

# PACIFIC RIM

M A G A Z I N E

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her **persecutors**


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## President's Message

Once again, the students of the Publishing: Techniques and Technologies Program deserve a standing ovation for producing this professional quality magazine. This is Pacific Rim Magazine's twelfth annual issue and the fourth time it has been produced by Publishing students.

This issue is a special one; it marks the year 2000, the beginning of a bright millennium. Here at Langara College, we are celebrating this momentous year by proposing the creation of a learning and living community within our neighbourhood. We want to strengthen our ties with our neighbours and become a part of the community.

We took our first steps in that direction almost a decade ago. Early in the '90s, Langara saw the need to enhance its environment so that it would welcome not only students, staff and faculty, but our neighbours, as well. We hoped to expand our facilities to create inviting social spaces, including more engaging classrooms, expanded food services, a new library, a gymnasium and a centre for the creative arts. The plan began to materialize in 1997 with a new classroom and administration building. The next steps would be larger and more costly, and needed creative planning.

Meanwhile, the South Slope YMCA, another non-profit group dedicated to healthy living and education, had similar ideas. We both wanted more neighbourhood-friendly facilities, and we saw a way to help each other get them. Our joint plan, which emerged this March, is to combine parcels of land between Langara and the Y. We would look for builders who would create compact and gracefully designed housing on part of the land. This would finance the other part: a library to share with the community, an arts centre with a theatre and gallery space for neighbourhood enjoyment, gymnasium space to share with neighbours, and other areas that would allow for physical, mental and spiritual growth for our community.

We are anxious to work with our neighbours to make this project a success. If you live nearby, please stop by Langara College, stroll past the land between the college and the Y, and imagine a centre for education, arts and healthy living blossoming on these grounds. We will be seeking your thoughts on this soon. We have a lot to share with you, and we welcome you as our partners in shaping this learning and living community.

**Linda Holmes, President**



## Publisher's Message

Ever since the year 2000 slid quietly into our lives—no power outages, no explosions, no fuss—people have been finding simple, elegant and innovative ways to welcome the future. You can find a simple but elegant innovation right on our cover. Our art department has designed a new banner, changing the lettering of "Pacific Rim Magazine" from its traditional Bodoni font to a more modern—and aptly named—Futura.

Other innovations in this issue include new departments that explore our readers' interests: sustenance, habitat and artefacts, to name a few. Our writers have probed topics as diverse as the roots of a bonsai tree and the heights of the world's tallest skyscrapers. We've put a lot of effort into this millennial publication, hoping that you, the reader, will enjoy our stories and learn about Pacific Rim culture.

We could not have done all this without the help of some wonderful people here at Langara College: Publishing instructors Giselle Lemay, Marilyn Sing, Kevin McMillan, Janet Russell and Michael Lee; sales manager Keith Murray; building services manager Mel Fearman; Library Technician instructor Ann Calla; Photo-Imaging instructor Catharine O'Brien-Bell; computing services director Jim Goard; and of course, all the students who have put their hearts and enthusiasm into making this issue a success. There are too many students to cite, but please peruse their names on the masthead. Today's students will be the leaders of Canada's future. And we have some of the best of them here at Langara.

**Elizabeth Rains, Publisher**

## Letter from the Editors

Greetings from the accretion\* zone.

Twelve thousand years ago the only communication link between Canada and Asia was the Bering land bridge. Today a single strand of fibre optic cable no thicker than dental floss can convey the entire works of Shakespeare between Hong Kong and Vancouver faster than you can say "bard."

But does faster make things clearer? We found, in producing this issue, that much of our knowledge of our Pacific Rim neighbours is riddled with misconceptions and stereotypes. Even our pronunciation of a simple word like *sake* needed correcting.

We also discovered that speed-of-light contact between cultures accelerates the rate at which traditions change. It may be tough to get properly fitted for a kimono 50 years from now, but within five years it will be possible to shake Mickey's hand in China.

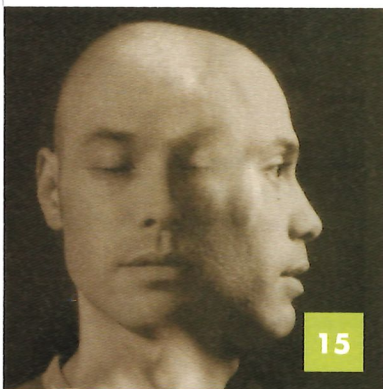
This magazine is primarily a student publication. We hope that it will expand your awareness as you absorb the stories and images.

Consider these pages as one flash of light from the new fibre optic link.

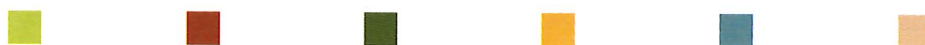
\* (definition: organic growth, especially the addition to land by water-borne sediment)

**Editors: Leanne Prain, Rob Howatson, Trisha Elliott**





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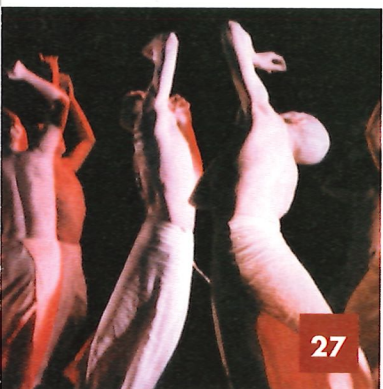
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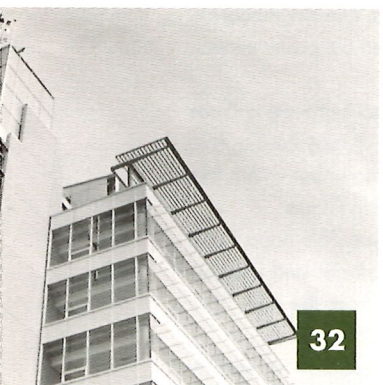
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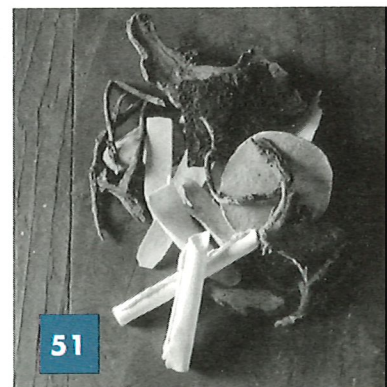
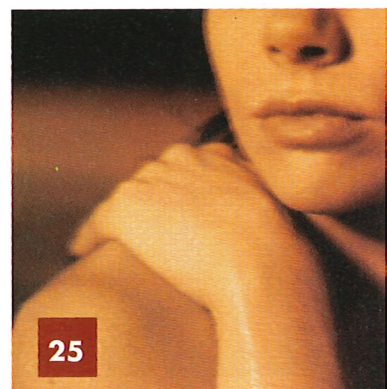
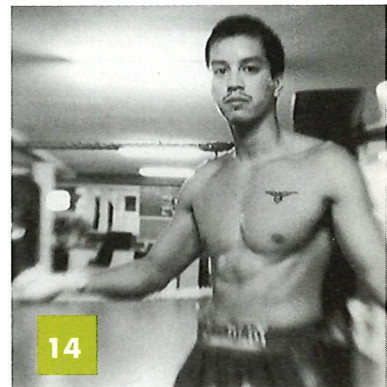
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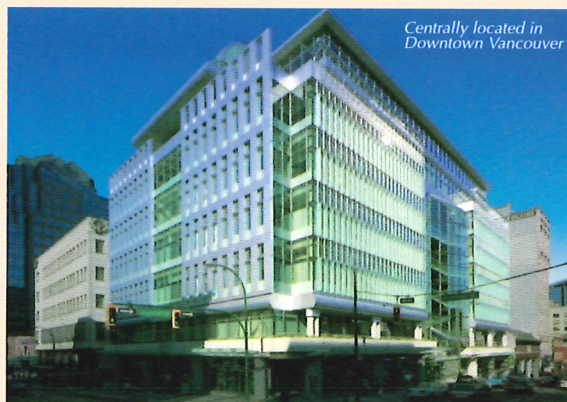
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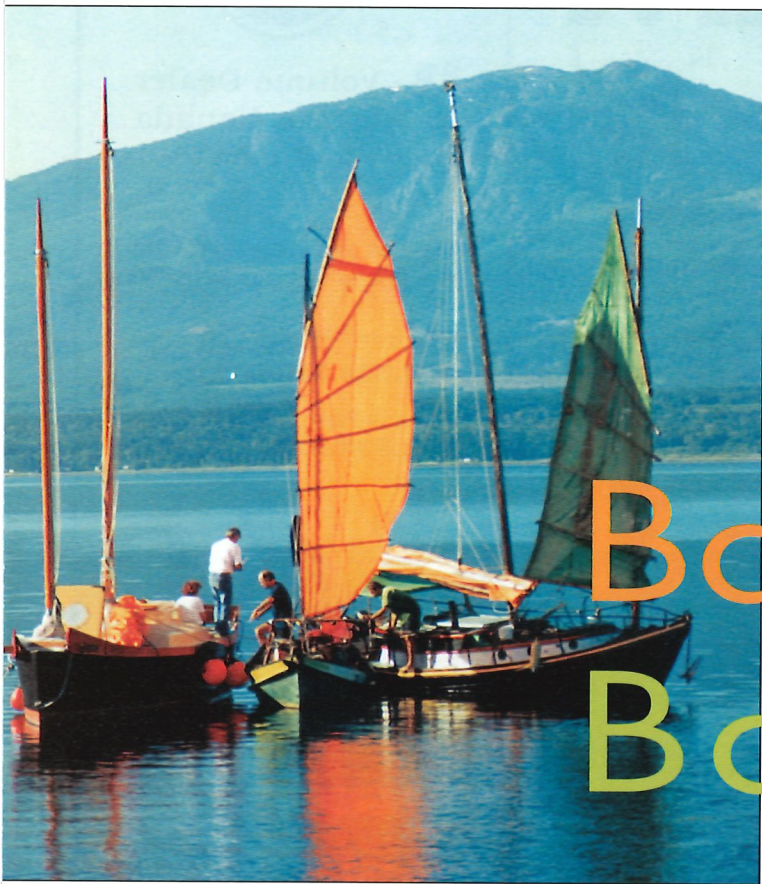


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# Batwings & Bamboo

s t o r y   b y   L e a n n e   P r a i n

Even the dog beside me was quiet while the old man rowed his dory towards us. Minutes earlier our on-water party had been laughing. My father and I had just sailed from the Comox Marina to Newcastle Island, and our neighbours wanted to hear of our adventure. But we were silenced.

The old man looked thoughtfully at each of us.

"Which boat you in?"

My father nodded vaguely towards Nanaimo Harbour, "Not ours. We're bringing down someone else's to Sidney. Just a white boat."

Alan Farrell, builder of the legendary Chinese junk *China Cloud* grinned. Behind him, the colours of his orange-red and black boat shone. "Another one of those white boats with blue sail covers?" he asked mischievously.

Between Victoria and Port Hardy, Lasqueti Island and Vancouver, boat builders have embraced the colourful Chinese junk. West Coasters build modern day junk rigs because they are affordable, "beachable" and maneuverable in the water.

"A flat-bottomed junk can be built for the price of a modern day kayak," Dan Prain says. He finished his own junk rig on a *Herreshoft Meadowlark* hull four years ago.

"Boats of 30-plus feet [19.5 metres] can be made. Paint comes from paint exchanges, lines from government wharf dumpsters and sails cut out of plastic tarps," Prain says. While the materials can come cheap, the form of the rig varies artistically with each builder.

photographs by  
Lynn VanHerwaarden  
and Dan Prain



Michael Parker, who has built 10- to 13-metre beachable West Coast junks in a "funky" style, agrees. In 1966, Parker was fishing on a junk, *The Lotus Princess*, near Sooke, B.C. He was amazed at the spaciousness of it and the simple catwalk that bordered the cabin. His life has never been the same since. Junks make him feel, "overwhelmed, touching nostalgia."

Years later, when Parker was building his own junks, he was handed a piece of yellow newsprint. The article was about an old fishing boat that had come from Hong Kong. It was *The Lotus Princess*. Parker was astounded that the junk had come so far. This confirmed his belief in the strength of the junk form. He sums up a 2,000 year history simply: "Chinese junks are practical. Built to take abuse [and] water damage."

Since 221 BC, during the Ch'in Dynasty, the Chinese junk has dominated the world's sailing fleets. A thousand years before European ships dominated the seas, the junk was already using maritime innovations such as the balanced rudder, watertight compartment and spoon-shaped stern.

In China, spotting a junk on the horizon was considered a symbol of good luck.

Certainly for Hong Kong, the junk not only symbolized luck but also industrial and financial security. Hong Kong has a long shipyard history, producing junks for industry and pleasure. Although fewer junks are being built there today, fishing junks are still being shaped with heat and charcoal.

Given its various forms, it is no wonder that the shape of the traditional Chinese junk remains a mystery. Chinese shipbuilding has long been recognized for an absence of written plans. Expertise was passed down between generations. This verbal exchange of instruction continues among builders in British Columbia.

"If it looks right, then it probably is right," says Prain, citing a general rule of thumb for building a junk.

Those who build junks share newspaper clippings and out-of-print books. It is this dialogue that makes the junk form stay alive.

When Prain is asked what distinguishes the junk's body, he says, "It is not so much a hull form, but a state of mind."

Steel is becoming more common in the Gulf Islands as the material of choice for junk hulls, though they are traditionally made of wood. Wooden junks on the West

Coast have mostly been flat-bottomed. Sailboats generally have a keel that descends from the hull to a drop of approximately 0.6 to 0.9 metres. The longer the keel, the deeper the water needs to be when the boat anchors. Thus, a boat without a keel not only anchors easily in shallow areas, but also beaches on sandy shores. Most junks have a detachable rudder that can be raised when beaching the vessel.

Red and yellow cedar, fir and yew are the primary woods used to build junks. Natural crooks and knees are used as latches, rudder handles and joints. The Chinese junk is an expression limited only by the imagination.

The junk is environmentally safe. "I'd rather be an attraction than a detraction," Parker says of the junks beached near his home on Hornby Island. By keeping his boat on the beach, Parker avoids painting the underside of his hull with fouling agents. The more time the boat spends on the beach, the more time the bottom has to dry, warding against marine growth.

In addition, "The [lug rig] sails don't flap...and all the other sails in the wind flap...a heck of a racket," says Parker. He claims that a silent lug rig can be orange tarp or Dacron.

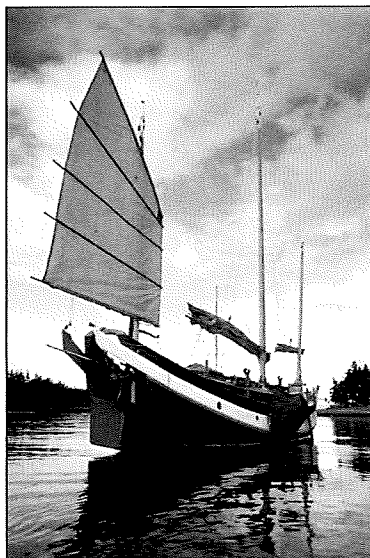
Traditional junk sails are Chinese red, an orange-like mix of white, black and red, or deep green. The sail rigging uses multiple lines. The more lines there are in a rig, the less chance of stress on any one line. The battens (the crossbeams of the rig), are made of bamboo or fir. Parker insists that the sails can be put up easily in the wind, just like an "automatic transmission."

Junk rigs are used on boats other than the traditional flat bottom junk, such as Colvins' *Gazelle* and *St. Pierre Doris*.

Rolf Zarr lives aboard his 13-metre sailboat at Stamps Landing, B.C. He has had success adopting a junk lug rig to his sizable boat, making it manageable for one sailor. His initial rig plans came with a Pelican design. He had never seen a junk. When asked about first raising his junk sails, Zarr's face lights up.

"Some people don't like junk rigs at all," says Zarr, "but it suits my personality."

Junk rigs come naturally to some people. "It felt like something I'd done before. It doesn't make a lot of practical sense, but..." Parker hardly pauses in his thoughts when describing the first time he saw a junk, "...it felt like coming home." ■



*Batwinged vessel at anchor*





# AYA'S STORY



DURING WORLD WAR II, JAPANESE-CANADIANS WERE PLACED IN INTERNMENT CAMPS THROUGHOUT B.C.'S INTERIOR. THERE, SOME OF THE CANADIAN-BORN INTERNEES FACED THE PROSPECT OF EXPATRIATION TO A COUNTRY MANY HAD NEVER EVEN VISITED. RESPECTED KASLO TEACHER, AYA HIGASHI, TELLS FORMER STUDENT, TANA FRIE, HER STORY.

s t o r y   b y   T a n a   F r i e

*above left: Aya at her desk in her classroom, circa 1944.  
above right: Notice to Male Enemy Aliens is posted, 1942.*

*On a sunny day in 1945, Aya Higashi sat crying in the deserted sanctuary of Saint Andrew's United Church in Kaslo, B.C. She faced a monumental decision that would affect her entire family. She had less than 48 hours to sign papers that would "repatriate" her to Japan, out of the province of her birth.*

*Recalling this time, Aya said, "How could I be repatriated to a country to which I'd never been and of which I'd never been a citizen? I was a Canadian. That was not repatriation; that was expatriation, and they are entirely different things."*

*This was one of the many trials that Aya confronted as a Japanese-Canadian in one of British Columbia's World War II internment camps.*

*Aya's father, Kiyomatsu Atagi, had come from Japan to Canada in the early 1890s. After a series of hardships, including being press-ganged into railway work, he eventually made his way to the Pacific coast and became a naturalized Canadian citizen in 1903. He married a young Japanese woman and they had children: Kimi, Aya and Yute. The family settled in their home on Quadra Island, and prospered until war spread.*



"The RCMP came to the door...the day after Pearl Harbor, and Dad was ordered to take his three boats to New Westminster. In early March, 1942, they told Mom and Dad to pack enough to be away for three months. They were to be on the Union Steamship for Vancouver the next day."

*Like others in the Japanese-Canadian community, the family did what was asked of them. The Atagis packed up, leaving family heirlooms, mementos and photos behind. They were sent to Hastings Park where they remained until October 1942.*

"You didn't have much time to think and you were hustled here and there .... If they didn't show up for dinner, the families knew that the men had been taken into work camps.... We were supposed to be sent to an internment camp, but not until my parents signed over all of their possessions to the British Columbia Security Commission. I remember crying to my father, asking him 'Why is Canada doing this to us?'"

*Finally, the Atagis signed and were sent to Kaslo, then a scattered ghost town.*

"The houses had no insulation.... The windows had been smashed or boarded up, and in most homes the plaster was falling off the ceilings.... One thing that disturbed me was the misconception by some people in the white community that we Japanese were living the high life, and that we were given housing while 'their boys were off fighting.' Many Japanese boys tried to enlist but were denied.

"We had to pay for our lodgings, and prior to leaving Hastings Park, the government had frozen everyone's assets. It was a real struggle to make ends meet. Most of the men had been separated from their families and were away in work camps. Some men remained and worked at logging for 25 cents an hour. This provided wood for

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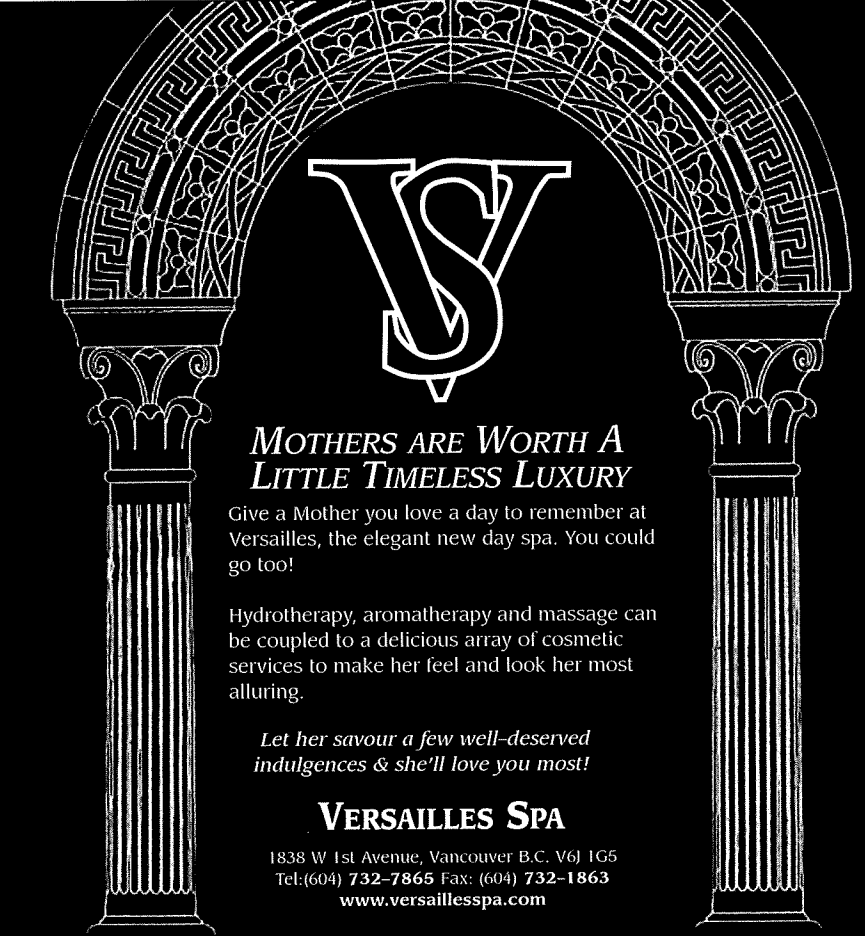
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Japanese families. Whole families were packed into single rooms, many sleeping on a single straw mattress."

Kaslo's population of 500 swelled with the addition of 1,100 Japanese internees. With no provisions for educating the children, it quickly became apparent arrangements had to be made. Ten young people with high school diplomas were identified as suitable teachers, Aya among them.

"I was paid 25 dollars per month for teaching and, out of that, I paid my lodging and bought school supplies. There was no place to put the students so we rotated between various spots in town.... Eventually, the Legion offered us space to conduct our classes in the drill hall. In time, we were also given discarded textbooks.... Within a year or so, the local high school made room for some of the senior students."

With all the senior students at the high school, and the Japanese elementary classes moved into the Geigrich building, Aya took the opportunity to hang the Union Jack and Red Ensign flag above her blackboards.

"I was reported to the RCMP by someone who said I didn't have the right to hang the flags in my classroom. The RCMP officer told me to remove them. I was very upset...'No sir, I will not take down those flags. I am a Canadian citizen and I have every right to hang those flags in my classroom...if you want them down then you will have to find a ladder and take them down yourself....' I got to keep my flags."

In 1945, there was a growing national resentment towards local Japanese people, and the movement for repatriation to Japan began. Most Japanese-Canadians faced repatriation to a country they had never visited, or a forced dispersal to mid-west and eastern Canada. It was a busy time for Aya. As well as



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## currents



Aya today.

teaching, she looked after her brother and gave blood for the transfusions her ailing mother received at the local hospital. Her father was in Crowsnest Pass, working for the CPR. One Friday, an officer arrived with repatriation papers.

"I put off signing the papers because of Mom's illness, and I had no way of communicating with Dad. Censorship was in place and even if there had been time to send a letter, his response would have come back in shreds. I was so distraught making a decision that would change all of our lives.

"I sat in the church overnight and wept and...I scribbled all over that paper outlining my reasons why I shouldn't be expatriated—that I was signing under duress—and explained my family's situation. Moreover, I was a Canadian. I then went to one of the RCMP officers.... I wanted him to witness and sign his name to the form as well. I vowed to him that if the government wanted to expatriate me I wouldn't go alive.... The officer was sympathetic to my reasons."

Aya stayed in Canada.

After the war, the British Columbia Security Commission closed down the Japanese school. The remaining Japanese children in Kaslo attended the local school, and Aya went to Slocan City for a year to teach in Slocan's Japanese school.

Life improved. The Canada Act passed in 1947, proclaiming that anyone born in Canada was a Canadian citizen. April of 1949 brought the removal of restrictions placed upon Japanese-Canadians, now free to go anywhere in Canada. Aya, newly-married to Buck Higashi, was now a substitute teacher at the Kaslo school. The principal, Greg Dixon, encouraged her to get her teaching certificate. Yet despite this progress, the lessons of the internment camps remained.

"Years of being called an enemy alien, and I thought that I would file my naturalization papers. Do you think I could actually get anyone to listen to me?"

Throughout the early '50s Aya sought naturalization with government agents in many communities across B.C.

"Finally, in the mid '50s, when the new government agent Tom McKinnon came to town, I convinced him to proceed with the paperwork." Aya finally received her naturalization papers.

"Buck and I were fully prepared to move back to the coast...but we soon realized how deep our roots were in the community and we couldn't leave.... This town's kids were all my kids."

The trials of Aya's family are not unique. No other ethnic community in Canada was treated as unfairly as the Japanese during World War II. Kaslo and other former internment communities have not ignored the contributions of internees: Kaslo's Langham Hotel is now the Langham Cultural Centre and houses the Langham Japanese Museum to commemorate Japanese-Canadians. These are testaments not just to a time of injustice, but to the legacy and patriotism of Canadians like Aya Higashi. ■

Archival images provided by Kootenay Lake Archives and the Langham Japanese-Canadian Collection.

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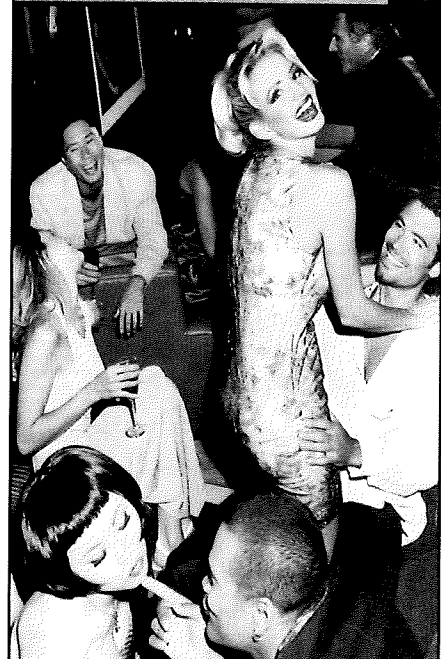
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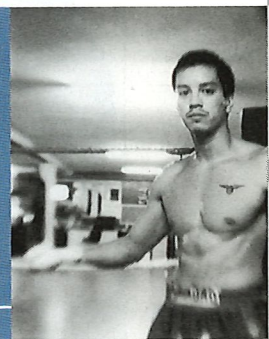


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# Boxed Lunch:



IN THAILAND, BUSINESS TAKES A RINGSIDE SEAT.

story by Edward Wong

Before a fight, combatants dipped their hands in glue and broken glass.

A thousand-year-old fighting style, traditional *Muay Thai* could be considered barbaric by today's standards. But its apparent barbarism did have its uses, both military and cultural, with fights bringing honour to individuals, families and towns. During peacetime, Thai soldiers competed in unarmed combat to hone skills and identify strong fighters, both locally and regionally. Battles took place inside hand-drawn circles and the length of each round was measured, surprisingly enough, by coconuts: perforated coconut half-shells were placed in water.

When the shell filled, the coconut sank, ending the round. Winners were not only honoured, but gained their choice of wives as well—strong fighters were considered highly marriageable.

Of course, *Muay Thai* has changed a great deal over time. One of the world's fastest growing full-contact sports, most know it better as Thai kickboxing: a fast and furious kickboxing style that incorporates flying kicks, elbows and knees—unlike western-style kickboxing which allows only punches and kicks. Currently an Olympic sport, *Muay Thai*'s international popularity reflects the sport's increased respectability—fighters traded in glass-laden fists for boxing gloves long ago. Domestically, the sport's standing has changed dramatically as well, moving from the military to the business arena.

It's close to golf in the business world, explains Michael Gosal, owner of Akal Martial Arts, and a kickboxing instructor. "Deals are made during a fight, just like how deals are made on the golf course."

In Thailand, where corporate meetings are, as Gosal notes, "nothing like western business meetings," contacts and contracts fill ringside seats at *Muay Thai* fights. In fact, corporations sponsor many fighters, and a boxing ring can be as essential as a good dinner to seal a sweet deal. The sport absolutely fits Thailand's corporate culture where "business meetings are conducted like celebrations."

Of course, this business focus doesn't mean traditional *Muay Thai* practices have completely disappeared—in some parts of Thailand, women are still introduced to champion fighters as potential wives. The sport is, in fact, firmly entrenched in Thai culture, with Saturday night fights analogous to our own Hockey Night in Canada. Just less violent, of course. ■



photographs by Steven A. Smith





# FACE to FACE

with

# Hapa

story by Rob Howatson

"WE HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO WANT TO FIT IN EXACTLY....  
WE HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO JUSTIFY OUR ETHNIC LEGITIMACY."

—Maria P.P. Root, Bill of Rights for Persons of Racially Mixed Ancestry

Late one night, when Vancouver artist Michael Tora Speier was a teenager, he and a drinking buddy stumbled into a dance studio uninvited. The place was closed, yet the proprietress seemed happy to seat them. She proceeded to crank the sound system and perform interpretive art with her body. Then, and this is the part Speier will always remember, "She came right up to me, about one boozy breath from my face, eyed me with a dead-serious look and said: 'I can see you are a half-breed. You will deal with that someday. You will have to.'"

Twenty years later, the drunken prophecy has come true. Not just for Speier, but for the millions of people born in the mixed-race baby boom of the '60s and '70s. They are discovering, as Canadian author Carol Camper has, that "to be perceived as a racial oddity is isolating and confusing."

Speier, the son of a Jewish father and Japanese mother, explores his biracial identity through art. Other mixed-race people use music and seminars. Perhaps though, the movement is most prevalent among university students. At last count, there

photographs by Carlos Mendes



were 26 multiracial/transracial campus organizations in the United States and one at Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnic University. No such group exists in Vancouver.

This is puzzling given the city's large immigrant population—45 per cent in 1996, two-thirds of those from Asia. As journalist Gwynne Dyer wrote in the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*: "One recent Saturday night I stood on a corner in downtown Vancouver and watched for a quarter of an hour. I estimate that between a third and a quarter of the young couples who passed by were multiracial."

Meet Denise Bonney. At 19, she is confident and energetic. She works two part-time jobs while studying to be a legal assistant. She is half-Caucasian and half-Chinese. Although most of the relatives she socializes with are Chinese, contrary to the stereotype, Bonney hates rice. She laughs as she says it: "The whole family's rice eaters and I'm, like, give me the potato."

Her grandfather gave her a Chinese name, which she can't pronounce correctly and she forgets what one of the characters means. She knows the other means luck. In grade four, she tried Cantonese lessons for a couple of years but they conflicted with Girl Guides.

Bonney hasn't felt the isolation and confusion that Carol Camper describes in her introduction to *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women*. It's unlikely that Bonney would be the first to sign up if a biracial awareness group formed at her college.

Perhaps the Lower Mainland's "halfers" don't feel a need to discuss the new racial consciousness. Speier disagrees. He has been to the birthplace of the biracial movement and has seen its momentum firsthand.

Berkeley, California. Interracial mecca. Even before the last miscegenation laws were cut from American law books in 1967, mixed race couples were having children in Berkeley. Perhaps it was the large number of foreign students, or the school's proximity to San Francisco, home of the largest Asian community on the West Coast. Or the university's progressive, laissez-faire environment. Whatever the reasons, seven years ago the climate was ripe for biracials to convene. They chose a name for themselves that didn't sound like a syndrome. They picked Hapa.

*Hapa* (pronounced hoppa) is from the Hawaiian phrase, *hapa haole* which means "half-white" or "foreigner." The founders of the Hapa Issues Forum want this to be the new term for people of partial Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry. It is one of their stated mandates, along with providing a voice for Hapas and challenging America's rigid notions of race.

Speier, who exhibited his artwork at the forum's sixth annual conference, was impressed with their level of

commitment. He knows there are politically active Hapas in Vancouver; it's just a question of who is going to step forward to begin the groundbreaking work.

The impetus for some American student groups to take action came from the year 2000 census controversy. Hapas lobbied the U.S. Census Bureau to allow respondents the right to indicate mixed-race heritage in a manner more specific than simply checking a box called "Other." They won the battle.

Does such a controversy exist in Canada? Our 1996 census posed an open-ended ethnicity question in which respondents could write in their answer rather than check a box. However, there was a new visible minority section that forced people to check one or more of 10 boxes. The possible Hapa ones were: "Visible Minority Not Included Elsewhere" and "Multiple Visible Minority."

Biracials continue to field the eternal question, "What are you?"

"Those words, they never vary, which is odd," explains Speier. "It's the *what* that gets me; it sounds so meaty or stolid, like a yak or a flightless bird. What does the question mean?"

This search for identity continues to fuel the artist's work. His show, *Nectarine River*, is on display at the Richmond Art Gallery until May 28. Speier's illustrations and text offer a re-telling of the Japanese peach boy fable, "Momotaro," with the hero being replaced by Hapa the Kid Surfer. Speier has received grant money from the National Association of Japanese Canadians to expand the vibrant and whimsical project.

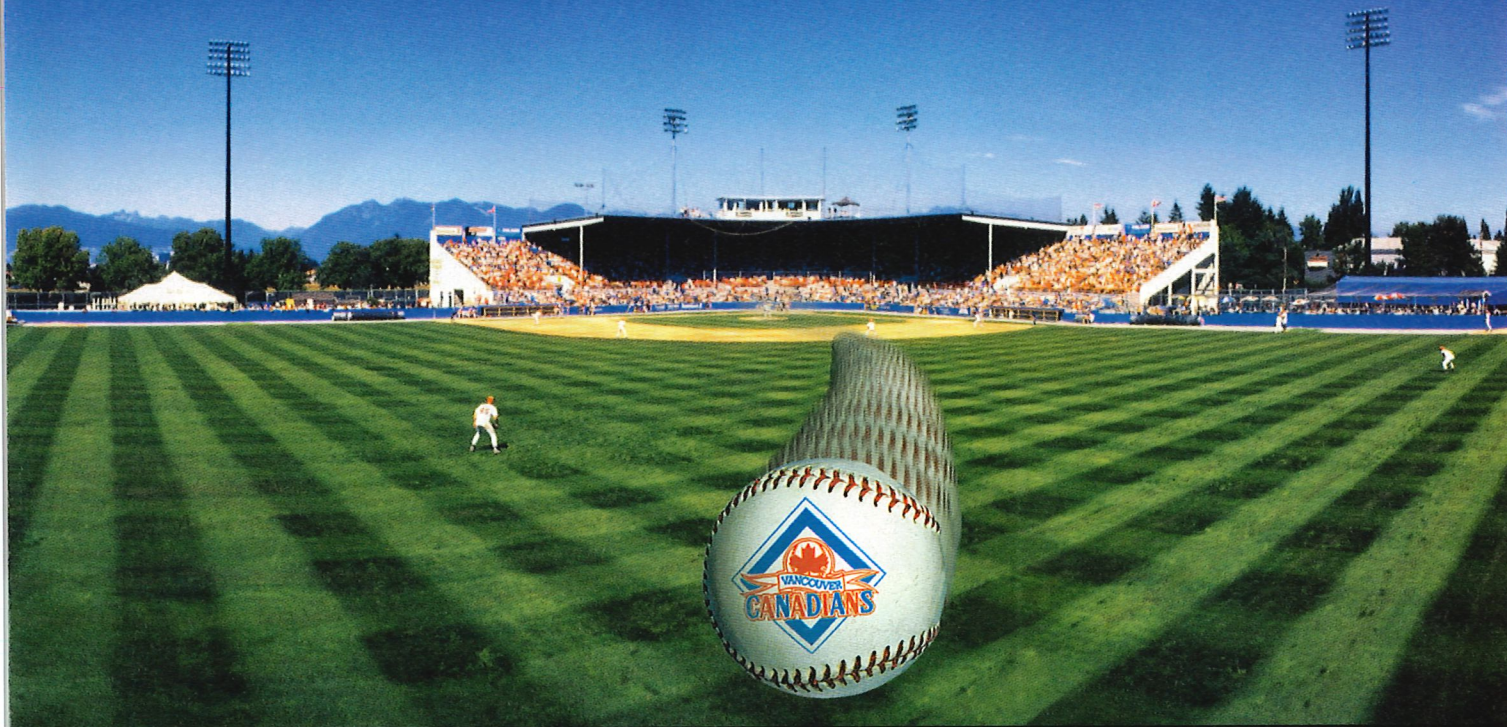
In the meantime, Vancouver's Hapas lack a safe place to express their own feelings and experiences about growing up hybrid.

Debora O, a local biracial grad student interested in identities that fall outside traditional classification systems, suggests why the Hapa movement is slow to catch on north of the border: "In Canada there is this notion that you belong more generally to a multicultural society. I think that this has led to a very watered-down sense of where you stand in relation to your neighbour. The liberal notion that we are all the same despite our differences only sweeps the inequities under the carpet and silences the abuses that disenfranchised groups feel in this country. And of course the minute you show discontent you are seen as ungrateful and not part of the larger benevolent project that is Canada. So no, I don't think we'll be seeing too many biracial campus clubs in Canada."

Or, it may be that Vancouver Hapas are still awaiting the right issue to rally around. Speier believes if there is genuine enthusiasm, a community will form. "It's a kick just to be in a room that is majority Hapa, but don't ask me why!" ■



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# HELLO KITTY

## Goodbye Wallet

story by Jim Oaten

photographs by Kathryn Mussallem

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—Corporate Philosophy from Sanrio, Hello Kitty's parent company

"So what's that," I inquired, gesturing at the figurine on my student's desk, "some sort of insect?"

Sandy's seven-year-old eyes widened in astonished amusement.

I looked closer, and tried again, "Oh, I see, it's a caterpillar. No, wait, a rat."

Sandy cuddled the figurine protectively. "Don't you know," she exclaimed in the exasperated voice of the already enlightened, "It's Hello Kitty!"

And then came the mantra I've heard over and over in the eight-odd years since I first encountered the only cat that really matters to more people than you might think: "Isn't it cute?"

Well, no, not really. One of the dubious joys of teaching English as a Second Language is gaining an intimate knowledge of what passes for "must-haves" in the odd galaxy of pre-teen trends. I've sat through endless extrapolations about the evolution of the Pokémon universe; learned much too much about Sailor Moon's saccharine struggle against the world's evil; and suffered the song-like stylings of far more flavour-of-the-second adolescent Asian pop stars than I care to admit. Yet while these fads have short shelf-lives, the quarter-century-old Kitty's appeal outstrips the proverbial nine. The orifice deficient feline may lack a mouth, but its definitely got legs. And it's stretching those legs into North America.



I am in what may be the pinkest place on earth: the Sanrio Surprises store in Burnaby's Metrotown mall. Numbering 200 in the U.S. alone, the stores are the exclusive dens of all the oddly shaped animals released by the giant Japanese corporation. If you want something more than a little cute, this is where you come.

The entire big-headed Sanrio "Social Communication" clan is here: Winki Pinki, Spottie Dottie and Picke Bicke. Over there is Pochacco and Pekkale and Keroppi the frog. There's Badtz-Maru, a penguin creature whom I first mistook for an owl; My Melody, a Red Riding Hood rabbit; and Little Twin Stars, those angelic siblings far from their birthplace: Compassion Planet in Dream Galaxy.

But, mostly, inevitably, there is Hello Kitty.

Rita Ho, the Sanrio Surprises manager, inducts me into the mysteries of Hello Kitty while waiting on a stream of customers.

"I think people like Hello Kitty so much because it's so simple and so cute," she says as she shows me around. "Also, the products are of a very high quality."

The products Ho refers to have a staggering range—Hello Kitty's image graces over 15,000 consumer goods made and licensed by Sanrio. As well, at least 500 new Sanrio limited edition items appear monthly—the bulk of them Hello Kitty collectibles. Besides the ubiquitous stuffed dolls, backpacks and hair barrettes, Hello Kitty's under-featured face adorns food items, toaster ovens, fashion accessories and all sorts of stationery and school supplies. It's on televisions and cell phone covers, T-shirts and dish sets, bathroom carpets and candy boxes—useless trinkets and household appliances for arrested adolescents of every age.

"When we first started here," says Hong Kong native Ho, "about 80 per cent of our customers were from Hong Kong. Now it's about fifty-fifty North American and Asian." Ho rings in a customer, then adds, "Even when we were in Hong Kong we knew we'd grow with Sanrio together."

It's a company to grow up with as well. In Asia, and especially Japan, the corporation has been an institution since introducing Hello Kitty in 1974. Little more than six whiskers and a hair-ribbon, the image took off with youngsters, making Sanrio's founder Shintaro Tsuji, an extremely wealthy man.

Not that profits get much mention on Sanrio's web site. Instead, much space is devoted to the slightly vague concept of "Social Communication." In his president's message, Tsuji writes that despite the practical realities of everyday life, people "nonetheless find joy and hope in beautiful, fanciful things such as the blooming of a flower or a bird's cheerful song." After this insight, Tsuji adds that his products foster communication that helps "build

a bridge between the hearts and minds of people all over the world."

Despite Sanrio's other-worldly concerns, the company keeps an eye on the bottom line. After years of focusing almost exclusively on the children's market, the company engineered its current sales boom by creating character product lines of fashion accessories and household appliances commonly used by grown women. By adding its images to items like toaster ovens, Sanrio gave 20 to 40 year-old women who grew up with Hello Kitty both a nostalgic and "pragmatic" excuse to put the cute cat back into the shopping bag.

"Now, I don't collect Hello Kitty," says Ivy Chen, a Simon Fraser University communications student, "I just buy it."

Nineteen-year-old Ivy is a perfect, if unwitting, example of Sanrio's new target market. As elementary school students in Taiwan, she and her friends would visit Sanrio stores weekly—and occasionally daily—to blow allowances on new Hello Kitty items. Ivy stopped buying Sanrio "kid-stuff" in her early teens, but has started picking up a few Kitty bits and pieces again.

"Before when I bought it there was no reason. Now I just buy the things that can be useful," she says, emphasizing the practicality of her purchase decisions.

We are sitting in the basement of her home, and on the table facing us is Ivy's Hello Kitty non-collection. There is a Hello Kitty clock and Hello Kitty stationery—if you send a letter with Hello Kitty on it, she explains, people will know it's special and they won't throw it away—and there is an empty Hello Kitty candy box, and a Kitty change holder and a pink air freshener. All useful enough items. And there are other things, added as Ivy remembers she owns them: cell phone antenna decorations, a cup holder and a windshield ornament that works a bit like a yo-yo. There's also chewing gum and some unopened rice flavouring with Kitty packaging intact. "It's too nice to tear," says Ivy. *cont'd on p. 20*

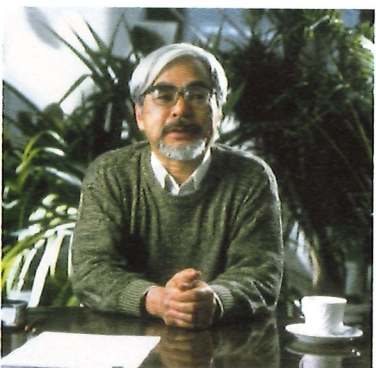
Here Kitty, Kitty...  
cat merchandise abounds.





# ANIME on the horizon

story by Robert Hardy



Miyazaki says: "Go out in the world and fearlessly watch everything you can."

photographs courtesy of Alliance Atlantis

Japanese animation is more than cute monsters and teenage girls in short skirts. *Anime* (ah-nee-may), as the genre is known, sent a wake up call to mainstream adult audiences last fall with the North American release of *Princess Mononoke*.

The tale portrays an exiled prince who must find a cure to the fatal curse that has been cast upon him. In the course of his search, he finds himself caught in a war between forest spirits and human civilization.

Critics and animators fawned over its epic storyline, and were pleasantly surprised by the film's mature content. Ricardo Rodrigues, a computer animation graduate from the Center for Digital Imaging and Sound in Burnaby said, "I soon came to realize I wasn't watching a Disney cartoon where things are sugar-coated and certain subject matter is restricted." He was also impressed by the quality of the work's hand-drawn imagery and noted that, "to smoothly animate all those creatures of the forest spirit by traditional methods would have been extremely tedious and time consuming."

The film's writer-director, Hayao Miyazaki, is considered a master of the art form in Japan. He began his career writing and illustrating *manga* (black and white comics), before striking his first anime success, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. The revenue from that hit enabled him to found Studio Ghibli, one of the hottest animation companies in Japan.

Miyazaki, who draws inspiration from a variety of historical periods, including 14th century Japan and 19th century England, doesn't normally make violent films. *Mononoke*, however, contains enough blood that he insisted on a no-cut clause from Disney, his American distributor. They released it via Miramax.

Tons of anime films are released annually in Japan, but very few cross the Pacific for wide release. Given *Mononoke's* phenomenal success in Japan (it finished second at the box office behind the much more expensive *Titanic*) and the warm reception *Mononoke* received in North America (Roger Ebert considers it one of 1999's best films), Canadian audiences can expect to see more of this sophisticated animation.

An American distributor has already scheduled the release of another anime feature this year, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, a story about 14-year-olds who defend the world against gigantic monsters known as "angels." ■

*Hello Kitty continued from page 19*

Other Hello Kittys lurk elsewhere, Ivy assures me.

She cheerfully runs upstairs to round some up, and as I'm left alone with the growing pile of Sanrio stuff, it strikes me that maybe I wasn't so wrong when I misidentified Sandy's Hello Kitty as an insect all those years ago. The thing really is as insidious as an insect infestation, spreading the consumerist virus to children unequipped to realize their "special" purchases aren't much more than mass-produced tat. And that for all of Sanrio's talk of

fostering joy and friendship, it seems to me there is, in the heart of the company, something manipulative, something which makes all those fine words as empty as the space where Hello Kitty's mouth is supposed to be.

Ivy's mother brings coffee and questions about what we're doing. I point to the table and she grins in nostalgic recognition.

"So," I venture, "how about you? Do you like Hello Kitty?"

"Oh, yes, I like it very much," she says. "It's so cute." ■



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
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## IT'S A WALT WORLD AFTER ALL



DISNEY HAS TAKEN YET ANOTHER GIANT MOUSE-SIZED STEP TO AMERICANIZE THE FAR-EAST, EXPANDING ITS KINGDOM TO INCLUDE HONG KONG. BUT NOT EVERYONE IS THRILLED WITH THE IDEA OF HAVING MICKEY MOUSE MOVE IN NEXT DOOR.

story by Jenn Farrell

illustration by Michelle Veldhuizen

Main Street U.S.A., Tom Sawyer's Island, New Orleans Square — North Americans can't seem to get enough of the Disney experience. In fact, the whole world seems hungry for that special brand of wholesome family entertainment the Disney company offers. Or is it?

The Disney machine has always been eager to tap into international consumer markets, especially in Asia, and this year marks an occasion that even Walt himself could not have foreseen. The gates of Hong Kong Disneyland are scheduled to open in 2005. Mickey and his friends are going to China, making this the third international Disney theme park after Paris and Tokyo.

Flanked by Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa announced the venture on November 2, 1999, after months of negotiations. The Hong Kong government is spending 2.72 billion dollars of its total investment of 4.49 billion (Cdn) on land reclamation, equity and infrastructure. It will control 57 per cent of the park's shares, and Disney will control the remaining 43 per cent. Chinese government officials see the park as a well-timed life preserver, thrown to the region's economic and tourism related woes since China assumed control from Britain in 1997.



"China is trying to enter the World Trade Organization and the government welcoming Disney is a nice symbol for them to say that China is open for business," says Kalle Lasn, founder and editor of *Adbusters* magazine, a Canadian publication that encourages readers to question the control that large corporations exert on their daily lives.

As for Disney, the deal couldn't have come at a better time. With a contribution of just 315 million dollars, a royalty fee of 5 to 10 per cent for the licensing of characters, and an undisclosed take of the gate's revenues, the project is a seemingly guaranteed money-maker for the Mouse. With Tokyo Disneyland being the company's most profitable theme park yet, the company is hoping to strengthen its foothold in the Asian marketplace. However, it must exercise caution. The Chinese government was not pleased when Disney distributed *Kundun*, a film about the Dalai Lama, exiled leader of Tibet. And last year's Chinese release of *Mulan*, a Disney animated version of the Chinese legend, was poorly received by Chinese moviegoers and deemed too "American-looking."

The Chinese entertainment industry is a blend of politics and culture that can be difficult for westerners to navigate, so it comes as no surprise that the company will not be trying to incorporate Chinese history into its motif of mythical America. But will Disney's version of America work in Hong Kong?

There are over 1,000 theme parks already in China, most of them poorly attended. America, Japan and Europe already have their own Disney parks. That leaves Hong Kong with the unenviable task of luring visitors to a region that is plagued with overpriced shopping and accommodation, and poor air quality. Nevertheless, glowing predictions place park attendance at 5 million in



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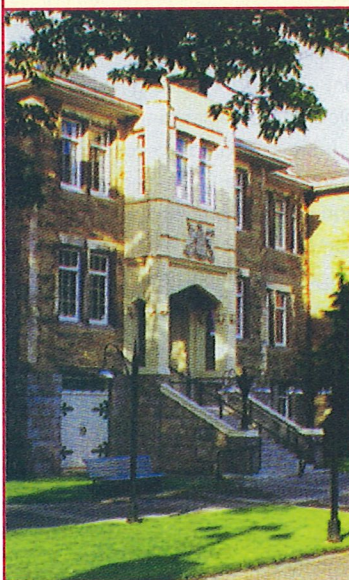
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the first year of operation, doubling to 10 million visitors annually within 15 years. If the combined efforts of Disney and the Hong Kong government can't lure the millions of outside visitors they predict, that leaves China to fill the turnstiles. Certainly not an impossibility, given the 6.8 million residents of Hong Kong and 1.3 billion people of Mainland China. Yet, the question remains: "If they build it, will they come?"

Some locals have already decided to stay away. Sze Pang-cheung, a spokesman for an anti-Disney group called Beware of Mickey Mouse explains, "Our own distinct culture will be eclipsed. Hong Kong is getting more and more American. Being a multicultural city with a Chinese identity was our biggest attraction, and now we are throwing it away."

Kalle Lasn agrees: "American culture is the first truly global culture. The world is, in essence, becoming Disneyfied. The theme park developments are but one tiny manifestation of this culture."

In addition to the Disney naysayers, environmental groups are also speaking out against the new attraction. The park, along with resort hotels and an entertainment complex, is initially slated to occupy 126 hectares of a 280 hectare site at Penny's Bay on Lantau Island, 12 kilometres west of central Hong Kong. At present, Penny's Bay is an undeveloped area, accessible only by chartered boat, or a combined ferry trip and three-hour hike. That is all changing as roads and tunnels are being carved into the hillsides surrounding the coastal area. Lantau Island itself is the green lung of Hong Kong, being one of last areas of untouched vegetation in the city.

Penny's Bay is an archeological treasure trove, filled with relics from its days as a port for trading ships. Divers are frantically trying to salvage items of historical significance before construction begins and the majority of the bay is filled in. Others voice concern with regards to the sea habitat of the bay, particularly that of the white Chinese dolphin. Hong Kong legislator Emily Lau is succinct. "The environment will be ruined once the construction of the park has begun."

Mike Rowse, Hong Kong's commissioner for Tourism, disagrees. "This

project is going to be scrutinized from top to bottom by everybody. The whole thing has to go through a very rigorous process before it's allowed to go ahead, and that's exactly what we've launched into now. You can't get the go ahead at any step of the way without a full environ-



mental impact assessment and clearance," he says. The government also notes that the region was slated for development as either a shipping port or a prison, and Disney is, in fact, bringing beauty to the bay.

No matter how vocal, critics of the park remain a minority. Currently, all of Hong Kong is abuzz with hope and anticipation. Most residents see the arrival of Disney as a symbol of renewed economic prosperity and a vote of confidence in a city struggling to regain its image as a world-class destination. The company has a lot to live up to as it juggles commerce with political sensibilities. It remains to be seen whether Hong Kong will sustain its enthusiasm and if Disney can deliver the goods. It's a risky proposition to hang hopes and dreams on a single project, but Disney trades on hopes and dreams everyday. ■

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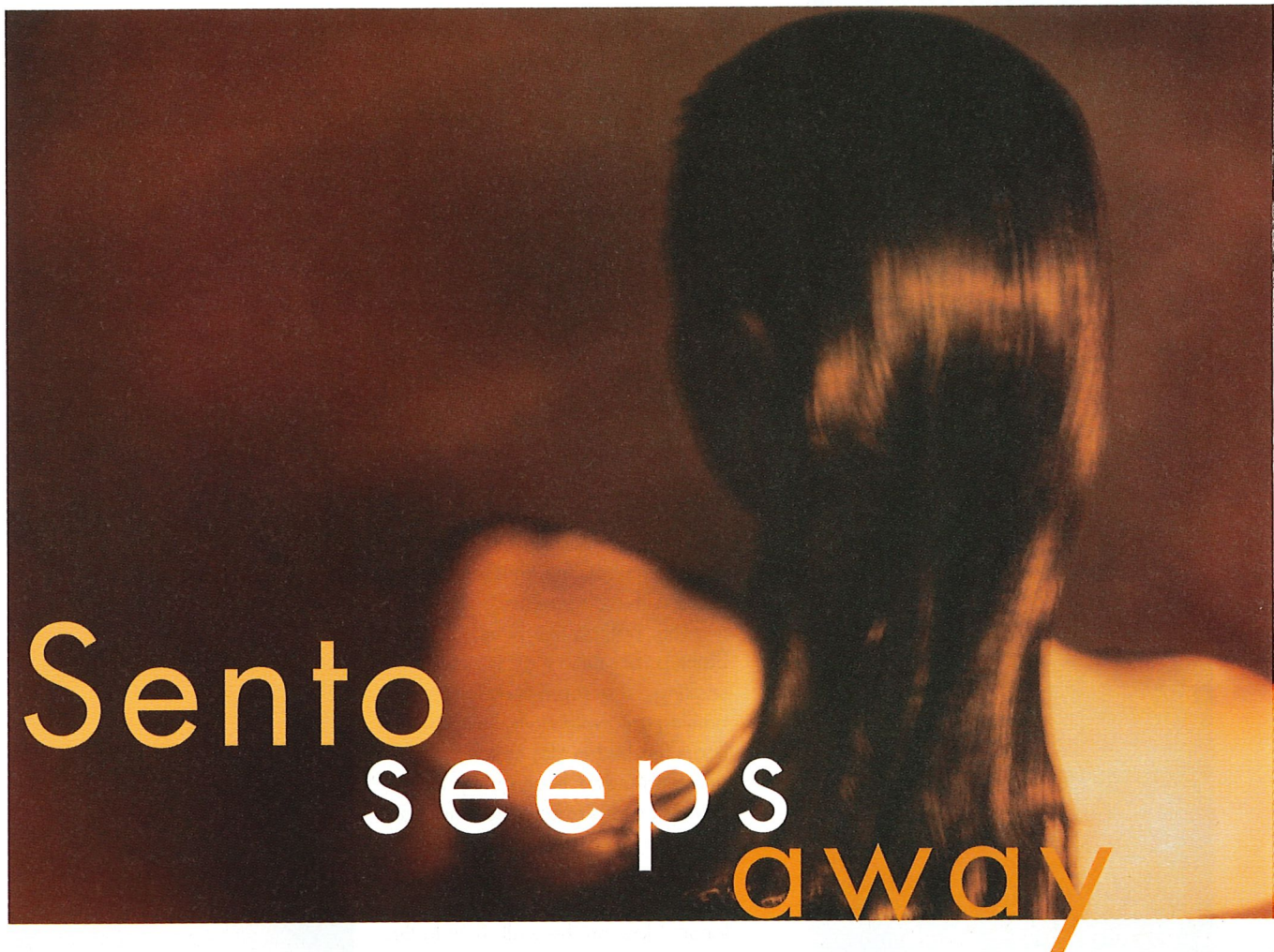
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# Sento seeps away

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s t o r y   b y   C a r m e n   F e r r e i r a

Imagine reclining in a huge bathtub, up to your chin in gallons of water that gently hug your body. You close your eyes and let the tension melt away. You doze, surrounded by the comforting murmur of quiet voices. When you open your eyes, you see a mural of Mt. Fuji rising out of the steam. Just then, a long-time friend enters. After the soak, the two of you head off for the evening.

Although this scene is unfamiliar to most North Americans, ritual bathing has long occupied a distinct position in Japanese culture. Tsuneharu Gonnami, of UBC's Asian Library, attributes the rise of the public bathhouse, or *sento*, to the Edo period in Japanese

history (1600 – 1867). The city of Edo, modern day Tokyo, was home to one million people, most of whom lived in 17th century-style condominiums without indoor plumbing. About 600 *sento* supplied the bathing facilities for the population. Along with providing personal hygiene, the *sento* assumed a social role. It became a place for neighbours to meet and relax.

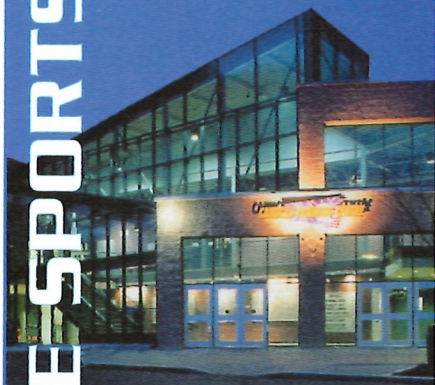
With the advent of indoor plumbing and westernization, the nature of the *sento* experience has changed. A greater variety of communication technologies, more women working outside the home, increased workloads and less recreational time have all resulted in a declining

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use of public bathhouses. According to Tsuneharu Gonnami, the Japanese government is concerned about preserving this once integral part of the Japanese culture, and has appointed the Ministry of Health and Welfare to subsidize many of the remaining public bathhouses.

In contemporary Japan, most homes now have their own bathing facilities. However, the bathing ritual remains essentially unchanged. In keeping with tradition, family members share the same bath water, keeping it clean by first scrubbing outside of the bathtub. The eldest male washes first and the wife or mother goes last. In homes with young families, the children usually bathe with their parents.

The bathrooms have a deep bathtub or *furo* that is used for soaking. The room functions as a bathing area with walls, ceilings and floors finished in tile, molded plastic and stone. The floor gently slopes towards a drain, and the toilet and sink are in a separate room. In modern bathrooms, a set of taps and often a hand-held showerhead are located low on the wall, next to the bathtub. There is a small stool to sit on while washing. In older, faucetless bathrooms, a small bucket is used to scoop water out of the bathtub. Once the body is clean, it's time to enter the bathtub for a long, hot soak.

Although public bathhouses are dwindling in popularity, a new bathing trend has emerged that carries on the tradition. The *onsen*, or hot springs, are enjoying resurgence. Japanese and foreign tourists flock to the many *onsen* scattered throughout the country in search of recreation and therapy. Because of Japan's volcanic geography, naturally heated springs and pools abound, and although the mineral content varies, a high sulphur content is common. Many believe that the heat and

minerals hold medicinal properties that relieve common ailments such as anemia, asthma, gout, hemorrhoids, rheumatism and arthritis. Most of these naturally occurring hot springs have been incorporated into commercial ventures, but some, called *rotenburo*, still exist in a natural state.

Many Japanese émigrés attempt to recreate the tradition of public bathing. Leonard Morizawa, a third generation Canadian, remembers being a teenager in the early 1970s and experiencing the bath for the first time. He was at a fishing camp

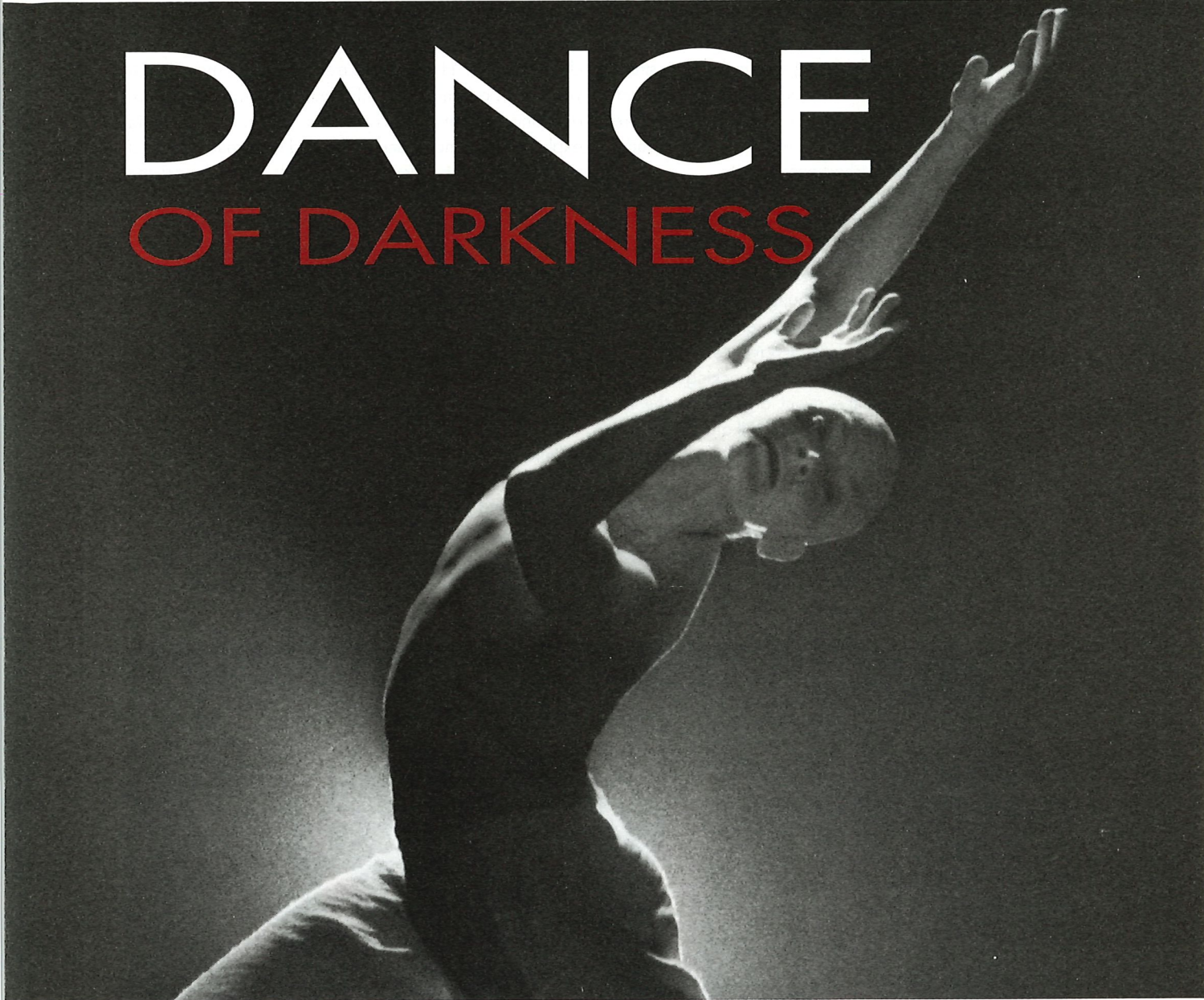


with his father on the Skeena River near Prince Rupert, B.C. Morizawa and the rest of the Japanese fishing fleet went to a specially constructed bathhouse in the evenings to enjoy a traditional Japanese-style bath. There was a shower area and small stools outside the bathtub for soaping and rinsing off, and the water in the square wooden tub was heated by a wood-burning stove.

Of his first experience with communal bathing, Morizawa said he felt, "a little self-conscious." But what stands out most in his mind was the "great camaraderie" between the three generations. It seemed to him that the bathing experience strengthened the bonds of friendship, family and culture. ■



# DANCE OF DARKNESS



"WE SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEAD, WHO SEND US ENCOURAGEMENT FROM BEYOND OUR BODY; THIS IS THE UNLIMITED POWER OF BUTOH....SOMETHING IS HIDING IN OUR SUBCONSCIOUS, COLLECTED IN OUR UNCONSCIOUS BODY, WHICH WILL APPEAR IN EACH DETAIL OF OUR EXPRESSION....SOMETHING CAN BE BORN, CAN APPEAR, LIVING AND DYING IN A MOMENT." —TATSUMI HUIKATA

s t o r y   b y   U s h a   W e n n e r s t r a n d



Born out of the reconstruction of postwar Japan, the avant-garde dance form, Butoh, originated in the late 1950s. Concerned with exploring truth in the inner strata of the subconscious, Butoh's raw art broke the traditional western dance ideals where youth and beauty were celebrated. This dance was a rebellion of the body, where freedom was cherished over beauty.

For Butoh pioneer, Tatsumi Hijikata (1928 – 1986), the expression of the inner soul and the exploration of taboos were paramount. His 1959 dance debut scandalized Tokyo. The performance, based on Yukio Mishima's *Forbidden Colours*, involved a young boy mimicking sex with a chicken by strangling it between his thighs and then succumbing to the homosexual advances of Hijikata. The performance was outrageous—shocking to both audience members and the event organizers, the All Japan Artistic Dance Association. Hijikata ended up being banned by the association which labelled him a "dangerous dancer."

Hijikata's dance form became known as *Ankoku Butoh*, or "dance of darkness," later shortened to *Butoh*, literally "dance step" or "stomp." Used during the Meiji era to refer to western-style, ballroom dancing being introduced to Japan, the word *Butoh* actually harks back

to ancient Japan when it was used as a name for ritualized dancing. The term had fallen into disuse when choreographer Hijikata resurrected it. This time Butoh was given a completely different, primordial meaning, denoting dance rooted to the earth. As Hijikata explained, "It is not grand jumps and leaps as in ballet...I would never jump or leave the ground; it is on the ground that I dance."

In spite of its earth-bound roots, Butoh liberates within the confines of society while imposing extreme discipline on its dancers. Bent knees, bowed backs and turned-in feet are common characteristics, as well as white painted bodies, shaved heads and slow movements. Like any art straying from the mainstream, Butoh has received harsh criticism, with the dance said to have no aesthetic harmony and to employ a vocabulary of ugliness.

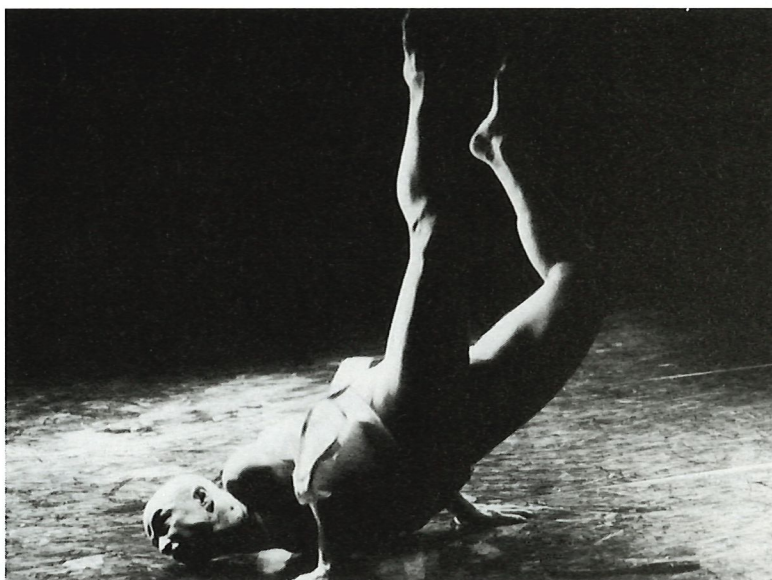
A better description of modern Butoh is an eclectic mixture of traditional Japanese dance and theatre, mime, ballet and European dance. Like modern dance, Butoh is abstract and improvisational, yet it differs significantly from other modern forms. Modern dance often deals with gender issues; Butoh tries to neutralize the body, focusing instead on the human spirit. Transformation is its essence. The dancers stop being themselves. Former Butoh dancer,



p h o t o g r a p h s . b y V i n c e n t W o n g



# artefacts



Yoko Ashikawa, explains: "Hijikata choreographed dances for me that were based on puppets or babies. Looking back, I understand that this training was not designed to mimic puppets or babies, but to enable the dancers to really experience...their bodies like a baby through touching, feeling or exploring."

The dance also awakens emotion. Barbara Bourget, Artistic Director for Kokoro Dance Company, says, "Butoh is trying to express the feelings that everyone has. It can be happiness; it can be sadness; it can be any depth of emotion that we feel as human beings. The importance is that it comes from the inside and not the outside."

Just as Hijikata has been compared to the trunk of the tree with other dancers being the branches, Butoh has split into multiple forms and disciplines. Currently, there are Butoh groups in Japan, Europe and North and South America.

In Canada, Butoh is performed in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, which has the Kokoro Dance Company, a post-Butoh dance company that performs a hybrid of Butoh and modern dance. The group was founded by Barbara Bourget and Jay Hirabayashi in 1986.

Their first encounter with Butoh was in 1980 when they watched a 15 minute performance by Tamano, a former student of Hijikata's. Tamano metamorphosed from a plastic-swathed cocoon on the floor to an upright butterfly. The piece was timeless — encompassing silence and movement. For Jay and Barbara, the mesmerizing performance had a lasting influence.

Following the old master Hijikata, Vancouver's Kokoro dancers use white body paint and a loincloth when performing. This use of white paint began when Hijikata's wife, a ballerina, did not want to perform naked in front of an audience. Hijikata threw paint on her and said, "Now no one can recognize you." Kokoro's Barbara Bourget says that applying body paint before a performance has a ritual feeling: "It would be hard to perform without it. I would feel naked without it—even when wearing clothes."

Butoh dancer, Kazuo Ohni, agrees, "The Butoh costume is like throwing the cosmos onto one's shoulders. And for Butoh, while the costume covers the body, it is the body that is the costume of the soul." ■

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## QUEST FOR **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

story by Tess deHoog / illustration by Ashley Spires

Replete with world-class hotels, shopping malls and enough high-tech office space to house a city of computer geeks, Malaysia continues to build its Multimedia Super Corridor outside Kuala Lumpur. The challenge is to complete the 699-square-kilometre project without creating an urban mess. Rising to the occasion, Lestari, a Malaysian environmental institute, and Envision Sustainability Tools, a Vancouver environmental software developer, have joined forces to create an interactive planning program known as Quest.

Quest can be downloaded or purchased on CD-ROM. The first component in the series is called Invent-a-Future. It allows the user to combine criteria such as water quality and labour force, and to view the potential outcomes for a year 2030 scenario. The program is fine-tuned for every country, area and situation; it recognizes the differences in development between Malaysia and Vancouver, and realistically calculates the environmental impact accordingly. The final variable is the Malaysian government, which will choose whether or not to adopt Quest as part of its sustainable development plan. ■



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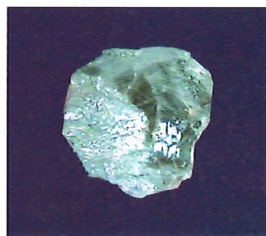
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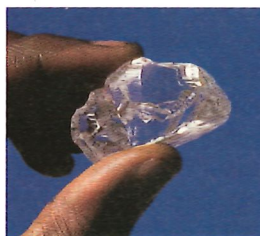
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## FALUN GONG: CULT OR CULTIVATION?

story by Lisa Thé / photograph by Shane Annandale



Everybody has seen the morning Tai Chi group that works out atop Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Park, but less prominent is the much smaller *Falun Gong* gathering that meets there on weekends. *Falun Gong*, (aka *Falun Dafa*), combines ancient Taoist and Buddhist thought with founder Li Hongzhi's own philosophy. The practitioners perform slow, grace-

ful exercises with names like "Penetrating the Two Cosmic Extremes" and "Strengthening Supernormal Powers."

Fanny Qiu, an SFU grad student who has been doing the moves for three years said, "I need less sleep now, because the sleep I get is better quality. Also, it's easier for me to concentrate on my studies and I have a happier mood in general."

Ironically, as the local *Falun Gong* crowd exercises in the greenery, fellow practitioners in China are being incarcerated for doing the same movements. The Chinese government banned the practice in July '99, alleging that Li, who lives in New York, is a charlatan with political aspirations in Beijing. ■

## THE EMERGING IMMERSION

story by Lynda Yopez / photograph by Kio

Shihori Wada came to Canada to learn English at a language college in Nelson, but it just wasn't happening. Fluency is next to impossible when living in residence surrounded by Japanese-speaking classmates. So she boarded with the White family in North Vancouver after spotting their ad on a bulletin board. That was six years ago. Today, Wada is completing her Bachelor's degree in Multicultural and Ethnic Studies at Simon Fraser University. And still living with the Whites.

According to Cheryl Humphries, a faculty member at Canadian International College—a school strictly dedicated to Japanese international students—those who continue their studies in Canada constitute a minority of foreign students. Most return to Japan or travel to other countries.

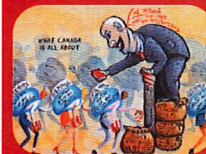
"Originally, I didn't think I was planning to stay here forever," Wada said, "but now I'm totally adapted to Canadian culture, total freedom, and my goal is to get immigrant status."



Her host mother, Vivian White, is an occupational therapist who has hosted 10 students in the last eight years. White feels the key to a successful homestay is to assess the relationship between the student and the family. "For example," she explained, "when a host family suggests an idea and the student picks up and runs with it, that's great, but if not, then you just leave it alone, because we do not force our North American values on an individual from another culture."

With such caring hosts, it is not surprising that foreign student enrolment in Canada has steadily increased over the past few years. ■

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# FENG SHUI: blueprint for balance

YOU CAN'T FIGHT CITY HALL, BUT YOU CAN REBUILD IT.

story by Glen Stedham

Richmond's new city hall is one of the first public buildings in Canada to incorporate *Feng Shui* into its design. This should not be surprising in a community whose population is one-third Chinese—"the largest percentage of Chinese-Canadians in any city in the country," according to Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt. This is a mayor with Chinese characters on his business card that spell out his adopted Chinese name, Ho Sai Bun, a name which some of his constituents find easier to pronounce.

"Virtually every opening of a new building that I go to will have a *Feng Shui* master's input," says the mayor. "They do this all the time in the private sector because they are concerned about their customers, and the way I see it, we are no different. If we build a building that makes it uncomfortable for say, 20 per cent of our population, then that is not in the interest of the community we are trying to serve."

Literally translated as "wind and water," *Feng Shui* is an ancient Chinese set of principles governing the design and layout of homes and businesses. These principles are believed to increase harmony in ones living and working environments.

Richmond resident and *Feng Shui* Master, Sherman Tai, of Fortune Tellers and Associates, became a consultant for the city hall design team at the earliest stages of planning. He sought to achieve a positive relationship between the five *Feng Shui* elements: wood, water, earth, metal, and fire. Lead architect Joost Bakker expected Tai would tell him that Richmond had too much of the water element, but instead, he was told that Richmond had too much fire. The fireplace that had been planned for the public atrium would have created "friction for anyone using the building," and was therefore eliminated.

"The issue of working with the five elements was an easy fit for us," says Bakker. "We didn't find it restrictive. In working with *Feng Shui*, you don't have to buy into Chinese aesthetics — style isn't an issue. It's materials and relationships that are the issue."

The architects found it easy to accommodate Master Tai's suggestions without overall extra costs. Some suggestions had already been incorporated into council's original design. The decision to relocate a stone cenotaph from Richmond's first city hall to the new one, coincided exactly with Tai's

photographs by Ka-Kei Law



suggestion that stone, representing earth, should be placed at the front entrance "to give a calming effect."

Master Tai recommended that the eight-storey administrative tower be significant and seen from afar. A flagpole was already slated for placement beside the tower, drawing further attention to its unique design. The tower uses sandblasted glass to create an unusual effect. During the day, it glows when rays of sunlight strike it, and at night a pendant light shines from the tower in all directions like a beacon.

The old city hall, built in 1956, was not sustainable. It was full of asbestos insulation, so workmen had to don "space suits" to do repairs. Water pipes broke and produced flooding, electrical circuits overloaded and shut down, and its concrete construction made it vulnerable to earthquakes. Mayor Halsey-Brandt called it "the building with the highest risk of any building that the city owned. It was built on the basis that city hall was an office building and you didn't go there unless you were going to pay taxes, get a permit, etc. Apart from the council chamber and a small meeting room, there were no public rooms. We decided that a city hall belonged to the public, and we wanted them back in city hall."

The new building is designed for public use. The meeting hall is a low two-storey structure on Granville Avenue housing the mayor's and councillors' offices, atrium, cafe and meeting rooms. The council chamber, at one end of the meeting hall, is a striking circular structure overlooking water ponds. Community groups will be able to book meeting rooms, and there is space for art, displays and musical performances.

Entering city hall from the main entrance on No.3 Road, the public will encounter the "Front of House." A long counter staffed by well-trained personnel enables residents to conduct most public business without having to search through a number of offices looking for the correct department. Meetings can take place at the counter, in one of the meeting rooms or in the administrative tower.

The building encloses a public square with an outdoor stage and seating to accommodate major civic events and celebrations, as well as public performances. Covered walkways radiate to other public buildings in the immediate area and encourage pedestrian use of the plaza. Richmond's Public Art Commission has allotted a 300,000 dollar budget to purchase outdoor sculptures for the area.

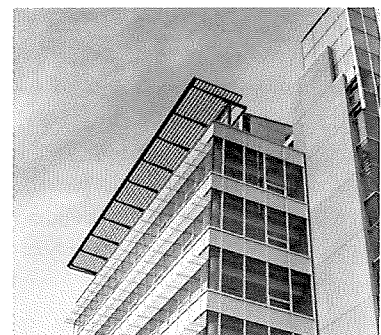
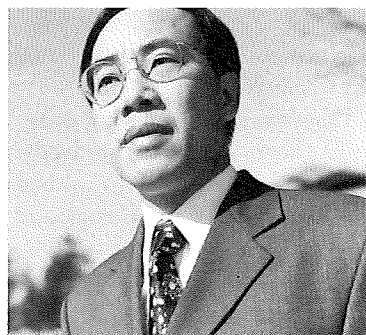
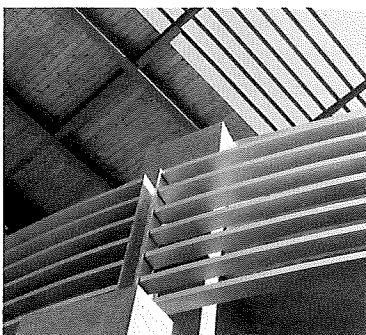
To further incorporate *Feng Shui* into the outside landscaping, metal railings were used to balance the metal element and were softened by being painted blue or green. Round corners replaced sharp edges on the outside pools, and, to avoid "unhealthy conditions," pumps were installed to keep the water circulating. A mocha colour was added to the concrete to give it a natural, earth-like appearance.

The full price for the building and landscaping is 36 million dollars, with a three million dollar reserve for contingencies. Planning for the building began in 1990 with funds being put aside each year into the reserve, and additional monies coming from the sale of city owned property. The mayor is on record as stating that "we are not raising taxes; we will build it out of our existing funds. We want something we can be proud of, but not something to break the bank."

All Richmond's citizens have reason to be proud of their new city hall. The design received two awards from *Canadian Architect Magazine*, which praised it for "leading by example in setting a high standard for sustainable civic architecture."

This is the third city hall at this site, replacing earlier buildings from 1922 and 1956 that had become obsolete. Given that Richmond's population has doubled to 160,000 in the past 20 years, the municipality is certainly due for a new city hall. It's also a sure bet that other Canadian communities with significant Asian demographics will be closely watching Richmond's foray into *Feng Shui*. ■

*Feng Shui Master Sherman Tai in his elements.*





## Excuse us while we KISS THE SKY

America may hold the history of the skyscraper, but Asia holds its future.

Long associated with prosperous American cities such as New York and Chicago, skyscrapers are increasingly filling Pacific Rim skylines. In fact, according to the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH), more than one-third of the world's 100 tallest buildings are outside America. Just as the Empire State Building defined New York City, Malaysia's Petronas Towers have put Kuala Lumpur on the map.

At 452 metres, the Petronas Towers are currently the world's tallest buildings, surpassing Chicago's Sears Tower, which held the title for 20 years. Completed in 1996, the Towers not only house the offices of Petronas, Malaysia's national oil company, they also quarter a mosque and symphony concert hall. Yet despite completion only four short years ago, the Towers are already in danger of losing their title. There are presently plans in Hong Kong, Australia, and America to break the record.

In Chicago, the 7 South Dearborn project is vying for the title of tallest building at a projected height of 472 metres. And—in the spirit of edifice envy that characterizes skyscraper construction—the Shanghai World Financial Centre wants to redesign its own building to surpass 7 South Dearborn so it can be the world's tallest building at its 2001 completion date. So eager is the company to claim this title that the president of the company building the centre, Minoru Mori of the Mori



story by Julia de Sousa

Building Company, refused to disclose the new target height to the Chicago Tribune saying, "Some people might want to surpass it again."

Of course, skyscrapers aren't just built for records, they're also constructed for perceived needs, particularly those related to business and multi-use dwellings. But more often than not, new high-rises are built for the perception of modernity rather than need. Luciano Zago relates how—when Bing Thom Architects (BTA) were invited to participate in a competition to design the New Dalian Central Area in China—the company was impelled to fill its proposed plan with high-rises; if it wanted to win, it had to show a contemporary city with tall buildings.

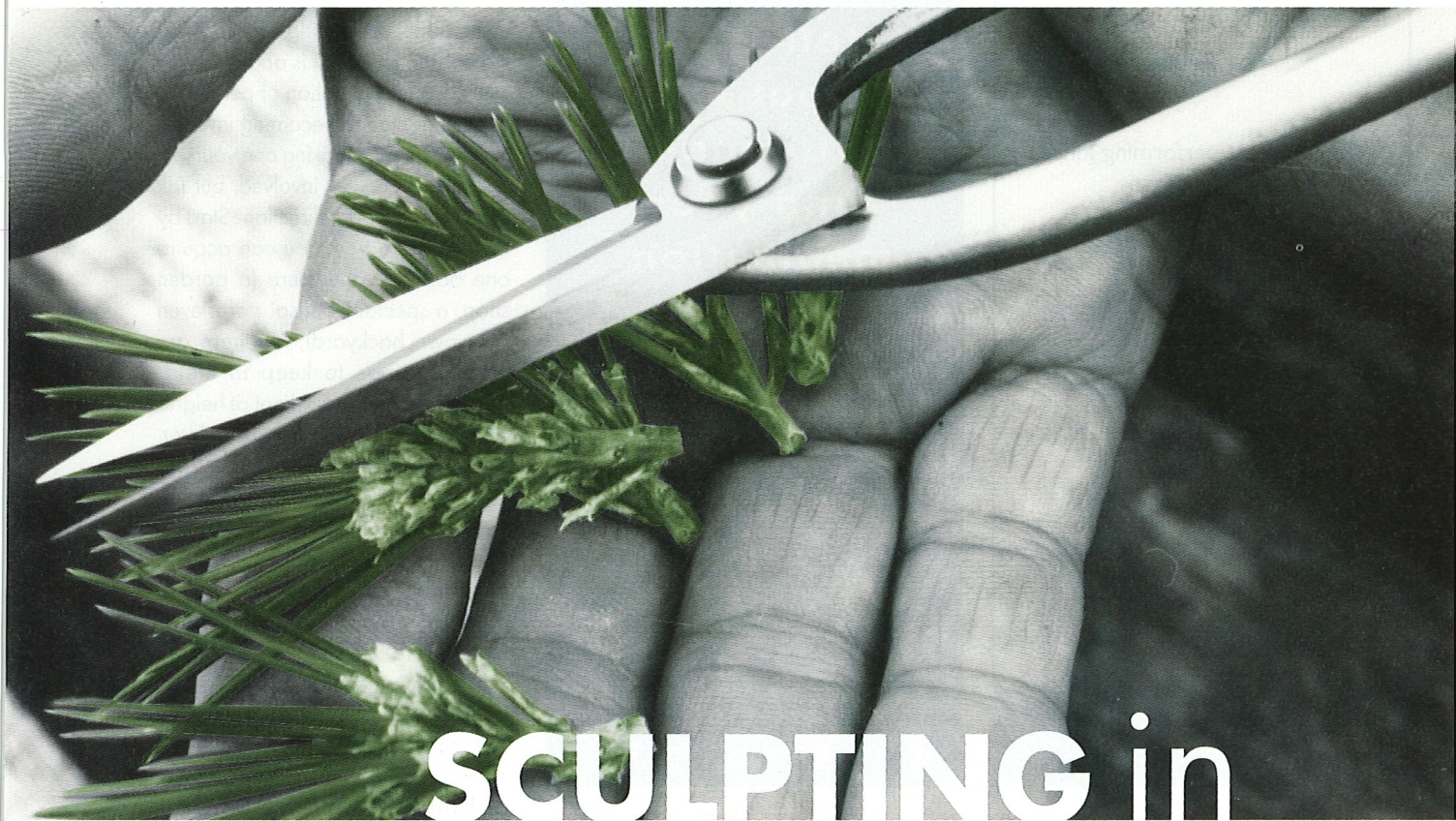
But skyscraper symbolism doesn't come cheap. Zago, who has worked with BTA for six years and has been involved in much of the company's work in China, notes that countries

pour money into erecting skyscrapers. He points to Hong Kong's Shanghai Bank as a prime example. The people behind the bank wanted to spend a lot on their buildings in order to demonstrate faith in Hong Kong's economic and political stability, especially after China's take over. They ended up building what was, at that point, the most expensive per square foot high-rise in the world, even though alternate—and cheaper—solutions existed. In this case, Zago believes the height of the building was very much a symbolic gesture.

Skyscrapers are thus, in many cases, self-fulfilling prophecies. Symbolic of progress and prestige, skyscrapers sprout up in developing counties, erected in the hope that the image of success will bring success itself. And in their quest to go ever upwards, high-rises suggest that the sky's the limit, no matter the true cost of their construction. ■

photograph by Kris Grunert





# SCULPTING in slow motion

BROOKE BOWIE RETURNS TO HER ROOTS AND DISCOVERS THE ESSENCE OF BONSAI.

story by Brooke Bowie

My favourite memory of my father is the two of us sitting at our kitchen table in Victoria one rainy Saturday afternoon, clipping and snipping away at a tiny Mugo pine. My father, passionate about oriental arts, and I, curious about the miniature, sat silently for hours crafting the would-be bonsai. We revelled in the creation of this delicate beauty—something in between fine horticulture and fine art. It was meditation.

Since that time, some 15 years ago, I have longed to create a bonsai once again. This is, in part, because of my desire to revisit old feelings, but also to experience the joy of living art.

Here begins my dilemma: as I mentioned before, the last time I touched a bonsai, I was six. My skills were a little rusty, and I was going to need some help. So I called

upon Tak Yamaura, owner of Japan Bonsai, a local shop dedicated to sales and instruction.

I wandered into his nursery on a rainy Thursday morning and immediately felt at peace. In the silence of the garden sat hundreds of tiny trees. All were in different stages of the bonsai process. Some were gnarled and ancient looking, others were still in training wires. This is what Tak says he enjoys the most. "I like the process, start to finish. It's actually never complete: seasons and form are always changing."

We sat and discussed the large bonsai phenomenon in the Northwest. In the Vancouver area alone, there exists two clubs devoted to bonsai. The West Coast Bonsai Society and Taguchi Bonsai Club are both part of The B.C. Bonsai Club Federation. To federation members, it is as

photographs by Robert Bergen



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much about socializing as it is about the hobby; for Tak, it is about creativity and the cooperation of people.

The first step to becoming involved in bonsai is to try making one yourself. The process is very involved, but Tak sent me in the right direction. Start by picking out a tree. You can acquire one basically anywhere (a garden shop, a specialty bonsai store, even your own backyard), but there are several things to keep in mind: bonsais are generally kept at heights between 10 cm–1.3 metres. Evergreens native to the Northwest are the easiest to sculpt. Finding a tree with a nice thick trunk, healthy foliage and a good root system is important. Tak helped me pick out a juniper, about 25 centimetres high, with a thick corkscrew trunk.

The next step is to pick out a pot. Bonsais must be planted in pots that are shallow, complete with large drainage holes. Ceramic pots are preferred. Aesthetics are important in this process, especially concerning the pot. It has to suit the tree; if a tree has a "feminine" look, give it a pot with a round, soft shape; if the tree has a "masculine" look, give it a pot with a strong, rectangular shape. I decided my tree was without gender and settled for a rectangular pot with rounded corners. How's that for a compromise?

Before I actually got started, there was one last thing to consider: the soil. Traditional soil isn't used when growing bonsais. They grow best in soil that looks like tiny clay rocks, especially made for bonsais. Tak happened to have a concoction of his own made up of 50 per cent lava chunks and 50 per cent pine bark. He sifted out the smaller bits and used the remainder to achieve the best absorption and drainage possible. To avoid losing the soil out of the drainage holes, cover them with squares of plastic mesh and anchor them with aluminum wire. The wire

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*Tak Yamaura trims a prospective bonsai.*

can also be used to anchor the roots.

Other supplies I needed included aluminum wire for shaping the trunk and branches, branch/root cutters, wire cutters and a sealant. Applying a certain sealant to freshly cut branches will not only reduce the risk of the tree being infected by fungus, but it will also speed up the healing process.

The time came for me to venture out on my own and begin the process of creating my bonsai. I spread all the supplies out on the kitchen table and began to shake the roots free of dirt so that I could see where to begin clipping. My tiny juniper felt so fragile in my hands that I was afraid to cut freely at its lifeline, let alone the sprigs it had for branches. The good thing about evergreens, however, is that they are virtually indestructible. I continued cutting.

Roots trimmed and pot prepared, I placed my tree in its new home and contemplated the shape it would take. The trunk had already taken a slightly spiraled look, and wiring the branches to follow the shape became a natural process. Three hours had passed and I hadn't even noticed.

My final product pleased me. The once bushy, young juniper looked ancient and wise. Having spent hours with my hands in the soil, pruning, sculpting and savoring the smell of nature, I truly felt fulfilled.

My bonsai now sits peacefully on my balcony, a constant reminder of the simplicity of nature. It requires little maintenance. I prune and water now and again, and eventually I will remove the training wires. Now I have a feeling that my bonsai would like company—and I think I'm addicted. ■

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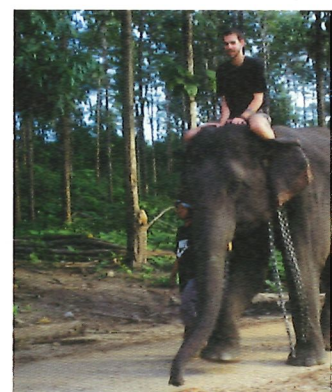
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# LOSING GROUND

photographs by Brian Hughes

THIS ARTICLE IS BASED ON RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY NAOMI WATT, ERIN ROSS AND ALDEA PALLARD, THREE STUDENTS WHO SPENT THE FALL OF 1999 IN THAILAND AS PART OF LANGARA COLLEGE'S PACIFIC RIM PROGRAM. THEIR STORIES WERE COMPILED BY ROB HOWATSON.

Thailand was built by elephants. These giant, reputedly sensitive creatures were the weapons of choice in times of war, the transport vehicles that travelled the trade routes, and the front-end loaders that hauled teak from the forests. At the turn of the century, an estimated 20,000 pachyderms were used as beasts of burden. Today only 3,000 remain in captivity. Half that number survive in the wild. Their population declines at an estimated rate of three per cent annually.

Yet the elephant legacy is visible everywhere in Thailand. Their likenesses grace the walls of Buddhist temples. Bronze elephant statues flank the entrance to the Grand Palace in Bangkok. Even today, if a so-called white elephant is found in the wild, Thai law dictates that the creature belongs to the king.

In spite of this reverence, they are still poached for their ivory. Their jungle habitat was razed to accommodate an exploding human population. And in 1989, the Thai government delivered a crushing blow to the elephant work force when it banned logging. Thailand

suddenly found itself with 3,000 unemployed behemoths and an entire community of jobless mahouts (elephant caretakers). Their prospects are bleak. As freelance journalist Leyla Alyanak put it, "Jobs are scarce for animals whose principal talent lies in rolling a log with their trunk."

Many of the down-and-out handlers resort to busking with their elephants in the cities. They sell passers-by small bags of cucumbers that people feed to the animals. Pregnant women pay to walk beneath the pachyderms for good luck. Then there are the performances for tourists. One event featured a fashion show with multi-ton models wearing makeup, earrings and sunglasses as they lumbered down a catwalk.

Some people find these antics amusing; Bangkok authorities do not. Roaming elephants are banned from the city, yet mahouts continue to pass through the metropolis and periodically stage protests in the streets, asserting their right to work there.

In rural areas, pachyderms are understandably tempted by farmer's fields. These are creatures who eat up to 250



kilograms of fruit or vegetables, or five per cent of their own body weight, each day. This provokes some farmers to react as one group did on a pineapple plantation in 1998. They set poison for the mammoth "pests."

With so little space left in the nation, it is no surprise that some people employ the tight-leash method to care for their three-metre-tall pets. This was the case in 1996 when a 23-year-old bull named Phlai Petch escaped from a tree to which he had been shackled for years. The tree stood in a temple, and once outside the compound, the elephant wandered into a nearby residential area. When police arrived the bull panicked. Some cars were damaged. The police fired a 100-round volley that eventually killed the animal, but not, some onlookers say, before Phlai Petch tried to return to his tree.

Some of these ugly incidents could be avoided if there were more experienced mahouts available, but like the Thai elephant, mahouts are a dying breed. The financial incentive to become a lifetime handler ended with the timber trade. It takes 20 years to produce a master mahout. These are truly skilled individuals who can anticipate an elephant's every move.

Master mahouts seem to have no problem maneuvering them. When riding atop the animal's neck they steer the creature with their feet or nudge it with an iron hook, applying pressure to one of 85 different points on the elephant's hide. This is how they "operate" the Asian pachyderm as a forklift. Elephants are remarkably sure-footed, quiet walkers. They can outperform tractors on steeply-sloped, densely-treed terrain. They can lift 100 kilograms with their trunks and pull a half ton, but only if they are under the supervision of a quality mahout and not being overworked.

This is less likely to be the case in this era of illegal logging in Thailand. The men controlling log-poaching elephants will work their animals on dangerous inclines, for impossible durations, at unreasonable speeds. They often hack at the animals with knives and spears to keep

the work moving one step ahead of the park rangers. Log poachers will also mix amphetamines into the banana meals of their trunked-crew. The elephants become addicted. They suffer many of the same symptoms that human methamphetamine addicts experience. They become aggressive, despondent and accident prone.

If an abused elephant is lucky, it will be seen by a veterinarian at the world's only elephant hospital. The facility is located on the grounds of the Thai Elephant Conservation Centre near Lampang, in the northern part of the country. The doctors run a mobile clinic. They drive through villages looking for malnourished, infected and addicted pachyderms. A typical call saw Dr. Preecha Puangkham treating a 60-year-old female, his entire forearm thrust into a cyst the size of a man's head as he cleaned out the pus. The owner confessed to overworking the animal.

Elephants also stagger into the hospital itself. The most famous case is Motala, a 2.7 ton patient that stepped on a landmine while logging in Myanmar (formerly Burma). The animal managed to hobble out of the jungle and was trucked to the hospital. She underwent an operation in which four of her toenails and a five-inch-thick triangular piece of her foot were removed. Surgeons worked around her as she lay on a trampoline-like cot fashioned from fire hoses. After the procedure, Motala was fitted with a harness connected to a crane. The crane helped her stand upright and took some pressure off her injured limb. She was eventually fitted with a prosthetic. Donations flowed to elephant conservation groups as the story unfolded before the world media.

Efforts are underway to deal with the elephant crisis in Thailand. In addition to the hospital and conservation centre near Lampang, there is park land set aside for wild elephants and projects to re-introduce animals into the jungles. These initiatives offer some hope for the plight of pachyderms in Southeast Asia. Hopefully they are not too late for these giants, said to be so sensitive that they mourn the loss of loved ones and cry real tears. ■

*Motala, the landmine victim, recovers at the Thai Elephant Conservation Centre.*







# Warming up to Cold Sake

NOT A WINE. NOT A SPIRIT. NOT SAK-EE, BUT SAK-EH.  
JAPAN'S PREMIERE BREW GETS SOME CACHET AND  
CATCHES ON IN VANCOUVER.

Sake, Japan's national drink, has undergone something of a renaissance over the past decade. Today's *toji* (master sake brewer) combines old world methods with cutting-edge technology to create the finest sake ever produced. Improved quality has spread the sake renaissance outside Japan as well, as sommeliers at world-class restaurants in New York and San Francisco suggest "the smiling

liquor" to thirsty patrons. Even Martha Stewart, that doyenne of restrained chic, included a premium sake segment in a recent episode of her popular television show. In Vancouver, however, the joys of premium sake are practically unknown.

Of those Vancouverites who have sipped sake, many vaguely recall an endless procession of tiny cups filled with steaming liquid of

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indeterminate taste. They may also vividly recount the following morning—their heads ringing as though a tiny jackhammer had drilled its way into their skulls.

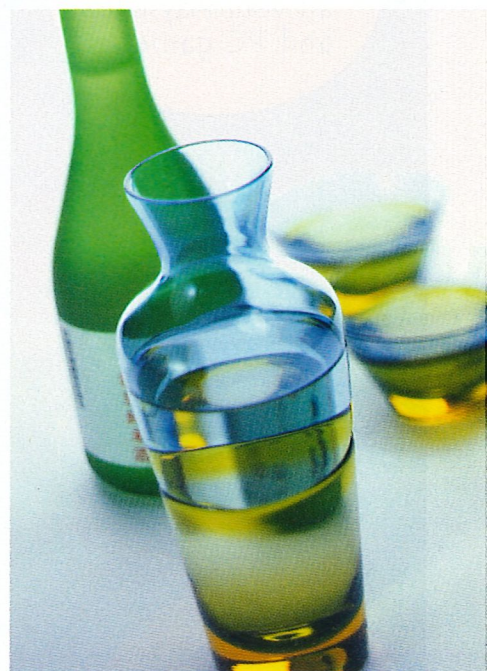
Others fondly recall sake as part of an exotic ritual, complete with darling, thimble-like cups and ceramic decanters constantly raised for toasts or refills. Still others have sworn off it—usually after one taste—as a terrible brew, strong and noxious. Charming or toxic, most locals are sure of one thing: sake is served hot. Indeed, they might be shocked at the suggestion they try their next cup cold.

Nevertheless, it's true. To truly experience the surprising pleasures of good sake, the fruit of the *toji's* long hours of work, it must be drunk cold. However, you shouldn't try just any sake cold: most sake delivered piping hot to tables in the average sushi bar would taste awful if chilled. In fact, heat makes a lower quality sake palatable. What we're discussing here is premium sake—*junmai*, *ginjoshu* and *daiginjo* sakes.

Of course, this doesn't mean you can't ever heat sake—warm sake is a fine comfort on a cold winter's night. Just know it's analogous to mulling wine—don't do it to the good stuff. If sake must be heated, then place the bottle in a pot of heated—not boiling—water, and heat only until vapour forms over the sake's surface. But for high-quality sake, heating is definitely *déclassé*. In fact, Luisa Deziel-Baker of That's Life Gourmet, a distributor for several premium sake brands in Western Canada, compares heating *ginjoshu* to warming Chardonnay. It's barbaric.

Speaking of Chardonnay, some wonder whether sake is a wine or a spirit. It's neither. While sake is commonly misidentified as a wine by westerners, it is, in fact, a type of non-carbonated beer that's brewed, rather than vinted like wine. Another misconception is that sake is a strong liquor, similar to vodka or whiskey. At 15 per cent alcohol by volume, sake is the strongest non-fortified fermented beverage around, but it's not much stronger than many wines, which are usually 9–12 per cent alcohol. Nor is it as strong as vodka or whiskey's 40 per cent. Despite its relatively low alcohol content, heated sake does make its way straight to your head—the vapours inhaled, while sipping a steaming cup, are highly alcoholic.

It also differs from wine in that there is no such thing as "vintage" sake. Some harvests produce finer quality rice, but there are few varieties of sake rice, and yearly variations are far slighter than those in the world of wine. With fine sakes, brewing determines quality. As well, since they are best consumed within a year of bottling, there is no reason to age sake. Sake should be protected from strong light and temperature fluctuations as both adversely affect colour and taste, so it's wise to store a fine sake in your wine cellar. Just not for too long.



*Premium sake calls for a premium serving set. The flask and cups above, which are from a line that is handblown in Japan, are available from Chachka's, 1075 Robson in Vancouver.*



*To properly pour sake is a ritual and an art. One tip: take care to pour with the palm of your hand facing down.*

*Remember, sake is a social drink—always offer to pour for your companions, and allow them to pour for you!*



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## sustenance



These premium sakes are available at select BC Liquor Specialty Stores. Shown here (front to back): Kagatobi Gokkan Junmai; Mizuho Blue-Yamahai Junmai and Haru Junmai

Few Vancouverites have tasted, or even heard of, premium sakes. Even in Japan, premium sakes were virtually unknown until the last few decades as high-quality sakes were originally produced only for national competitions. Then, in the 1970s, computerized polishing techniques made *junmai*, *ginjoshu* and even *daiginjo* brews commercially available. Still, all of the special designation sakes combined currently account for only one-quarter of Japan's sake market. So, yes, heated sake is still common in Japan.

While commercially produced premium sakes are a recent development, the history of fermented beverages in Japan stretches back 15 centuries or more. A colourful folktale relates sake's discovery: ancient Japanese observed monkeys placing fruit into tree hollows and then drinking the fermented result called *saru-zake*, or monkey sake. Folktale aside, it is more likely

Korean immigrants, who had acquired the secret of sake from China, brought the drink to Japan in the third century.

Japan's earliest recorded fermented beverage was *kuchikami-zake*, or "chewed in the mouth sake." As the off-putting name suggests, these sakes were produced by chewing various ingredients, including millet, rice and acorns, and spitting them into a large pot which was left to ferment for several days. Apparently, the best *kuchikami-zake* was chewed by beautiful virgins.

Thankfully, sake brewing has advanced since then. Creating the finest modern sakes requires simple ingredients—rice, water and mash—but a complex and labour intensive process, and one of the most important stages, is the rice polishing. Unlike table rice, sake rice has most of its starch concentrated in the core, with fats, proteins and minerals in the outermost layers. And while all



sake rice is polished, special designation sakes like *junmai* and *daiginjo* require rice polished to less than 70 per cent of its original weight. Once polished, the rice is washed and steamed. Water is added, making a mash which is left to seethe and foam as it ferments. A *ginjoshu* is left to ferment for a month, compared to two or three weeks for lower quality products.

When the *toji* determines the right moment, the mash is pressed. The clear sake is poured away, filtered, pasteurized and diluted. It is then left to mature in tanks for approximately six months, then heat-treated a second time, bottled and sent off to stores where connoisseurs can enjoy its pure freshness.

And the purer the better. Premium sake's lack of additives makes it a forgiving drink for the day after. Generally, the better the sake, the smaller the chance of a hangover.

Which is just as well as sake appreciation demands first-hand experience. Get your first bottle of *ginjoshu* (or, for the flush, a *daiginjo*) and try a sip of premium sake. While local choices are limited (compared to the thousands of brands available in Japan), fine sake is available in Vancouver, and a wider variety is expected in the future as its popularity increases.

In fact, Bruce MacKenzie, who oversees premium sake sales at the British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch, reports an increase of 37 per cent in 1999 sales over 1998. And for two years now, the Vancouver International Wine Festival has included sake tasting, raising awareness of premium sake among wine lovers and restaurateurs. Given Vancouver's abundance of fresh seafood—a natural match for sake's lighter taste—and close ties to the Pacific Rim, premium sake could well be the next big trend. So go on, Vancouver, warm up to cold sake. ■

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# THE KING AND I

story by Jenn Farrell

I arrived at Gyoza King with my two dinner companions in tow at 11:30 on a Monday evening. The restaurant was half-full, most of the customers young Japanese. Seated at one of the small tables, I took the chance to have myself a little look-see. Cozy and unassuming, the décor was the usual assortment of fans, paper lanterns and masks, as well as innumerable beer, sake and vodka posters. An unusual feature was the artwork made from photographs, postcards and varnished wood.

Our server arrived promptly to take our order, wearing a Gyoza King t-shirt that bore the slogan, "No Sushi." In keeping with the slogan, the menu featured not only gyoza, but also a myriad of other Japanese dishes, including *ramen*, *udon*, *hot pot* and salads. To begin, we ordered a round of *Asahi*, a popular Japanese beer.

Within minutes, our appetizers arrived, all served in deep, hand-thrown ceramic bowls. My *agedashi* tofu appeared to be moving. The large, paper-thin strips of *bonito* curled like blossoms atop the sizzling tofu cubes. The tofu itself was deep-fried, lending just a hint of crispness to the moist, crumbly texture (and putting my chopstick skills to the test). A hearty portion of broth, along with the *bonito* and tiny strips of *nori*, added flavour and colour.

One of my companions' tofu dishes was prepared in the same manner, but was topped with a rich, mushroom sauce. Although it was delicious, she decided it was a heavy choice for an appetizer and suggested it might be better shared. Being a good friend, I readily complied.



Gyoza King, 1508 Robson Street

The green salad with "secret" dressing, chosen by my other companion, posed no such difficulties. The salad was a standard mix of greens, cucumber, tomato and the like. The sweet, tangy topping only increased its popularity. "I would eat more salad if I could have this dressing every day," she said.

There was no more time to talk salad, as our gyoza was delivered on chunky, hand-painted platters. We had chosen both vegetable and chicken gyozas, and opted for pan-fried rather than baked. Plump and golden brown, dipped in gyoza sauce, they were a delight. The vegetables were alternately crunchy and yielding, and the chicken was deemed "very tasty." I was glad to have had the foresight to order 10 pieces instead of six, and we made short work of clearing our pretty little plates.

As I finished my *Asahi*, I decided that my search for the perfect gyoza might well be over. The bill for the entire meal came to 50 dollars, including our drinks, and the service was relaxed and efficient. So if you're sick of *sashimi*, and looking for a delicious alternative, head down to Robson and discover the joys of gyoza. ■

# AROUND THE EAST IN EIGHTY BITES



story by Jim Oaten

Mall food courts aren't usually associated with adventurous eating. The common-denominator approach to the between-stores dining experience pretty much guarantees that the same fast food is available at every shopping mall across the country. Quick and bland is the usual order of the day for hungry shoppers. Yet one great exception to this general rule is right here in the Lower Mainland—the food court in Parker Place Mall on No.3 Road in Richmond.

Along with the Aberdeen Centre and Yaohan, Parker Place is one of the sprawling Asian malls that sprang up in Richmond in response to the large influx of Pacific Rim immigrants who settled in the municipality over the last

photographs by Kris Grunert



decade. In fact, it's estimated that over one-third of the city's population is now of Asian descent. That makes Richmond the logical location for shopping complexes catering to a Pacific Rim clientele—or anyone else who wants a taste of Asia.

At Parker Place, in the space of a five-minute stroll, it's possible to eat your way around most of the Far East. The 20 or so small street-vendor-style cafés serve specialty foods from, among other countries, Mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia and Singapore, and offer a variety of dishes unknown to any other food court I've visited.

The range is so broad that it took my wife and I at least five tours around the food court to decide what we wanted to eat. Bustling stalls, like Rainbow Café, Tak Fook Noodle and Congee Shop, offer the usual sweet and sour, and chow mein dishes most people are familiar with, but they are usually buried in bilingual lists of more esoteric menu items. If you've ever wondered about the taste of curried squid, star-fruit juice, pig's feet or tripe, this is a pretty good place to come. Or if, like me, you develop a sudden hankering for a skewer of duck kidney and liver, Parker Good Food will be more than happy to oblige.

And that's what makes Parker Place food court such a great place to visit. For just over 15 dollars, my wife and I sampled four tastes we'd never tried before: the aforementioned duck skewer, curried squid in noodle and soup, taro with red bean-pearl drink and a papaya milkshake. Even if some dishes aren't to your liking—my wife diplomatically reviewed the skewer as “pretty okay, for people who like duck liver and kidney”—the cost of the dishes, generally from three to five dollars, is so slight, and the range of choices so broad, that it's almost guaranteed that you will find a new taste to enjoy. ■

## THAI AWAY HOME

story by Leanne Prain

With dandelion yellow walls, mulberry red fixtures and cerulean blue counters, the atmosphere of Thai Away Home's Cambie Street location reminded me of a box of crayons. Colorful, simple and fun.

After perusing the menu's wide fare of salads, soups, curries and noodles, I ordered at the standing café-type counter. Thai Away Home seems to have a steady stream of both eat-in and take-out customers. The restaurant also encourages its patrons to try Thai cooking at home, using their bottled sauces. Instead of being secretive with their ingredients, like many food establishments, Thai Away Home offers free recipes. I pocketed directions for *Pad Thai* and mixed vegetables in garlic sauce. Yummy.

Quicker than you can say “McThai,” my order came steaming out of the kitchen.

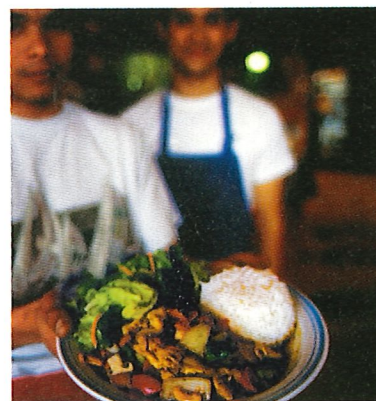
For an appetizer, I had crispy spring rolls (\$3.95), served on a lovely flowered plate. The spring rolls, surprisingly ungreasy, were stuffed with rice noodles, shredded carrots and green vegetables. Crunchy on the outside and soft inside, they were perfect, and the accompanying dipping plum sauce was delicious.

For my main entrée, I ordered a yellow curry with potato and onions (\$5.25). It was artfully garnished with cilantro and carrot shavings. I chose to pair it with fried tofu, instead of beef or chicken, as I tend to eat vegetarian meals. In fact, Thai Away Home's menu notes that most of its dishes can be prepared without meat. Lucky me.

I poured the curry onto a dish of white rice. I had ordered a small size (\$1.25), but the portion was huge. The curry was pleasantly mild and sweet with coconut milk. The potatoes were firm and the tofu soft. I ate until I could eat no more, and the friendly staff offered to wrap up my leftovers.

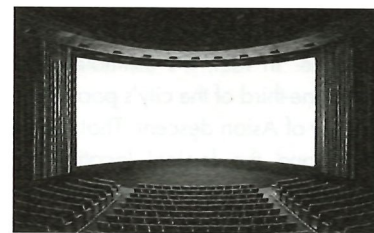
Had there been room for dessert, I would have tried the exotically named “Coconut surprise/Mango Flower” (\$2.75). It sounded great, as did the other dessert dishes, like fried bananas on coconut ice cream.

Thai Away Home (3315 Cambie Street and 1918 Commercial Drive) is the type of place where you order standing up, pour your own water and plunk down on a stool at the street-side counter. It's casual, but the food is definitely of the linen tablecloth and silverware variety, both in taste and presentation. ■



photographs by Steven A. Smith





# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

story by Brooke Bowie

Neither pretty nor practical, the *Mirror's Edge* art show captures the essence of life in the 21st century as perceived by artists from around the world. The works of painters, sculptors, photographers and cricket maestros are being exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Gallery tours are offered in English or Japanese and provide the opportunity to explore these unique, multinational interpretations of our world. But, be forewarned, an open mind is essential. This exhibit pushes the term "multimedia" to the limits.

Swedish artist Henrik Håkansson and his cricket circus are no exception. This piece evokes either surprise from a "been there, done that" audience, or, at the very least, serves as a soothing, audio backdrop to the rest of the visual chaos.

Other interesting pieces include an eerie, mock science lab by Switzerland's Thomas Hirschhorn and a humorous video installation involving a "close call," appropriately entitled *Dead Pan*.

Not every piece is so obviously wacky.

*Scenario*, an intriguing yet inconspicuous video piece by Pacific Rim artist Rei Kawakubo, challenges the modern vision of the human form. It depicts a troop of androgynous, interpretive dancers in stuffed, red tunics, giving them a tumour-like appearance.

Also worth seeing is a series of black and white photographs by Japanese-American Hiroshi Sugimoto. Subtle in subject (the innards of various theatres), and beautifully contrasted, the images draw the eye in and leave viewers wondering what is being said.

Although a far cry from traditional oil on canvas, *Mirror's Edge* appeals to the artistic mind and modern, worldly thinkers. Catch it while you can, as Vancouver is the only North American tour date for this unique spectacle of sight and sound. *Mirror's Edge* continues until August 13th. ■



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"Indonesian coffee is all the rage," says Starbucks barista, Helen Ker.

This is good news for the 11 million citizens of the Southeast Asian archipelago whose livelihoods depend on sales of the beverage. They are fortunate that their islands produce a bean valued for its smooth, full-bodied flavour and unique taste.

And what a precious bean it is. Given that it takes five years to grow a coffee tree that will sprout beans,

and each tree only gives up enough beans per year to produce 2.2 kilograms of the roasted good stuff, it is not surprising that average Indonesian plantation yields are small. In fact, farmers must often combine their crops, which is a plus for the consumer. Mixing the harvests can intensify the special characteristics of the beans.

The beans actually come from the fruit of the coffee tree. The fruit is crimson red at harvest time, each cherry a little larger than a cranberry. One cherry contains two green beans. The beans are separated from the fruit in a process called hulling. But before that can be done, the cherries must be dried.

The traditional method involves laying cherries out on the ground for ten days to tan in the sun while attendants turn them hourly. The beans absorb the exotic flavours of the environment—the dank scent of leafy mulch and the tang of rich volcanic soil.

Considering that it is our nose, more than our taste buds, that renders the final verdict on what we think of a cup of joe, it is no wonder that the Indonesian drink is making such a splash in mugs around town. Each sip is like a walk through a Javanese rainforest.

Here's mud in your eye, Juan. ■



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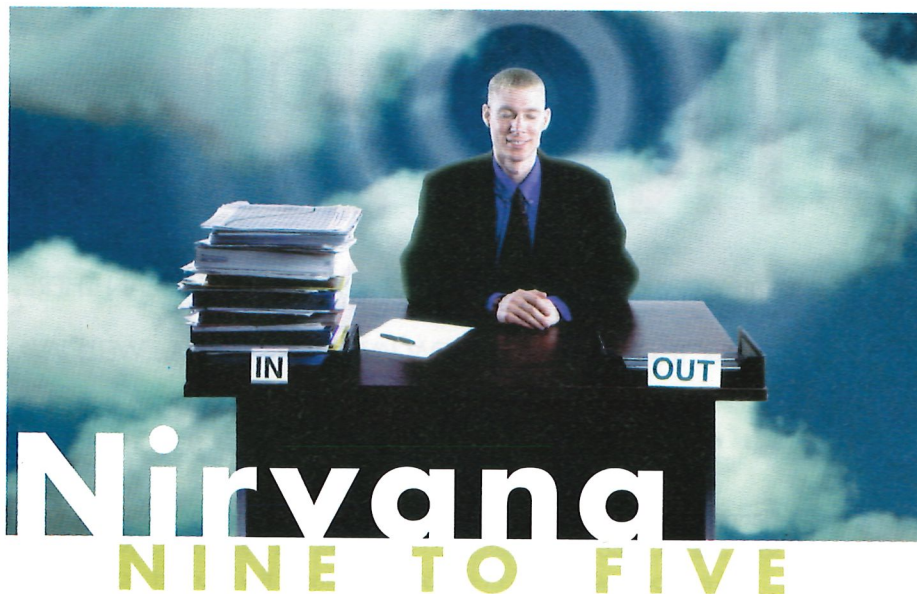
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## paths



BUSINESS AND MEDITATION TOGETHER AT LAST?  
TRISHA ELLIOTT PAYS A VISIT TO THE VANCOUVER  
MAHARISHI VEDIC COLLEGE.

story by Trisha Elliott

Preparing for my interview with the director of the Maharishi Vedic College meant also preparing myself. I visualized meeting a spiritual yogi of sorts, one who would dress in earthly robes and beads, and frown at the material world.

As I walked into the front lobby of the college, warm peach walls and soft light lured me to a state of peace. Just as I had almost drifted away, I was abruptly brought back to reality by a firm handshake.

"I am Stephen Beck, director of the college. Pleased to meet you."

Beck took me into the public forum room and educated me about Transcendental Meditation (TM) by way of flip charts, documentary videos and posters.

Many flip charts later, I discovered that TM is growing not only among the "unworldly," but also among business owners. In the Lower Mainland, for instance, a vitamin wholesale company, a land-development company and a fire-fighting supplies manufacturer have all incorporated the practice into their work-places to reduce stress and promote healthier environments.

The roots of Transcendental Meditation go back thousands of years. TM is derived from the *Vedas*, the most ancient and sacred texts of the Hindu religion. In 1957, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who holds a physics degree, founded the Transcendental Meditation Program after completing two years of silence in the Himalayas. Today, TM is practiced by over four million people worldwide.

Maharishi lives in Holland where he owns his own television station and continues to develop the TM program. The TM organization is non-profit and most of the students' fees go to teachers' wages. It is even possible to get a bachelor's or master's degree in Vedic science at hundreds of universities and colleges around the world.

photograph by Kevin Teneycke



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"TM is a simple mental technique practiced 15-20 minutes twice a day," says Beck. "It involves sitting comfortably with the eyes closed and allowing the mind, very innocently, to experience quiet levels of awareness. Not only does the mind get rest, but the brain becomes orderly with alpha and beta waves appearing on the left and right sides of the brain."

Over 500 scientific research studies have investigated various aspects of TM in the past 25 years. The findings have linked TM with everything from increased job satisfaction to reduced blood pressure.

It also reportedly alleviates stress. "Stress is the number one inhibitor to performance," says Mark McCooey, owner of S.E.I. Industries, a firefighting supplies manufacturer in Delta. "So, when you have a work environment that is not focused on conflict and stress, performance goes way up."

McCooey is no stranger to TM. He has been practicing for 27 years and claims to enjoy two to four added hours of productivity each day. Today, many of his employees practice TM.

"We introduced it as an informal stress reduction policy," says McCooey. "If the employees are interested, the company helps pay the cost."

The business philosophy is simple. "When you are feeling relaxed, you are more generous," he says. "When a problem comes up in many businesses, management looks for who is at fault. We look at it as a team and say 'how do we fix it?'"

McCooey attributes the increased performance of his company to TM. He notes that there are fewer conflicts between co-workers and people are relaxed enough to work efficiently.

Executives are always interested in reducing the number of sick days at their companies. The Transcendental Meditation program web site is teeming with graphs from studies illustrating how TM affects health. In addition, a recent study by American

Blue Cross and Blue Shield demonstrated that a sample group of TM patients required less medical care than the control group of non-TM users.

The physiological key to Transcendental Meditation's success is respiration. Breathing patterns are wavelike. TM slows the rhythm and depth of those waves, reducing carbon dioxide in the blood and the need for the body to expel it. The body uses less energy during this process, and therefore stores it for later use. It is in a state of restful alertness, neither active nor passive.

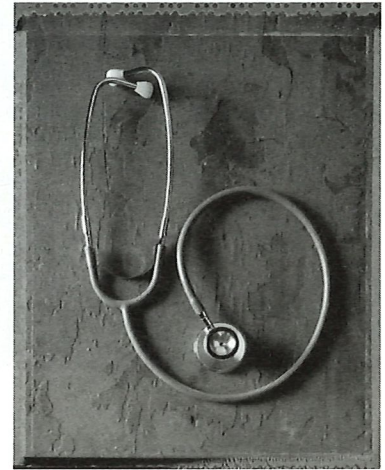
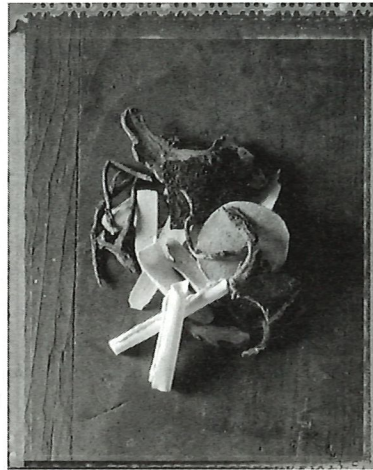
So, the question arises: if this practice can benefit business, why hasn't every CEO adopted it?

Glen Stedham, a former TM student, introduced the concept to his employees. It didn't take. "The problem is that meditation requires self-discipline," says Stedham. "People begin with the best of intentions, but soon quit."

McCooey offers this view. "I think it is because people aren't as comfortable with [TM] in the West, as it is a traditionally eastern practice. People are concerned that it involves some kind of cult activity. After you are taught the technique, you can take what you've learned and never have contact with the organization, if that is what you would prefer."

There is also the option of having lifetime follow-up instruction as part of the course fee. Which brings us to another area of apprehension. Some people balk at paying a TM instructor for information they think they can get in a book. But McCooey explains: "When I sat in a room with my teacher, she would ask, 'How are you feeling now?...Then you should do this.' The lessons were personally catered. It would be very difficult to learn from a book." Perhaps, in the final accounting, the only book that can teach CEOs about the benefits of TM is the ledger book. ■





# the pulse of prevention

story by Kristine Davidson

"Are you feeling stressed out? Do you have trouble falling asleep? By the way, how are those bowel movements?"

This is not an intimate conversation between friends, but the typical line of questioning between a patient and a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine.

Chinese medicine has been around for nearly 3,000 years. Long before western doctors began probing and dissecting, their eastern counterparts had already established a complex understanding of the human body's intricacies. National surveys reveal that each year greater numbers of Canadians turn to alternative therapies. Some say a medical revolution is upon us, creating a new system—if modern medicine fails, Chinese medicine heals.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) differs greatly from western medicine in its approach to well-being. It is concerned mainly with prevention and maintaining harmony through the various functions of the body. Though rich in philosophy and spirituality, TCM is based on tangible principles and patterns. The body is a collection of integrated systems, each carrying out a specific function. When there is disharmony in one area, it is inevitable that the rest of the body will be affected. Central to this concept is *Qi* (pronounced *chee*). Though difficult to translate into English, *Qi* is said to be a person's life force or vital energy. *Qi* is present in every living thing, flowing through the body via meridians and passages as defined by Chinese medical theory.

photographs by Yoko Yamamoto





## Qi and Traditional Chinese Medicine

There are five types of Qi, each corresponding to the five elements of nature:

**Organ Qi**—the Qi of each major organ has its own function and character. The substance is the same, but its activity is different.

**Meridian Qi**—integral pathways in the body through which Qi flows, adjusting and harmonizing their activity.

**Nutritive Qi**—moves with the blood through blood vessels, transforming nutrients derived from food.

**Protective Qi**—responsible for resisting external pernicious influences that ultimately create viruses. It is "fierce and bold," moving within the chest and abdomen and between the skin and muscles.

**Ancestral Qi**—the "sea of Qi" which gathers in the chest, connecting the throat, heart and vessels. It helps to regulate respiration and the heartbeat, affecting the lungs, heart, voice and movement of blood.

Dr. Fang Liu, Director of Educational Resources from the International College of Chinese Medicine of Vancouver, points out that attempting to translate the word Qi is futile.

"Qi just is," he says. "It is functional, material and emotional."

Qi is in constant motion throughout the body. It changes form with each muscle and blood vessel, allowing every part of the body to function in harmony. It resists the entry of external pathogens and will combat them if they enter the body. A healthy Qi moves harmoniously in every direction. Qi becomes "emotional" when out of balance, creating discordance between one's body and spirit.

"You know those times when you just meet a person, and immediately know that you don't want to be around them...that is due to disharmony of that person's Qi," says Dr. Liu.

Since traditional Chinese medicine views the body in a completely different way than western medicine, there must be a different way of interpreting the body's problems and needs. We cannot see Qi through X-ray or CAT scans, so how then does a TCM physician identify where there is disharmony?

A diagnosis in Chinese medicine begins with an in-depth conversation between doctor and patient. The doctor asks a series of questions regarding emotional and physical symptoms while observing the patient's manner, skin tone, posture, mood and smell. During the examination, a doctor checks the pulse at six different points, which correspond to the six organs. He or she will check the consistency and depth of the pulse to determine whether it is slippery, shallow, deep or wiry. The physician may then examine the tongue, observing its colour, texture and smell. There are eight basic principles used in TCM diagnosis: yin and yang, interior and exterior, hot and cold, Qi, and blood. By exploring these principles within each area, a doctor will begin to see a pattern of symptoms.

"Traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis is far superior to western medicine," says Tessa Neilson, a third year student at the International College of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Vancouver. "TCM is successful because it does not isolate the symptom. It understands that you cannot separate the emotional from the physical, and is willing to dig deeper to treat the cause rather than the symptom."

It is inaccurate to view the TCM diagnosis as a series of steps leading to an indisputable conclusion. Most patients will say that it feels more like talking to a friend who is concerned with your well-being. Your emotional state is examined as much as your physical condition.



Prevention—encompassing the mind, body and soul—is key in the eyes of the traditional Chinese medical community. It uses a holistic approach, enlisting both patient and doctor.

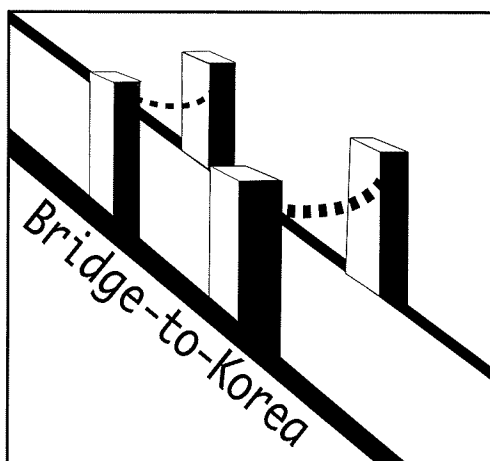
In today's fast-paced world, there are many types of people turning to TCM for solutions outside of mainstream medicine. Cindie D'lorio, a second year student at the International College of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Vancouver, has only recently begun working in the school's open clinic and already sees a pattern.

"There is an overwhelming number of people who come to us after being told that they must live with the pain, that there is nothing more their western doctor can do."

Many of these problems can be managed easily with remedies such as herbalogy and acupuncture. Dr. Liu explains the recent turn to alternative therapies as two-fold: "Firstly, western medicine uses too many chemicals. People are tired of the side effects and the isolated way of viewing their illness. Secondly, the mass production of chemical drugs since the end of World War II has had serious effects on this generation's ability to withstand infection."

The two schools of medicine not only treat problems differently, they do not even identify the problem the same way. Where western medicine might see raised blood pressure and heart palpitations, Chinese medicine might find a stagnation of liver Qi or a case of liver fire. Where a western doctor might open the body in surgery to correct what is wrong, the TCM doctor will recommend a change in lifestyle and diet with a treatment of specific herbs.

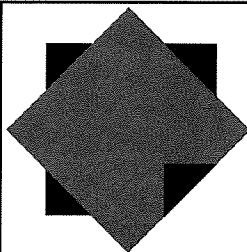
"There is no surgery in traditional Chinese medicine," says Tessa, "because where there is Qi, there can be healing." ■



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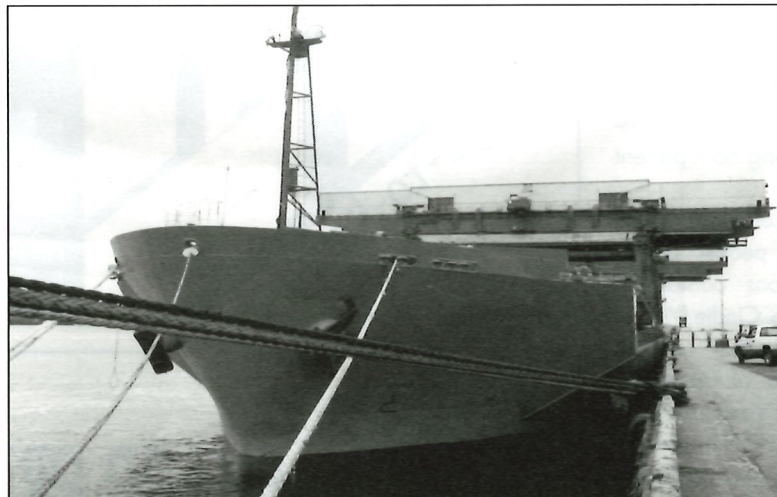
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story by Tineke Ziemer



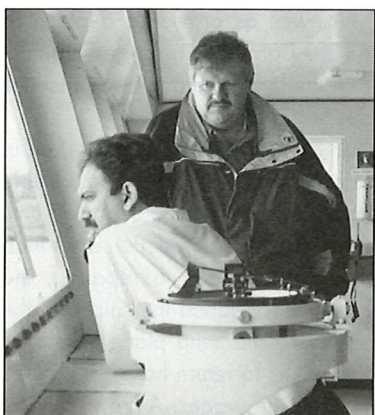
*Sailors relax at North Vancouver's Lighthouse*

Something was wrong aboard the *Espiritus Santos*, but the crew wasn't talking. When it docked in Vancouver, Teus Kappers decided to investigate.

He boarded the ship and approached the captain. After insisting he could help, Kappers was led to a tightly-chained storage locker. The officers slowly opened the heavy door and peered in. "Are you sure you want to help?" they asked. Kappers nodded, but was beginning to have second thoughts. Before he could change his mind, they thrust him into the locker and slammed the door shut. When his eyes adjusted to the darkness, Kappers discovered he was not alone. There were other men in the locker—four stowaways from East Africa.

photographs by Vivian Kereki





*Teus Kappers with the captain of Saga Tide in Vancouver.*

Kappers arranged for immigration officers to escort the stowaways off the ship, and not a moment too soon. Given the costs—thousands of dollars and the many problems the freeloaders had caused the captain, it was likely he was beginning to consider the traditional method of stowaway disembarkation—pitching them overboard.

Kappers is Port Chaplain for Lighthouse Harbour Ministries in Vancouver. One wouldn't normally expect to find a missionary on the docks, but this is exactly where he's been since 1981.

Lighthouse Harbour Ministries is a worldwide Christian organization with a mission to serve the world's seamen. Located in North Vancouver and the Fraser Surrey Docks, it provides the perfect place for seamen to experience the warmth of home.

The ministry began in Britain in the mid-1800s. An old troop ship was converted into a church for sailors who docked nearby, providing a place for spiritual worship, friendship and care. With crews of nearly 200 men coming to port, it wasn't long before similar centres began opening their doors all over the world, including such ports of call as Korea, the Philippines, Germany, Holland and the United States.

The ministry is a lifelong endeavour for Kappers. He discovered the organization as a college student in Wales, and never turned back. In 1982, he and his family moved from London to Vancouver to help open the local centres. "Time flies. I used to go onto the ships and I was the youngest one there. Now I'm the oldest!"

Since 1985, the Lighthouses in the Lower Mainland have served over 150,000 men of 120 different nationalities. Isabella Gilmartin has been volunteering for 15 years. "When this place was built, my son said 'Mom, I think this is something that would suit you,' so I've been here ever since."

Gilmartin spends her time serving coffee, visiting with sailors and knitting toques to give as gifts. But that's not all the centre has to offer.

Each night, volunteers pick up the men and give them free transportation to the centre, where they enjoy refreshments, snacks and entertainment such as table tennis, pool, shuffleboard and singing. They're also given a place to phone home and low-cost phone cards. On occasion, the Lighthouse arranges special activities, including sight-seeing tours, volleyball and soccer games. Most of the seamen speak some English, but, to help overcome the language barrier, literature, music and movies are provided in a number of different languages.

Pedro Matabang, a Filipino sailor, was at the Lighthouse for the second time after having visited in 1996. "It is comfortable," he said. "It feels like home. I like it very much to be here."

There is an atmosphere about the centre that seems to attract the sailors. "We come here for the environment," said Lin Jin Hong, first engineer aboard the *Mass Prosperity*, who visited the Lighthouse from China. In broken English, he explained that he hasn't seen his wife and baby boy since he boarded the ship nine months ago.

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As well as providing a place to go, the Lighthouse arranges financial aid, medical care and assistance for seamen in trouble.

In 1992, a Chilean ship docked in Vancouver in such poor condition that port authorities denied departure until the ship was repaired. But rather than spend the money to repair it, the owner abandoned the ship and the crew. He did send plane tickets for the sailors to return home, but failed to pay their wages. A crew member named Louis was left penniless and stayed with the ship for over a year in order to claim salvage rights. He slept on the ship throughout the winter, without electricity or heat.

During this time, his only source of money and food was from his new friends at the Lighthouse. Volunteer Joan Carré cooked many of his meals during the year. "When I made a meal at home, I just cooked a little extra to bring to him." He got permission to use the Lighthouse to warm up his meals and use the appliances. "That was his home while he was here," said Carré. "He wrote later to let us know that he did get the salvage rights and he is not going back to sea."

Another goal of Lighthouse Harbour Ministries is to help the seamen spiritually. "We want to show God's love. That's the purpose of the Lighthouse," said volunteer Gilmartin.

Each morning a volunteer visits the ships to assist the crews, hand out Bibles translated into their languages, and invite them to visit the Lighthouse. Kappers still remembers his first visit to a ship. "The first ship I ever went on was from the Soviet Union. I was giving out Bibles to the men and they threw everything overboard. If it wasn't for my size, I would have gone over too! Every free afternoon after that, I went down to the ships."

He believes that the Lighthouse is his calling. "God told me. That's the simplest of all answers. I really consider it as God's call." ■

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# China



PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVEN A. SMITH

## Tips

- Ask permission before taking someone's picture.
  - Be on time for meals, as it is an insult to the host if you are late.
  - Chopsticks are used at all meals, but you may request western utensils.
  - When greeting someone, shake hands if the Chinese person offers a hand first. The family name or surname is always placed first.
  - Salads and fruits should be washed with purified water or peeled. Tap water is not safe to drink, so only drink boiled or bottled water.
- "Psst!"** Taxi drivers generally do not know English so have your destination written out in detail by a Chinese speaking person.

**Population:** 1.25 billion

**Languages:** Mandarin, Shanghainese, Cantonese, Hakka

**Religions:** Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Taoism, Confucianism, ancestral worship

# FactSheets departure data for jetstreamers

## Climate:

Northeast:

December–March: cold winters

May–August: hot summers

July–August: rainy season

Central:

short cold winters

April–October: long, hot, humid summers

South:

January–March: winter

April–September: hot, humid, rainy

July–September: typhoons likely

Northwest:

very cold winters; hot, dry summers

**Time Difference:** PST + 16 hours

## Travel Information

**Airlines:** (leaving from Vancouver) Japan Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, United Airlines, Korean Airlines, Canadian Airlines, Air Canada, Air China

**Visa:** Visas are required and can be applied for at the Chinese Consulate or Embassy. Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond the date of expected return.

**Health:** Immunization for diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis A and hepatitis B recommended. Watch for malaria, typhoid and Japanese B encephalitis in rural areas, as well as dengue fever in parts of southern China.

**Currency Exchange:** Renminbi  
C\$1 = Rmb5.66 (March 8, 2000)

## Canadian Representatives

Canadian Embassy  
19 Dong Zhi Men  
Wai Street  
Chao Yang District  
Beijing, 100600  
People's Republic  
of China  
Tel: 011-86-10-  
6532-3536  
Fax: 011-86-21-  
6532-4072

## Chinese Representatives

People's Republic  
of China  
Consulate General  
3380 Granville St.  
Vancouver, BC  
V6H 3K3 Canada  
Tel: 604-734-7492  
Fax: 604-737-0154  
Embassy of the  
People's Republic  
of China  
515 St. Patrick St.  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 5H3 Canada  
Tel: 613-789-3434  
Fax: 613-789-1911

# Hong Kong



## Tips

- Handshakes are appropriate for business contracts. Address people by their family name preceded by Mr., Mrs., Ms., unless being addressed by their first name is their preference.
  - Reciprocate lunch or dinner invitations.
  - Avoid giving "unlucky" gifts such as knives or clocks. Wrap the gifts in colours other than white or blue—they are mourning colours.
- "Psst!"** Avoid eating at unlicensed establishments and street stalls.

**Population:** 6.8 million

**Languages:** Cantonese, Mandarin, English

**Religions:** Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism

**Climate:** Subtropical

March–Mid May: spring 23°C

Late May–Mid September: summer 28°C

Late September–Early December: autumn 23°C

Late December–February: winter 17°C

**Time Difference:** PST + 16 hours

## Travel Information

**Airlines:** Canadian Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, Air Canada

**Visa:** Canadians are not required to have a visa for stays up to three months, but must have a valid Canadian passport and proof of onward travel. Visas are necessary for employment or permanent residence

**Health:** There is a risk of cholera, malaria, Japanese encephalitis, hepatitis A and tuberculosis. Health Canada recommends an individual risk assessment.

**Currency Exchange:** Hong Kong dollar  
C\$1 = HK\$5.10 (March 1, 2000)

## Canadian Representatives

Canadian Consulate 12-14/F, One Exchange Square,  
8 Connaught Place Central Hong Kong  
Tel: 852-2810-4321 (general inquiries) Fax: 852-2810-6736  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Lester B. Pearson Bldg.  
125 Sussex Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2 Canada  
Toll Free: 1-800-267-8376 Tel: 613-944-4000 Fax: 613-996-9709  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce  
Suite 1003, Kinwick Center, 32 Hollywood Road Central Hong Kong  
Tel: 852-2110-8700 Fax: 852-2110-8701

## Hong Kong Representatives

Hong Kong Trade Development Council 36-39 Floors, Office Tower  
Convention Plaza 1 Harbour Road Hong Kong  
Tel: 852-2584-4333 Fax: 852-2824-0249 hktdc@tdc.org.hk  
Hong Kong Trade Development Council Vancouver (Consultant Office)  
904A-938 Howe St. Vancouver, BC V6Z 1N9 Canada  
Tel: 604-685-0883 Fax: 604-331-4418 vancouver.consultant@tdc.org.hk  
Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office (Canada) 174 St. George St.  
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2M7 Canada  
Tel: 416-924-5544 Fax: 416-924-3599 etotor@hketo.ca



## Tips

- When greeting Malay people, the handshake should be quite gentle
  - Business cards should be received with the right hand, then held in both hands and studied attentively.
  - At business meetings, men should not wear rolled-up shirt sleeves and women should not wear trousers. Also, avoid wearing the colour yellow, as it is the colour that Malaysian royalty wear.
  - It is impolite to point with your index finger.
  - Do not point your foot at someone.
  - Do not touch someone's head as it is considered sacred in southeast Malaysia.
  - At large hotels and first class restaurants, a 10% tip and a 5% government surcharge is automatically added.
- "Psst!"** Here are some useful phrases:  
Yes: *Ya*, No: *Teeda*, Hello: *Apa kabar*, Thank You: *Terima Kasih*, You're Welcome: *Sa ma Sa ma*, Good bye: *Se la mat jalan*,

**Population:** 22.2 million

**Languages:** Bahasa Malaysian, English, Chinese dialects, Indian  
**Religions:** Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Sikh, Animism

**Climate:** Tropical (warm and humid all year)  
May–September: dry season  
Mid November–March: rainy season  
Temperature: 21°C–32°C  
Annual Rainfall: 2000mm–2500mm  
**Time Difference:** PST + 16 hours

## Travel Information

**Airlines:** Canadian Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, Malaysia Airlines, Singapore Airlines

**Visa:** A visa is not required for visits up to three months. Passports need to be valid for at least six months beyond the date of arrival.

**Health:** No immunization is required but inoculation against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis A and polio is recommended.

**Currency Exchange:** Malaysian dollar (ringgit) C\$1 = M\$2.62



## Malaysia

### Canadian Representatives

Canadian High Commission 7th Floor Plaza MBF  
172 Jalan Ampang 50450 Kuala Lumpur  
PO Box 10990 50732 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: 603-261-2000 Night Line: 603-261-2031  
Fax: 603-261-3428

### Malaysian Representatives

Consulate General of Malaysia  
1900-925 W. Georgia St. Vancouver, BC  
V6C 3L2 Canada Tel: 604-685-9550  
Fax: 604-685-9520 kp@jph.gov.my  
High Commission of Malaysia 60 Boteler St.  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8Y7 Canada  
Tel: 613-241-5182/5206/5210  
Fax: 613-241-5214 Telex: 053-03520 WAKOTT  
mwottawa@istar.ca  
Tourism Malaysia 830 Burrard St. Vancouver, BC  
V6Z 1X9 Canada  
Tel: 604-689-8899 Telexfax: 604-689-8804  
mlpb-yvr@msn.com http://tourism.gov.my

## Thailand



## Tips

- The most common greeting is the *wai*. Press palms together, forearms touching chest, elbows down, and bow head slightly. Lower rank or younger people usually *wai* first. Foreigners may be exempt from initiating, but are expected to reciprocate.
  - Thai cuisine is spicy and rich with herbs. Seafood is considered a national specialty. Thai-grown tropical fruits are legendary. Avoid eating raw seafood, raw meat or dairy products.
  - Do not photograph any person or Buddhist image without permission.
  - Do not touch the head or pass anything over the head of a Thai person. Do not cross your legs before elders or supervisors.
  - Tipping is not the usual practice in Thailand, although it is becoming more common. Most hotels and restaurants add a 10% service charge to the bill. Taxi drivers do not require a tip, but the gesture is appreciated.
- "Psst!"** If you'd like to experience a new form of transportation, try the *Tuk Tuk*: a three-wheeled, open air vehicle that comfortably fits two. Fares are negotiable. You may also enjoy a peaceful ride down the Chao Phraya River by taking the River Taxi.

**Population:** 60.6 million  
**Languages:** Thai, English (in major tourist centres and among the upper class)  
**Religions:** Buddhism 95%, Islam 4%, Other (Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Sikh, Brahminism) 1%

**Climate:**  
March–May: hot season  
June–October: rainy season  
November–February: cool season  
Temperature: 17°C–36°C

**Time Difference:** PST + 15 hours

## Travel Information

**Airlines:** (leaving from Vancouver) Cathay Pacific Airways, Japan Airlines, Canadian Airlines

**Visa:** No visa is required for tourists staying less than one month. Business travellers require a business (non-immigrant) visa.

**Health:** Immunizations for cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, polio, rabies and typhoid are recommended. Contact a doctor to determine which applies.

**Currency Exchange:** baht  
C\$1 = 26.01 baht (March 8, 2000)

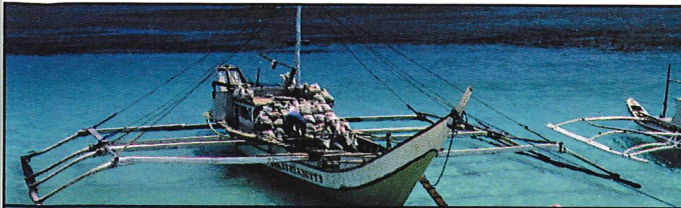
### Canadian Representatives

Canadian Embassy Abdulrahim Bldg.  
990 Thanon Rama IV, 15th Floor Bangrak,  
Bangkok 10500  
PO Box 2090 Bangkok, Thailand 10501  
Tel: 2-636-0540 Fax: 2-636-0565  
bngkk@dfait-maeci.gc.ca  
Chiang Mai Hon. Hon. Consul, N. Wangviwat  
Honorary Canadian Consulate  
151 Super Hwy, Tambon, Tahsala  
Muang Chiang Mai, Thailand 50000  
Tel: 0-53-242-292 Fax: 0-53-850-147

### Thai Representatives

Royal Thai Embassy 180 Island Park Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0A2 Canada  
Tel: 613-722-4444 Fax: 613-722-6624  
Royal Thai Consulate-General  
Consul-General, Chamni Ridhiparsart  
1040 Burrard St. Vancouver, BC  
V6Z 2R9 Canada  
Tel: 604-687-1143 Fax: 604-687-4434  
www.lhaicongenvancouver.org/  
Commercial Section 1180-888 Dunsmuir St.  
Vancouver, BC V6C 3K4  
Tel: 604-687-6400 Fax: 604-683-6775





## Philippines

### Tips

- The proper method to summon someone is a downward wave.
- Fixed eye contact between men is considered an aggressive gesture.
- Great emphasis is placed on polite language, soft and gentle conversation and voice tone.
- When tipping, 10% of the bill is standard practice, including hotel, taxi and restaurant. Bellhops, hairdressers, manicurists, barbers and security guards also expect a tip.

**"Psst!"** Filipinos often use their eyes and hands to convey a variety of messages. Raised eyebrows and a smile indicate a silent "hello" or a "yes" in answer to a question.

**Population:** 77.7 million

**Languages:** Filipino, English, Spanish

**Religions:** Roman Catholicism 83%, Protestantism 9%, Islam 5%, Buddhism and other 3%

**Climate:** March–May: hot and dry

June–October: hot and wet

November–February: cool and dry

**Average Temperature:** 25°C–28°C

**Time Difference:** PST + 16 hours

### Travel Information

**Airlines:** (leaving from Vancouver)

Cathay Pacific Airways, Japan Airlines

**Visa:** Canadians can stay up to 21 days without a visa, but require a passport that is valid for at least six months and a ticket to an onward destination outside the Philippines. To stay up to 59 days, a temporary visa and registration with the Commission on Immigration and Deportation is necessary.

**Health:** There are no immunizations or vaccinations required.

**Currency Exchange:** Philippine Peso  
C\$1=P28.249

### Canadian Representatives

Canadian Embassy of the Philippines

9th & 11th Fl., Allied Bank Centre

6754 Ayala Ave. Makati City,

Manila, Philippines

PO Box 2168 Makati Central Post Office

Makati 1261 Makati City, Philippines

### Philippine Representatives

Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines

#606-130 Albert St. Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 5G4 Canada

Tel: 613-233-1121 Fax: 613-233-4165

ottawa@istar.ca

Philippine Consulate General

#1405-700 West Pender St.

Vancouver, BC

V6C 1G8 Canada

Tel: 604-685-7645 Fax: 604-685-9945

## Singapore



### Tips

- Chewing gum is prohibited in Singapore, along with items such as firecrackers, chewing tobacco and imitation tobacco products. Obscene articles including publications, video tapes, discs and software; and endangered species of wildlife and their by-products are also banned.
- An import permit or authorization is required to bring certain items into the country, including plants; bullet-proof clothing; toy guns, pistols, revolvers and walkie talkies; newspapers, books and magazines; and medicines.
- Singaporeans go barefoot inside their homes, so remove your shoes at the front door.
- Muslims don't eat pork. If entertaining Muslim guests, be sure that no pork, lard or alcohol is used in the cooking. Never bring wine when visiting a Muslim home.
- Littering is treated severely, with fines up to S\$1,000 for first offenders, and for repeat offenders, up to S\$2,000 plus a corrective work order to clean a public place.
- Tipping isn't customary in Singapore. It is prohibited at the airport and discouraged at restaurants that have a 10% service charge, and in hotels (except for bellboys who generally receive S\$1 per bag).

Singaporeans don't tip taxi drivers and become upset when tourists do.

**"Psst!"** Avoid giving the following items as gifts: clocks (called *zhong*, which means funeral), handkerchiefs (associated with tearful partings), and umbrellas (associated with mishaps).

**Population:** 3.5 million

**Languages:** Chinese, Tamil,

English, Malay

**Religions:** Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Taoism

### Climate:

Tropical, hot, humid, rainy

**Average Temperature:** 23°C–32°C

November–January: coolest/wettest months

**Time Difference:** PST + 16 hours

### Travel Information

**Airlines:** (leaving from Vancouver)

Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, Canadian Airlines, Air Canada

**Visa:** Visas are not required for a Canadian passport holder for stays up to 14 days. A 30-day visa is issued at airport upon arrival.

**Health:** No vaccination required.

**Currency Exchange:** Singapore dollar  
C\$1 = S\$1.18

### Canadian Representatives

Canadian High Commission

14th Fl., IBM Towers

80 Anson Rd.

Singapore 079907

PO Box 845, Robinson Rd.

Singapore 901645

Tel: 65-325-3200

Fax: 65-325-3297

### Singaporean Representatives

Consulate General of the

Republic of Singapore

1305-999 West Hastings St.

Vancouver, BC V6C 2W2

Tel: 604-669-5115

Fax: 604-669-5153



# FactSheets departure data for jetstreamers

## Tips

- Handshakes are customary when meeting friends or acquaintances, but nodding your head is appropriate when meeting someone for the first time. You may bow slightly to show respect.
- Business cards are essential. Present and receive them with both hands and read another person's card carefully before putting it away.
- Don't touch members of the opposite sex except to shake hands. Members of the same sex often walk arm in arm or hand in hand—this is a common expression of friendship.
- If invited to a Taiwanese home, take a small gift. It should always be wrapped, but avoid using the colour white. Use both hands to offer or receive a gift and almost never open the gift in front of the giver.
- When travelling by taxi, insist that the driver use the fare meter and have the destination and address written in Mandarin.

**"Psst!"** A "yes" answer to a question may not translate into a positive answer; it may merely indicate that the person heard and understood what was said.

**Population:** 21.9 million

**Languages:** Mandarin, Taiwanese (including Hakka dialects), English

**Religions:** Buddhism/Confucianism/Taoism 93%, Christianity 5%, Other 2%

**Climate:** Cloudy all year  
North: subtropical; South: tropical  
July–September: typhoon season  
Average Temperature:

January 12.9°C, July 33.8°C

Average Rainfall: 2,080.4mm

Time Difference: PST + 16 hours

## Travel Information

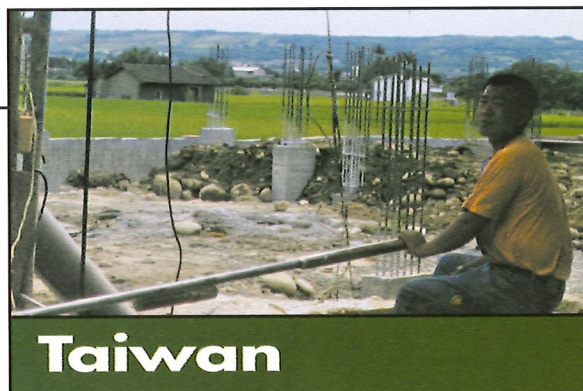
**Airlines:** (leaving from Vancouver)

Air Canada, Canadian Airlines, China Airlines

**Visa:** A travel visa is not required for Canadian citizens visiting for less than 14 days. Travellers must carry a valid passport that will not expire for six months after scheduled departure date from Taiwan, and must also be in possession of a valid return air ticket and seat reservation.

**Health:** Immunization for hepatitis B, gamma globulin for hepatitis A (or active immunization for longer visits), tetanus booster, flu vaccination and anti-malarial drugs are strongly recommended.

**Currency Exchange:** New Taiwan dollar  
C\$1 = NT\$21.114865 (March 7, 2000)



## Taiwan

## Canadian Representatives

Canadian Trade Office in Taipei (CTOT)

13th Floor, 365 Fu Hsing North Rd.

Taipei 10483, Taiwan

Tel: 886-2-547-9500

Fax: 886-2-712-7244

<http://www.ctot.org.tw>

The Representative Office of

British Columbia, Canada

Taiwan Office, Taipei WTC Exhibition Hall

7G03 7F., No.5, Hsin-Yi Rd. Sec. 5, Taipei

PO Box No. 109-857

Taipei World Trade Center

Tel: 886-2-722-0805

Fax: 886-2-723-9364

[inquiry@bcrotaiwan.org](mailto:inquiry@bcrotaiwan.org)

## Tips

- The Japanese way of greeting is bowing. The way one bows depends on the social status of the person being greeted.
- Shaking hands is not popular but is done for foreigners.
- The Japanese family name is followed by *san*, but it is appropriate for foreigners to use Mr. or Mrs.
- The Japanese drive on the left and have the steering wheel on the right. To drive in Japan you need to have a driver's license and an international driving permit.

**"Psst!"** Little tipping or bargaining is done in Japan. If you want to show your appreciation, gift giving is common.

**Population:** 126 million

**Languages:** Japanese, English (taught in schools and used in business)

**Religions:** Shintoism and Buddhism 84%, other (including Christianity) 16%

## Climate:

Southern: subtropical

Central: temperate

Northern: sub-arctic

August–October: typhoons and torrential rains

Average Temperature:

January 10°C to -7°C

July 21°C–30°C

## Time Difference:

PST + 17 hours

## Travel Information

**Airlines:** (leaving

from Vancouver) Canadian Airlines,

Japan Airlines, Air Canada

**Visa:** Visas are needed for work or study purposes, or to take up residence.

Canadian business travellers are required to have a business visa if they will receive compensation for the work carried out in Japan that is not part of the regular salary. Visas are not required for tourist visits up to 90 days. Passports must be valid for six months beyond the date of expected return to Canada.

**Health:** No vaccinations are required for travellers from any country, but if planning to stay longer than six months, a hepatitis B vaccination is recommended. If staying in rural areas of Japan, the Japanese encephalitis shot is advised.

**Currency Exchange:** Yen  
C\$1 = ¥76.17 (February 26, 2000)

## Japan



## Canadian Representatives

Canadian Embassy 3-38 Akasaka 7-Chome

Minato-ku Tokyo 107 Japan

Tel: 011-81-3-3408-2101

Fax: 011-81-3-5412-6303

Canadian Consulate General

12F, Daisan Shoho Bldg.

2-2-3 Nishi-Shinsaibashi Chuo-ku

Osaka 542-0086 Japan

Tel: 011-81-66-212-4910

Fax: 011-81-66-212-4914

## Japanese Representatives

Japanese Consulate General

900-1177 W. Hastings St.

Vancouver, BC V6E 2K9



# The Science of KIMONO

story by Julia Tanner

In our world of zips and snaps, the daily ritual of dressing is usually a quick one. Yet if you were to wear a kimono, dressing would be a lot more complicated.

Although becoming a forgotten art, kimono dressing is still taught in some schools in Japan. It takes three to six months to learn the basics of how to put one on, and up to five years to learn more complicated techniques. The aim is to make the body look as straight or flat as possible, with few creases in the fabric. Straight lines represent a traditional view of feminine beauty in Japan.

The full dress comprises many layers, starting with special underwear: a half-slip, an undershirt, a bra padded above the breasts and a towel tied around the waist to flatten feminine curves. After the underwear is put on, the under kimono is tied just above the waist. Then the front of the top kimono is overlapped, left side over right. All kimonos are the same length and are adjusted by pulling the material up over a sash tied around the waist. The kimono is then secured by another tie called *date-obi*. When the kimono is finally on, then comes the most complicated part: tying the *obi*.

The *obi*, a large sash or tie, is the most important kimono accessory. There are many ways to tie the *obi*, some so complex that they take years to master.

There are many *obis* and knots, and many variations on each knot. The four most common are:

**Bunko Musubi** (Box Tying): The box-bow, which resembles a large bow, was inspired by the way that books are tied when bundled together. Usually used for a summer kimono, it was traditionally worn by single women on special occasions.



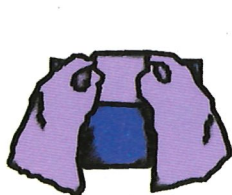
*The Obi: complex yet elegant.*

**Kai no kuchi** (Shell's Mouth): The shell-fish bow, while similar to the way a man would tie his *obi*, is nonetheless strictly for women. Usually worn by older women for casual wear, young girls generally choose not to wear this as it is flat on the back, and not considered pretty.

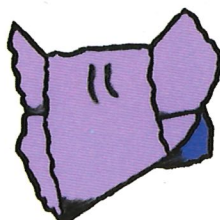
**Oateya** (Arrow): The standing arrow, always worn by brides, is also a favorite of single girls on formal occasions. It accompanies *furisode* (long sleeved kimonos traditionally worn by unmarried women). An exceptionally beautiful and complicated bow, it was inspired by soldiers of old who wore quivers of arrows on their backs.

**Taiko Musubi** (Drum Tying): The drum bow can be worn by anyone, but is favoured by married women on formal occasions. Plain and simple, it looks just like a square box.

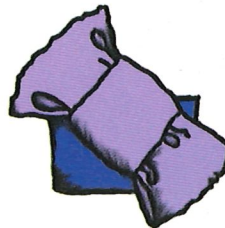
Tomoko Ray Jatusukawa, a Vancouver kimono instructor, shares her thoughts on learning to tie the *obi*: "There is a mountain; first you have to practice a lot, but you can't do it, so you feel very frustrated. But then something changes, and you understand. And it becomes fun." ■



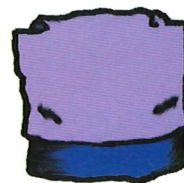
*Bunko Musubi*



*Kai no kuchi*



*Oateya*



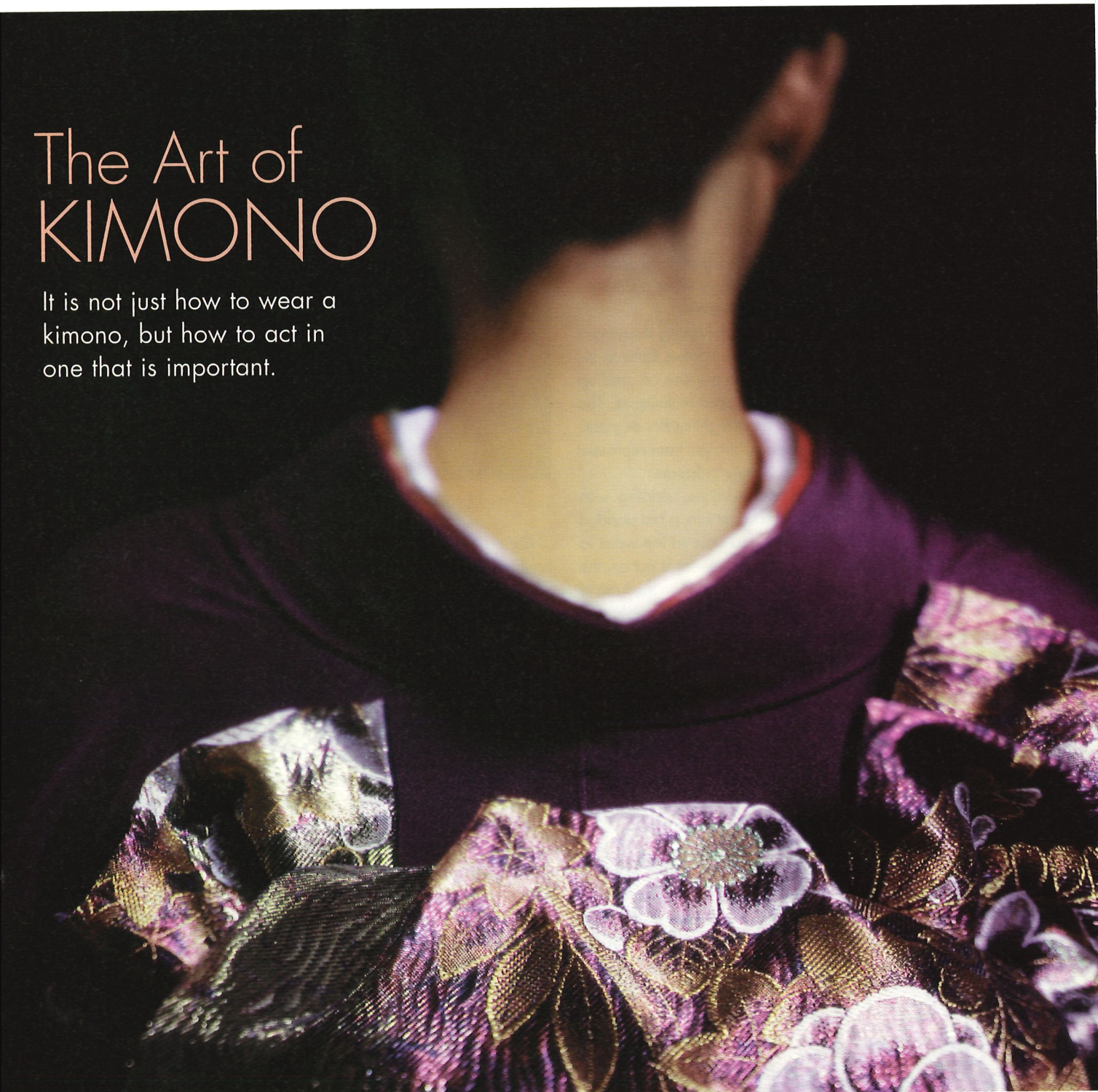
*Taiko Musubi*

photographs by Melanie Fox



# The Art of KIMONO

It is not just how to wear a kimono, but how to act in one that is important.

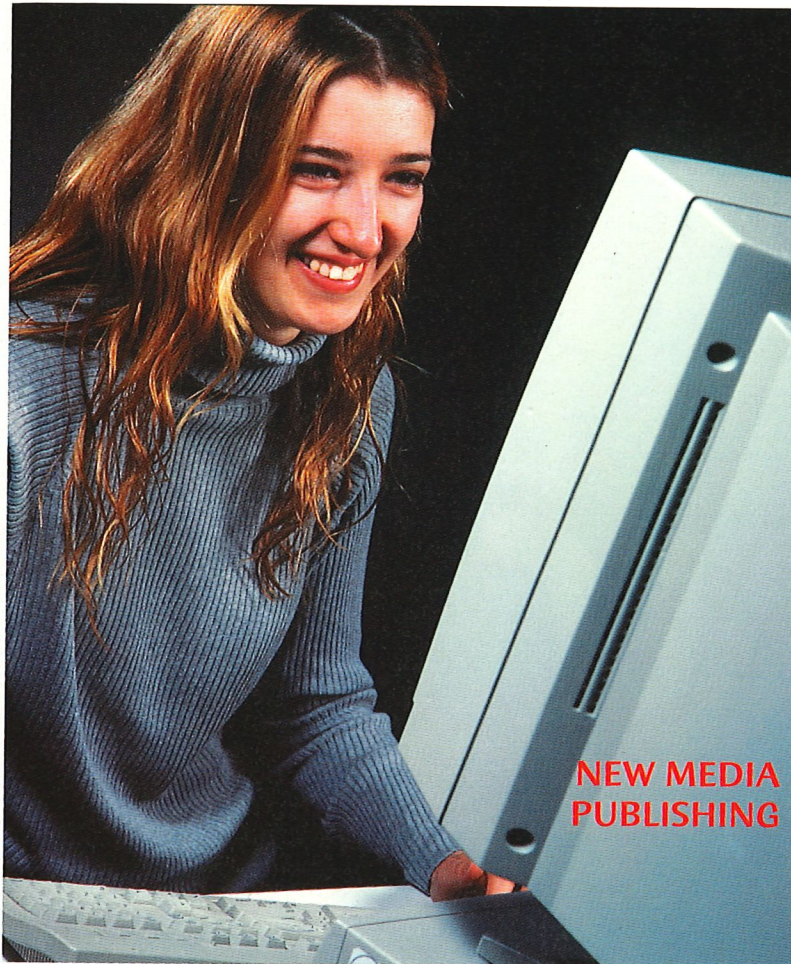


"I walk slowly and my steps become small. This makes me feel like a Japanese lady and I am proud to be this."

—Tomoko Ray Jatusukawa, *Toukaryu Nihon Kimono Shidosha Kyokai* (Japan Kimono Instructor Society)



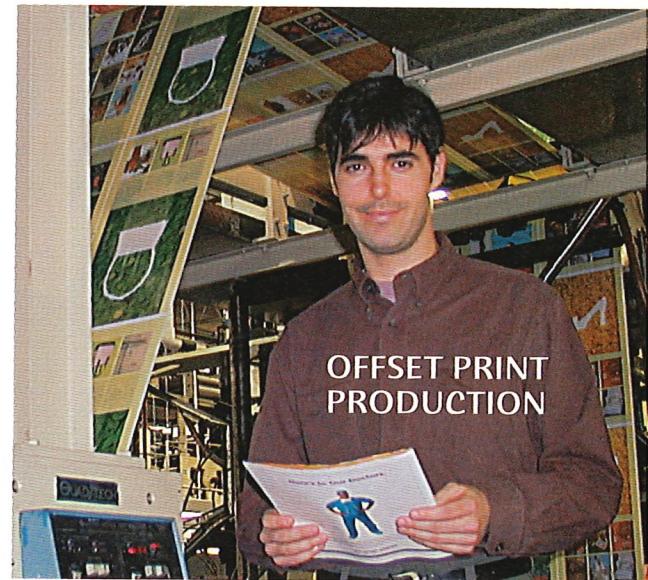
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