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Critique by Helen MacLam

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Masayuki Sato's article *Concept of Shame and the Mental Health of Pacific Asian Americans* serves the vital function of raising issues as the necessary first step in seeking answers. Sato has convincingly related some attributes of Pacific Asian Americans (eg., high scholastic achievement, low utilization of mental health services and underemployment) to the need to avoid shame or "save face."

However, reading his article is like eating delicious *hors-d'oeuvres* which tantalize the appetite without satisfying. I wish he had dealt more specifically with some of the implications of his statements. For example, what are the psychological and emotional costs to PAAs of high achievement and underemployment? Is the suicide rate or rate of psychosomatic illness higher for people in cultures which employ shame as a socializing/behavior controlling technique? Or is this an unknown factor because of their reluctance to seek treatment? How have providers of mental health services managed, if at all, to overcome the "shame barrier"? What kind of counseling have they used?

Perhaps a key question is whether or not there exists historically in PAA cultures any rituals or processes whereby one who has brought shame upon his group may be expiated. If there are such processes, can these be somehow incorporated in a contemporary healing setting, whether that be clinic or church?

Sato has mentioned the need for further research. Perhaps the results of such research will suggest solutions consistent with the purpose of *Explorations*.

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