



The Asian Pacific Women Connection

The Official Newsletter of Section V: Psychology of Asian Pacific American Women
APA Division 35: Society for the Psychology of Women

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President's Column

My mother was born and raised in the southern province of South Vietnam farm country. She was pursuing a college degree in law when she finally consented to marry my father at the old age (for her time) of twenty four. Shortly after their wedding, my father was drafted into the Southern Vietnamese armed forces. While she was pregnant with me, she advocated tirelessly and successfully to help get my father into a civilian position to ensure the presence of a father for her children. During the chaotic and terrifying end of the Vietnam war, she made the decision to leave her mother, sisters, friends, and relatives to follow my father on a daunting and uncertain journey. Her priority was to ensure a safe and free future for her five children. During our early years as refugees in the United States, she somehow managed to help her children grow and thrive on food stamps and government aid. Even though my mother's ambition was to become a journalist, she became a wife and a mother. There was no doubt she did not fit into the traditional mold of "feminism" as defined in the Western world. But for me, a 1.5 generation Vietnamese American woman, my mother was my very first role model of a feminist. The determination, strength, and love with which she made a life for herself and her children out of a chaotic and oppressive environment showed me that the possibilities are countless when one stands and fights for what is meaningful in one's life.

In her own loving and resilient way, my mother taught me as

a child to confront inequalities, to stand up for my own values and beliefs, and to be aware of my own privileges and issues of social justice. However, it has been an ongoing challenge for me in the process of defining my feminist identity in the face of stereotypes about APIA women and sexism that exists both in Asian and Western cultures. For many Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) women, feminism is often an unnamed and unexplored territory. What is feminism? How does it look for APIA women?

At the 2007 Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) convention, Debra Kawahara and I explored these questions and others with twenty or so APIA sisters during an engaging and dynamic interactive session. At that time, Division 35 (Society for the Psychology of Women or SPW) of the American Psychological Association (APA) has been in existence for almost 35 years. Yet, the voices of APIA women and feminist issues relevant to the lives of APIA women have not been formally brought to the table with our feminist sisters. The energy, commitment, openness, and challenges that connected us during

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Phi Loan Le and her two children

Upcoming Event:

Joint meeting with Division of Women (AAPA) @ APA Convention in San Diego, August 13th, 2010 (11-11:50am); Division 35 Hospitality Suite, Marriott Hotel & Marina.

The purposes of Division 35's Section V for Psychology of Asian Pacific American Women are to:

- Promote the general objectives of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Psychology of Women
- Develop feminist approaches to Asian Pacific American Women
- Develop and advance feminist understanding of the psychology of Asian Pacific American Women

President-Elect's Column



Diane Hayashino

As the incoming president of our section, I want to acknowledge and thank all the members on the Executive Committee! One of the reasons that I became involved in Section V was because of the wonderful people who had tirelessly been working for years on the making of this section, and who were invested in mentoring incoming professionals to ensure that their passion would continue into future generations. As a relatively early career professional, I am thankful for the guidance and support that has been offered to me and our section by those in leadership positions. I will never forget our first formal executive committee meeting during the Multicultural Summit when we all met each other, it was a refreshing experience as we connected in such genuine, warm, and loving ways. We ate, laughed, brainstormed, and ate some more, and I left that meeting truly energized and excited about what was in store for us. Our section will continue to seek the wisdom and insights of our elders as

well as the fresh perspectives of seasoned and early career professionals and students. I also hope that our section can partner on collaborative projects with the other sections in Division 35 to build a strong voice for all women. As our new executive committee forms, I plan to continue to provide the leadership and community that are at the foundation of our section, and that has been instilled by our current president, Phi Loan. From the dedicated work of Khanh Dinh our newsletter editor/publicist, Ivy Ho our Treasurer, Yuying Tsong our secretary, Catherine Hsieh and Dhara Thakar our student representatives, and Susana Lowe our program chair, the visibility and membership of Section V continues to grow. In the next two years, we will continue to reach out to student and early career professionals to become involved in our section and inform us of their interests and needs. We are a diverse group of women from various backgrounds and specialties who hold shared values when it comes to finding ways to increase awareness of API women's strengths, giving voice to our diverse communities' mental health needs, and supporting each other through the process. I hope that you will continue your involvement and share your vision with us!

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that session at the AAPA convention symbolized the spirit, as well as the mission of this newest section of SPWV. We realized that as APIA women, we needed to share our voices and our experiences. We wanted to be heard as "feminists" in our own ways; however that might look for each of us with our intersecting identities as women, as APIA, as heteroexual/lesbian/bi/trans.

I am grateful for the guidance and support of other APIA women (Siony Austria, Jean Chin, Jeannette Hsu, Edna Esnil) who persisted in SPWV and doing the work to keep us at the table over the years. The generosity and experi-

ence of other feminists (Nancy Baker, Martha Banks, and other SPWV EC members) were invaluable as we took the steps necessary to bring our voices forward. Section V, the Psychology of Asian Pacific American women, was formalized as a section of SPWV in August, 2008 as a result of a grassroots effort of our collective resolve.

Since the inception of the section in August 2008, we have accomplished much. Last year, at the 2009 APA convention in Toronto, for the first time in the 35-year history of SPWV, APIA women contributed two programming hours as a formal section of SPWV. At the 2010 APA convention, we will be sponsoring two fantastic

sessions as part of Division 35. We are working with the Division of Women (DoW) within AAPA to collaborate on issues and events that are important to Section V and DoW. I am so fortunate to have a group of dedicated, energetic, and creative women who are passionate about issues relevant to our intersecting identities as we work together on growing our section. Our EC group, Diane Hayashino, Khanh Dinh, Ivy Ho, Susana Lowe, Yuying Tsong, Catherine Hsieh, Dhara Thakar, has been "meeting" on a monthly basis to brainstorm ways for us to secure funding and recruit new members. We are in the process of planning collaborative projects with the Division of Women (DoW) within the Asian American Psychological Asso-

ciation (AAPA). It is exciting to have the opportunity to collaborate on issues and events that reflect the missions of Section V and DoW.

There is much to anticipate for the future of Section V. Though there is a lot of work to do ahead of us, we are excited about moving forward and growing together as we explore APIA feminism. We need your energy and commitment as we advance on this very exciting journey. We want to hear from each of you about your own experience, questions, ideas, and passion for APIA feminist issues. Please feel free to contact me at le_philoan@sac.edu or anyone of us on the EC for more information (www.apa.org/divisions/div35/)

Sharing her Wisdom: Interview with Susana Lowe by Michelle Holmberg

It was growing up experiencing racism, and watching her family's struggle with it as well, that shaped the type of work that is now so important to Dr. Lowe. She says, "I always had this feeling that I wanted to work with people to fight racism, and to empower people of color," which led her to U.C. Berkeley to study psychology as an undergraduate. While attending U.C. Santa Barbara for her Ph.D. in counseling, she had two strong individuals as mentors, Don Atkinson and Sucheng Chan.

Dr. Lowe has worn many hats professionally. She worked for some time as a professor in the Boston College Counseling Psychology program. After a few years she left Boston to return to San Francisco, and worked for the non-profit Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF). With APIAHF she conducted community-based research and studied heart health in underrepresented Asian communities. After working as a clinical practitioner at U.C.

Berkeley for several years, Dr. Lowe eventually moved to Hawaii to teach and start a small, clinical practice.

Currently Dr. Lowe is excited to announce the special issue of Training and Education in Professional Psychology titled *Sharing Wisdom: Ethnic minority supervisor perspectives* (<http://psychnet.apa.org/journals/tep/4/1/1>), which she is the co-editor with Claytie Davis III. She had always hoped that "there would come a time when we could interview people of color about supervision. Most of my peers and I didn't have supervisors of color coming into the field, even though we went into the field to emphasize working with minority populations." The timing for this special issue seemed right for Dr. Lowe, because "it feels like there is a whole generation of young professionals who are ethnic minorities, but also older, career professionals, many of whom are in roles as supervisors and mentors and so on." And so she and Claytie Davis III "invited people to tell their sto-

ries, their lessons learned, theoretical perspectives, conceptual pieces, and research as well. We really tried to get a wide-diversity of respondents."



Susana Lowe

Moving forward on a personal level, Dr. Lowe hopes to "never lose sight of how much I can learn from my elders, and how much I can learn from those younger than me as well. And I say that in total honesty." She points out that although some, like herself, may be in a position of teacher and mentor, that remembering to be open to the lessons and support of others is vital. Reflecting on her background, current work, and what she hopes to see in the future, she says "it can provide a lot of comfort and peace to know that we do not need to carry this struggle alone, that people have different energies, and talents, and gifts, and to trust in that."



From L-R: Ivy Ho, Treasurer; Diane Hayashino, President-Elect; Yuying Tsong, Secretary; Phi Loan Le, President; Edna Esnil, Member; Khanh Dinh, Newsletter Editor/Publicist

I learn to make my mind large, as the universe is large, so that there is room for paradoxes.

-Maxine Hong Kingston

How to Apply for Membership

To apply for membership in Section V and Division 35, please visit: <http://www.apa.org/divisions/div35/Membership/membership.htm>.

Online membership application is also available for APA members at: <http://memforms.apa.org/apa.cli/divapp/>

Call for Nominations (2010-2012)

Section V Executive Committee Officers

- President-Elect
- Secretary
- Newsletter Editor/Publicist
- Student Representative

For more information, please visit the following website:

<http://www.apa.org/divisions/div35/Sections/5/section5.html>