

**Commentary**



**The Women Strike Back: White Day**  
Commentary by Shawn "Shank" Honnold

Since women give gifts to men for Valentine's Day instead of the other way around here in Japan, I thought I had escaped the painful task of picking out a yearly "present that represents my love and affection for that special someone". I was wrong. March 14 brings us in Japan (and those in Korea and Taiwan) White Day, or the day where we show our appreciation for the Valentine's chocolates, neckties, handkerchiefs, or whatever that we received the previous month. Again, storefronts are lined with cookie, chocolate, candy, and flower vendors. Lingerie displays multiply ten-fold. Moreover, traditionally the gift should be white, reducing my odds of scoring a good gift with ease. When I first encountered White Day, I immediately suspected a conspiracy by the confectionary and chocolate industries. My suspicions were in fact true.

White Day was began as Marshmallow Day in 1965, and created by a company that decided to market their reciprocation gifts of marshmallows to men who had received a Valentine's present from their co-worker, friend, girlfriend, or wife. By 1978, the National Confectionary Manufacturer's Association had begun planning a counter attack against their stay-puffed competition. Their pre-planned marketing assault came on March 14th, 1980 when the first full-scale White Day was launched. In the beginning, white chocolates, cakes, and candies were pushed. As time went on, the flower and gift card industries joined the crusade. Now lingerie companies, resorts, restaurants, and whoever else can put together a marketing plan are pushing their products and services under the guise of White Day.

By now you can tell what I think about this cunningly contrived holiday. However, I figured

that not participating in this holiday would bring me more pain than shopping at the crowded Matsuzakaya department store. I wondered if my Japanese male counterparts felt the same. Japan-Guide did a survey that showed only 45% of men celebrate White Day. Of those men who do, 33% give sweets, with 11% giving flowers. Incidentally, a 1996 poll by a Japanese department store showed that women receiving flowers with a nice greeting card. Fifty-five percent of men of men give a gift other than sweets or chocolate. Guys, don't you know you are complicating an otherwise easy gift-giving holiday! Younger people are more likely to give a gift than the older generations (probably because their wives and girlfriends hadn't been expecting a gift each year of their whole lives).

Well, I fall into the younger generation, and am old enough to know that I shouldn't upset the women around me. So now I'm obligated to give a gift to every woman that was kind enough to give me a Valentine's gift: Two co-workers, my girlfriend, my ex, and my colleague's 8 year old daughter. If only I could bring back Marshmallow Day.

**The Enclaves**

*Asian Style en Español*

LIMA, Peru -- Hungry? Tired? After you and the kids have come home from school and work, done their homework, and watched anime on television, why not call your local around-the-corner Chinese food place for delivery? After it's delivered, call the kids in while everything is hot and chow down! If this sounds like a typical Chinese take-out dinner at any big American city like Los Angeles or San Francisco, guess again. This happens in one of the biggest cities in the heart of South America -- namely, Lima, Peru.

Lima is truly a diverse city. Aside from the *mestizo*, native Peruvians, and African Peruvian communities, Lima is home to a century-old Chinese and Japanese community. In Peru, just as in all Latin American countries, people of Asian descent regardless of country of origin are called "*los Chinos*". Often used as a term of endearment or without the oversensitivity of American-style political correctness, many *chinos* and *chinas* do not find the term offensive. It is the same way many Latin Americans use nicknames such as *gorda* (chubby) or *flaco* (thin) among friends and family members.

I interviewed second-generation Chinese Peruvian Manuel Yep, who still speaks some Cantonese, about the livelihood of most Chinese Peruvians there.

"*Negocio generalmente* (commerce generally)," he answered. When asked if Asians had been contributors to Peruvian pop culture, he replied that he has never seen any Asian Peruvians in cinema or music. They do have a strong presence in politics; the most famous example being now-exiled former President Alberto Fujimori. However, while watching television, I had seen Asians depicted as professionally-dressed chefs in a commercial for a dish scouring soap called Ayudin giving them at least some visibility.

Armed with the information Manuel gave me, I went out to the streets of Lima armed with a camera.



Wong is a supermarket chain, much like Ralphs or Acme, owned by a Chinese Peruvian who started off owning a few small corner stores. His enterprise expanded to be the only nationwide Peruvian supermarket chain. Other chains in Peru, such as Plaza Vea and Santa Isabel, are imports from neighboring Chile.



A bus billboard advertising Azumanga Daioh. In Spanish.



Importaciones Hiraoka is an appliance store chain owned by the Japanese Peruvian Hiraoka family. The chain is the Peruvian equivalent of the US' Best Buy.



Chinese food restaurants called chifas are on every corner. They range from large, fancy buildings like these to hole-in-the-wall restaurants containing merely a row of chairs and a few tables.

With this much cultural and ethnic diversity, I interviewed more Lima residents to find out if they were aware of other Asian nationalities in Peru other than the Chinese and Japanese. "For the past couple of years, there have been Vietnamese immigrants settling in Lima as well," Lima native Carmen Saperstein answered. "The community is so young that they are still very little of them here," she added.

-- Paula Angeles

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We'll be making major announcements  
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PM Monthly Congratulates

# Ang Lee

Best Director  
for  
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### *PMX Veterans' and Other Upcoming Events in Los Angeles for March:*

3-17 and 18-06:

Corrinne May @ Evegreen Baptist Church  
- Rosemead

3-22-06:

Lemon Drop Kick @ Anarchy Library - Downey



### *PMMonthly Call For International and Local Writers*

Do you want to write articles for a monthly newsletter on Asian pop culture throughout the world? Topics can be about, but not limited to: Japanese/Korean animation/manga, Asian cinema, internet/console gaming, cosplay, music trends (Japanese/Korean/Chinese/Filipino musicians), fashion trends (Japanese/Korean/Chinese-inspired exported to another country), and Japanese animation events outside of the U.S. If you live in the following cities, we want to hear from you: San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Vancouver, Seoul, Beijing, Hong Kong, Manila, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, London, Berlin, Rome, Paris, and Sydney. All articles must be written in English and cut and pasted into email. Photo attachments are allowed. Please note that the readership age of this newsletter are people aged 14-35. Writers of accepted articles will receive a by-line (credit) in the newsletter. This opportunity is perfect for a journalism student or anyone who just wants to write! If you're interested, please send email with a very short writing sample or clip (link to previously published articles) to [asianamerican@pacificmediaexpo.com](mailto:asianamerican@pacificmediaexpo.com).

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