyond belief. However, along with this industrial success came a staggering environmental toll.

Mark Osterman, an environmental audit and management systems specialist with the SNC-Lavalin Group Inc., has watched China's change for almost a decade. He raved how the change was "the most spectacular thing to witness." While he worked for the China-Canada Cooperation in Cleaner Production (CCCPCP), he was fascinated by the rate at which China underwent such a

dramatic metamorphosis. Osterman described the country's streets as being loaded with bicyclists in 1996. In contrast, nine years later, cars and buses were plentiful, while bikes were scarcely seen. A tea-consuming culture had been transformed nearly overnight when the first Starbucks franchise opened for business in Beijing.

As an environmental audit specialist, Osterman visited factories in both rural and urban China to assess their impact on the environment. Fortunately, the Chinese factory and mill managers with whom

Osterman worked were open-minded, and they committed to pollution prevention. The CCCPCP stressed the importance of linking environmental management and protection with increasing the economic efficiency of factories. The project's

“Many Chinese mills have also begun to reuse water, keeping their ecological footprint to a minimum.”

team suggested no-cost or low-cost solutions to deal with different dilemmas.

For example a solution was created, reducing the amount of water that Chinese pulp and paper mills use. A large amount of water is generally used to produce sheets of paper, the process involving blending water and pulp into a soupy mix. The stock is then strained with screens and rolled out to be dried. Before meeting the



CCCPCP, Chinese mills would clean the screens with open hoses — even though less water would be wasted if a nozzle was attached. The demonstration of nozzle use at Anhui Paper Mill caught managers' attention after the project's team publicized their positive results. The CCCPCP passed out manuals about environmental and economic benefits, and published a website to spread the word. Consequently, many Chinese paper mills now use water more efficiently and consume less energy (principally coal), for a given output of paper.



PHOTO by Bronwyn Kent

Additionally, many Chinese mills have also begun to reuse water, as do all Canadian paper mills, keeping their ecological footprint to a minimum. Mike Shelton is a mechanical supervisor at Norampac Inc., a recycled-paper mill, and knows the Canadian paper process thoroughly. Shelton described how water is cleaned and reused. After paper is made, the used liquid is pushed through a screen to remove larger solids, and a flocculent is added. Flocculent is a chemical that causes small particles of pulp to group together and fall to the bottom as sludge. The muddy looking mixture can be returned to the process and added to new paper. This does not purify the water enough to return to the river, however the mills can reuse the water in production, and in cleaning facility tools. Recycling water reduces the amount taken

from local surroundings, and the amount of dirty water returned to natural reserves.

While the project team enjoyed this kind of success, Project Director Ken Parent of IBM Canada Ltd. admitted that the team did have their difficulties. The S.A.R.S. outbreak prevented Parent and his staff from travelling to China, and forced the team to keep in contact by email; it was important to keep the momentum going during the devastating outbreak. Other obstacles included

convincing the Chinese locals that cost-efficient solutions did exist. "[Locals] were skeptical that results could be achieved without a massive investment," Parent said.

Osterman explained how money saving did not affect mill managers before China opened up to the world. Before the free market system was introduced, managers were not rewarded for making more money for their mill. They were only rewarded for reaching production targets, which gave them no incentive

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*Thinking of moving?*






Mitchell Press in Vancouver makes an effort to meet demands for higher recycled content in paper.

to be efficient. Once the managers realized the economic benefits, they were quick to adapt their workplaces into more environmentally conducive sites.

Chinese involvement with the Canadian non-governmental organization, (NGO), made the project thrive. The project collaborated directly with locals, in lieu of just providing donations. Instead of shipping technology from Canada, solutions for the project were manufactured locally. This project was guided by Chinese products, with support from the Chinese authorities.

Success stories such as these demonstrate how environmental awareness is gaining momentum in countries facing rapid, industrial change. Though already a 'developed' nation, Canada needs to remember its own environmental impact as well. The lifestyles we maintain in North America are generally wasteful and consumptive, and Canada could consider making greater attempts to assist other nations with environmental protection. 

## green machine

Moisture-free paper was a dilemma. "Recycled paper starts out as 96 percent water and four percent fiber," explained Mechanical Supervisor Mike Shelton. So much liquid is needed in the process that the paper mill now collects rainwater to address the issue. Spread out over Norampac Inc.'s 50 acre property, a system of simple gutters collects the water that would have been puddles on the ground.

This saved water is used throughout the papermaking process, from cleaning screens to removing plastic and tinfoil from juice boxes. Instead of sending Tetra Pak containers to garbage sites, the paper mill removes plastic and tinfoil and keeps the paper pulp. According to Shelton, drink containers are boiled and pulp is mechanically separated.

Turning garbage into a money-making product is energy efficient and environmentally stable. It emphasizes the key idea behind recycling, which is to reduce pollution by revamping old products. The process becomes perpetually greener.

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# environmental yardstick

## how do countries compare?

### AIR

#### INDONESIA

According to a UN report in October 2006, over 500 forest fires were raging per day in Indonesia. These fires were not accidental; they were started by timber and plantation companies.

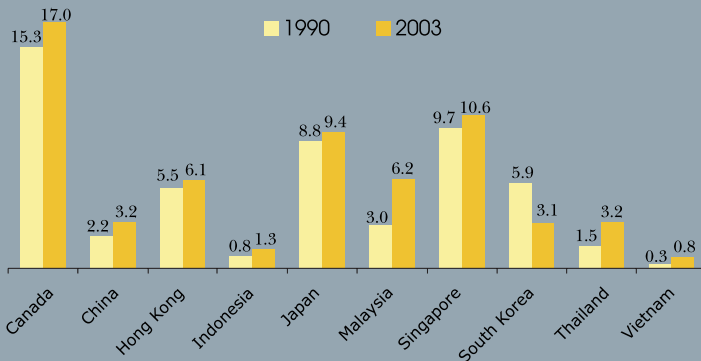
The air pollution index in Pontianak, Malaysia, reached a staggering 913. An index of 101–200 is considered 'unhealthy,' while 300–550 is 'dangerous.' The thick black smoke travelled, covering parts of the neighbouring

countries of Malaysia and Singapore.

Tragically, according to the Indonesian Association of Medicinal Plants Exporters, more than 100 species of medicinal plants have been lost due to the fires.

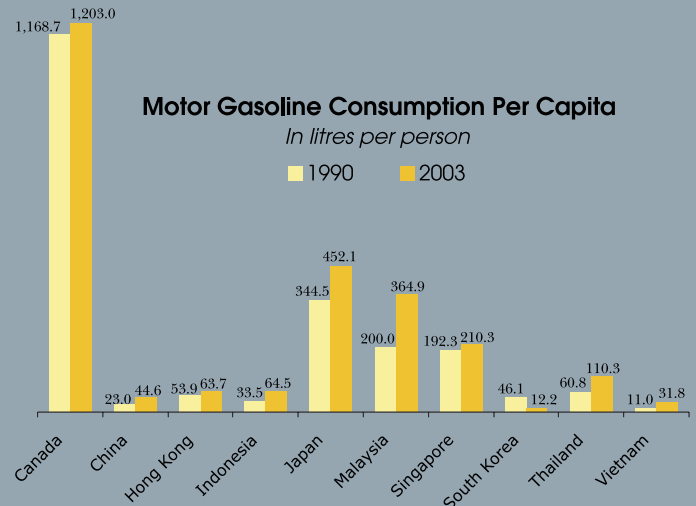
**CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Per Capita**  
In thousand metric tonnes

1990 2003



**Motor Gasoline Consumption Per Capita**  
In litres per person

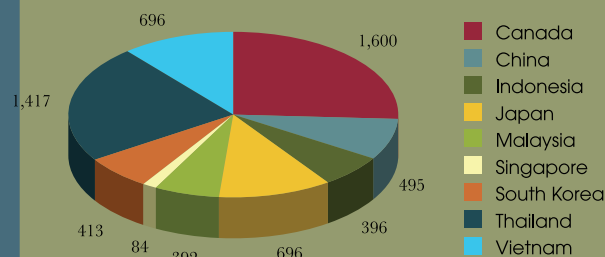
1990 2003



GRAPH ILLUSTRATIONS by Fiona Kerr

### WATER

**Water Consumption per Capita**  
In cubic metres per person



#### HONG KONG

Half of the sewage from Hong Kong goes untreated into the water.

#### CHINA

70% of China's rivers and lakes are polluted with industrial chemicals or human and animal excreta.

"Nearly 70% of the Heihe (or 'Black River') is comprised of waste water. The Henan Provincial Medical College

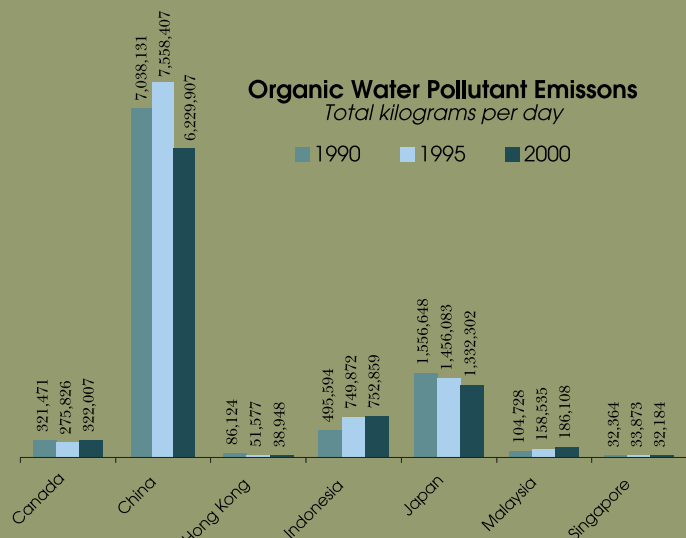
found that the death rate in the area is 30% higher and the malignant tumour rate is more than twice as much as the nation's average. It has been found that the livers of 90% of the children

who live in the area have been affected by disease, and in the last two decades, none from the area has been physically healthy enough to qualify for the People's Liberation Army."

<http://www.h2o-china.com>

**Organic Water Pollutant Emissions**  
Total kilograms per day

1990 1995 2000



## ENERGY

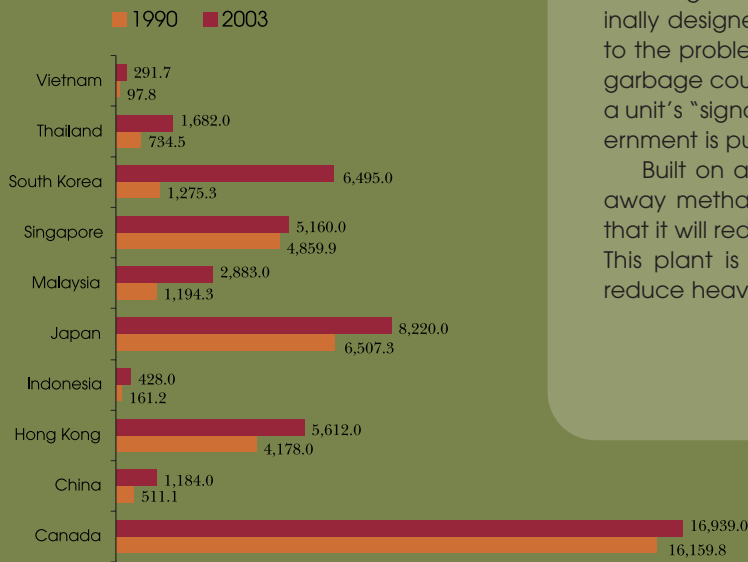
### SOUTH KOREA

South Korea now boasts the world's largest biorefinery, or in layman's terms, 'garbage-fueled power plant.' Scientists at Purdue University originally designed the technology for the US military. It provided a solution to the problems associated with garbage left behind by soldiers, as the garbage could potentially provide clues to enemies and is referred to as a unit's "signature." No longer used for military purposes, the Korean government is putting the plant to practical use.

Built on a garbage dump in Incheon, the 50-megawatt plant burns away methane naturally generated from the garbage. It is estimated that it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1.37 million tons annually. This plant is designed to provide power to 180,000 households and reduce heavy oil imports by 500,000 barrels annually.

### Total Electricity Consumption Per Capita

In kilowatt-hours per person



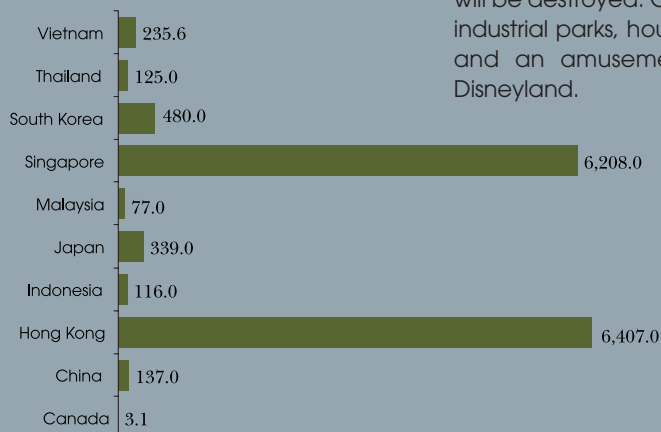
## LAND

### HONG KONG/SINGAPORE

Population density is a serious problem for waste management and air quality. In Hong Kong, families often live in spaces of 200m<sup>2</sup> or less. Landfills are piled up to a height of 80 storeys.

### Population Density

In persons per square kilometre

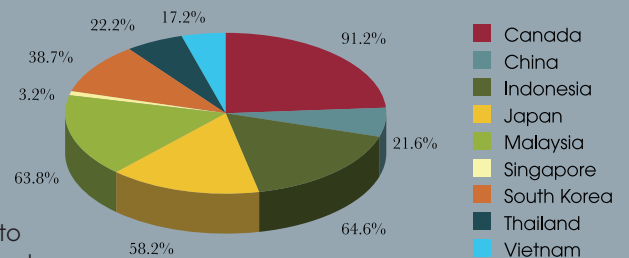


### SOUTH KOREA

Between North and South Korea lies the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ. It is home to two of the world's most endangered birds, as well as more than 51 species of mammals, and over 1,100 plant species. Ironically, the biggest threat to its preservation — peace. If North and South Korea sign an agreement, this lush area of untouched land will be destroyed. Current plans include industrial parks, housing developments, and an amusement park similar to Disneyland.

### Forested Area

As a % of original forests remaining



### VIETNAM

"Over 72 million litres of herbicides destroyed roughly 10% of southern Vietnam's valuable forests, including nearly 1/3 of the coastal mangroves which play vital roles in coastal ecology and in sustaining fish stocks.

"Altogether, the damage to the environment was so intense and widespread that it gave rise to the term 'ecocide.' Nearly three decades later, many of the affected ecosystems have still not recovered."

Report for the Environmental Conference on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

<http://www.nnn.se/vietnam/ecology.pdf>



# a stronger community

finding harmony through the martial art of aikido

STORY by David Botten  
PHOTOS by Travis Jeffers

For the past 11 years, local residents from a wide range of ages and abilities have met regularly near Granville Street, taking turns fending off each other's blows. Participants grab, punch, and kick at one another, sometimes with many people attacking just one. If someone gets tossed in the attempt, he or she nimbly rolls with the throw and is soon on his or her feet, ready to attack or be attacked again. This is not a fight club; The Gathering Place is a community centre where

students learn to blend together harmoniously through the Japanese martial art of aikido.

In 1995, while making plans for a new downtown community centre, Recreation Programmer Peter Greenwell knew martial arts would be part of the offerings. A survey of 1,000 downtown residents had revealed a desire, particularly from youth, to learn self-defence and physical skills. Martial arts seemed a natural opportunity to teach these skills, while also increasing participants'



balance, flexibility, and strength. After finding out what made other centres successful, he put out calls for instructors of judo and Tai Chi. One teacher contacted him offering aikido, a martial art foreign to Peter — and likely to the general public as well.

Sensei Michael St. Germain, a fourth degree aikido black belt, began studying in Vancouver under Sensei Y. Kawahara, a *Shihan* (master teacher) and the Technical Director of the Canadian Aikido Federation. Sensei St. Germain was impressed immediately with what he described as “the smartness of the movements, the intelligence.” Aikido’s movements are smooth and often circular in motion, since participants turn and blend with the force of an incoming attack before capturing and grounding it. Aikido’s techniques protect not only the defender, but also the attacker. “I don’t like hurting people,” Sensei St. Germain says, “and aikido gives me a chance not to hurt people.” He eventually began

teaching, and then formed his own dojo (training place) calling it Granville Aikikai.

In 1995, Sensei St. Germain heard about plans for The Gathering Place in downtown Vancouver. He says he contacted Peter about being involved with the community centre because it was part of the neighbourhood. It was also a chance to offer aikido to downtown youth and to others who were not able to afford regular club fees.

The Gathering Place officially opened on December 6th, 1995, offering laundry facilities, showers, a hot tub, weight room, library, day storage, and affordable food to downtown residents young and old for one dollar a year. In addition to the martial arts of aikido, judo, taekwon do, and Tai Chi, classes were offered in qi-gong, yoga, reiki, dance, visual arts, music, and theatre. Not exclusively a sports and arts centre, one can complete high school courses through the Learning Centre at The Gathering Place. Now, 11 years later, most of those founding programs are still available to the centre’s members, which topped 4,000 in 2007. Membership is still just one dollar a year, though there is now an additional five-dollar annual fee for certain activities, such as aikido.

Wendy Wood has been the Youth Programmer at The Gathering Place since its inception and has seen the positive effect aikido has on participants. “It offers discipline,” she says, “beyond self defence. It’s about taking care of yourself.”

Aikido’s effectiveness does not rely on strength. There are no competitions; practice is cooperative and geared to a person’s abilities — it can be practiced safely by people of all ages. Students enrolled in aikido classes at The Gathering Place have ranged from children to seniors. According to Wood, this “builds bridges between groups, making a stronger community.”

Greenwell surveyed students about their opinions regarding the classes. From these surveys, he found Sensei St. Germain to be a popular instructor and a positive role model. Greenwell feels the success of the program is in the connection students make with their classmates and instructors. “So many people are isolated,”

## the art of peace

Aikido is a unique martial art founded in this century by Morihei Ueshiba, known as O Sensei to aikido students around the world. O Sensei was a master of traditional sword, staff, and spear fighting as well as of several styles of ju-jitsu. He adapted elements of these arts and added techniques of his own creation to develop a martial art that was more harmonious with his philosophical and spiritual beliefs desiring techniques of harmony, rather than of contention. In 1942 he named his new art aikido, which can be translated as ‘The Way of Harmonizing Energy,’ ‘The Way of Unity With the Fundamental Force of the Universe,’ or, more simply, ‘The Art of Peace.’ Part of O Sensei’s genius was taking techniques that were created to cause devastating damage, and modifying them to control an opponent without causing them injury.

In aikido, there is no sparring during practice. Training partners help each other learn by applying and receiving techniques as they alternate roles. Regular practice improves flexibility, posture, strength, balance, and coordination. In addition to martial skill, the aim of aikido is, as O Sensei stated, “to unify the mind and the body and to promote peace, harmony, and cooperation among all beings.”

Morihei Ueshiba passed away in 1969 and was awarded Japan’s highest honour when the government named him A Sacred National Treasure of Japan.

For more information, visit

<http://www.aikidoonline.com>

<http://www.granvilleaikikai.org>

<http://www.vancouverwestaikikai.com>



Participants watch techniques being demonstrated

he noted, “or it can be desperation that’s driving the groups they’re in.” Greenwell said the classes create a situation where people can positively function in a good group experience.

Since opening, hundreds of people have experienced aikido at The Gathering Place. As the classes take place in a public community centre, they draw a lot of curious observers, some of whom decide to try it out. For most people, it is the first time trying aikido, or even martial arts in general; some do not return, some



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come back for a while, and others keep coming back for years. Sensei St. Germain hopes everyone, despite how long they practice, will have something that stays with them. He said, however, that this is difficult to judge.

Grant Babin is a student who stayed for years. When Babin started aikido at The Gathering Place in 1997, he was on welfare, recently out of a long relationship, and living in a shared house with five others. He had been introduced to aikido in Victoria and was pleased to learn that it was available at The Gathering Place. Babin said that at the time, other dojos would have been out of reach financially. At The Gathering Place, he “found good people

and a good community that helped [him] bounce back up.” Babin practiced regularly for nine years, during his return to school for a diploma in agriculture. At this time he also met and moved in with a new partner, sharing the responsibility of raising her daughter. In 2005, shortly after being granted his black belt in aikido, Babin moved with his new family to Thetis Island, where he is building a home and a dojo. He has started teaching classes at the island’s community centre. “I have to keep practising,” he emphasizes. “I enjoy it, and it’s either use it or lose it.”

If The Gathering Place had a poster child, it could be Alphie Zupan. Zupan was 21 when she started aikido in 1998. She had recently moved out of a car to occupy a room above a café on West Hastings. She found herself working odd jobs and did not know what she wanted to do with her life, except that she wanted to travel. She had never heard of aikido and did not know what martial arts really were. However, Zupan was avidly interested in working with inner energy, what the Japanese call *ki* and the Chinese call *qi* or *chi*. A friend told her about aikido at The Gathering Place and she liked the idea of practice that worked with ki energy while at the same time being physically demanding. Zupan claimed that she benefited

from aikido on every level — physical, spiritual, and mental. “It helped me get to the core of myself.”

Zupan was so taken with aikido that in 2001, upon hearing of a company looking for English speakers to teach the martial art to children in Japan, she jumped at the opportunity. As she put it, “How could you not walk that road when

“She benefited from aikido on every level — physical, spiritual, and mental. “It helped me get to the core of myself,” Zupan explained.”

the door opened like that?” While in Tokyo, Zupan took advantage of the opportunity to practice at Hombu Dojo, the Aikikai Foundation Aikido World Headquarters. She felt she had been well prepared to train at aikido’s main dojo. “Sensei [St. Germain] taught me good etiquette,” she said. “I picked up the nuances by watching.” After three years of working and training extensively in Japan, Zupan returned to Canada with her second degree black belt. She is now studying Hospitality Operations Management with plans to work internationally. She will continue studying and developing in aikido, and wants to learn how to transmit what she is learning. Zupan plans on returning to Japan in the future, to live and to train.

New students continue to discover aikido at The Gathering Place, and for some it will be a life changing experience. **PRM**

The Gathering Place is at  
609 Helmcken St. Vancouver  
Phone: (604) 665-2391  
Aikido classes take place  
Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.,  
Saturdays at 11:00 a.m., and  
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

# learning by ear



Michael Tenzer and I Wayan Sudirana with the set.



I Wayan Sudirana



## Balinese music with Gamelan Gita Asmara

STORY by Meryl Howsam  
PHOTOS by Laara Cerman

Gamelan Gita Asmara, loosely translated as Gamelan of the Song of Love, is a Vancouver-based Balinese music ensemble that rehearses at the University of British Columbia. It is made up of people from a variety of musical backgrounds, including professional musicians, university graduate students, and anyone else interested.

A gamelan set, according to ensemble director and UBC music professor Michael Tenzer, refers to the full collection of instruments built and tuned to be an inseparable unit. Among Gamelan Gita Asmara's set (a new type called *Semarandhana*), are gongs, drums, and metallophones.

During rehearsal at UBC, the intricately designed metallophones were set up at either side of the ensemble. One group of instruments had seven keys each; the others had 12. The 12-key group is collectively called *gangs*, and included are four *kantilan*, which play the highest octaves; four *pemade*, the middle octaves; and an *ugal*, the lowest octaves and leader of the section. Included in the seven-key group are three pairs of instruments called *jegogan*, *calung*, and *penyacah*, from lowest to highest pitches respectively.

In the spaces between and behind these instruments were various drums and gongs. Included were two drums

with multiple rhythmic functions, a long row of small gongs called *reyong*, and a *kajar* or *kempli*, a gong that keeps time.

Using few words, Tenzer signaled for the ensemble to begin. What resulted was a loud, full burst of sound. All of the musicians began in

“Unlike traditional instruction, there is no sheet music. Music in Bali is all learned by ear.”

unison, the ringing metallophones supported by the deeper sounds of the gongs and drums.


The ensemble played for over ten minutes, varying tempo, dynamics, and the number of musicians playing at one time. The *ugal* player had small solos that incited a musical call-and-answer session, and occasionally some of the instruments, such as the bass melody instruments, sat out for various parts of the song.

Fellow instructor, composer, and Bali native I Wayan Sudirana finally stopped the group. He demonstrated

how the song should sound by singing and clapping the different parts, which the ensemble then emulated. Unlike traditional instruction, there is no sheet music. According to Sudirana, music in Bali is all learned by ear.

The rehearsal continued with a singing section, a flute part, and all of the gamelan set together. There were several reoccurring musical motifs, especially from the metallophones. The musicians constantly worked together; complementing, balancing, and taking cues from each other. Sudirana explained that all of the instruments — the gamelan set — create one sound; they are never played on their own.

Gamelan Gita Asmara is one of many ensembles that perform in Vancouver during the year. They are often joined by professional Balinese musicians and dancers. Families are encouraged to attend, and the performances are free for children.

The ensemble is always open to accepting new members, and rehearses twice a week from September to May. For those interested in learning more about Balinese music, community workshops are available. 

For more information, please visit: <http://www.gitaasmara.ca>



# organ transplants in China

what is the truth?

For a number of years, reports have flooded the news about China harvesting organs of Falun Gong prisoners. Many countries, including England, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, have had media coverage relating to these allegations. There have been statements from Falun Gong practitioners recounting their sufferings while imprisoned by the Chinese Government. John Russell, a Philosophy instructor at Langara College, states, "These allegations are not new; suspicions of such activities have been around for at least 15 years."

The Chinese Embassy in Canada issued a statement in July 2006, "Falun Gong has been spreading the rumour that more than 6,000 Falun Gong practitioners were cremated after their organs had been illegally transplanted at a 'concentration camp' in [the] Sujiatun Hospital, Shenyang,

Liaoning Province, China." The Chinese Embassy in Canada states that China has a responsibility to the principles of the World Health Organization, and that they have followed these guidelines in all instances.

According to a statement issued by the Chinese Embassy in Canada, China's Communist Government banned Falun Gong in 1999 and deemed it an "anti-science, anti-humanity, and anti-society evil cult."


Li Hongzhi started Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong, as principles to "cultivate, or improve, their mind, body, and spirit." According to the Canadian Falun Dafa website, it is "based on the universal principle of 'Truthfulness-Compassion-Forgiveness,'" as well as "performing Falun Dafa's five sets of gentle exercise," which includes meditation, sometimes enjoyed as a group activity.

The investigation relating to the rumours of organ transplants began in July 2006 by former Liberal MP David Kilgour and immigration lawyer David Matas. In a January 2007 story from *Canadian Press*, they asked the Foreign Affairs Department to "issue an advisory warning Canadians off of travelling to China for organ transplants."

Kilgour and Matas have collected countless reports and statements since last year that, according to *Canadian Press*, "doubled the evidence they had that unconscionable practices are taking place." The pair documented cases where "Canadians from Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver [travelled] to China for transplants."

Russell stresses how difficult it is to verify these allegations with a closed society such as China, but believes it is appropriate that Foreign Affairs issue a warning. He feels "where suspicions about the origin of the transplanted organs exist, the burden of proof lies with the provider" who needs to be able to prove that the organs were obtained legally. Russell also stresses caution in trusting information provided by sources as it could be fabricated.

Kilgour said in a CBS 11 News story from February 2007, "Since the persecution of Falun Gong five-years ago, the number of transplants has gone through the roof. In a five-year period, there have been about 41,500 organ transplants."

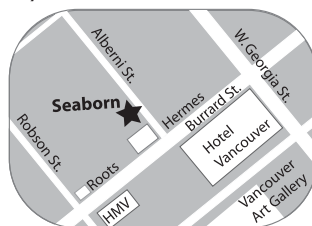
The Canadian Federal Government and other international organizations may put pressure on China for additional information regarding written donor consent, but it is very difficult to create change in another country without violating individual rights. If the Canadian Federal Government feels this is not enough to guarantee medical safety, it is within its power to spread awareness about the situation and to allow Canadians to make informed choices about travelling to China for transplants. 

STORY by Monica Miller



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# the precision of beauty

a new look at  
double eyelid surgery

It has been said that the eyes are the windows to the soul — a portal through which people can share their beauty. Although many believe this, to some, inner beauty is secondary to appearance. Across the Pacific Rim, individuals are flocking to surgeons to have their eyelids reconstructed with a procedure called Asian blepharoplasty. They are having their eyelids snipped and stitched to fit into an ideal of Asian beauty that values larger eyes. Lacking the stigma that goes along with plastic surgery, blepharoplasty is common in the Asian community, with some as young as 14 years old going under the knife. Widespread popularity of the surgery suggests the pressure to fit into an Asian ideal is more prevalent than ever.

Asian blepharoplasty, also known as double eyelid surgery, is a surgical procedure in which eyelids are reconstructed to incorporate a crease, or to alter a pre-existing one. According to William Pai-Dei Chen, the author of *Asian Blepharoplasty: A Surgical Atlas*, the surgery dates back to late 19th Century Japan, with the first operation being performed on a Japanese woman with a crease in only one eyelid. In this procedure, silk sutures were used to fix a crease, and the number of days they were left in the eyes

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STORY by Laura Tennant  
PHOTOS by Laara Cerman



determined the depth of the crease. The procedure has advanced significantly since then. Today's modern procedure, though fairly similar, is safer due to better materials and refined methods. At the beginning of the hour-long procedure, eyelids are marked with incision guides, a local anesthetic is applied, and the patient is given a sedative. A scalpel or laser is then used to make an incision along the lid,

and some skin and muscle are taken out. After some exploration of the fat pockets of the eyelids, excess fat is removed and the lids are then stitched together with

fixations. Alternatively, a closed lid crease procedure can be used if the patient wants just a crease in the lid and does not want to alter any other aspect of the eye. This minimally invasive surgery does not require an incision, but instead creates the crease using only sutures. After surgery, the patient can usually go home after about two hours, with an advisory to avoid excessive activity for the following two weeks. According to Dr. Donald Fitzpatrick, a plastic surgeon at Fairview Plastic Surgery in Vancouver, there are a number

able to put on makeup easier," she explained. "I just thought bigger eyes looked better." Julie, a student living in Vancouver, was first introduced to Asian blepharoplasty when she found an old photograph of her cousin. "I was looking at old family pictures and noticed my cousin's eyes looked different, so I asked my mom about it and she told me about a surgery that makes your eyes larger." Although Julie had been seriously considering the procedure, she ended up deciding against it, feeling it would be painful and expensive. Since her main concern was easier makeup application, she decided instead to get semi-permanent eyeliner tattooed on her lids. According to Julie, the procedure is so common "it doesn't even seem as if it is surgery anymore, it seems like it is just like going to buy makeup." Julie is happy that she did not get the surgical procedure done, stating, "In the end, there was no real need."

According to Soo Kim in *Canadian Press NewsWire*, Asian blepharoplasty is the most sought-after cosmetic surgery in the Pacific Rim. Most patients seeking the procedure are Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Southeast Asian. It is speculated that in these demographics, the numbers are higher because more than half of the population already has a natural eyelid crease.

The motivations pushing people to spend thousands of dollars on Asian blepharoplasty are multi-layered. Individuals are driven to get the surgery done for reasons varying from cultural ideals to convenience; their motivations cannot be simplified to a single rationale. Though some candidates subscribe to a notion of beauty in which big eyes with creases are more attractive; for others, the motivation for getting Asian blepharoplasty is much simpler, such as Julie's desire for bigger eyelids to allow for easier makeup application. William Pai-Dei Chen says half of all Asians have a crease naturally, while the other half have only a single eyelid. One film in the series *Skin Deep* explores Asian blepharoplasty and discusses the reasons for the large number of surgeries each year. In the film, Ann Shin suggests that many cultures have embraced an aesthetic ideal that values large eyes. "People who have bigger eyes, or who have double eyelids, will be considered more attractive," says Shin. She suggests magazines, film, and fashion reinforce the notion that bigger eyes are more attractive.

There is a misconception that people seeking the procedure want to attain a more Western looking eye, but this is rarely the case. According to Dr. Andrew Denton, assistant clinical professor at the University of British

“There is a misconception that people seeking the procedure want to attain a Western looking eye.”

Previous page:  
Woman on left with  
eyelid crease,  
woman on right  
without.



Above:  
Woman has placed  
a sticker on her left  
eyelid to create a  
non-surgical crease.

of complications that can arise. Infection, scarring, and muscle damage are rare, but can affect some patients after the surgery. Bleeding around the eye is another possible complication, and may result in loss of vision or even total blindness.

Asian blepharoplasty typically costs \$3,000–\$4,000, with most patients being young women. One young woman looking into the surgery was Julie Karl. "I wanted to have bigger eyes and to be



Woman born with one single eyelid and one double eyelid

Columbia and director of facial plastic surgery at Vancouver General Hospital, one of the first things Asian patients say is they do not want a Western looking eye. “The procedure used to be called Western blepharoplasty,” Dr. Denton

“It doesn’t even seem as if it is surgery anymore, it seems like it is just like going to buy makeup.”

explained. “The inference [was] that you were westernizing the eye, but that has shifted and it is now referred to as ‘Asian blepharoplasty’ because we’re really not interested in changing the ethnic appearance of the eye.” Most Asian patients, according to Dr. Denton, do not want a Caucasian eye, they want an Asian eye that has a crease. Chen also believes the concept of westernization is false. According to Chen, “The growing popularity of Asian blepharoplasty has been incorrectly interpreted as resulting from the influence of Western culture after World War II and the Korean War, a manifestation of which was believed to be a desire on the part of Asians to blend in with Caucasians, to look westernized or occidental.” Chen attributes the increasing popularity of Asian blepharoplasty to the growing awareness of the procedure’s availability, not to Western influence.

However, some believe that Western influences cannot be ignored. Hung-Tai Lo, a cultural psychiatrist, was quoted in *Canada Press NewsWire* saying the influence of the West can not be discounted. According to Lo, west-

ern culture has successfully dominated media across the world, establishing a near universal ideal that is imitated worldwide. Shin also believes that the West is responsible for the increased popularity of the procedure. In her film, *Western Eyes*, she follows the story of two women who are interested in the procedure after their immigration to Canada — these women feel out of place and want to blend into Canadian culture. Shin discusses the influence of the West, suggesting that magazines and fashion are some of the culprits for the westernization of Asian eyes.

The reasons behind Asian blepharoplasty’s popularity are clearly debatable. The motives that are driving more people to surgery every year are obscured by the media and cultural ideals, and therefore remain undefined. It is not just Asian blepharoplasty that is experiencing an increase in demand, but many other surgeries such as liposuction and rhinoplasty (nose jobs). According to Dr. Fitzpatrick, the increase in eyelid surgeries coincides with the increase of the population. He also suggests that an increased awareness of procedures available plays a role in surgery’s gain in popularity.

Some are concerned about the popularity of the operation and its acceptance in the Asian community. Shin hopes the media will someday embrace all types of Asian beauty, and people will be happy with their Asian features. She suggests if the media accepts all kinds of Asian beauty, fewer people will feel the need to alter themselves through surgery. However, until pressure of the Asian ideal weakens, eyelid surgeries will be frequently present in the community. **PRM**



# an open stage



Banana Boys performers (left to right): Rick Tae, Simon Hayama, Victor Mariano, Vincent Tong, and Parnelli Parnes

## the Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre

STORY by Meryl Howsam  
PHOTOS courtesy of the VACT

Breaking stereotypes. Granting opportunity. Providing identity. These are three integral components without which the Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre (VACT) would not exist. The VACT “addresses the voices of second and third generation Asian-Canadians who do not see themselves, or their stories, represented in the media. See many contemporary Canadian-Asians with full three-dimensional lives on TV?” quipped VACT board member and comedian Tom Chin. It has stayed true to its mandate, claiming a significant role in the theatre community by granting Asian-Canadians the opportunity to fill important and non-stereotypical parts. It presents Asian-Canadian themes and stories in a contemporary setting often based on popular culture — with an Asian twist.

The productions *Sex in Vancouver* and *Really Blind Date* are spin-offs of popular North American television shows, featuring Asian-Canadians in leading roles, for which they may not have otherwise been considered. According to Joyce Lam, VACT president and producer, Asian men specifically are not portrayed in popular culture as being desired

leading men. The VACT’s productions challenge this kind of stereotype.

Everyone involved with the VACT is a volunteer, and the theatre manages to put out three or four shows a year. It isn’t often in life one meets someone who is a doctor by day and an actor by night, but such an occurrence is common with the VACT volunteers. For the most part, volunteers are Asian-Canadians brought up to choose more secure career paths but who want to express their creativity through theatre. “Theatre is not actually a career choice for a lot of Asians because it’s not something allowed by parents and not secure enough for a lot of Asians to go into. But we find that is changing; there are the brave ones who will buck the trend and do this because they want to do this,” Lam explained. Volunteers put tons of hard work into producing the shows from conception to closing night, motivated by their faith in the organization.

When Joyce Lam and Tom Chin saw Seattle sketch comedy group Opening People’s Minds (OPM) perform at the Fringe Festival, they decided to start a similar show in Vancouver. They found two organizations that believed in what the

two of them were doing and helped sponsor their show. The organizations allowed them to keep the money they made and offered to help them pay off any debts. The show ended up being a huge success, which Lam claimed was partly because there was nothing like it in Vancouver at the time.

The company's first play was *F.O.B. (Fresh Off the Boat)* by David Henry Hwang, in 1999. It was a drama about the conflicting feelings experienced by Chinese-Americans. During production, the volunteers scrounged around for props and materials, many coming from family and friends. In the early stages of the theatre, each volunteer had some knowledge of theatre or the arts that they brought to the production, helping get the project off the ground.

The theatre company, completely non-profit, has put on more than 20 productions over seven years — from comedy nights to dramatic plays to realistic everyday life episodes. However, the VACT aims mostly to entertain, and the comedy nights, which facilitated a successful start for the company, have been widely and well received. The VACT has showcased many different comedians and comedy groups, including radio broadcaster and comedian Tetsuro Shigematsu, Seattle comedy troupe Pork Filled Players, and VACT-founded groups Assaulted Fish and the Hot Sauce Posse.

The VACT also co-sponsors a Scripting Aloud series monthly at Our Town Café, where playwrights can showcase their work and get feedback. A one-woman play, *Through the Grocery Store Glass*, was introduced at a Scripting Aloud session by Angela Louie and will be performed at the Vancouver Fringe Festival 2007.

*continued on page 45*

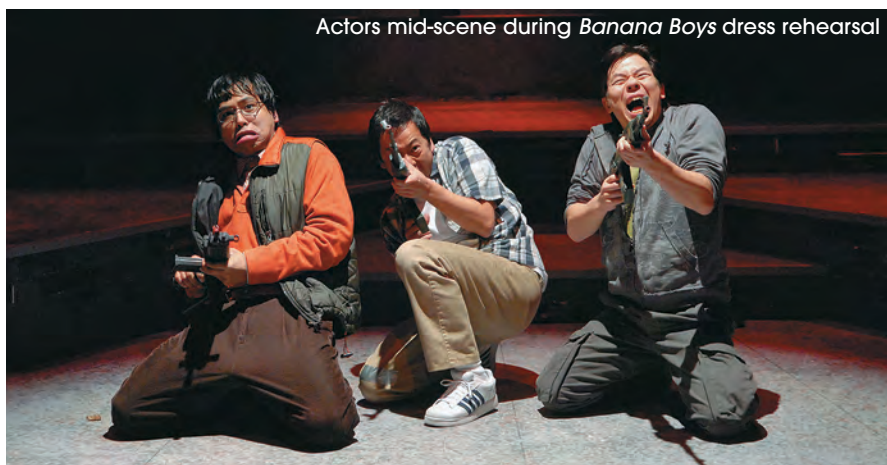
## VACT 2007 Season

For 2007, the VACT will be presenting two productions — a romantic comedy called *Cowboy Versus Samurai*, and a musical staged reading called *Red Letters*. They are also co-producing a contemporary piece with the Firehall Arts Centre called *Banana Boys*.

*Cowboy Versus Samurai*, a show that just finished its run in Seattle put on by Sex in Seattle (SiS) Productions, will be put on by the VACT in Vancouver in the summer of 2007. The play is about the events that occur when an attractive Korean woman moves to a small rural town. According to SiS's website, it is a "politically edgy exploration of inter-racial dating and identity through irony, humor, and social commentary."

*Red Letters* is a story that involves the Chinese Head Tax, started in 1885, and Exclusion Act of 1923, but is not a political production. "It's good because it's not bashing over your head (politically) about the head tax, it's really a love story," Lam said. It involves two people who are kept from each other due to the Head Tax and Exclusion Act. It is especially significant that this musical is occurring in 2007, Lam points out, since the anniversaries of important Chinese historical events are years ending in seven. In 1907 was the riot in Vancouver's Chinatown, in 1967 was the immigration law that opened up to allow immigrants into Canada, and in 1997 was the return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China. The stage reading of *Red Letters* will be a workshop of the production with a trial audience.

*Banana Boys*, beginning after the spring, is about the lives and friendships of five Canadian males and their experiences in trying to identify themselves as Asians in Canada.



Actors mid-scene during *Banana Boys* dress rehearsal

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# Harajuku

one district's diverse style



STORY by Fiona Kerr  
PHOTOS by Tommy Cuellar



Harajuku is a district in Tokyo, Japan, filled with fashion boutiques and art galleries. It is an open-minded place that welcomes individuality and artistic freedom. On any given Sunday, a mecca of fashion styles permeates the senses of anyone who visits. The fashion itself is distinctively Harajuku, but discerning between the different styles is quite difficult. Many people misunderstand or underestimate the complexity of the fashion, interpreting the myriad of styles as sexualized playwear. Misrepresenting or simplifying the styles of Harajuku is especially present in the media. For example, pop star Gwen Stefani, though giving the district attention by showcasing her 'Harajuku Girls,' has distorted the district to the rest of the world by blatantly exploiting the style.

Similarities exist between different Harajuku styles of dress, but more discernable differences are present to those who pay attention to detail. To spot a Lolita (one who dresses to emulate Victorian beauty) or a Cosplayer (one who morphs into an animé or sci-fi character) requires a keen eye for the art form.



“Many people misunderstand or underestimate the complexity of the fashion.”

### ★ Sweet Lolita (Amaloli):

Lolitas in Harajuku generally portray themselves as being much younger than they are. “[The style is] prim and proper,” explains Samantha Rei, founder and designer of *Blasphemina’s Closet* in Minneapolis. “You can show a corset without being skanky. You also don’t see a lot of cleavage with Lolita, and I like that. There has been an over-sexualization that has happened... it’s embarrassing to the art form.” **White Lolita** (Shirololi): A sub-category of Lolita where the person wears only white.

### ★ Classical Lolita

(Classic Lolita, Country Lolita):

A sophisticated Victorian, Baroque, and Rocaille inspired Lolita. Colours used are pink, white, blue, brown, black, burgundy, and floral patterns. Accessories such as head-dresses, headbands, or miniature hats are often worn. Handbags are also commonly carried around.

### ★ Gothic Lolita (Gothloli):

Gothic Lolitas wear a cocktail of Victorian adult styles from the 18th and 19th centuries, with a touch of Goth, but without religious connotations. Being a Gothic Lolita is not the same as being Goth. Goths use the dark aesthetics of Christianity and Germanic culture in their style, dress, and attitude, whereas Gothlolis aim for a style reminiscent of a more elegant Lolita. Sometimes Gothlolis will even carry around a teddy bear as do their Lolita counterparts, but it is made of black leather. **Kurololi:** A sub-category of Gothloli where the person wears only black.

### ★ Cosplay:

Cosplay (not considered part of the Lolita family) is where players dress as specific animé, manga (Japanese comics), video game, and

*tokusatsu* characters from science fiction movies, Japanese pop bands, or television shows. People who participate in Cosplay in Japan do so on a regular basis — typically Sunday nights in Harajuku. In Cosplay, unlike Lolita, followers tend to make costumes by hand, garner nicknames, take pictures of other Cosplayers, and participate in contests for best costume. **Crossplay** (cross-dressing play): A sub-category of Cosplay where one dresses as the opposite sex.

### ★ Gurololi:

‘Gruesome’ Lolita. A mixture of Cosplay and Gothloli as a costume is usually worn with ‘gory’ accessories such as fake blood, bandages, and unusual-looking contact lenses.

### ★ Lolita Punk:

Punk with some Lolita influence. Trends include short and spiky hair, plaids, red and black stripes, and band t-shirts. It is the raw, musically-oriented energy of punk style mixed with lace, grommets, frills, and spikes. Mika T. is a follower of Harajuku fashion and lives in San Francisco. “[My] typical costume would be shirts with random phrases, or band [t-shirts] with skirts over capris. Shoes are something comfortable, like Converse over multiple pairs of striped socks and leg warmers. As for hair, right now it’s pink, orange, and red, and the style is choppy and easy to spike. Another popular addition is the coloured contacts or ‘wild eyes,’ which are contacts with designs instead of colours. My makeup is anything from black to pink, white, and yellow.”

### ★ Erotic Lolita (Erololi):

Victorian inspired but more revealing than Lolita. Fetish-based, with short skirts. Undergarments, such as petticoats, bloomers, and corsets are almost always revealed. Many Lolita followers frown on Erololi as it gives a bad reputation to the art form. **PRM**





# Decorating ancouver

David Lam's Blossoming Vision

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One spring day in 1947, a young graduate student at Temple University in Philadelphia gathered his friends and set out on a road trip to Washington, DC. Armed with a deep love of flowers and memories of cherry blossoms from a Japanese cruise, he was determined to see the famous cherry trees of the US capital. When he learned about the National Cherry Blossom Festival, he had only one thing on his mind: get to Washington, and get there fast. Upon arrival, the student and his friends experi-

enced the cherry trees in full bloom. It was a sight to behold — a breath of fresh air to the young man, who a couple of years before had experienced the ugliness of World War II. “It brought tears to my eyes. I just couldn’t describe how beautiful it was,” recalled David Lam, former British Columbia lieutenant-governor, in his home overlooking Stanley Park.

David Lam was born in Hong Kong on July 25, 1923, and from an early age he had a love for growing flowering plants.





STORY by Marie Sarabia  
PHOTOS by Kevin Lanthier

PHOTO by Meghan Kirkpatrick



David Lam at home inside his greenhouse

This was rare, since in those days very few people in Hong Kong cultivated their own gardens. While other schoolchildren secretly read comic books in class, David Lam read a seed catalogue containing photos of flowers. Lam's first business venture, which began in his high school years, involved selling flowers to friends of the family and to his local church. As he expanded the garden in his family's Kowloon home, he decided to sell his flowers at an open flower market he passed on his way to class. He continued this business into his early years of university.

Several years later, while working as Chief Manager for the family-owned Ka Wah Bank, he decided to open a flower shop. Along with the CEO of the Hong Kong and Youmat Ferry and the vice president of Hong Kong Land, he opened the Green Fields Flower Shop at Ocean Terminal. The shop soon became popular in Hong Kong.

In 1967, Lam, his wife Dorothy, and their three daughters moved to Vancouver. The parks, beaches, mountains, and cleanliness impressed the Lams and they looked no further. "When I came to this country, I said, 'This is it.' Perfect weather, perfect climate, perfect everything for cherry," recalled Lam.

In the decades following their move to Canada, David and Dorothy Lam gave to a variety of causes and institutions in Vancouver, Victoria, and other areas of Canada. Regent College, a theological school on the University of British Columbia campus, was one of the institutions that attracted Lam's support in early 1982. In September 1988, the Regent College auditorium opened and was named the Lam Chi Fung Auditorium after Lam's father. In addition, 120 cherry trees of the Shirotae variety were planted around Regent College at Lam's request.

The initial gift of cherry trees to Vancouver was from the mayors of Yokohama and Kobe in the 1930s to honour the Japanese-Canadian soldiers who served during World War I. In 1958, more trees were donated and planted along Cambie Street between 49th and 33rd Avenues, in Queen Elizabeth Park, and around the Japanese monument in Stanley Park. Lam hopes to have thousands more planted all over Vancouver, envisioning enough trees planted to eventually earn Vancouver the title 'West Coast's Cherry Blossom Capital.' He wishes to put forward all of his effort, money,



and influence in order to get others involved in the project.

Since the land on which Lam hopes the cherry trees will be planted belongs to the city of Vancouver, the initiative and approval of the Vancouver Parks Board is necessary to see the project through. The board must be prepared to dedicate enough parkland to the planting of cherry trees. According to the Parks Board website, 3,500 trees of various species

the project has its challenges; namely, the availability of cherry trees, the political will of the Parks Board staff and the need for the Commissioners' approval, but the people involved with the project hold hope that these challenges will be met.

Lam initially had no plans of proposing specific locations to the Parks Board, but that changed when he learned of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival. The first city-wide celebration of the festival was held in the spring of 2006. He hopes cherry trees will be planted at his namesake park, located at the foot of Drake Street on Pacific Boulevard,

beside False Creek. With cherry trees as the main attraction at David Lam Park, it may become the focal point of the festival. Zlotnik sees the planting of cherry trees at David Lam Park as a real possibility, especially since the banks of False Creek, Vanier Park and Sunset Beach have all been identified as potential locations for cherry tree planting.

Lam encourages his friends overseas to visit Vancouver when the city has its best foot forward: autumn foliage, the flowers in spring, snow in winter, and even the salmon run. "Vancouver is becoming [very] important, particularly to people in Asia," said Lam. The blooming of the cherry tree coincides with a slow time in the hotel season. From an economic

perspective, it is a good time to have visitors flooding into the city. "We've got so much to offer. Can you imagine if we offered cherry trees? I'm going to sell the cherry, not only the beauty, but there is a philosophy," Lam explained. "Cherry trees philosophically tell people, okay, you can be beautiful, powerful, and on top of the world, but remember that you have very limited time. Use that time to make people happy."

"Several times I asked really rich people, 'How much are you worth, your invisible asset?' They miss the word invisible," he lamented. They reply, 'You don't have to ask me. Everyday I am in the newspaper.' "I am not asking you in dollars and cents," Lam tells them. "Your enjoyment of life, your love of beauty and harmony. Your health — you sleep well, you make people happy, and you yourself become happier," he explains. Lam believes the cherry tree brings joy; one's enjoyment of it brings invisible wealth.

During his term as lieutenant-governor of BC from 1988–1995, Lam promoted harmony between the province's cultural communities. As a philanthropist and avid gardener, he has helped enhance BC's physical beauty through notable projects such as the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden and the enhancement of the Government House gardens. Similarly, the cherry tree throughout history has become an instrument of diplomacy, as well as of landscape beautification and enhancement. Lam, who founded the

“Lam believes the cherry tree brings joy; one's enjoyment of it brings invisible wealth.”

are planted around the city annually to replace dead or diseased trees, or to plant new ones in treeless areas. With over 17,000 growing on city boulevards, the flowering Japanese cherry tree is the most common street tree. Of the number of trees planted each year, Lam expects some of them will be cherry trees, and hopes that with his financial contribution even more will be added to that number.

Parks Board Commissioner Marty Zlotnik was pleasantly surprised when told of Lam's vision for Vancouver. According to Zlotnik, the cherry blossom project was well received by some of the senior Parks Board staff, which later offered a number of potential planting locations. Zlotnik admits





This tree in English Bay is actually a plum, which are commonly mistaken for cherry trees, due to the bark and the way they blossom. The blossoms of a plum tree are single buds while cherry tree blossoms grow in clusters like pompoms.

Floribunda Philanthropic Society in 1982, is now one of the strongest advocates of abundant cherry tree blossoming. Floribunda in Latin means "abundant flowers." He laughs heartily at the suggestion that he and the cherry tree have much in common, and quickly points out that he hopes the similarities stop there since cherry trees are in bloom for a relatively short time. The blooming period can last for 14 days, and then the petals start to fall and leaves begin to appear.

At 83 years old, Lam has fully retired, but continues to engage in various activities with his garden society and hymn society. He has also cooked meals for participants of the Alpha Course (a series of talks on the Christian faith) at his church. His rooftop garden overlooking Stanley Park is a sight to behold — in the fall, a solitary yellow hibiscus flower, which reminds Lam of Hong Kong, is radiant against the rich green foliage of his garden.

When asked about his favourite cherry tree variety, Lam paused, and after much consideration, he answered. "They are actually competing. My favourite is Akebono. Akebono is a tree, which when you drive out here on Pacific Boulevard and on your right hand side, there are about seven or nine trees there. They come up like an umbrella and when they flower, there are no leaves, and all the flowers look down; so you can walk underneath and look up, and see all the flowers." The Akebono cherry also grows on 17th Avenue at Cambie Street.

The cherry tree blossoms arrive with a show of beauty; standing under a Yoshino cherry tree, one sees clusters of single flowers with five petals, the stems meeting at the centre to create a symmetrical star shape. Every year, the cherry tree quietly waits for springtime to tell its story. It is the message, not just the physical beauty, that Lam hopes both Vancouverites and visitors will embrace. **PRM**



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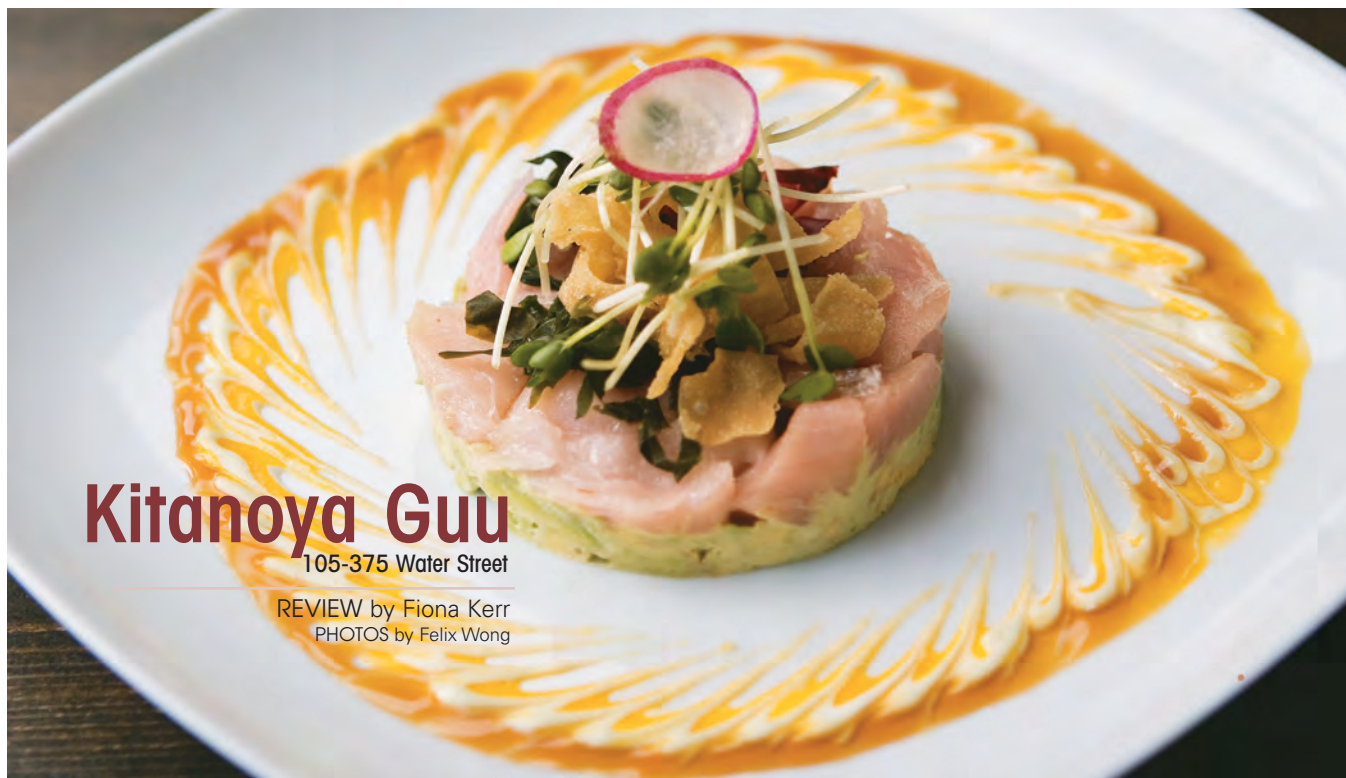
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# Flavours of Vancouver



## Kitanoya Guu

105-375 Water Street

REVIEW by Fiona Kerr

PHOTOS by Felix Wong

Maguro (tuna) in five-colour sauce with chopped avocado

With three locations to choose from (all within a ten-kilometre radius), I decided to venture to the oldest part of downtown Vancouver with seven friends to sample some innovative Japanese cooking.

The décor is more western than Japanese, with gorgeous brickwork, hardwood floors, an elegant bar area, and huge windows framing Gastown. My friend and I were the first to arrive and were seated promptly with cheerful choruses of “Welcome!” and “Glad to see you!” from the staff in Japanese. Our server for the evening offered us an impressive drink list to choose from, which was just as large as the food menu. A few minutes later, I had a tall glass of a Japanese gin and tonic in my hand.

By the time my whole party arrived, every other table was also occupied and the restaurant was abuzz. We promptly got down to ordering the tantalizing tapas-style dishes offered on the menu. The dishes are meant for sharing, however, we decided to order our own meals for the evening.

I started with a popeye salad — baby spinach leaves, sautéed mushrooms, and pan-fried bacon, skillfully tossed together in a light oil dressing, topped with crispy wontons and garlic flakes. It was sublime, and gobbled up in moments. The next dish to arrive was an ebi-chili pie, a potpie dish overflowing with light flakey pastry and filled with plump prawns in a savoury, spicy sauce. After dipping the accompanying oyster crackers in the sauce, I was starting to get full. Then, the last dish of the evening came: a plate of savory chicken karaage — lightly battered, boneless, and piping hot. This was the best karaage I have ever tasted!

Everyone in my group was pleased with their choices, though two of my friends thought the shoga yakisoba was too pungent. I sampled some noodles and thought it was superb. If you like fish, you will love this dish. If I had not tried three tasty beverages, I definitely would have ordered more food. They brought us some frozen sweet grapes while we settled our bill, and I had to have

one... or seven. Our total came to \$200 before tip, which was reasonable considering everyone had ordered around three dishes and two or three drinks apiece.

As we got up to leave, the busy staff pleasantly exclaimed, “Goodbye!” and “See you again soon!” in Japanese. With excellent food, drinks, and service, they will definitely see us again, very soon. **PRM**



Deep-fried brie with mango sauce

# Cabin 5555

5555 West Boulevard

REVIEW by Angie Quan

PHOTOS by Jessica Offer

Richmond is not the only hub for bubble tea cafés and Taiwanese restaurants. Nestled in one of Vancouver's most charming neighbourhoods is Cabin 5555, the newest addition to Kerrisdale's string of Taiwanese bistros.

The masses began arriving around 6:30 p.m. Brightly lit and steam-filled, with the aroma of Chinese sauces and garlic, Cabin 5555 made for a nice getaway from the gloomy post-winter weather. Be warned, if quiet fine dining is more on your plate, the gleaming white chairs and walls combined with loud mixes of Chinese music and casual chit-chat may not be your style.

The first dish, an appetizer for my starving group of friends, was a tiny bite of heaven for the garlic-lover. The pork slice with garlic paste did justice to its name. It arrived as a plate of thinly cut, fatty pork slices smothered in a thick paste of minced garlic — a delight for the palette, a disaster for the breath.

Next, our long-awaited bubble tea drinks arrived. My honey green milk tea was refreshing, but tasted a little watered down. I stole a sip of my friend's pudding milk tea and it too lacked in flavour. I asked my friend's boyfriend how he liked his longan tea. With a smirk, he lifted the lid of his teapot and showed me the few bits of tea leaves scattered in the strainer.

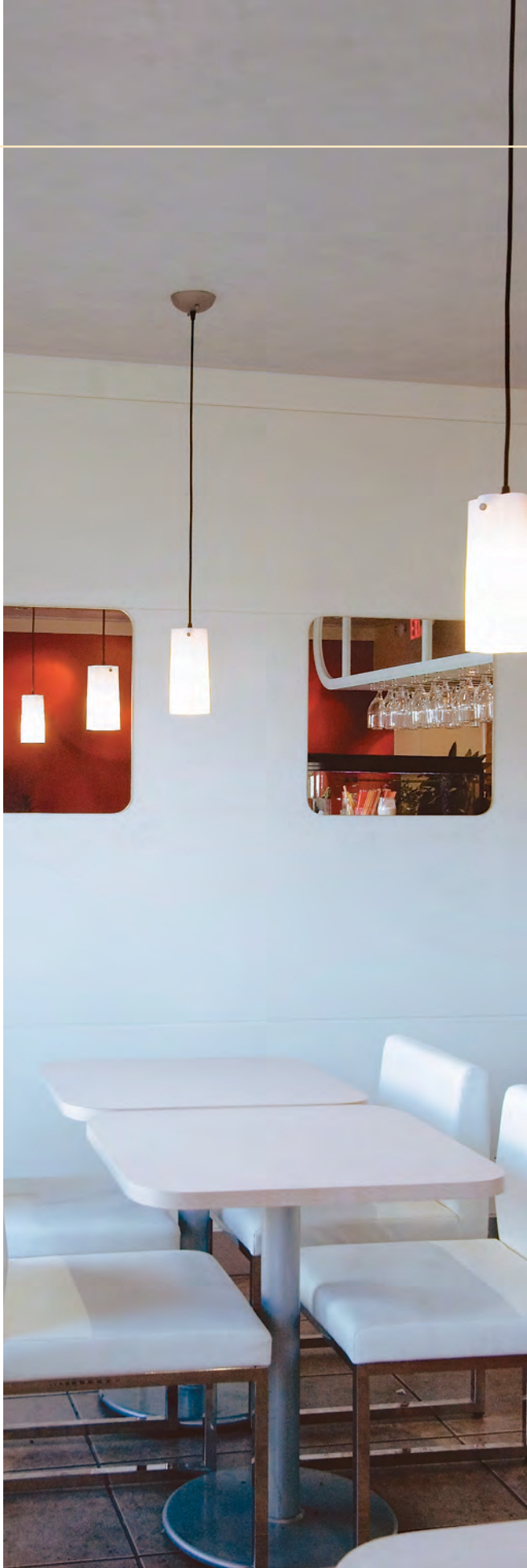


Three types of bubble tea drinks

The waitress returned and laid a tray of various dishes on our table, reminiscent of a Japanese bento box, but on a tray. First we each took a stab at the side dishes. The sui choy cooked in Chinese dried shrimp took some getting used to. The flavour of the shrimp can be overpowering, unless you are a fan of its exotic taste. The next side dish, whole sautéed mushrooms, was flavourful and mildly spicy. The final side dish was as exotic as the first — crunchy shreds of bamboo shoots in a mild vinaigrette dressing. The chicken with three-spice sauce was tender and bursting with flavours — the magic and mystery of the three-spice sauce.

The lamb, bean curd and vegetable hot pot, came together with our crispy, salty peppery chicken. The hot pot smelled and tasted great, but we all came to the consensus that the crispy chicken was the overall favorite of the night. The deep-fried chunks of chicken were subtly spicy and devoured in no time.

With the exception of watery drinks and slow service, Cabin 5555 served up some scrumptious Taiwanese dishes and provided a flavourful night that satisfied our eager stomachs. **PRM**





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## restaurants



Vietnamese green papaya salad with tiger shrimp, cilantro, and tamarind dressing

Red Door is a Pan Asian restaurant on the corner of Granville and West 14th. The dishes provide an eclectic mix of Asian favourites, from Vietnamese green papaya salad, to Bangalore chicken curry. Plates are moderately sized, and shared by the table. Although complaints abound on the internet as to the size and price of the dishes, the two of us struggled to finish two choices, thus being a 'sizeable' misconception. The prices are moderate, considering its location on South Granville, surrounded by upscale restaurants such as Ouisi, West, and Vij's. Compared to more 'authentic' Asian restaurants, however, the prices are comparatively higher.

Our service was attentive, friendly, and pleasantly informal, although the staff were uniformly dressed in Chinese-influenced button-up shirts, complete with mandarin collars. The décor is urban-chic: picture the newly updated Earls, meets the Bamboo Company, meets Ikea lanterns.

The Red Door is not a fusion restaurant; it touts itself as having a wide array of Asian dishes, authentically prepared from various locations worldwide. While this may be true for some entrées — for example, the pad Thai was well prepared and comparable to traditional Thai

## Red Door

2996 Granville Street

REVIEW by Rachel Burns  
 PHOTOS by Jessica Offer

restaurants — others seem somewhat fusion-inspired, such as the sweet chili chicken, which was deep-fried and listed aptly as Red Door's version of the popular Thai dish.

Executive chef Glen Zoteck has served himself up a challenging task: creating cuisine and flavours from many different Asian foods and styles within an Asian-inspired North American setting. He has come up with palatable dishes for what was, at least on the night that I went, an audience with nary an Asian-Canadian in sight. Considering his audience, and the ambitious task he has taken on, the result is quite good, and exactly on par with what one might expect.

Personally, if I want an authentic dish from China, I would be more likely to go to a specifically Chinese restaurant, rather than a Pan Asian restaurant. But, if Sally wants Indian food, Syma wants Japanese, Tomoko wants Thai, and your mom is afraid of dim sum, then Red Door might just be your place. **PRM**

# paying homage to the instruments

## The Borealis String Quartet

The Chi Mei Corporation, a Taiwanese company, established the Chi Mei Culture Foundation in 1977 using the corporation chairman's private collection of artifacts. The foundation collects rare antiquities, among them a prominent and rare string instrument collection. Graced with the honour of playing these ancient instruments, the Borealis String Quartet is able to practise classical music using beautifully crafted works of art. This is a fine example of the Chi Mei Culture Foundation's commitment to musical education, promotion, and patronage.

The Borealis String Quartet, quartet-in-residence at the University of British Columbia, has had the good fortune of acquiring four rare and historical instruments from the foundation. They have been lent two treble violins; a dark, rich-sounding viola; and a deep, warm-sounding cello. In addition to the instruments, the quartet was allowed to borrow four bows crafted by French bow-makers.

Yuel Yawney, a violinist in the quartet, explained that playing the rare artifacts inspires them to "seek out different colours and sounds" in their performance.

Yawney and the other quartet members, cellist Shih-Lin Chen, violist Nikita Pogrebnoy, and second violinist Patricia Shih, felt "like kids in a candy store" while looking at and trying out the instruments of the collection in Taiwan. Being allowed access to such a collection, with 300-year-old instruments and master-crafted bows, is without a doubt a classical musician's dream come true. "Most of the bows were crafted before Mozart's day," Yawney revealed.

The musicians were unfamiliar with each instrument's individual history, but stated that most had been locked away in a vault for safekeeping. It was therefore an even rarer occurrence to be loaned these instruments, especially for year-long use.

Although the quartet's performance on March 3, 2007, was cancelled, three members came to the UBC Recital Hall to give lectures and quick instrumental demonstrations. One could not help being in awe while watching and listening to these musicians and their sample performances. Their zeal for music and passion for playing the instruments shone through, as did their gratitude to the Chi Mei Culture Foundation. **PRM**

STORY by Rachel Reid  
PHOTO by Jessica Offer



1778 Lorenzo Storioni cello, known for its resonance and richness in pitch



# for the love of a donut

STORY by Rachel Reid  
PHOTOS by Aerin Oldham



It is hard to imagine restaurant chains like Mister Donut in Japan and Tim Hortons in Canada being anything but successful. Both of these multi-billion dollar corporations make outstanding contributions to their communities, having become similarly focused, and branded icons in two very different cultures.

Tim Hortons has been a Canadian cultural icon since the first store opened in 1964 in Hamilton, Ontario. Associated with hockey, morning coffee clubs, community events, and late night caffeine runs for university students, it has become a staple in the lives of many Canadians. Founded by former Toronto Maple Leafs all-star defenseman Tim Horton, the chain has stuck to its homespun roots, promoting

Canadian lifestyles and history. Though the Tim Hortons Company was sold in 1995 to Wendy's International of Dublin, Ohio, the franchisees have virtually been Canadians, maintaining a unique Canadian perspective for marketing purposes.

Harry Winokur, an American, founded Mister Donut in 1955 after discovering that people enjoy fresh donuts with their morning cups of coffee. The chain picked up momentum quickly, though its popularity was short-lived due to the competition of the Dunkin' Donuts chain, founded five years earlier by Harry's brother-in-law, William Rosenberg. However, momentum was regained when Japan's Duskin Co. Ltd. of Japan bought the sales and trademark rights for Asia in 1983. Duskin mainlined the Mister Donut



Chocolate-dipped Tim Hortons donut next to a replica of Mister Donut's signature "Pon de Ring"



brand name, and as a result, the company obtained 1,000 restaurants in Japan alone. The chain has also expanded to include outlets in other areas in Asia, including 700 in the Philippines. Outlets exist in South America as well.

Scholarships from both companies are available to employees and their families. Mister Donut offers camp opportunities and supports a school for disabled children, which it also founded, called Nemu Noki. The Tim Hortons Children's Foundation offers camp opportunities, giving financially disadvantaged children the chance to attend. These scholarships and camp opportunities, along with sponsored sports teams and employment positions that offer benefits, make it easy to see why these two companies thrive. In caring about their communities and giving back to them, they have built a strong following and dedication from their patrons.

This loyal customer backing is solidified by well-known contests and giveaways. Mister Donut offers a point system that expires at the end of each month, reminding patrons to redeem their well-earned donut points. For every 300 yen (approximately three dollars) spent at any Mister Donut location, the customer gets one donut point. Also, every month the Mister Donut brand features collectible products such as towels, picture frames, and dishes. Commercials consistently featuring adorable Japanese actress Aiku Sabu have made Mister Donut familiar in most Japanese households.

For 20 years in Canada, the Tim Hortons 'Roll up the Rim to Win' contest has created excitement; the contest does not end until all of the cups are gone. The chance to win everything from donuts and coffee, to barbecues and vehicles makes this an in-demand contest among customers.

The formerly Canadian company has gone to the great lengths of building a Tim Hortons in Kandahar, Afghanistan to boost morale of Canadian (and other) troops. Tim Hortons also encourages their patrons to tell their 'Tim Hortons Story.' Commercials have been created from these stories to promote a sense of community between the company and its customers. 

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# peril in the jungle



Orangutans of Indonesia, who share 97 percent of human genetic makeup, are endangered due to illegal logging, fires, and hunting. They are facing extinction because of the exploitation and devastation of their habitat. This destruction is taking its toll on this 'man of the forest' and soon there may not be any orangutans left. At the beginning of the 20th century, the orangutan population numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Today, it has diminished to approximately 50,000 in Borneo and 7,000 in North Sumatra. It is estimated that an additional 4,000–5,000 orangutans are killed every year.

Wild orangutans live only on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra and have slight genetic and behavioural differences. Bornean orangutans are quite solitary, as food is scarce and travelling in a group for food would create conflict. Sumatran orangutans are slightly more social, as food is more available and they do not have to search to find their meals. Orangutans have the largest birth interval of any land mammal on the planet, only giving birth every eight or more years. Because of this, they are more susceptible to extinction than any other species. They are entirely dependent on the rainforest for food, shelter, and ultimate survival.

Palm oil plantations are the most significant development that threatens the future of wild orangutans. Indonesia intends to become the top palm oil producer in the world. "By 2007, Indonesia's palm oil production will exceed 16 million tons," stated Derom Bangun, chairman of the Indonesian Palm Oil Producers Association. According to the WWF (formerly called the World Wildlife Fund), as reported by <http://www.mongabay.com> (an online news source for wildlife conservation issues), there is already enough degraded, non-forested land in the region to establish palm oil plantations without destroying natural forest. Despite this, illegal fires

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STORY by Laura Jeffries  
PHOTOS courtesy of Borneo Orangutan  
Survival Foundation-UK



continue to burn to make room for more plantations.

Oil plantations unnecessarily log thousands of acres of forest, and although the fires are damaging, the orangutans often do not perish in the fires but starve afterwards. Emaciated orangutans are often then attacked, have their hands cut off, are captured and sold, or are burned alive. Poachers and farmers with machetes, clubs, and guns are killing around 1,000 apes a year, according to Hardi Baktiantoro of the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOS).

“The rate of loss of orangutans has never been greater than in the last three years, and oil-palm plantations are mostly to blame,” explains Dr. Willie Smits, founder and chairman of BOS. “We are facing a silent massacre, taking place far from where people can see what is going on. We need international cooperation now to address this crisis.”

In the face of these tragedies, many fight for the future of these primates. Tanjung Puting Park, which was declared a National Park in 1982, is one of the largest and most diverse protected forests. Stretching to just over 300,000 hectares, the park also

includes Camp Leaky, a refuge for the rehabilitation and the study of wild orangutans. Dr. Biruté Galdikas established Camp Leaky and named it in honour of legendary anthropologist Louis Leaky in 1971. The camp originally consisted of just two huts, but has expanded to serve as a base for scientists, students, and staff.

Dr. Galdikas also formed The Orangutan Foundation International (OFI) in 1986, with the goal of conserving orangutans and their Bornean rainforest habitat. OFI works toward countering the primary threats to orangutan survival. A few of their top priorities include “stopping illegal logging, increasing sustainable economic alternatives for communities surrounding critical orangutan habitat, and releasing ex-captive orangutans into suitable, protected habitats.” Dr. Galdikas states, “Unless extreme action is taken soon, these forests could be gone within the next five to ten years, and wild orangutans along with them.”

As Maureen Leahy, a keeper at Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, expressed, “I am so privileged and honoured to work with these animals every day because I get to know them as individuals and I make that

personal connection.” She feels, “with that [connection] comes awareness... just how much we are like each other. By default we have a responsibility to them.”

There are many organizations worldwide that are working to protect the orangutans and their habitats. These organizations are in need of monetary donations to keep their facilities running, as well as to fight forest fires in the region. In addition to donations, keeping informed is another way to help the plight of the orangutan — such as reading product labels for palm oil, or checking with manufacturers about the source of their palm oil.

Also, Dr. Galdikas feels that people visiting Borneo will help to show that there is a worldwide interest in orangutans. If Borneo is attracting concerned people, the government will then realize protecting both orangutans and their habitat is crucial. As Leahy explains, “Orangutans need our help. If nothing is done to stop the current trends of orangutan habitat destruction, we will lose this kindred ape. PRM

For more information, visit <http://www.savetheorangutan.co.uk>

“We are facing a silent massacre, taking place far from where people can see what is going on.”



A palm oil plantation in Malaysia



STORY by Patti Lefkos  
ILLUSTRATION by Ginger Erskine

Cantonese conversation and laughter were almost drowned out by the sizzling sounds of camp stoves. Chopsticks flew as group members distributed gailan and oysters to one another's cooking pots.

From a snowy vantage point high above Vancouver, damp mist obscured the view. However, group spirits remained high during this lunchtime break of the British Columbia Outdoor Recreation Club snowshoe outing at Cypress Mountain.

Loretta Yuang, 52, on snowshoes for the first time, was thankful for the rest. "This is going to kill me," she said earlier, when after just a few minutes on the steep trail she developed a hot spot on one foot, signaling the beginning of a blister. After sock alterations and water, Yuang forged ahead with a smile, encouraged by other members.

"For sure you will see me again," Yuang said at the end of the day, admiring the scenery. "You don't see this in Richmond."

Veteran member Jennifer Ng hopes other Asian immigrants will take part. She stated that many are often urban and used to spending time indoors, but hope they "will discover there is more to do than dim sum, ping pong, and badminton."

Burnaby resident Mike Chan, 50, was all for it. When the doctor told his wife, Moony, 57, to exercise or risk developing osteoporosis, he encourage her to take Ng's offer to join. A year later he changed shifts and joined, too.

The founding members met in 1999 at a Vancouver School Board Continuing Education course called *Introduction to BC Backpacking*. They were ten avid hikers, all Hong Kong immigrants, and began with week-end hikes to local destinations. One of the original members, retired

accountant James Tsang, 60, never misses an outing.

Every year, some group members try a more challenging trip. They have completed multi-day camping and hiking trips in the Rocky and North Cascade mountains, the Grand Canyon, and Yosemite, and have canoed the Bowron Lakes circuit and the Yukon River. A group of 12 people hiked the West Coast Trail in 2003. "We met a local First Nations man who said we were the first large group of all Chinese hikers he had ever seen on the trail," Tsang said with pride.

The group is no longer exclusively Chinese; newcomers of all nationalities are now welcome. On the club's website, their mission statement is "to promote friendship and nurture health through outdoor activities in a safe, environmentally friendly, and responsible way." **PRM**

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VACT continued from page 29

In addition to these shows, there have been one-person shows, stand-up comedy nights, and the annual sketch comedy evening titled *SKETCHOFF!#\$\$%!!*. Hosted by comedian Tom Chin, *SKETCHOFF!#\$\$%!!* is a night of competition between sketch comedy groups. The VACT has also received well-known acts, such as OPM — the Seattle sketch comedy group that inspired Lam in 1999. The comedy nights are interactive and personal. Chin explained, "As we draw closer to opening the show, I like to get out amongst the audience, either in the line-up or in the seats to personally talk [to and] welcome people to the show. Not all shows or theatre groups do this, but I like to do it because it fulfills one of [the] VACT's mandates to create community."

For the next Asian Comedy Night, showing May 26–27, 2007, the VACT plans to open the stage to anyone who thinks he or she can be a sketch comedian. In *SKETCHOFF!#\$\$%!!* — *Etch-YOUR-Sketch!*, contestants will perform in sketch groups, each having two sketches prepared for the show. An audience clap meter determines the winners.

VACT's productions usually cost about \$20–\$25 to attend and everyone is welcome. Often held at the Roundhouse Theatre downtown, the productions are very successful, which is largely due to their universal themes and the connections the audience feels with them. "It's amazing to see the reaction of our Asian-Canadian audiences. They stay long after the shows to meet the performers. It is so satisfying to hear them roar with laughter and approve of characters they recognize from their own lives and the incongruence of living in two cultures," Tom Chin said.

The VACT is always looking for volunteers, even if it's just extra help for a day. "Most productions require about 50 volunteers, and we usually get about 30," Lam commented. A little funding helped, too — the volunteers soon realized in 1999 they would also need to apply for government grants to stay on their feet. They successfully received a grant from Arts Now that allowed them to restructure and keep the theatre alive until 2010, and hopefully the VACT will last long after that. **PRM**

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to Crystal, eight languages in the world have over 100 million speakers: English, Mandarin, Spanish, Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, and Japanese. Approximately 96 percent of the world's population speaks just four percent of the world's languages.

When people die, they take the languages they speak with them. Crystal says fewer than 50 percent of the world's languages are effectively passed on to the next generation. Some languages die without any documentation. He mentions a linguist, Bruce Connell, who witnessed the

Egyptian and Greek. The Rosetta Project team had initially thought there would be a database of languages available to begin with, but soon realized they had been wrong. "No one had ever tackled anything like this before," said Leahy.

When the Rosetta Project started in 2000, its initial goal was to archive 1,000 of the 7,000 documented languages in the world. Linguists, researchers, and organizations from around the world provide all language information. The Rosetta Project has a core team of 50 people,

The project aims to provide a space in which documents can be stored safely. The first priority of those involved with the Rosetta Project is to store documents in their online archive. Once they receive the original documents, they create digital copies and make several back-ups. The back-ups are stored either in the Stanford Library or in the University of Michigan Library. The archive, which is accessible from their website, organizes each language by country, language family, name, and data type. If searching the archive by language family, nodes are available to navigate up and down the language's family tree. For example, clicking on the language family Sino-Tibetan brings up the nodes Chinese and Tibeto-Burman. Further down, clicking on the Chinese node

reveals more information on several Chinese languages. This is useful for both linguists and curious minds alike to navigate within a language family. Surfing the online archive allows anyone to discover the similarities and differences between related languages.

According to the Rosetta Project's website, the project strives to maintain an online archive in which each language contains meta-linguistic data, such as information on its orthography, and a map to show where the language is spoken. It aims to include grammatical descriptions, vocabularies, translations of texts, and media such as audio files.

In addition to the online archive, the Rosetta Project also keeps the archive on a physical disk known as the Rosetta Disk. The Rosetta Disk uses micro-etching technology to store 15,000 pages from the archive onto a physical disk. Micro-etching refers to an etching of metal samples for examination under the microscope. The idea of the Rosetta Disk using this technology is similar to using microform images to look at past newspaper articles in libraries. In order for newspaper articles to be legible to the reader,

“Approximately 96 percent of the world's population speaks just four percent of the world's languages.”

stark reality of endangered languages. During his field-work study in Cameroon in 1994–95, he came across the language of Kasabe, which had only one remaining speaker in the world. Connell went back to Cameroon in 1996 hoping to gather more linguistic data about Kasabe, but upon arrival discovered that the last speaker of Kasabe had passed away.

The Rosetta Project attempts to prevent situations like Kasabe from happening. The Project is part of the Long Now Foundation, a private San Francisco-based organization that aims to foster long-term thinking. The Long Now Foundation writes years using five digits, such as 02007, instead of the conventional four.

"The Rosetta Project started as a desire to maintain long-term storage data using analog instead of digital," explained Rosetta Project researcher and archivist JD Ross Leahy. Leahy said the Project team got together to brainstorm how they could use this idea, and decided that linguistics was a fitting subject. The team wanted to create a modern version of the Rosetta Stone, an ancient stone discovered in 1799 with inscriptions in

and also 2,500 volunteers around the world, according to Leahy. It also teams up with organizations such as the Endangered Language Fund, the National Science Digital Library, and the Linguist List. When the team surpassed 1,000 archived languages, they expanded their vision, aiming to document all of the world's languages. They currently have an archive of over 2,300 languages around the world, which is the largest collection of linguistic data. Approximately 500 of these languages are from Pacific Rim countries.



Top of Rosetta Disk container

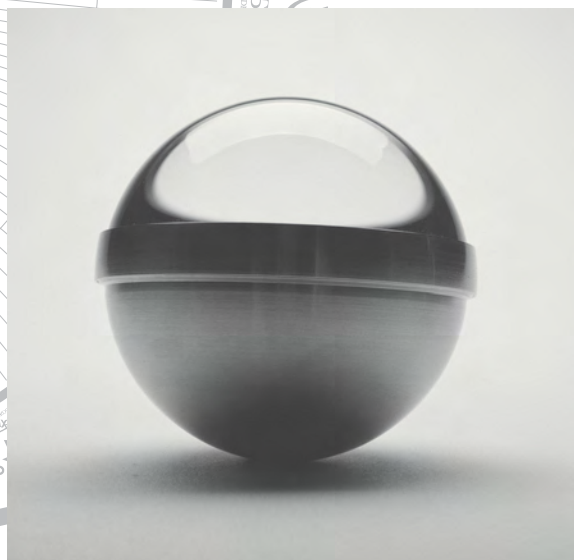


the flat sheets of microfiche need to be magnified at about 25 times. Microfiche has an estimated shelf life of 500 years. In comparison, the micro-etching technology used to produce the Rosetta Disk can last twice as long.

The Rosetta Disk is uniquely designed; it is made of nickel, flat, and only three inches wide. Etched in a spiral fashion, the outer part of the disk holds a message written in the world's eight major languages. In English, it reads, "Languages of the world: This is an archive of over 1,000 human languages assembled in the year 02000 C.E. Magnify 1,000 times to find over 15,000 pages of language documentation." Each message begins at human-eye legibility and becomes smaller as it spirals down.

At the center of the disk is a globe, and then the pages (at 0.019 inches wide) form rings around the globe. Each page contains information on individual languages, just like the online archive. "All digital

information is etched onto a small disc as analog information, and people can see it using a microscope




Side of Rosetta Disk container

optical glass, which magnifies at six times. The bottom hemisphere, made of stainless steel, has a cylinder that contains a ribbon. On the ribbon, the disk owner may have names and personal messages etched. This feature adds to the uniqueness of the disk, especially when it is passed through generations. Copies of the Rosetta Disk can be obtained by making a \$25,000 donation to the Rosetta Project.

The Rosetta Project also shows interest in producing a reference book to archive the world's languages. At the moment, however, according to Leahy, this part of the project is still on the back burner. Recently Alan Lomax, a well-known ethnomusicologist, kindly donated his audio collection to the Rosetta Project. The collection contains 250 tapes of recordings of various languages. The Project will keep a digital version of the recordings while the original tapes will be sent to the Library of Congress.

The Rosetta Disk and its container can be publicly viewed at the Long Now Interactive Museum and Gallery at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. In the museum, visitors can also see examples of text from the archive and audio recordings that are yet to be available on the internet. If readers would like to contribute to the Rosetta Project, Leahy suggests it is best to contact them by email for further guidelines.

It is hard to imagine that all the endangered languages will be saved and revived, but hopefully with the help of the Rosetta Project and the micro-etching technology, we can preserve much of the flavour and uniqueness each language brings to the world. 

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# Cracked Up!

STORY by Bronwyn Kent

## Egg-themed art by Junichiro Iwase

If you prefer your eggs light and fluffy, you're in luck, as it just so happens this is the way Junichiro Iwase serves them up (or at least paints them). In his *Cracked Up!* exhibition, Iwase used an 'egg' theme to deliver a playful yet obscure new series, which ran recently from Feb. 2 to April 27, 2007, at Art Beatus Consultancy Ltd., Vancouver.

Iwase's previous work includes the *Sick in Japan* series, which was comprised of some provocative pieces that drew criticism due to their satirical look at Japan. In *Sick*, Iwase created a character called ST whose eyes fell out of his head. *Cracked Up!* is inspired

by these works, but is decidedly more lighthearted and optimistic.

"To me, eggs symbolize life, and I wanted to relate it to ST somehow," explained Iwase. Using light and soft colours, he brings about a youthfulness that makes you feel like the sun is shining. "I want to make people



A painting from the 'Egg' series; acrylic on canvas

smile, laugh, or at least feel warm when they look at my paintings."

On the delicate eggshell covered canvases, Iwase had painted family, friends, animals, and even David

Suzuki. Also among the portraits was Tojo, a former boss of Iwase's whom he greatly admires. "I don't know if it is my old age, but painting simple things gives me the most pleasure now, [for example, painting] portraits of people I know." Although Iwase is only 35 years old, he has accomplished a lot and is wise beyond his years.

Vancouver has made Iwase very content, and he wishes to convey this feeling through his work. "After living in Japan for several years and finally moving back to my hometown, I am at peace and very happy," he said. "I feel I have come full circle at this point in my life."

Iwase was born in Tokyo, Japan but raised on the West Coast in Vancouver, where he attended Langara College. He later moved to New Jersey to take a sculpture program. After moving back and forth between Japan and Canada several times, he eventually settled in Vancouver. He now lives here with his wife and two children. **PRM**

PHOTO courtesy of Art Beatus Consultancy, Ltd.

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# Letting the dogs in

pets at play in  
vancouver cafés

Fiona Kerr enjoys dinner  
with her furry friend Moishe.

Dogs give their owners the gift of unconditional love, and in return, are cherished. In Vancouver, owners have the good fortune of being able to treat their pets like beloved family members. Dog lovers can provide their pets with doggy daycare, pet taxis, visits to spas and salons, diets fit for kings, access to parks, and good living conditions. However, Vancouver bylaws still prevent dog owners from taking ‘man’s best friend’ out to dinner.

In the Asian Pacific Rim, dog owners are able to take their canine companions to a restaurant that caters to the taste buds of both species. Some countries have dog cafés in which dog owners can treat themselves, and their dogs, to home-made food and drinks. For those who do not have pets of their own, there are also cafés that ‘employ’ animals, mostly cats and dogs, as companions. These animals are available for patrons to stroke and play with while enjoying food and drink.

Dog cafés are proving to be a hit in the densely populated city of Hong Kong, where many people do not have enough room to keep their own pets. They are good therapy for

those immersed in the frenetic pace of everyday city life. Dogs satisfy humans in need of ‘creature comfort,’ who enjoy the companionship in return.

The first café to employ domestic animals as hosts opened in Hong Kong in 2004 for cat lovers. The original concept was to have cats on the premises for patrons to pet and be around, while enjoying their meals. Soon after the cat cafés were introduced, dog cafés started popping up.


“Dog cafés are proving to be a hit in the city of Hong Kong.”

According to Ullrich Fichtner in the Spiegel Online story, *Heavy Petting in Hong Kong*, the patrons are young (between 14–25), and attired in the latest fashions. He reports that these cafés are not licensed to sell alcohol, so the young people are playing with the dogs and cats while slurping shakes. They come seeking warmth, cheer, and companionship with both animals and their peers.

Vancouver is home to many dog lovers and would-be dog lovers (who would like to own pets, but cannot), so why is it that no entrepreneurs have opened pet cafés here? Perhaps it is because the current Vancouver

bylaws do not allow it, however, they can be changed.

Vancouver bylaws forbid animals being inside public places where food or drinks are served (with the exception of assistance animals). Brian Johnston, a supervisor for Vancouver Coastal Health, says this is due to concerns about sanitation and pet behaviour. Even enjoying a beverage on an establishment’s outdoor patio with your well-behaved dog at your feet is, strictly speaking, illegal. These restrictions, however, are not cast in stone and can be called into review.

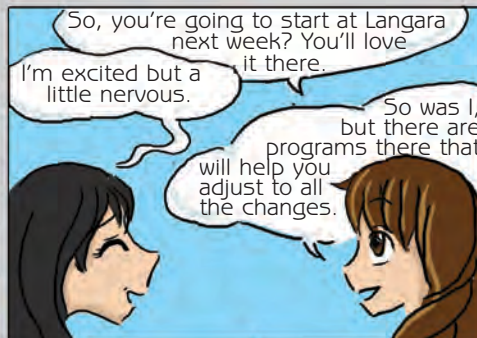
“If enough people were to express to City Hall the desire for designated pet cafés in Vancouver,” said Johnston, “city council may order a review of the bylaws.” This request would involve various city departments and could include those of Building, Permits and Licenses, and Property Use, in addition to Vancouver Coastal Health. Pending positive reports from these branches, the City of Vancouver has the power to make the changes that would allow Vancouverites the opportunity to enjoy specified pet cafés. Whether it is taking Buster out for fine food, or stroking a tabby while enjoying a latte, these pleasures could be had in Vancouver if that is the will of the people (and the pups). 

STORY by Benjamin Wong  
PHOTO by Laura Cole



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Storyboard by David Botten • Illustration by Karlinga Lee





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Let's skate!

It prepares international & Canadian students whose first language is not English for University Transfer or Career programs at Langara. The classes use content from real university courses taught at the college.

The best part is that when you finish LEAP you don't need to write TOEFL or IELTS. You can start university courses as soon as you graduate from LEAP!!

What are classes like at Langara?

The LEAP classes have an average of 16 students and the university courses have a maximum of 40 students. You would not be in classes with 500 students like at a big university.


What's Langara PLUS? It sounds like it costs more money.

Another thing that will interest you is the Langara PLUS program.

No, most of it is free. Only some recreational events or dinners cost money.

Hmm... tell me more.





Langara PLUS gives you a chance to get involved in campus life by participating in activities such as: basketball, snowboarding, cultural celebrations, and study skills workshops.

If you complete Langara PLUS, you will get a 'Statement of Achievement' certificate.

So I will get to meet people and take part in activities around town?

That sounds like a GREAT program!

Exactly, and the certificate can help you get into university.

Later that day...

I hear people talk about how prestigious universities are. I wish I were going straight to university.

I had good marks but not the best in my class.

Well, how were your marks in Senior Middle School?

Actually, Langara is a better place to start your university studies. Here's why... It is easier to get in, you don't need top marks, and you can move from LEAP directly to the University Transfer program.



You must still meet UBC's admission requirements, but you would be entering the third year, not the first year so it is less competitive.

The tuition is about 25-30% of what it costs for the same courses at big universities.

Can I go directly to UBC after Langara?

and the cost at Langara?

In all, Langara offers more than 200 first and second year University Transfer courses.

See, there are University Transfer Programs in Arts, Commerce & Business Studies, Computer Science, Engineering and Science.

Why did you choose Langara? Why not go to a well-known university?

What kind of courses can I take?

There's so much to choose from. Langara has the largest selection of university courses outside of the large universities.

Well, there's the cost, but also, because I like Langara. The professors are focused on teaching, not preoccupied with research like in a university. Plus, classes are smaller, and it's more comfortable and friendly.

I know you want to go to UBC but Langara has transfer arrangements with other Canadian universities as well.

Such as...

Simon Fraser University, University of Alberta and York University in Toronto.

Langara chose those universities based on their reputation, the wide range of degrees they offer and the quality of their international student services.

Why those schools?

hmm...

I'm so excited to see the campus.

It's easily accessible by public transit.

I like this park.

Really? I'm going to like it here!!

Actually this is the campus!



# travel in the pacific rim



PHOTO by Melissa Anderson

Malaka, Malaysia

## malaysia

**Population:** 28,876,000

**Capital City:** Kuala Lumpur — Legislative  
Putrajaya — Administrative

**Official Language:** Malay

**Other Languages:** English, Tamil, Chinese, Malayalam

**Currency:** Ringgit (MYR)

**Exchange:** \$1 CAD = 3.01203 MYR

**Climate:**

- Tropical — hot and humid
- Humidity hovers around the 80–90% mark
- Coastal temperatures range from 21–32°C
- Mountain temperatures range from 13–27°C
- From October–April is monsoon season
- Peninsular Malaysia averages 250cm of rain a year

- Sarawak and Sabah average 380cm

**Transportation:**

- Malaysia has an estimated 94,000kms of roads, ¾ of which are paved
- Fast, economical and widespread bus system
- Roads in East Malaysia and the eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia are still relatively undeveloped

**Religion:**

- Muslim (53%), official religion
- Buddhism
- Minority practice Taoism, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism

**Visas:** Not required for Canadians for visits up to three months

## indonesia

**Populations:** 206,264,595

**Capital City:** Jakarta

**Official Language:** Bahasa Indonesia

**Other Languages:** Malay, Common Malay (a dialect), and about 250 other Malayo-Polynesian languages and dialects (such as Sundanese and Mandurese), Japanese, Dutch, Chinese

**Climate:**

- Predominately tropical
- Hot and humid, moderate in highlands
- Average temperature in the lowlands is 27°C, highland areas are cooler

**Transportation:**

- Driving is on the left, an International Driving Permit is required

- Note for air travel: A number of small commercial aircraft have crashed in remote parts of the country. Maintenance standards (especially for small regional carriers) are often below Canadian standards

**Currency:** Indonesian Rupiah (IDR)

**Exchange:** \$1 CAD = 7,759.94 IDR

**Religion:**

- Islam 88%
- Christian 8%, Hinduism 2%, Buddhism 1%, Other 1%

**Visas:** Required for stays of 30 days or less, visas can be bought at the airport. Longer stays require travellers to apply for visas beforehand through an embassy



PHOTO by Tanya Keim

Woman in rice field in Mengwi, Bali

### DID YOU KNOW?

The country of Indonesia includes 17,508 islands in total. The population is concentrated on five main islands — Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Irian Jaya — and only about 1,000 of the islands are permanently settled. About 6,000 islands have been named.



**Population:** 48,846,823  
**Capital City:** Seoul  
**Official Language:** Korean  
**Currency:** Won (SRW)  
**Exchange:** \$1 CAD = 808.41 SRW  
**Climate:**

- Temperate climate
- Rainy season extends from the end of June–August
- July is the wettest month
- November–March can make for colder winters that dip below freezing, while summers tend to be hot and muggy
- Pollution levels peak in July and August

**Transportation:**

- Modern subway system
- Buses are fast, frequent, and safe
- Taxis are expensive and come in two types: standard and deluxe
- Train tickets must be reserved in advance

**Religion:**

- Buddhism (50%), Christianity (50%)
- Many are non-religious.
- Confucianism, Unification Church, and Chundo Kyo (a combination of Shamanism, Buddhism and Christianity)

**Visas:** Not required for Canadians for stays less than 180 days

PHOTO by Tanya Goehring



Hot day in front of Seoul's City Hall

## cambodia

PHOTO by Mark Pedrosa

Student training to become a monk takes a break to reflect in the Angkor Wat temple, Cambodia.



### KOREAN ETIQUETTE:

Bow politely when you greet. Use both hands for hand-shake. Koreans generally appreciate a foreigner's effort in expressing a thank you (gam-sa-ham-ni-da) or a hello (an-yong-ha-say-yo) in the Korean language.

Respect punctuality. Relationships are important. In business, 'cold calls' do not work and introductions are crucial.

Respect the hierarchy and address yourself to the most senior person. Never refer to Korean counterparts by their first name, particularly in front of other businesspeople or their contemporaries.

**Population:** 11,437,656  
**Capital City:** Phnom Penh  
**Official Language:** Khmer (95%)  
**Other Languages:** French and English  
**Currency:** Cambodian Riel (KHR)  
**Exchange:** \$1 CAD = 3,500 KHR  
**Climate:**

- Tropical monsoon climate
- Rainy monsoon season from May–November
- Dry season from December–April
- The average annual temperature ranges from 27–29°C

### Transportation:

Within cities:

- Motorcycle taxi: cost is negotiated
- Cyclo taxi (ie. travel by bicycle): good for short distance trips
- Car and driver rental: cost of car and driver is about \$25 CAD per day
- Mini-bus: rough, but a good way to connect with locals
- No Public transit or car rentals

### Religion:

- Theravada Buddhism 93–95%
- Islam, Christianity

**Visas:** Required

### DID YOU KNOW?

An estimated four to six million land mines litter the countryside of Cambodia. It is advisable not to stray from well-marked paths.

## new zealand

PHOTO by Shirley Sara



**Population:** 4,076,140

**Capital City:** Wellington, on North Island

**Official Languages:** English, Maori

**Currency:** New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

**Exchange:** \$1 CAD = 0.88 NZD

**Climate:**

- Mild, moist climate
- Seasons are opposite those of the northern Hemisphere
- July is the coldest month, January and February are the warmest
- Southern NZ is cooler than northern NZ
- Average summer temperatures range from 15–20°C, occasionally rise above 32°C
- Average winter temperature ranges from 2–12°C

**Transportation:**

- Domestic airlines, intercity bus companies, train, ferry
- Driving is on the left
- New Zealand is popular with cyclists

**Religion:**

- Majority unreligious
- Unspecified, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, other Christian

**Visas:** Not required for Canadians, for visits up to three months

### DID YOU KNOW?

New Zealand is one of the first places in the world to start the new day. NZ is 12 hours ahead of GMT/UTC and two hours ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time.

## thailand

**Population:** 64,631,595

**Capital City:** Bangkok

**Official Language:** Thai

**Other Languages:** Chinese and Malay. English is a mandatory school subject and widely spoken.

**Currency:** Thai Baht (THB)

**Exchange:** \$1 CAD = 28.19298 THB

**Climate:**

- Hot and Humid
- Monsoon season runs from May–October
- Severe rainstorms can cause flashfloods and mudslides
- Dry season runs from November–March
- Hot months are March–June

- March and April average temperature is 28–38°C
- Humidity 73–82%

**Transportation:**

- *Tuk-tuks* (motorized rickshaws), *samlors* (bicycle rickshaws), *songthaews* (small pick-ups) and taxis.
- In Bangkok, trains, buses, cars (driving is on the left)
- Mopeds available for hire

**Religion:**

- Buddhist (95%)
- Muslim (4%)
- Christian, Hindu, other

**Visas:** Not required for Canadians, for visits up to 30 days



PHOTO by Melissa Anderson

Thai Buddha — representing his physical attributes as well as Buddhist teachings.

### Travel Precautions:

Travellers are advised against travelling to the far southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and Songkhla (including the city of Hat Yai). On September 16, 2006, bombs exploded in Hat Yai (Songkhla Province), killing several foreigners, including one Canadian. On February 18–19, 2007, bombings and other types of attacks occurred in the same provinces. In both incidences several people were killed and more were wounded.

Travellers are also advised against travelling to areas that border Burma (Myanmar).

PHOTO by Tanya Goehring



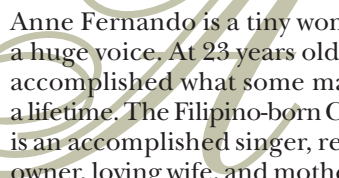
The floating market operates every morning until noon.



# a taste of success

singer Anne Fernando's story

STORY by Angie Quan  
PHOTO by Dan Stone



Anne Fernando is a tiny woman with a huge voice. At 23 years old, she has accomplished what some may not in a lifetime. The Filipino-born Canadian is an accomplished singer, restaurant owner, loving wife, and mother of two. Longtime friend Clara Ng describes Fernando as someone who always expects a lot of herself. Ng remembers how, at 16 years old, Fernando was devastated after placing second in a competition she was too young to enter in the first place.

Also at this age, Fernando had her first solo concert at the Vancouver Playhouse, with proficient Canadian music director and composer Bill Sample behind the scenes. Her involvement in the show got her name out and acquainted her with Bananatoons, an established writer/production team in the North American music industry that has contributed songs to stars such as Kelly Rowland, Jessica Simpson, and 98 Degrees.

Recording demos for Bananatoons confirmed Fernando's unmistakable talent for music. Fernando explained that the songs she recorded were being sent to professional artists and producers and were meant to "sell the songs, not the artist." Regardless, huge record labels began to take interest in the young woman, and Bananatoons decided to develop Fernando as an artist.

After she finished high school, Fernando prepared for stardom, sending out demos to record labels and music producers in New York. Soon, artist and repertoire representatives (A&Rs) from major record companies in America began flying to Vancouver to meet her.

Fernando made an impression and was flown to New York where she

met big names in music: L.A. Reid and P. Diddy. She also auditioned for Clive Davis in his home. "I thought that it was all so surreal," Fernando remembered.

A unit of Sony BMG Music Entertainment, J Records, signed Fernando on her 18th birthday. "Whitney Houston was one of my biggest idols growing up," said Fernando, "so being signed by the legend who jump-started her career was just unbelievable." Fernando started recording her solo album, working with top R&B writers and producers, and decided to move to New York at 19 years old to accelerate her career.

Fernando was on her way to fulfilling her dreams. However, life is hardly free of obstacles, and the subsequent merger of J Records with RCA Records Group put a glitch in the launch of Fernando's career. J Records was forced to cut many of their new artists, and she was dropped from the label before completing her first album.

The setback was disheartening for Fernando, who was just about to find her place in America's music empire. "Yeah, it was disappointing," Fernando admitted, "but you keep working hard; you toughen up, and keep going." Fernando stayed in New York for two more years, singing, songwriting, and keeping up with the bustling lifestyle of the Big Apple. She fell in love and got married, became pregnant, and with this new phase in her personal life, Fernando decided to put her music career on hold. "It's my passion," she said, "I love singing, but can I still be a good wife, a good mom?" With this in mind she moved back to



Vancouver with her husband, Luck Sarabhayavanija.

Encouraged by Sarabhayavanija, Fernando ventured to Stockholm, Sweden, in 2006 to restart her music career. She now travels back and forth between Vancouver and Stockholm, preparing an album with two other writers. "We are currently working on finishing the album. They're a husband and wife team based in Stockholm; we met in New York when we were both working there."

Fernando chose Sweden because it is too difficult to break into the American music industry. "No one is willing to develop new artists anymore. No one wants to take the risk, especially since I'm not 17 anymore," Fernando explained. "The way the industry is now, you have to be a sure thing for the company... that's why having some sort of fan base really helps, like MySpace or some sort of exposure on the media like American Idol."

In the meantime, Fernando is busy taking care of her two children, enjoying marriage, and running her upscale Thai restaurant, O Thai, on Broadway in Vancouver. Though her music career has been put on the back burner for the time being, Fernando's aspiration to be successful and make the most of life is continuing with impressive force. **PRM**



# elements of *tranquility*

## the art of japanese zen gardens

STORY by Monica Miller

**Z**en, bonsai, suiseki, bonkei, and saikei are all terms you may recognize. Different thoughts, feelings, and places, are represented in a simple setting by elements of water, stones, and trees. Professionals of these art forms use their skills to seek relaxation, and truth in thought. Not just aesthetically pleasing, Japanese gardens are created with a great deal of conceptual method behind them. However seemingly complex, a beautiful, unique, and serene space can easily be created by simply learning the basics.

There are many subcultures of Japanese gardening. The art of bonsai cultivation involves raising and pruning a miniature tree into an artistic shape. Stone appreciation is a simple idea meant to invoke thought and peace using the natural contours of a rock. However, it is the ideas behind Zen philosophy that shape these ideals.

This philosophy is a form of Chinese Buddhism that plays an important role in both Japanese culture and gardening. It values simplicity, attributing spirituality to surroundings through direct experience, and mental awareness. Monks are deeply thoughtful and influential in their teachings by being aware of the world around them. They craft dry gardens that pose a question, to which everyone has a different answer. Jenny Hendy, botanist and author of *Zen in your Garden: Creating Sacred Spaces*, explains how people may see rocks and moss symbolizing mountains and islands, or the stone-raked contours symbolizing the ripples in the pond.

“Because the development of religious thought and the style of gardens are inseparable, it is likely that garden design encourages thought and helps move it in new directions, towards the Zen approach,” muses designer and author Erik Borja in *Zen Gardens*. Bringing the calm, relaxing style of a Zen garden into your own home is as simple as buying a *bonkei* (a dry miniature garden with white sand and stones).

PHOTO by Rachel Burns





View of Zen garden from Buddhist temple in Koyasan, Japan.  
PHOTO by Rachel Burns

## DESIGNING THE ZEN GARDEN

An important factor, described by Toko Garden Design founder Tamotsu Tongu, is creating a transition between the garden and the house. A ‘grey zone’ exists in the eaves and the deck of the house. “Trying to design a Japanese garden is more difficult in a European house,” Tongu said. The garden is not usually taken into consideration when the house is built, which differs from Japanese design where the garden is part of the house. “The patio and the deck [should be] for looking at the garden.”

Tongu explained how to find balance between the house and the garden by determining a focal point in the garden, keeping in mind where it is seen from the house. “In Japan, you sit in the house, open the window, and look out; you see the garden. Of course, you can go sit on a bench outside. It is a different idea totally, watching the garden.”

The Zen garden is “designed to be gazed at from a fixed point — that is, from the raised, covered passage of the house — it is seen in its entirety and so transforms the way we see it,” says Borja.

After deciding on the focal point, the placement of other elements is crucial. One must try not to overwhelm the senses; there should be a balance between elements. The focal point could be a rock grouping, a temple, a pond or stream, or a sculpted tree. Accents to the focal point could be rocks, stone pathways, water sounds, stone-rivers, and moss. Backdrops, screens, walls, gates, and entranceways should also be considered.

When designing a garden, the purpose must be kept in mind, as different needs require different arrangements. “Most people want something natural,” said Tongu, “but this definition is very vague. Often, it is best to create a closed space, using a wall to divide from the neighbours, a temple, or an entrance... Zen is very closed in. You try to separate from the outside. If there is no wall, it is harder for the spiritual design.”

Trees, and the shapes of their branches, are frequently used to block out other elements, creating a wall that secludes the garden. A tree in a full-sized Japanese garden could be designed in a Bonsai style, as it is pleasing to the eye. Multiple full-sized trees, however, can often be overbearing and divert attention away from the focal point.

There are a number of factors to consider when viewing a Zen garden. “The design should promote clean lines and no unnecessary flourishes,” explains Hendy. The senses are to be soothed, not stimulated. “It is a place that encourages a contemplative state of mind,” explained Kieran Egan, a Simon Fraser University professor and author of *Building My Zen Garden*. “Western gardens overwhelm the senses with massive amounts of flowers, colours, and pretty things. It’s quite vulgar.” A Japanese Zen garden should draw on subtle and natural shades of green, grey, and blue.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF STONES

Stones are an integral part of the garden design. Garden structure is determined through arrangement and harmony of elements in which stones have special significance. “Each stone has a character,” Tongu explained, “European gardens are more focused on planting material. Japanese gardens are more focused on rocks. They believe rocks never rot, never grow, and never break. They will last many generations.”

“According to the ancient religion of Shinto, the gods manifest themselves in certain natural places or things, including mountains and rocks, which are therefore regarded as ‘divine bodies’ (*shintai*),” author François Berthier explains in his book *Reading Zen in the Rocks* (translated by Graham Parkes).

“Stones are the skeletons on which gardens are supposed to be built. The placement, style, and size all play an important part in invoking emotions of peace and harmony with plants and other planted material,” stated Bruce Miller, a stone-hobbyist.

Allowing the stone to look natural in its setting is key. If a stone is misplaced or misused, its importance is lost. Stones “must not be used in a different way from their natural position,” said Borja. “A stone that is found lying on its side, for example, must not be placed vertically and vice versa.”

The stones are not meant to copy nature, but to provide a visual into the sensations and emotions of the rock. Certain stones can represent a mountain, a stone-river, an island, or a plateau. “Layouts in Japanese and Zen gardens are triangles,” said Master Tak Yamaura of Japan Bonsai Garden Art, “with rocks, stones, and settings in a three-style triangle.”

There is a “preference for stones that [are] more suggestive than explicit,

style. The five basic styles are straight, curved, slanted, semi-cascade, and cascade. A straight trunk can also be called formal upright, where the tree is coached to grow in its natural fashion. Informal upright, in contrast, involves wiring the tree trunk to display a slight curve or twist. Slanted bonsai may have a subtle lean or a windswept look. Semi-cascade styles represent the trunk ascending slightly, and then succumbing to gravity.

Cascade, like semi-cascade, symbolizes a tree growing on a steep slope, but with a much more dramatic descent. Most plantings have exposed, or semi-exposed, roots. The

amount of root showing reveals the power and stability of the plant.


According to the book *Bonsai* by Susan Lang, “Bonsai can range from a few inches to about four feet in height.” When a tree exceeds four feet, it can still possess a bonsai style, but it is no longer classified as a miniature specimen. Multiple bonsai in one pot often come in groups of three, five, or seven.

When beginning bonsai cultivation, soil choice and watering are important to consider. A coarse soil that will not retain too much water should be used to avoid rotting roots. Consequently, due to this coarse soil, the bonsai will need watering regularly. “Bonsai is made of two parts, the horticulture and the artistic side. You should create more artistic shapes. But you need to know how to grow bonsai, that’s the horticulture part. Know the trees; when you cut the branches wrong, it makes [the tree] weak and it dies,” said Yamaura.

Bonsai can be planted with rocks, moss, and representations of water; the combination of these elements create a miniature landscape called *saikei*. Saikei represents a natural scene and was created

by Toshio Kawamoto to describe his school of bonkei. *Bon* is the acceptable word for tray, on which a bonsai is displayed. *Sai* is translated as the tree or other planted greenery — a living vegetative material. *Kei* is the Japanese term for landscape.

As with a full-sized garden, there must be a focal point, trees, rocks, and an aesthetically pleasing scene in the *saikei*. Positive and negative space, sand and soil, and stones and trees are all represented in a small tray. Kawamoto makes it clear in Lew Buller’s *Saikei and Art* that *saikei* are not bonsai; his living landscapes contain all elements to represent a full landscape with water, plants, and the roots and soil above the rim of the tray.

Berthier explains how Zen thought and Japanese gardens are connected: “In his *Dream Dialogues*, Musō Soseki wrote: ‘He who distinguishes between the garden and practice cannot be said to have found the true Way.’ In other words, creating a garden is a way of practicing Zen. Such an assertion implies close connections between the art of the garden and the search for truth.” 

“The stones are not meant to copy nature, but to provide a visual into the sensations and emotions of the rock.”

more natural and irregular than artificial and symmetrical, more austere, subdued, and weathered than ostentatious, colourful, bright, and new. Reduced to its bare essentials, the stone [becomes] a means of spiritual refinement, inner awareness, and enlightenment,” Vincent T. Covello and Yuji Yoshimura describe in *The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation*.

*Suiseki* is a branch of stone appreciation that focuses directly on feeling, power, and beauty. Believed to have originated over two thousand years ago in China, *suiseki* focuses on displaying a rock that suggests a scene from nature such as a mountain, desert or waterfall. “The shape and colour determines how it is perceived,” Miller offered, “whether it reminds you of distant mountains, rocks, shores, waterfalls, pools, or other objects.”

## BONSAI & SAIKEI

The art of bonsai is an entire subculture to Japanese garden design. To the uneducated eye, it may only be miniature trees; but to a professional, it is the careful cultivation of a beautiful work of art. “Bonsai is art expressed in miniature form,” explained Yamaura. “It’s a beautiful, natural form to try to create the art of bonsai. It is not to copy nature.”

There are many different styles of bonsai, and it is important to choose a style that suits one’s taste and needs. The size of the potting, the shape of the branches, the trunk, and the roots all contribute to the

15-year-old Shimpaku Juniper  
in slanted bonsai style.

PHOTO by Felix Wong







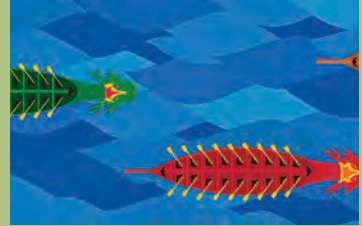
In the cherry blossom's shade  
there's no such thing  
as a stranger.

---

HAIKU by Kobayashi Issa  
ILLUSTRATION by David Botten

# Imagine

*the possibilities...*



Samples of first semester Publishing program student work using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator software

- Art Director
- Graphic Artist
- Illustrator
- Writer
- Publicist
- Web Designer
- Production Director
- Magazine Editor
- Photo Editor
- Book Editor
- Production Artist
- Magazine Publisher



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