

**Sangam****Unify Through Shared Goals**

By  
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Sangam  
President

Asian Americans, at times, are quick to find distinctions to separate themselves from each other. Specifically, in the South Asian community, recent immigrants will socialize and organize in groups based on the region of origin in South Asia. For example, Sangam recently received a listing of all the names of South Asian organizations in Georgia. There were countless numbers of groups based on a language or a specific state in India or Pakistan. In fact, even specific regions within a particular state had claims to a separate organization.

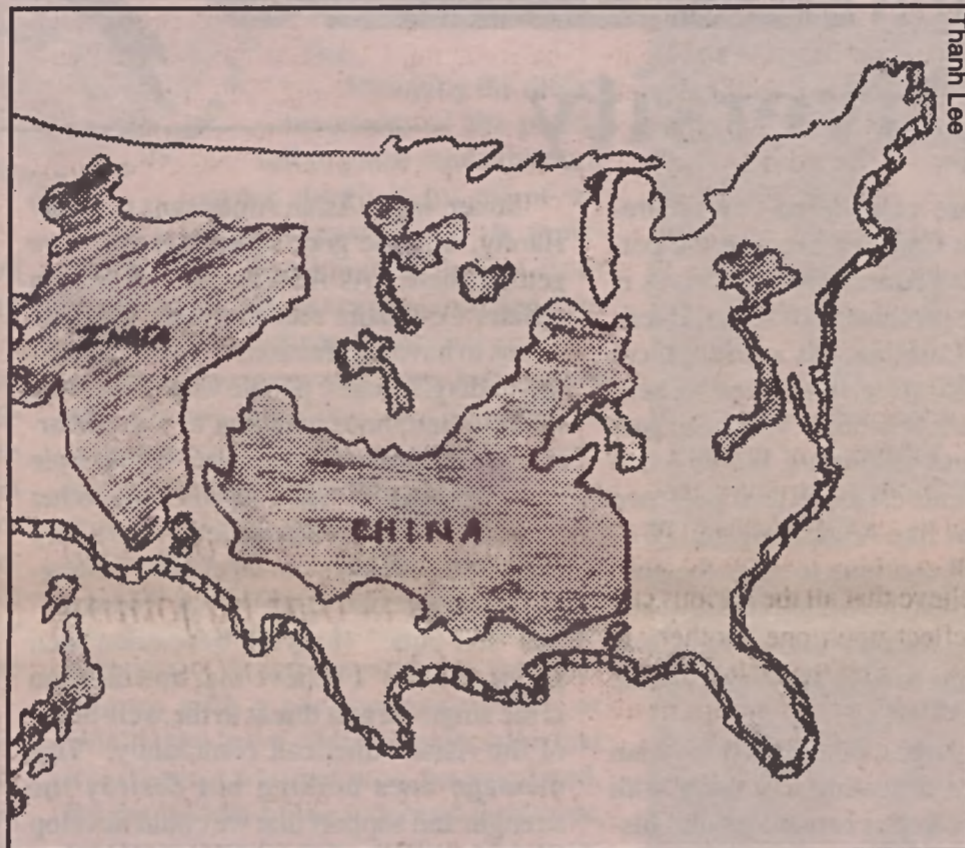
As each state or region in South Asia enjoys its own language, foods, and customs, immigrants will naturally feel most comfortable relating mutually with others from the same region. By organizing into region-specific groups, our parents are creating a niche in the U.S., a place they now call home. It is exactly through this separation into region-specific groups that they are able to maintain their own cultural pride, allowing it to seep into the minds of their children, who then are confident and motivated, in turn, to organize as young adults. It is at this point that we, as Asian American college students, can begin making our mark in U.S. history by establishing friendships and substantial coalitions which cross regional and national boundaries.

Even as a native of New Jersey, whose state university is at times referred to in jest as "Bombay University," I only established relations with individuals from the southern regions of India when I reached UNC. Until coming to college, I only had close contact with North Indians like myself despite the Indian organizations to which my parents belonged and the Indian programs for which my sisters

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and I worked. At UNC, I also have come to befriend Pakistani American students, who represent yet another community from which I had been separated until now.

As South Asians, we have a lot to share, including some degree of real identification with that region. Also, we share seemingly universal South Asian American experiences, whether one was raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina, or in upstate New York. Childhood stories about entertaining South Asian guests, about seeing America for the first time, or about going on long family trips to landmark temples are all resoundingly and comfort-



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ingly similar. Our shared experiences quickly become a first stepping stone towards establishing alliances.

The South Asian American experience is not terribly different from that of other Asian students in general. The experience of leading a dualistic lifestyle with two sets of languages, foods, and ways of thinking exists in the overall Asian American experience. We share the challenges of cultural ignorance and stereotypes. As a minority group, we are quickly growing. Between the years 1990 and 2030, it is predicted that the number of Asians in the U.S. will have increased from 6.9 million to 19.9 million (source: Leon F. Bouvier and Anthony J. Agresta, "The Future Asian Population of the U.S."). In the meantime, we must realize, at the least, that there is a need to increase awareness of Asian American issues through educational and institutional programs to keep America at pace with the changing nature of America. Asian Americans as a whole have the unique opportunity to unify based on these shared goals and experiences, which form a strong platform from which to establish needed alliances. I commend our parents, who have successfully created alliances with one another, region-based or not, in order to formidably meet the challenges of living in a land foreign to them. Taking advantage of the cultural pride we inherit from their efforts, it is now our turn to unite in order to face our challenges as Asian Americans.

**Korean American Students Association****Wanted: More Inclusive ASA**

By Grace Lee,  
KASA Social  
Co-Chair

Recently, it has been brought to my attention that there are some people who are becoming disillusioned about a certain organization on campus. They are concerned that this organization is not succeeding in accomplishing all of its goals, specifically

the goal of "Unifying Our Diversity." Of course, the organization of which I am speaking is the Asian Students Association.

The members of ASA have been actively trying to bring more public attention to their organization. Two of the organization's most publi-

cized events, the Atlantic Coast Asian American Student Union (ACAASU) Conference and "Journey Into Asia," have both been commendable attempts at trying to bring the Asian culture into the spotlight. While focusing on creating a better relationship with non-Asian cultures, the minority groups themselves have forgotten to explore each other's cultures.

Since ASA is an umbrella organization for all the Asian ethnic groups—such as the Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Indians—the organization

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should be the pioneers for a type of coalition which includes members of all of these ethnicities. The problem that arises now is that ASA does not have a membership which includes people from all of the different Asian countries. Instead, the majority of the members of the organization are either Chinese or Taiwanese. One has to ask why ASA only has a limited and seemingly homogeneous group of members.

At the beginning of the school year, ASA always starts off with a plethora of incoming potential members. The problem for this organization is keeping the members. This year, the membership list contained an amazing ninety-some people, but at the last meeting, the number of members who were present only reached thirty-something. Of course, one can say that it is not the fault of ASA that so few people return to the meetings, but the lack of attendance can not be blamed solely on laziness and uninterest. When an organization wants to maintain its members, it must succeed in fulfilling two main criteria. First, it must be capable of inspiring the potential members in a purpose, which in this case is improving relations between Asians and all races. The second criteria seems to be the one with which ASA has the most problem—making people, other than Chinese or Taiwanese, feel welcome.

A number of people with whom I have spoken have mentioned that the present members have not made them feel like they were included. They pointed out the problem of cliques present in ASA and the lack of acceptance by members of the main or popular clique. Cliques exist in many aspects of society, but it should not have such an overbearing presence that it prevents an organization from working as a cohesive force. The problem seems to be obvious to the ones being excluded, but the ones guilty of excluding people seem to be oblivious to the problem. Without active willingness of the executive members of ASA to change the status quo, the problems will remain. Many still want to take part in ASA because they still support the overall purpose of the organization. Unfortunately, many members do end up leaving by the end of the first semester. ASA itself is not a true representation of all of the different ethnic Asian groups. Obviously, it is not succeeding in being an association which includes ALL Asians; therefore, the Asian Students Association should maybe consider a name change in the future... perhaps, to the Taiwanese Students Association.

The best possible situation one can imagine for all the minority groups on campus is if all of them could become more integrated in each other's organizations. An idea which has come up is the formation of a coalition which would include concerned members of ASA, the Korean American Students Association, the Black Students Movement, the Vietnamese Students Association, and Sangam. The individuals interested would meet at least once a month to discuss ways of opening the lines of communication among themselves. It seems as

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