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Title: "She's Got the Look": Cultural Beauty Ideals from the Asian American Woman's Perspective

Course: AAS346 Section A(Asian American Youth) Fall 2007 -- Soo Ah Kwon

About the Author: I am currently a fifth year senior majoring in Psychology. I am a second generation Indian American who was born and raised in the Chicago suburbs. There, I was lucky to grow up in an environment where I very rarely experienced discrimination or felt "different". This is because my circle of friends, schools, and neighborhood were relatively diverse. I've had about an equal number of Indian and non-Indian friends throughout my life, and still do for that matter. As a result of my situation, I have always been proud and unashamed of looking, acting, and, essentially, being Indian.

I frequently travel to India because my entire extended family lives there. (My parents have actually moved back to India as well.) When I'm there, I cannot help but notice the differences between myself and my female cousins in the way we dress, do our hair, apply makeup, etc. Similarly, I've noticed differences between my beauty practices and preferences and those of my friends of different races. In a way, I have been doing informal, first-hand research for my project my entire life.

Keywords: asian american women beauty style image body

Abstract: This project investigates what Asian American women consider traditional Asian, Asian American, and mainstream American beauty ideals and practices, and which set they follow. The findings are further split between East Asian and South Asian perspectives. Data was gathered through participant observation and interviews of second generation Asian American women. Findings show that many characteristics are universally desirable. Asian American women have beauty ideals similar to the mainstream American standard with some traditional influence. While both groups try to emulate white beauty standards, East Asian Americans appear to make a more conscious effort to do so than South Asian Americans.

Question: Early Question - September 20, 2007

I think that an interesting topic to explore would be that of image

among Asian-American women. I would like to answer the question of what Asian-American females perceive as the stereotypical "perfect woman" in both American and Asian culture, and furthermore, what they personally strive to emulate. The dimensions that I wish to concentrate on are body type, grooming rituals, and fashion sense. I also plan on inquiring about attitudes towards eating disorders and plastic surgery. It will be interesting to see how women of different Asian American ethnicities compare, as well as the effect age of immigration has upon shaping one's image.

Refined Question - October 4, 2007

Trying to gather information about all Asian American groups will probably prove to be quite daunting, so I am going to specify my question to deal with Korean American women. The dialog in class brought up many interesting tidbits that I was previously unaware of and would like to learn more about.

Refined Question - October 24, 2007

I've decided that in order to make my project more interesting and address the heterogeneity among Asian Americans, that I would like to compare the beauty and image ideals of East Asian Americans and South Asian Americans. I plan to concentrate upon second generation individuals. Through my own experiences, I've noticed both similarities and differences between these groups and would like to formally investigate them.

Plan: Initial Plan - October 4, 2007

I plan to gather information for my project in a variety of ways. First, I will visit local Asian salons and gather observational data as well as conduct interviews of the stylists and customers. Second, I plan on attending a Korean social function so that I can take notes on how Korean American women present themselves in a social setting. Finally, I want to hold one on one interviews with a handful of Korean American women. I want my sample to be as diverse as possible, especially in terms of where the women grew up and age of immigration. These women will be my friends, classmates, and/or individuals I find through Korean organizations. Hopefully, the combination of these methods will provide me with a proper perspective and enable me to successfully answer my research question.

Refined Plan - October 24, 2007

For my observation, I am going to attend a party attended by both East Asians and South Asians where I will be able to observe women "looking their best". I feel this will provide insight into what the collective populations perceive as their desired image. For my interviews, I will obviously interview both East Asian American and South Asian American women.

Data (observation): For my observation I decided to observe a party held at Highdive in downtown Champaign. This party was being thrown by various Asian American party promoters for Halloween, so I knew that it would be attended by a diverse group of Asian American University of Illinois students. Also, this event was well suited to my project because I knew that girls would be "dressed to impress" and therefore making an effort to conform to their personal beauty ideals.

When I arrived at Highdive, it was not crowded at all and there was no line. I took a quick lap around the bar and saw that it was pretty dead. There were a few small groups of people sitting at the bar or at tables, but it was not crowded enough that I could observe them without appearing like an extremely creepy loner. I decided the best approach would be to sit at the booth closest to the entrance and size people up as they had their IDs checked.

Things slowly began to pick up, and I started to notice some general trends. The first thing that jumped out at me was that an overwhelming majority of the women at the party had long, straight, black hair. Secondly, black seemed to be the most popular color for tops among both groups. The next thing I noticed was that most of the women at the party were relatively short. Even with high heels, few were taller than 5'6". The girls who were taller than average wore flats. Yet some of the short girls opted for flats as well, leading me to believe being too short isn't an issue but being too tall is. These observations held true for both East Asians and South Asians.

Next, I moved to the woman's bathroom. I figured this would be a better place to observe since it would be an exclusively female environment, the lighting would be better, and I would not feel so conspicuous. As I watched girls of all ethnicities primping in the mirror, I noticed that eyeliner was easily the favorite makeup product for both groups. If nothing else, a girl had some eyeliner on. In general, it appeared that South Asians used more products and they went for a less subtle look. However, there were some

who seemed to barely use any makeup. Interestingly enough, these girls were also dressed more conservatively than most.

I did the rest of my observations walking around the bar. Now it was more crowded and rowdy so I could do so easily. Clothing was pretty standard among the female attendees. The typical outfit consisted of a cute “going out top” and form-fitting jeans. I didn't notice much variance between groups; it seemed everyone had similar, fashionable style. However, I did notice some South Asian girls dressed “fobbily” while I did not notice any East Asian girls who would seem unfashionable by American standards. Most people were dressed pretty generically, but I saw more flashes of individual style from East Asian women. This was not surprising to me based on my previous observations of East Asian girls around campus. Another thing I noticed regarding clothes, was that body type played a role in clothing choice. South Asian girls are generally more curvy, so it was more likely to see them in tops showing off their bustlines and waistlines. East Asian girls are more likely to be petite and toned, so it was more likely to see them in midriff baring tops or skinny jeans.

I had noticed many of these things before, but had never paid attention so closely. I feel my formal observation reinforces many things I've observed casually over the years. I'm interested to delve further into this topic and see what pans out from it.

Data (interview): South Asian Interview:

I interviewed “Kaya”, a second generation Indian American. Kaya is a 22 years old and a fifth year senior in Advertising at U of I. She was born and raised in a predominantly white, middle class suburb of Chicago, so the majority of her childhood friends were white. In college, she developed close friendships mainly with Indian Americans. She has traveled to India once in eighth grade, but has not been back there since.

I asked Kaya to describe the perfect woman to me by traditional Indian standards. She said that fair skin is a major factor in judging beauty. Fairer skin is seen to be more beautiful and desirable. Kaya continued to say that the perfect Indian woman is slim but still curvaceous. She will have “a flat stomach, but also an hourglass figure and B...maybe C cup breasts”. She remarked that many Indian girls are generally too skinny to embody this figure. The traditional Indian beauty has long, straight, shiny black hair. The only variation would be a reddish tint which is obtained using henna paste. Other than this, traditional Indian

women don't do anything unnatural or drastic to their hair. Finally, she stated, in Indian beauty, large expressive eyes are very desirable, and it's even more beautiful if eyes are light. For this reason, most Indian women use "kajal" or kohl eyeliner daily to enhance their eyes. This tends to be, she continued, all the makeup they will wear, but when they are brides they wear very heavy makeup. In Kaya's opinion, Aishwarya Rai is a good example of Indian beauty ideals.

I then asked Kaya to elaborate on her perception of American beauty ideals. She said that it would be represented by a Caucasian look, typically straight blonde hair and blue eyes. She said that American beauty also values big eyes and a small nose. Kaya continued that an American beauty will be "tall and thin, have big boobs, and a toned body...a little bit of ass but not too much, and a nice tan" She said that a good embodiment of American beauty would be Jessica Simpson.

Next, I had Kaya tell me what she felt South Asian American women saw as beautiful. She stated they placed less emphasis on skin color than traditional Indian women; some even went tanning. Also, their ideal body type was closer to the American standards. In comparison to traditional Indian women, Indian American women experiment more with their hair in terms of both cut and color. Similarly, they wear more makeup. Kaya wears subtle lip, skin, and eye makeup daily, and wears more when she goes out at night. She feels that white American girls still wear more makeup than Indian Americans though. One theory she has is that this could be due to the difficulty many Indian American women face in finding flattering shades. Often only high end brands carry these colors so expense can become an issue. I asked Kaya to choose someone she, an Indian American woman, found to embody true beauty and she picked Catherine Zeta Jones.

Noticing a lot of similarities between the beauty standards of these three populations, I asked Kaya's opinion on the Western influence upon both Indian and Indian American beauty ideals. Imperialism definitely reinforced and emphasized the traditional ideals, but she also feels they existed to a degree prior to the British presence. For Indian Americans, she says that the influence comes mainly from white friends and wanting to fit in. When she was younger, Kaya dyed her hair and wore colored contacts. Now she has adopted a more traditional look with black hair and brown eyes. She says this is based on her achieving more of an Indian identity in college as well as realizing what

looks best on her.

I finished up the interview by asking Kaya about a variety of topics. She feels that plastic surgery is not prevalent among Indian Americans, and that it might even be considered somewhat of a taboo. On a somewhat related note, she does not feel that many Indian Americans women have eating disorders. This is surprising because earlier in the interview she made a quip about how traditional Indian relatives often have no qualms of telling you you've gained weight. Kaya rationalized that at the same time they're also busy force feeding you. In terms of clothing, she says that Indian Americans dress more conservatively than other Americans. Kaya cites parental influences as the cause for this as modesty is an inherent Indian value. I asked her what a typical Indian American girl wears. She responded, "They wear a lot of black!" We both giggled and she continued, "There's not really an Indian-American style. Indian Americans tend to emulate other groups, whoever they identify with most." I then asked Kaya what beauty rituals she engages in. Apart from painting her toe nails and daily makeup, they were all related to hair, whether it was body hair removal or taking care of the hair on her head. Kaya agreed with my conclusion that hair removal is probably the biggest beauty concern for Indian American women.

This interview was easy to conduct as Kaya is one of my closest friends. I feel that in my case, our familiarity is more helpful to the interview than hindering as it would be with other topics. This is because girls talk about beauty with their girlfriends all the time, so the interview was basically a slightly structured version of a conversation we might have over dinner. But best of all: no awkwardness!!

East Asian Interview:

I interviewed "Melissa", a second generation Chinese American. Melissa is 20 years old and is a junior majoring in Finance and Entrepreneurship. Interestingly, Melissa grew up in Northern California where she associated mostly with white kids until high school. During high school her social circle was predominantly Asian due to their large presence in both the clubs she was involved in and her AP classes. Melissa developed friendships mainly with other Asians her freshman year at U of I, but she soon found them to be different than her Asian friends in California. As a result, Melissa has begun to socialize mostly with

Caucasians once again.

The first thing that Melissa mentioned when asked to describe what is traditionally beautiful for East Asians was that women wanted to be "really, really skinny". I asked her if she thought eating disorders were prevalent, and she responded that "It's mostly just extreme dieting." She said that Asian women strive to be as petite as possible because they don't tend to be curvy naturally. Another traditionally valued trait is very fair, clear skin. Melissa remarked, "In Asia they really like the doll look, so porcelain looking skin is considered beautiful. Also, they'll wear lots of makeup, like cake on the mascara, to achieve that look." In terms of hair, Melissa said that natural straight, black hair is the ideal, though some younger women get perms and dye their hair nowadays. Melissa then spoke about "the whole eye thing". She told me that big, wide eyes were probably the most desired facial feature. I asked her if she knew anything about eyelid surgery, and she said that it's definitely common in Asia but in some countries more than others. She said that, "Taiwanese people don't get it as much, some Chinese do, but it's huge in Korea." She also mentioned nose reductions were popular there as well. The celebrity embodiments of traditional Asian beauty were Zhang Ziyi and Ayumi Hamasaki.

I continued on to Melissa's opinion on mainstream American beauty. She said that the ideal American woman would be portrayed as "tall, blonde, tan, curvy, with full lips, and big eyes". She chose Angelina Jolie as her celebrity representation of mainstream American beauty.

Then I asked Melissa to tell me what she thought the East Asian American women beauty ideal was. She started off by saying "a lot of it is based on white culture". She says that many Asian American girls like to be tan. They also frequently highlight their hair; blonde and light brown are the popular choices. Melissa also mentioned Asian American girls like curves, but they do not often resort to plastic surgery. She commented that eyelid surgery and nose jobs are less common among Asians in America than in Asia. She remarked that Asian American women are "less hardcore" about beauty than Asian women. "Here," she said, "you don't feel as obligated to look a certain way. And many Asian American girls choose to go for a natural look, not as made up and stuff." Melissa had to think a bit before naming a celebrity who fit the Asian American look. She said the look that an Asian American girl wants to achieve depends a lot on the individual. Finally she decided upon Maggie Q because she and many of

her Asian American friends think she's gorgeous. She noted that Maggie is half Caucasian which fits with the idea that Asian American women desire a more mainstream American look.

This was a great point to transition into my questions about Western influence on Asian women's beauty ideals. Melissa reiterated that there is definitely a large impact on Asian American women. She said that growing up in America "you start to measure yourself by White beauty standards, and sometimes you feel inadequate because you know you can never fully achieve it. But even so, you try to fit it as much as possible." On the other hand, Melissa feels that Western beauty standards did not have that large of an impact on the traditional Asian beauty ideal because "a lot of it has been that way for centuries." She thinks that Asians value big eyes and fair skin because it is less common, not because they are Caucasian traits.

Finally, I asked Melissa to give me her opinions regarding clothing and beauty rituals for the three groups. She told me that, in her experience, Asian Americans wear a lot of Aeropostale, Hollister, and Abercrombie and Fitch. She acknowledged that these are generally the "white-washed Asian Americans" and said that some Asian American women dress more "slutty or ghetto". Melissa feels there is no specific Asian American style so it's equivalent to mainstream American style. On the other hand, she feels that according to traditional Asian ideals, women wear more conservative clothing. Also, Asians prefer designer labels. In terms of beauty rituals, she feels that Asians are relatively low maintenance compared to many ethnic groups. This is because most have "good skin, straight hair, and aren't overweight". She added that body hair isn't much of an issue for them either. Melissa says that she barely wears makeup and occasionally gets French manicures but does not do much else.

Analysis: I am still in the process of gathering data and information on my topic but I have been able to draw some general conclusions thus far.

Both South Asians and East Asians use the term FOB to describe recent immigrants who have not yet assimilated to American culture. One of the primary identifiers of a FOB is their lack of style. Asian American informants described FOBs as "wearing

funny clothes, all outdated and they don't match" (Pyke and Dang, 158). While doing my observation, I was able to pick out people who were dressed like FOBs. I did not verify my suspicions, but these people starkly contrasted with the second generation party goers. Also, I'm coming to find that regardless of how Asian Americans label their personal style and look, they always strive to avoid looking "fobby".

Another assessment that I have made is that the fashion varies between "Asian scenes". Maira's article speaks of how South Asians adopt hip hop style. One of her informants, Sujata, describes the "Upper East Side homeboy" who wears "huge pants, and then, like, a nice button-down shirt" (Maira, 6) The same article talks about the dichotomy between Indian American girls' style and how on one hand some dress like "hoochy mamas" and are Americanized, and on the other some dress conservatively and are traditional (Maira, 12) In our readings, similar findings were listed for East Asians. Hung's article about Lil' Cloudy describes him walking down the hallway with "baggy jeans sagging, T-shirt hanging off his slight frame like drapes from a curtain rod" (Hung, 1). While this article does not explicitly speak of women's fashion, it does address the fact that female Asians are adopting "gangsta" practices. The overall consensus of our readings has been that Asian Americans gravitate towards hip hop style, but my personal findings disagree. I encountered very few Asians with a hip hop look, and my informants did not describe it as what typical Asians wear. Instead, the typical look is the mainstream white look. Based on Maira's article, the girls I saw at the party would probably fall closer to hoochy mama than traditional, but they were generally dressed classily. Regardless their looks were more white than black. I feel that my results may be due to this being a higher education environment; the hip hop style is often equated with low academic performance.

Finally, one factor that I am uncovering in Asian beauty ideals is that of Western influence. I am still in the process of determining whether the standards are based completely on Western standards or whether they existed prior to exposure to Western culture. From my interview, I learned that different types of Western influence existed for traditional and Indian American beauty ideals. Lee's article talks about a Korean American girl saying that whites could distinguish Koreans because they looked more similar to whites than other Asians. She elaborated, "Koreans have better-looking faces than other Asians...You know, more American looking" (Lee, 29). This shows how to many Asian American women achieving a "white look" is

synonymous with being beautiful. Something that I've noticed is that East Asians are more blunt about this than South Asians. I am interested to do more research as to why this might be. One of my personal theories is that South Asians and whites have more similar facial features and body types than East Asians and whites. Therefore there is already some overlap in beauty standards making South Asian women likely to claim they are striving to maintain their own beauty ideals. However, East Asians must go through more drastic changes to look white so they are not subtle about it. Also, due to the long British presence in India it is safe to say that Western influence slowly permeated Indian culture thereby becoming a part of it to an extent. Most East Asians seem to want to look Westernized in attempt to fit in.

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Research Proposal: The college years are an integral time for the development of one's personal identity. For many, outward appearance is used as a manifestation of many aspects of their image; different populations embrace different looks.

I would like to research what second generation Asian American women perceive as ideal beauty as well as what beauty practices they undergo to achieve it. My primary question is, "Do second generation women strive to emulate stereotypically western/American or traditional/Asian beauty?" I want to see if the physical image they wish to display parallels their mental self-image. Within American style there are many different images that can be portrayed, so it is important to note not only why a woman rejects tradition, but also why she embraces

the specific western look she has chosen.

As a further layer of analysis, I would like to compare the perceptions of East Asian and South Asian women. I feel that East Asians and South Asians have very different physical traits, so it is logical to assume their views on beauty would be very different as well. I want to discover what aspects of beauty remain constant between the two groups and which differ. Furthermore, I want to learn about the level of western influence on the two types of Asian beauty. Are the traditional ideals truly traditional or have globalization and imperialism influenced them? Similarly, how much does assimilation and interaction with White-Americans influence the beauty ideals of Asian American women?

My project has been inspired most heavily by Anona Whitley's EUI project entitled "Korean American Aesthetics and Style". My primary research questions stem largely from her findings, which noted a difference in style between groups that identified themselves as different "degrees of Korean". Some of the interviews touched briefly on varying body type ideals. This intrigued me and motivated me to create a project similar to Whitley's but with a larger focus on physical beauty. I then decided to broaden my scope to include all types of Asian Americans in order to show the heterogeneity within the population. Finally, I wanted to research women only because I feel that Asian women are largely more concerned with their physical appearance than men. (This is a potential future research project in itself.)

The second EUI project I found insightful was "Class Differentiation in the University of Illinois and Parkland College". It highlighted the large role that image plays in determining where one stands in the social hierarchy at college. This made me wonder if second generation Asian American women decide what look to embody in an effort to achieve higher social standing. It will be interesting to research whether traditional or western style is associated with higher socioeconomic status. In this project, expensive things were seen as "en vogue" making more expensive looks the ideal. I wonder if this is the main factor within a solely Asian population as well. According to some of the readings, such as Pyke and Dang's article, it was implied that Asian Americans strive to look assimilated. A variety of western styles were embraced, always in avoidance of dressing like a "FOB". FOBs, being "fresh off the boat" have yet to learn about American fashion and naturally dress more traditionally. This illustrates that mainstream as opposed to expensive is equated with "coolness".

Both Maira's and Hung's articles discuss how Asian American youth are adopting the "ghetto look" if they want to abandon traditional

ways of dressing. However my research has shown that Asian American youth tend to dress more akin to mainstream style. The general look is more preppy and trendy. Interestingly, Maira's and Hung's research are based on the East and West Coasts respectively, while my research takes place in the Midwest. Another difference is that Maira and Hung both researched in a more urban setting than Champaign. Even though my interviewees did not grow up in Champaign, they were raised in a suburban setting. As my research progresses, I will be able to assess what factors determine which sort of western style is favored by an Asian American woman.

I feel that individual interviews are the best method to go about my research. An extended conversation is the easiest way to gain the information I need in an unforced manner. Also, I feel that observations have the possibility to be misleading regarding this topic, and that I would need each individual's personal opinion to put my observation of them into context. Surveys would not yield the level of detail I need. Since the topic of my research deals with self-image and potential insecurities, it is likely too personal for a focus group.

To continue my research I would conduct interviews with more participants throughout the semester. I would strive to analyze as diverse a population as possible. Not only would I look to find women from different ethnic sub-groups, but I would also try to have a range of exposure to other Asian Americans. Additionally, as I gain more knowledge, I feel that follow up interviews would be helpful to address new questions and obtain elaborations relevant to my research.

The interviews that I have conducted thus far have been relatively informal because I previously knew my interviewees. I feel that this was a helpful aspect to my research because my participants were immediately comfortable with me and volunteered information very willingly. However, due to the informality, the order and variety of topics that came up varied because I was following the natural flow of the conversation as opposed to a script. I do not feel this has any effect because my primary questions were addressed in all interviews.

At this point, I have not gathered enough information to devise an accurate, encompassing answer to my research questions. Still, I have found that in the opinion of both East Asian American and South Asian American women, they possess a much more diverse idea of beauty in comparison to their traditional counterparts. The ideal look they create from themselves tends to be a combination of traditional and western traits. Eyes are the feature of most concern for by East Asians, and South Asians seem to be most preoccupied with hair, whether it's on their head, face, or body. Another point I noted was that while the

ideal traditional East Asian and South Asian body types were rather different, the second generation women from each group had a very similar body type ideal. This matched most closely with what they thought the mainstream American body type was. I also got the impression that East Asian women were more likely to perform drastic changes to their appearances.

My findings about western influence are somewhat ambiguous. It is unclear how, when, and how much influence western beauty standards have influenced traditional beauty standards in both East and South Asian cultures, but interviewees from both groups acknowledged it existed. As far as western influence upon themselves, it was reported that growing up beauty and style was based on their friends and wanting to fit in. However, a larger proportion of white friends does not seem to result in too different of a final result leading me to believe that socioeconomic factors may play a larger role. A general consensus is that there is no particular Asian American look, but rather that Asian Americans emulate the image they are most accustomed to seeing. They dress "western" instead of "traditional" to demonstrate their full assimilation.

All in all, I will be able to elaborate upon and further understand my research as I make more progress with it. It is crucial for me to conduct more interviews in order to have a broader view of my topic.

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EUI Links: Exploring EUI Links - September 19, 2007

One of the papers that interested me was "Korean American Aesthetics and Style" by Anona Whitley. The questions that she addressed in her project were "How does a particular "style" distinguish the Other?" and "How is style informed by pop culture (Korean drama), class and gender?" Anona conducted her research by interviewing individuals she knew from class and work. She interviewed people who identified as Korean, Korean-American, and 1.5 generation in order to get a variety of perspectives. While not having any direct implications for the University, the findings provide insight into the interactions between a community (those of Korean ethnicity) that is well represented on campus.

This paper grabbed my attention because I often muse about how Asians have awesome, distinctive style as I pass them on the street. However, I never realized that there was a such a difference among Asian groups. I also found it interesting that Koreans consider themselves more materialistic and superficial than other communities. Material status symbols, clothing included, appear to be important to Koreans both in America and Korea.

EUI Links - November 8, 2007

The project "Class Differentiation in the University of Illinois and Parkland College" contained some discussion of how fashion is a marker of class. While dealing with the general student body as opposed to Asian American students, it still brought up some findings that I have noticed in my own observations. Informants in the Class Differentiation project spoke of how certain groups of students have trademark items of clothing and brand names. Generally speaking these groups are the upper class students. Poorer students often try to emulate the upper class look by buying fake designer goods and knock-offs. I feel that this parallels the actions of FOBs and second generation students. In the social hierarchy, second generation students are generally perceived as higher. Therefore, FOB students want to dress and style themselves based on the second generation students' look in order to be associated with the group by society.

Jennifer Norberg's project "Class and the consumption of status symbols on the U of I campus" communicated the same message.

I feel that the Anona Whitley's project which I used for my first EUI links assignment relates most closely with my project. The interviews that she did contain insights similar to those that I have gathered. For example, one informant describes how she, a Korean American, thinks a good body type is curvy and proportional but traditional Korean girls prefer to be extremely skinny. This supports my findings that second generation Asian Americans are adopting the mainstream beauty ideals. Also, it is noted that there is a distinct difference in style between Koreans and Korean-Americans, and even differences between subgroups. This is something I've found to be true as well. Finally, another informant made the comment that there is no such thing as Korean American style. This reminded me of the comment made in my interview that there is not really a discernible Indian American style.

Reflect: I thought that the EUI project was a relevant supplement to the topics we covered in class; I especially liked that we were able to formulate our research questions with few restrictions. I think that moodle was set up very well and allowed us to easily document our research in an organized fashion. Also, the spacing of the assignments kept the projects from becoming overwhelming. By the end of it, I looked over everything I had done and was amazed that I had done so much with so little stress.

Prior to this, I have conducted a similar research project in another AAS class (AAS 396: Asian American Families). I performed a number of interviews, observations, and outside research. The difference was that, in this case, my research culminated in a 12 page paper. Also, it was not a semester long thing; it was more of a final project. I liked the structure of AAS 346 much more. AAS 396 was not a part of EUI, probably because the main topic of families does not tie specifically to the university. However, we were able to choose our own research topics. My topic, Asian Americans in Greek Organizations, would have been a fitting addition to the EUI archives. I think that perhaps the EUI should be publicized to the entire student body, and that the opportunity to include one's research should be made available to everyone. None of my friends had heard of EUI before, and when I told them more about it and the class, they seemed interested.

Finally I think that the conference is a unique aspect of EUI. I thought the experience was a good one, and I wish that more people were invited to attend and participate. I hope that along with the program, the conference grows as well.

Recommendations: Through my research I was made aware of some issues among Asian American women that I had not previously given much thought to.

First, I think that the extreme dieting described by Melissa is akin to anorexia. I think that the model minority myth extends farther than the classroom and that society does not see Asians as susceptible to eating disorders. This is compounded by the fact that Asians are smaller made than other ethnic groups. Because of the perception that Asians are naturally slim, help and education about eating disorders may not be targeted towards Asian women even though it appears to be an issue. The University should make sure that the resources it has for dealing with and combating eating disorders, and body image issues in general, are equipped for and advertised to Asian students.

Second, my research has shown me how one's identity is manifested in their physical appearance. I think that many Asian American women strive to achieve mainstream American beauty ideals which are sometimes unattainable. I feel that it would be beneficial for the University to have workshops and programs for all women, not just Asians, about self-acceptance and appreciating the diversity of what is considered beautiful.