



## Review of the Month

### Lend with Care



Carmen Mercedes is a single mother with three daughters and she lives with her family on the outskirts of the city of Loja in southern Ecuador.

Carmen is a baker and she makes and sells bread, biscuits and other items. When they are not studying, her daughters help her. She also has one employee. She sells to local customers as well as to those in surrounding small towns. She works from her home which she rents.

Carmen established her business around 10 years ago with an initial capital investment of \$450 which she used to buy an oven. She estimates that her monthly production has increased tenfold to around 5,000 pieces per month. It is a good business and she reckons that she can make a profit of around \$950 per month on average. Carmen requested a loan to purchase a new industrial oven which is much larger and can accommodate more items. Any remaining money will be used as working capital for bulk ingredients such as sugar, salt and flour.

## Asian Heritage Month 18<sup>th</sup> July – 17<sup>th</sup> August

South Asian Heritage Month exists to commemorate, mark and celebrate South Asian history and culture, as well as to better understand the diverse heritage that continues to link the UK and South Asia. It is a recent innovation and was launched in the House of Commons in July 2019. This year marks the second South Asian Heritage Month.



To celebrate, the British Council, Glasgow Life, Manchester Museum and young people have curated a programme of activity involving artists and speakers from the UK and South Asia. Programme themes have been selected by young people and include language, diaspora and identity, alongside a focus on music, literature and fashion. Through a series of discussions, workshops and performances, South Asian Heritage Month is connecting speakers, artists and young people across the UK and South Asia - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives. Many of them remain part of the Commonwealth with close ties to each other and the UK. The heritage of these

nations is varied and their relationship with the UK complex but the relationship is ongoing.

## Influential Asian Women through the years

*Extracted from Time Magazine*

**1937: Soong Mei-ling** — In 1937, Soong became the second woman ever to grace the Time cover under the heading “Man and Wife of the Year” alongside her husband, Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek. She was pivotal to gathering support for China’s war against Japan and in 1943 she became the first Chinese national and only the second woman to address both houses of the U.S. Congress.

**1945: Chien-Shiung Wu** — Born in China’s Jiangsu province in 1912, in 1936 she left to pursue a PhD in the United States. At the University of California, Berkeley, she excelled but after graduation she joined the faculty of Smith College in Massachusetts where she was limited to teaching. Frustrated, she looked elsewhere and landed a job at Princeton. In 1944, she joined one of the Manhattan Project’s labs operating at Columbia University. She was credited with solving a problem that had bedeviled Enrico Fermi, and as Time notes, “she helped develop the method for separating non-fissionable uranium 238 from fissionable U-235—the bomb’s key fuel.”

**1947: Amrit Kaur** — Kaur was appointed India's first Health Minister in 1947 after a lifetime as an activist agitating for Indian independence. Born into



a princely family, Kaur attended Oxford University but upon returning to India she became enraptured by the

independence movement. She was arrested and jailed several times over the course of the years, but persisted in campaigning for independence, women's education, suffrage and for an end to child marriage. As Time summarized, "In leaving her life of luxury, Kaur not only helped build lasting democratic institutions, she also inspired generations to fight for the marginalized."

**1972: Patsy Takemoto**

**Mink** — Mink, a third generation Japanese American, became the first woman of colour and first Asian-American elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. She served as Hawaii's representative for 12 terms. The crowning glory of her government service was her co-authorship of the Title IX Amendment of the Higher Education Act which Time writes "has been used both to ensure that female athletes are given equal opportunities in sports and to protect students and staff from sexual assault and harassment." Mink's grandparents arrived in Hawaii from the Empire of Japan in the late 19th century..

**1976: Indira Gandhi** — The daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister,

Indira Gandhi was first, Time writes, "jeered at as a 'dumb doll'" by those who thought they could use her as a puppet.



But Gandhi wasn't anyone's puppet. She would go on, as

India's to-date only female prime minister, to centralize power and lead India into a war with Pakistan in support of Bangladesh's 1971 bid for independence. In October 1984 she was assassinated, leaving behind a powerful, complex and controversial legacy.

**1979: Tu Youyou** — Tu, born in Ningbo in 1930, was inspired to pursue a career in medical research after surviving tuberculosis in high school. By 1969 she was head of a Project 523 research group. Project 523 was a secret initiative established by the Chinese leadership to pursue a treatment for malaria. Tu turned to traditional Chinese medicine, screening ancient recipes for effectiveness and coming upon sweet wormwood, which was used to treat fever. In 1972, Tu and her team developed a technique to extract what made sweet wormwood effective — artemisinin, the base for malaria treatments today. Her findings were first published in English in 1979. In 2015, Tu was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine for her discovery.

**1986: Corazon Aquino** — In 1983, Benigno Aquino Jr., a leader of the opposition to Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, was assassinated. Aquino's wife, Corazon, publicly took up her husband's mission and ran for president against

Marcos in 1986. After the authorities declared Marcos the winner, Aquino called for protests and soon the People Power Revolution had swept Marcos from power and Aquino into the presidency.

**1990: Aung San Suu**

**Kyi** — 1990 was the year Aung San Suu Kyi truly became an international darling. She'd fought, following her father Aung San's death, against Myanmar's military dictatorship. In 1990s, her National League for Democracy (NLD), as Time writes, "won a landslide in an election swiftly invalidated by the junta." Suu Kyi was placed on house arrest and in 1991 awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In the following 21-year period, she spent 15 under house arrest. But by 2015, Myanmar's first civilian government took power with Suu Kyi (albeit in a de facto capacity) at the helm. Far from the democracy darling she once was, Suu Kyi's strident defence of the military's campaigns against the Rohingya has brought infamy to her name.

**1995: Sadako Ogata** — As the only Japanese and first woman to lead the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ogata oversaw responses to some of the world's worst refugee crises, from Kurdish refugees following the Gulf War to refugees fleeing the Rwandan genocide to refugees of various Cold War conflicts around the world. Ogata is credited with expanding UNCHR's mandate to include internally displaced persons. In 2002, after leading UNHCR, she was appointed as the Japanese prime minister's Special representative on reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan.

Women inspiring action, transforming lives

**2009: Malala Yousafzai** — On January 3, 2009, 11-year-old Malala's first blog was published. Time recounts how Malala's words first entered the world:

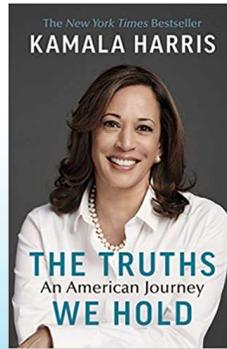


“When BBC Urdu asked Malala Yousafzai's father if one of his students would blog

about life under the local Taliban, his daughter took on the task.” In 2012, the Pakistani Taliban tried to assassinate Malala, whose writing about her life and desire to pursue an education angered them. But Malala survived being shot in the face to become the face of women's empowerment not only in Pakistan but around the world.

**2018: Maria Ressa** — In 2018, Time named “The Guardians” — journalists facing persecution and violence — as the Persons of the Year. Among them was Filipino journalist Maria Ressa. Ressa's publication, Rappler, had been started as a Facebook page in 2011 and evolved into one of the Philippines' most dynamic news outlets. As Time explains: “In the Philippines, the Internet largely exists on Facebook, because the platform girls take a back seat in the books they read growing up free data through its mobile app. But it fell to Ressa's reporters to expose dozens of fake and spam-heavy accounts that President Duterte supporters used to manipulate the online discourse that many now mistake for reality.” In pushing back against Duterte, Ressa landed herself not only at the centre of online hate campaigns, but several arrests.

## Book of the Month



This is an inspiring memoir from the first woman, and person of colour, to serve as Vice President of the United States.

The daughter of immigrants and civil rights activists, Vice President Kamala Harris was raised in a California community that cared deeply about social justice. As she rose to prominence as a political leader, her experiences would become her guiding light as she grappled with an array of complex issues and learned to bring a voice to the voiceless.

In *The Truths We Hold*, Harris reckons with the big challenges faced by the US. Drawing on the hard-won wisdom and insight from her own career and the work of those who have most inspired her, she communicates a vision of shared struggle, shared purpose, and shared values as we confront the great work of our day.

## Heroes vs Heroines

A study has found that stories written by children are more likely to have male protagonists because girls take a back seat in the books they read growing up.

Of 105000 stories written by 5-13 year olds for a competition, 75% of boys used a male as their central character. The study showed, however, that as girls age they increasingly turn their attention to female led stories with 70% of 13 year olds having a female protagonist compared with 55% of 5 year old girls.

The analysis of character gender in the Oxford Children's Corpus, a

catalogue of children's books published from 1813, found that just 38% of characters in books are female. They also found that since 2015, the rate at which male authors wrote about boys has increased. *“It seems likely that children have learned from the books that they read or from society more generally, that the actions of boys and men are more likely to be sufficiently exciting and interesting to be worth writing about”.*

An interesting exercise for everyone: what percentage of books on your bookshelves are written by male authors compared with female authors? Is your partner's author book profile very different from yours?

## An Interesting Collection

Needless to say I'm a bit of a collector, particularly of vintage kitchenalia. It started with a whisk or two and before I knew it, I had "a collection"! Other collections have been flirted with - vintage pyrex for instance - but my whisk collection remains my favourite.



They are often unnecessarily intricate (and beautiful), come in a surprising variety of designs, change through decades and some function far better than others! And yes, I do use a modern electric whisk for making cakes.

I wonder if anyone else has "a collection"?

Ruth Lewis