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Cover *by Leon Sun*

EDITORIAL

Asian Americans — Take a Stand!

By Steve Morozumi

The horror of the U.S. role in Viet Nam two decades ago is being reenacted today in Central America and the Caribbean. The striking similarities between the U.S. policy of covert and overt aggression in these regions resurfaces angry memories of the 20-year quagmire, and should underscore the extreme dangers of Reagan's rapid escalation in Central America and the Caribbean. As Asian Americans, we must urgently address ourselves to Reagan's gunboat diplomacy, take a hard look at its factual underpinnings, and make our stand against U.S. intervention.

For many Asian Americans, the Viet Nam War, possibly more than any other event, shaped our political consciousness, stirred our national and international awareness, and influenced the directions and outlooks of our lives. Nightly, we watched U.S. bombers and helicopter gunships strafe and bomb the Vietnamese landscape, slaughtering two million Vietnamese men, women and children — people who resembled members of our own families — in order to protect American capital. My initial reaction as a young Asian American was a sense of bitter irony in being subject to a military draft that coerced us into leaving our homes to kill other Asians in a racist war.

We were moved and inspired by the Vietnamese people's perseverence and courage in the face of monumental military might and technology.

We were compelled to take action and protest the war. We lost our naiveté and delusions about American moral sanctity and its pretensions of protecting national security and democracy abroad. Indeed, it was a rite of passage for our generation, from innocence to experience and political awakening.

As we became involved in that anti-war movement, our response to the war evolved to a more sophisticated understanding of third world peoples' legitimate national liberation struggles and their rights to self-determination. We began to recognize the systematic nature of U.S. imperialism. We felt a deep responsibility to build solidarity with oppressed peoples seeking justice. The slogan, "One struggle, many fronts" took on genuine meaning for us as we linked the war to the plight of our communities. We saw the same insensitive and ruthless U.S. government spending billions of dollars on a war machine while eliminating sorely needed social services.

Now it is critical that we rebuild the anti-war movement. We need to fulfill our duty to stand with and support other third world peoples' struggles for actual democracy and freedom from repression. One of the important lessons we dare not forget is that we must oppose all forms of imperialism and consistently support countries, nations, peoples' struggles for independence and liberation — whether it takes the form of opposing the U.S. in Asia or the Soviets in Afghanistan, deploring the Soviet's shooting down of the Korean civilian jetliner, or the recent brutal invasion of Grenada by 6,000 U.S. marines. Grenada, in particular, is a foreboding signal of Reagan's renewed policy of direct, naked military force and aggression. It is a rehearsal for other possible invasions in the region. Today, it is more urgent than ever that we put a stop to the U.S. military intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

The U.S. supports the ruling junta of El Salvador, and is the primary sponsor and accessory to a fascist reign of terror. Forty thousand noncombatants have been abducted, tortured and murdered in three years, mainly by right wing paramilitary death squads, government security forces and the army.

The U.S. also opposes the people of Nicaragua. In an attempt to destabilize the Sandinista government, the CIA funded right wing *contras'* bombing raids to destroy fuel pipelines and food supplies. U.S. nuclear-powered warships holding 16,546 troops loom ominously off the coast of Nicaragua. The U.S. has also installed permanent military bases on the Honduran and Guatemalan borders with 5,000 more troops and tanks poised to threaten Nicaragua. In Grenada 3,000 Marines continue the occupation while the U.S. installs a new colonial regime.

The U.S. role in Viet Nam began in the same way

No More Viet Nams!

— 1) provided military and financial assistance to a corrupt and unpopular regime (South Vietnamese Premier Ky and right wing President D'Aubuisson of El Salvador's Assembly both admire Adolf Hitler's policies); 2) sent in U.S. advisors to train local troops; 3) triggered an "international incident" as a pretext for direct intervention. The U.S. has budgeted $63 million dollars in 1984 to train the repressive Salvadoran government and army.

American tactics in Viet Nam and Central America are basically the same — My Lai-type massacres; the use of napalm against civilians; the building of strategic hamlets. The government is once again trying to "win the hearts and minds" of the people through "Operation Peace and Well-Being." It is using the same rigged elections forcing people to vote under duress and is instituting the same phony government land reform programs.

The Salvadoran government is plainly losing the war because it does not have the support of the population. The popular guerrilla FMLN army of the broad-based FDR (Revolutionary Democratic Front) continues to make gains; their support is growing rapidly among the rural peasantry.

Recognizing this, the Reagan Administration is upping the ante: reinstating the military draft; encouraging the use of mercenaries; increasing the numbers of U.S. military advisors in El Salvador by reclassifying job titles and lobbying Congress to send more; staging "war games;" and training thousands of brutal ex-National Guardsmen of the deposed Nicaraguan dictator Somoza. The experience in Viet Nam reveals the lengths to which the U.S. will go to maintain hegemony in the name of a global East-West conflict, to maintain its strategic interests and overseas investments in its so-called "backyard."

Viet Nam taught us that small countries can and will defeat a superpower. The peoples' legitimate and indigenous struggles against misery and crushing poverty is the real issue in El Salvador, all of Central America, and the Caribbean. Their goals are simply: social justice, human rights, and self-determination. Indeed, the backbone of the revolution can be attributed to a firm and fervent commitment of the people to achieve self-determination. The struggle of the Central American peoples will triumph over U.S. imperialism.

But what about our tasks here in the U.S.? As Reagan and his corporate class prepare to ignite a regional conflict, we must take a clear stand against this rapid escalation. Reagan has stopped short of all-out intervention for only one reason — the massive opposition here at home (over 70% of the American public have opposed U.S. intervention in opinion surveys) and the international outcry against U.S. foreign policy. There is growing support and sympathy for the guerrillas.

Asian Americans must recognize the horror and challenge of this new Viet Nam War. We must turn our revulsion and anger into action. Placed upon us is a new responsibility to stop U.S. intervention and build solidarity with the just struggle of the Central American peoples. Those of us who know the lessons of Viet Nam must teach others. We *can* help stop a Viet Nam War in Central America if we *act now* — if we agitate, educate and organize ourselves on campuses and in the communities; if we can pass initiatives like Proposition N (San Francisco's ballot measure) which called for an end to U.S. military aid to El Salvador and the withdrawal of U.S. troops. We can set up house meetings, raise the issue at union meetings, engage in public demonstrations. Asian Americans played a special role in protesting the Viet Nam War by condemning the racist, genocidal nature of the war which promoted the lie that Asian lives are cheap. The same racist attitude is being applied today to the peoples of Central America.

The struggle of the peoples of Central America is a passionate moral and political commitment to liberation and social justice that touches all Asian Americans. It is a cause we need to identify with and support with all our hearts.

Oppose U.S. Intervention Now! □

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Fighting Anti-Asian Violence

By Eddie Wong

There is a deep, menacing darkness falling over America. From coast to coast, Asians and other Third World people (Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans, and other racial minorities) are facing the ugly spectre of escalating racial violence. Physical assaults and murder, however, are not the only forms of racial violence. Harassment and psychological intimidation in the form of racist media stereotypes, chauvinist statements by government, labor leaders, and members of the news media, and anti-immigrant legislation — all of which degrade, dehumanize and reinforce the unequal status of Third World people — must be considered as racial violence. Racial violence is endemic to the capitalist system which maintains the inequality and oppression of Third World people. Thus, the fight against racial violence is bound up with the struggle for democracy, equality, and justice for the oppressed nationalities. This article will examine some causes of racial violence and share some examples of how communities have combatted this vicious trend.

Violence against Asians has not been an overnight development. Throughout Asian American history, there have been violent attacks — lynchings, the burning and driving out of Asian farm laborers on the West Coast, and the racist incarceration of 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. Asians, along with Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans and other peoples, were historically used as a source of cheap labor. Capitalists like railroad titan Charles Crocker profited from the inhuman exploitation of Chinese railroad workers. The rich farmlands and mines of the West were cultivated by Asian laborers, yet their repayment was exclusion from citizenship, segregation, and denial of access to education. Besides the low wages, long hours and unsafe working conditions, from which the capitalists derived extra profits, Asians faced social, political, cultural and educational restrictions. Taken as a whole, this constituted national oppression, a systematic denial of rights based on nationality.

To enforce the inequality of Asians and other Third World people, the white capitalists worked hand-in-glove with reactionary trade union leaders and racists such as the Klan to try and smash the movement of justice, equality and political power of Third World people.

But why is there a sharpening of anti-Asian sentiment today? Certainly, conditions are different than a century ago. Many Asians have achieved high levels of education and professional status, which has resulted in the "model minority" myth. But alongside this "positive" stereotype, a second image also exists, i.e. the dreaded yellow peril. What fuels this latter image of Asians is the reactionary climate being promoted by the monopoly capitalist class (the owners and top level managers of the multinational corporations and government officials).

U.S. capitalism is in deep crisis — the result of inherent contradictions in the capitalist system which are exacerbated by the decline of U.S. imperialism. The rate of profit is falling and U.S. corporations can no longer dominate the world market. Since the end of World War II, national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America have kicked out the U.S. Additionally, U.S. capitalists must compete vigorously with European and Japanese capitalists. At home, U.S. capitalists in some key industries find themselves with outmoded factories. But instead of investing in technological improvements and trying to find an alterna-

Anti-Chinese violence in the 1880's

tive to throwing millions of workers out of their jobs, the capitalists are solely motivated to seek the highest profit, no matter what the human costs. Thus, some U.S. capitalists have moved their operations to the third world, where they can pay lower wages. Some companies such as U.S. Steel are shutting down factories and buying up small oil companies to maintain their profits. The result is high unemployment and greater hardships for workers.

High unemployment combined with already existing anti-immigrant, anti-imports sentiment fanned up by the capitalist media produces the atmosphere of racial animosity. The furor behind anti-imports, protectionist legislation is meant to divert workers' anger away from the capitalists and toward people who are their potential allies. This is why racial violence is promoted by the ruling class.

Secondly, in times of economic instability, racist forces such as the Ku Klux Klan have played upon the fears and insecurities of the working class and petty-bourgeoisie (the class of small merchants, professionals) to promote the view that the U.S., "a white man's paradise," is somehow being overrun by "foreigners, Jews, and communists." In an extreme form, the Klan is simply carrying out what the ruling class also desires. The rise of the Klan and other racist forces is dangerous because it encourages open race hatred and emboldens the individual racists to play out their sick fantasies.

Today, the Klan is growing and attracting new adherents among women and youth. Although estimates of Klan membership nationally range from 10-12,000, their influence is larger. Since 1980, the Klan has received much publicity by holding public rallies and running for Congress. The new Klan strives for middle class respectability, but their actions are as violent as those during the days of Reconstruction. The National Anti-Klan Network has documented 600 incidents of Klan violence since 1978. The Network also reports 500 cases of Klan-like violence, most of which are anti-Black and anti-semitic acts. Rather than being a fringe element, the racists and reactionaries are much larger than commonly perceived. For example, *The Spotlight*, the newspaper of the extreme right wing Liberty Lobby, has 300,000 subscribers.

To fight racial violence, it is necessary to expose the Klan and other racist organizations.

Although the main target of the Klan and racists has been Black people, Asians also feel the chill of the nightriders. Ever since the 1975 immigration of Southeast Asian refugees (over 600,000 have entered the U.S.), the Klan and racists have mounted attacks. In 1981, the Klan plastered racist leaflets in a Sacramento housing project where many Southeast Asians live. That same year, the Klan fire bombed a Chinese theater in Monterey Park, California.

Yet, 1983 stands out as a watershed because so many horrific acts took place — acts which must be burnished into our consciousness to harden our determination to combat

A Chronology of Violence

April 19 — San Francisco, CA. Paul Wu knifed to death in an argument following a traffic accident.

May 2 — Los Angeles, CA. Trac Thi Vu, a Vietnamese widow, shot to death while standing by her kitchen window.

Thong Hy Huynh

May 4 — Davis, CA. Thong Hy Huynh, a Vietnamese high school student, knifed to death by James Pierman, a white student. The killing took place after several incidents of racial taunting of Vietnamese by white bullies. Pierman will be tried as an adult for murder in 1984.

May 9 — Houston, TX. Chansophea Nhim, a ten-year-old Cambodian girl, shot in the back as she walked to school.

May 26 — Fort Dodge, Iowa. Thong Souksseume, an 18-year-old Laotian, assaulted by Terry Van Ornum, a 23-year-old white man, who shouted "Go back to Japan, you kamikaze!" Van Ornum was sentenced to write an essay on Laotian culture.

June 15 — Seattle, WA. Truong Sinh, a Vietnamese man, shot to death after he resisted people who vandalized his car.

July 25 — Boston, MA. Anh Mai, a Vietnamese man, knifed to death by Robert Glass, Jr., a 19-year-old Marine. Glass and friends were outside Mai's apartment and created a loud disturbance. The killing occurred at 1:30 a.m. when Mai and friends went to ask Glass to quiet down. Two of Mai's friends were also stabbed.

Mai's killing was the 14th act of racial violence directed against Asians in Boston in 1983.

September, 1983 — San Jose, CA. Khamkeo Saelee, an 18-year-old Laotian student, chased home from school by white boys with knives. The Saelee's home had been previously vandalized.

October, 1983 — Sacramento, CA. Firecrackers and smoke bombs hurled into a high school English class filled with Hmong and Laotian students at Rancho Cordova High School.

STOP ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE!

FULL EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ASIAN PEOPLES!

Vincent Chin in happier times

racial violence. The realization that racial violence can strike anywhere against an Asian regardless of his/her status has propelled many people into action. Most particularly, it has aroused the anger of Asian working people. After the outrageously lenient sentence of a $3,000 fine and probation meted out to Vincent Chin's killers, hundreds of Asian people rallied and marched in Detroit, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to protest the continuation of racist mistreatment of Asians. The sentence not only cheapened the life of Vincent Chin but demonstrated that Asians are still unequal and politically powerless. Only as the result of a massive letter writing campaign did the Department of Justice convene a federal grand jury which returned indictments on November 2 against Ebens and Nitz for the violation of Vincent Chin's civil rights. Conviction on these charges could result in life imprisonment.

Many local and regional efforts are also underway to stem the tide of anti-Asian violence. In Sacramento, Asian community groups and individuals united to form The Coalition of Asians for Equal Rights (CAER) following the stabbing death of 17-year-old Vietnamese high school student Thong Hy Huynh. Besides offering aid to the bereaved family, CAER organized a letter writing campaign to the Davis, California District Attorney to ensure that James Pierman, Huynh's killer, would be fully prosecuted under the law. Pierman, who has a history of harassing Vietnamese and other students, will be tried as an adult for murder in 1984.

Because of the increasing number of incidents of anti-Asian harassment in northern California, several community organizations, progressive ministers, social service workers, labor activists, and revolutionaries have united to form the Asian Network for Equality and Justice, an information/referral network to monitor acts of anti-Asian violence, educate the public about the conditions which give rise to such violence, and participate in local campaigns to fight for the rights of Asian peoples.

All these efforts have stimulated more interest in the issue and have raised important questions: How does one fight racial violence? What steps can be taken to stop these attacks?

Asians have much to learn from the Black community which has been fighting racist terror ever since the days of slavery and Reconstruction. There are many valiant examples of how Black people have armed themselves and organized to fight racist terror. Take the case of Juanita Ash, a Black woman in Novato, California, a predominantly white community in Marin County. In 1978, a rash of anti-Black attacks broke out: crosses were burned, a Black man was stopped at gunpoint on a street, and there were acts of vandalism against Black homes. Juanita Ash was one of the victims. "I was driving home from teaching a sewing class when these fellows tried to run me off the road," said Mrs. Ash. "I was so scared. I came home and broke down in tears in front of my children." Later the harassment continued as racists threw human excrement on her house. That was the final straw. "I just said to myself, 'I'm not going to walk around afraid.' After I resolved that, I wasn't afraid to speak out. I guess you could say I became a warrior," added Mrs. Ash. She organized members of the Black community and people of other nationalities to form Novatoans for Racial Equality. The group approached the city council, the mayor, and police department to demand protection against racist attacks. As in other cases, the public officials first tried to deny that a problem even existed. But as the news hit the media, public pressure from churches and individuals forced the officials to respond. Eventually, a group of white youth were apprehended for some of the incidents.

Community organizing and public exposure were the key factors in the Novato case. The Novatoans for Racial Equality started a hotline and offered rewards for the apprehension and conviction of the racists. "If we had curled up and done nothing," emphasized Mrs. Ash, "we would have been driven out." The racist attacks have subsided, but the potential for violence still exists. A large number of Southeast Asians refugees have settled in northern Marin county and there have been reports of racial harassment of Asians in the schools.

Community protest also includes intervention and direct confrontation of the racists. In 1980, Black residents in a predominantly white housing development called Tara Hills in Richmond, California were shot at, received threatening phone calls, and had crosses burned on their lawns. Although the incidents had been occurring for nearly a year, the Richmond police did very little to stop the harassment. It took a concerted effort by community groups, progressive churches, labor unions and others to form a neighborhood watch to ensure the safety of the Black residents. One Black resident, a member of Local 6 of the Longshoreman's Union, got his union to hire a security guard and solicited volunteers to help on the neighborhood watches.

In Spring, 1981 Vietnamese residents in the Lemon Hill section of

Sacramento awoke one morning to find racist flyers plastered on their homes. The leaflets, signed by the KKK, demanded that Vietnamese get out of Sacramento. But rather than being intimidated, several Vietnamese went out and purchased guns — a declaration of their determination not to be driven out of their homes. This act of self-defense combined with an outpouring of support by Asian community groups, churches and public officials sent a clear message that racist harassment would be condemned and repudiated.

Legal redress to racial violence is another course of action. There are numerous laws in the U.S. civil and criminal codes prohibiting racial violence. Some of these laws date back to the post-Civil War period and many other statutes were instituted after the massive protest generated by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's.

In the past 20 years, numerous lawsuits have been filed to stop Klan activities and to seek redress for violations of civil rights. In 1981, the Galveston, Texas Vietnamese Fisherman's Association sued the KKK for harassment. They won a federal injunction which prohibited the Klan from burning crosses, and operating a paramilitary camp. Although this was an important ruling, it came too late for one Vietnamese man who was murdered and for others who had their fishing boats burned.

Many states also have laws which prohibit specific acts of terrorism and uphold the right to live free from violence. e.g. California's Unruh and Ralph Civil Rights Acts. What becomes apparent is not the lack of laws but the lack of willingness on the part of public officials to enforce these laws.

Similarly, the public schools fail to take seriously the growing racial tensions in schools. Ethnic studies in the high schools has either been cut back or is non-existent. There are few proactive programs developed to lessen racial tensions.

Perhaps the most tragic cases of racial violence which have occurred involve inter-ethnic violence. Take two economically disadvantaged minority groups, place them in the same neighborhood, make them compete for jobs, housing and public services, and you have a formula for racial tension. This is a situation relished and promoted by the ruling class. This competition combined with cultural misunderstandings and plain old racist images that some Third World people have of one another generates hostilities in the schools and in the communities. Conscious efforts to build Third World unity can be the only solution to overcoming these racial conflicts.

All the steps mentioned previously are positive and crucial ones to remedy the immediate incidents of racial violence, but these steps alone cannot eradicate the root cause of racial violence. Racial violence is embedded into the foundation of the capitalist system which institutes a system of national oppression against Blacks, Asians, Chicanos, Latinos, and Native Americans. The ideology of white supremacy and national chauvinism is a weapon used by the capitalist class to keep working and poor people of various nationalities pitted against one another. Racist terror is aimed at keeping minorities weak and intimidated. But the history of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Liberation Movement and all the Third World movements show that there is no turning back from the demands of justice, equality and political power. For Asians, the fight takes on many forms: for the right to unionization; for redress and reparations for Japanese Americans; for affirmative action; for ethnic studies; for the right to vote; for the right to bilingual ballots; and so on. It is this movement for full democracy, that the racists and reactionaries and their ruling class backers truly fear. The movements of Third World peoples for their full political, economic, cultural and educational rights when unified with the movement of the multinational working class form a strategic alliance against the U.S. monopoly capitalist system. Thus, as we educate people about the trend of racial violence and advocate specific reforms, we must educate people about national oppression and encourage support for the just demands of Third World peoples.

All indications point towards the continuation and intensification of racial violence against Third World people. Under the Reagan administration, national chauvinism is openly encouraged. Rampant jingoism fueled by the invasion of Grenada and military intervention in Central America, plus increased national oppression at home, portend of even harder times ahead. The fight against racial violence will necessarily be bound up in a much larger struggle against the capitalist system. □

The Klan inaugurating a new chapter in Sacramento in 1980

Eddie Wong *is the editor of* EAST WIND.

A People's Anger

An Interview with Beth Rosales on the Aquino Assassination

Beth Rosales is a Pilipino American who is a member of the Philippine Education Support Committee. She has been involved in the anti-martial law movement since 1973, when she was a student at San Francisco State College. "Through taking (Pilipino) studies," she said, "and through getting involved with the student organizations, I started becoming aware of the situation in the Philippines and also the situation of Filipinos here in the U.S."

EAST WIND *Contributing Editor Masao Suzuki-Bonzo conducted this interview in October 1983.*

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EAST WIND: What was the reaction in the Pilipino community when Aquino was shot?

Beth Rosales: The news came about midnight Sunday morning here in the U.S. For those of us who heard it first, there was total shock. That night some of the Philippine support groups and members of some of the Filipino organizations got together to respond to this. There was a demonstration on Monday that attracted about 400 people, primarily Filipinos.

True to the culture and the religion of the Filipinos in general, there were many vigils held here in the Bay Area. A memorial mass for the Senator was attended by 700 Filipinos and their friends.

Beth Rosales

"There can be no reconciliation with a government that has been at war with its own people."

Most recently there was a conference that was organized by a broad grouping of people who either were never involved or at least had never shown opposition to the government. The conference was held at the Dimasalang House in the South of Market in San Francisco and attended by well over 200 people . . . .

Previous to the assassination, the Filipino Senior Citizens Association had asked the (Philippine) Consul General to come as a main speaker (at) their second year celebration. They not only disinvited him, but invited an opposition leader to speak. So in that way, organizations are distancing themselves from the Consul General. I think it's an interesting and hopefully developing phenomenon in our community that the community has acknowledged that the presence or the activities sponsored by the consulate are political, and that they are representative of the government.

EAST WIND: You originally became involved as a student. How do you see the role of students in the movement today?

Beth Rosales: What we've seen at least in the past few weeks is a response from the students. In fact, as an offshoot of the conference that was held last September, a group of Filipino students in the Bay Area from San Francisco State, U.C. Berkeley, (and other schools) will be organizing a (workshop) both to educate themselves about the situation in the Philippines and to formulate some actions and some support as a particular part of the community. I think that's inspiring. I would say in the past three or four years students have been labeled as more conservative and not as community-oriented as those in the 60's. I think that the Filipino students' actions belie that.

EAST WIND: Why were people in the community convinced that it was the Marcos government that had killed Aquino?

Beth Rosales: It was not extraordinary that Marcos would have Aquino killed because of past atrocities of his regime against the opposition.

Thousands of activists have been jailed, killed, sanctioned for expressing their opposition to this repressive government. Workers disappear for attempting to organize unions; priests and nuns working with the poor and squatters have been harassed by the government, a couple murdered by the military. So, you can see that the government has had a history of murdering and silencing the opposition. Even an international figure such as Aquino could not be tolerated by a government whose weaknesses are being exposed day to day.

But for some of us in the community, we not only point to the Marcos government, but (also) to the U.S.'s role in terms of supporting the repressive government of Marcos. In the past, with the Carter administration, at least there was some indication that there was some concern about human rights in the Philippines. Although it may have been symbolic, it was certainly documented. Whereas with the Reagan administration, there's been all-out embrace to the point where Marcos was able to come and visit the U.S. So this staunch support from the U.S. government has emboldened the Marcos regime.

EAST WIND: What interests does the U.S. government have in the Philippines?

Beth Rosales: Well, a number of things. There are two major and strategic U.S. military bases located in the country. These bases have been used as launching pads during the Viet Nam War. Newspapers have reported that there are 20,000 troops at this time in Subic Bay being readied for any heightened military engagement in Lebanon.

Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base are the two largest U.S. military bases. The bases are basically "springboards for intervention" in the third world. There are nuclear

Commentary

Keeping The Flame Alive

Masao Suzuki-Bonzo

When former Philippine Senator Benigno Aquino was assassinated in Manila on August 21, none of us here knew how events would unfold. In the six weeks since then, millions of people have paid their last respects to Ninoy and demonstrated their anger at the Marcos regime. Reagan was forced to cancel his trip to the Philippines, and the peso was devalued over 20% as business doubts about Marcos further undermined the Philippines' sagging economy.

These events have prompted the largest show of protest in Pilipino communities throughout the United States since Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972. At the same time, efforts of community activists, like Beth Rosales, must not be forgotten. They have worked for the past ten years to keep the flame of concern alive.

Those of us here in the U.S., both longtime activists and individuals becoming involved for the first time, must be prepared for a protracted struggle, even as we hope for change coming sooner. We must be vigilant against the "change of guards" that would replace Marcos with new dictator(s). The downfall of the Marcos regime must be followed by the establishment of a democratic and independent government committed to social justice in the Philippines.

As the struggle intensifies in the Philippines, more and more questions are bound to arise as our media focuses on the threat of violence and the "danger of communism." It is important to put events in the context of Philippine reality and not judge them by our own opinions, whether for or against.

Our task here is the U.S. is not to determine what party is "best" for the Philippines (of course, we will have our own opinions) but to unite all who can be united to support the self-determination of the people of the Philippines — including the right to determine their own tactics (violence/non-violence), form of government and ideology.

Our support work for the Philippines liberation struggle should not be pitted against the day-to-day work in our communities for adequate and accessible social services and education, against racist immigration laws, etc. Those of us working on these issues should draw inspiration from our sisters and brothers in the Philippines. Our support for the total elimination of U.S. aid to Marcos is part and parcel of our general efforts to change the U.S. government's priority from funding dictatorships and a massive war machine to meeting peoples' needs. □

weapons stored in Clark and Subic. These weapons place the Philippines as a target for a nuclear war between the superpowers. The social costs of the bases are also dear to our people. Girls as young as eleven become prostitutes because of their surroundings and perpetual poverty that their families find themselves in. Drug trafficking and black market are brisk operations causing permeating corrupt and illicit lifestyles.

Of course, there are other interests. The U.S. multinational corporations have raped the Philippines. The Marcos regime has welcomed the multinational corporations to the Philippines. The Philippines is rich with natural resources: copper mining and huge pineapple plantations. The Filipino people have been a major source of cheap labor . . . .

EAST WIND: What kind of demands are being put out to the U.S. government from the community?

Beth Rosales: There's a call for the formation of an international independent commission, different from the commission that was put together by Marcos which was composed of judges and politicians loyal to the government. Also, people are calling for the reconsideration in Congress of the $900 million military aid package which is for the U.S. bases in the Philippines.

EAST WIND: Aquino was going back home in hopes of achieving national reconciliation. Do you think that there is any possibility of this?

Beth Rosales: There can be no reconciliation with a government that has been at war with its own people. Aquino was only one of thousands of Filipinos murdered to squelch their efforts toward a democratic government. When you have a government which allows interests of foreign nations such as the United States, Japan and Germany before the interests and well-being of its people, then there can be no reconciliation.

EAST WIND: What do you think is going to happen?

Beth Rosales: A broad coalition of the various parties, opposition groups, sectoral representatives from the workers, students, church, businesses have called for Marcos to step down followed by a caretaker government until such time that democratic elections can be held. The people are calling for the return of democratic processes in selecting government representatives, unlike the Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly), handpicked by Marcos.

My concern is that Marcos may resign, but then his government might be replaced by something similar, or there could be a military junta which would be much more repressive and oppressive than the current government. It would be basically a change of guards and the interests of the U.S. would still be primary.

For us here in the U.S., we must strive to do our share in assisting our people's desire and courageous actions towards a democratic government. We cannot just sit idly and allow the Reagan administration to continue to staunchly support an unpopular, illegitimate and oppressive regime. □

Gene Viernes

—Justice for— —Domingo & — —Viernes!—

Silme Domingo

By Denise Imura

On July 14, 1983, U.S. District Judge Donald Voorhees ruled that the plaintiffs in the Domingo-Viernes $30 million civil rights suit failed to provide evidence proving that the Republic of the Philippines, or one of its agents, was involved in the 1981 murders of Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo. His order stated that the plaintiffs failed to allege that the Philippine government, through its agents, had committed "any tortuous acts in the U.S." (Murder, assault, conspiracy, etc.)

Viernes and Domingo were reformers in the Alaska Cannery Workers Union (ILWU Local 37) in Seattle. They also organized against the Marcos regime. Just before being slain, they had attended an International Longshoremen's convention and had obtained the passage of a resolution to send a labor delegation to the Philippines.

The cold-blooded murders of these two organizers have angered the Pilipino community. The Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes maintains that prosecution of the instigators of the crime has been weak, and charges the U.S. and Philippine governments with complicity in the murders and coverups. Specifically, the U.S. government sought to prevent any prosecution of the Philippine government because it is a "friendly foreign state," and then the U.S. tried to have the entire case dismissed because of "national security considerations."

Though former local president, Tony Baruso, was fingered as the person responsible for ordering the "hits," and substantial evidence bears out this suspicion, he was not arrested until months after the killings. He was then released because of "insufficient evidence." But reason to suspect him is mounting: 1) Baruso owned the murder weapon; 2) witnesses testified that he promised to pay $5,000 to the gunmen; 3) during questioning, he took the Fifth Amendment 140 times; 4) a key witness against him was found murdered, and one of his killers fled to the Philippines to escape prosecution. Baruso was later arraigned on October 17, 1983, on federal charges of embezzlement of union funds.

Baruso may have ordered the murders because Silme and Gene were advocates of change and democracy within the union. They tried to resurrect the ACWU's principles of integrity and concern for the masses. (The ACWU was founded by Pilipino, Chinese and Japanese cannery workers who experienced insufferable hardships in the industry.) As rank and file dissatisfaction with the union's "old guard" mounted, they won seats as the secretary-treasurer and chief dispatcher of the local. They initiated a regularized dispatch system to curtail the practice of bribery and job-selling; they made it difficult for corrupt foremen and officials who ran the gambling operations to circumvent the seniority rules. They also linked up the Pilipino struggle here with the liberation movement in the Philippines.

Tony Baruso represented the opposing class interests — those of the labor aristocracy and capitalists. He was more interested in keeping the Pilipino workers under his thumb via racketeering, favoritism, signing sweetheart contracts with the companies. He also maintained close ties with the Marcos government. Six months after the murders, Baruso was honored by Marcos for "Outstanding Service to the Overseas Filipino Community."

Supporters of Viernes and Domingo maintain that Baruso was retained by the Marcos government to execute the two men, and that the U.S. has tried to shield the investigation and suppress any evidence incriminating to the U.S. or Philippine governments.

In light of the court decision, the supporters filed an amended complaint to allege the facts of U.S. involvement. □

Denise Imura *is an* EAST WIND *representative in San Francisco.*

Deems

From Seattle: Asian Cool

By Ken Mochizuki

In Seattle, Washington, jazz pianist Deems Tsutakawa could be as much of a household name as his father — internationally recognized sculptor George Tsutakawa. For the past 14 years, Deems Tsutakawa has gigged in just about every local entertainment establishment. If there was live music at any Asian American community event, Deems was usually there, playing with local Asian American musicians he rounded up at the time. Now, his own album, "Deems," is out. "No home is complete without one of these," he has said and will say when seated behind the piano, holding up his album between songs during nightclub engagements. Deems Tsutakawa knows he has to hustle the record he produced.

At age five, while waiting for rides to kindergarten, Deems Tsutakawa started playing on a neighbor's piano. Realizing the interest, his mother bought the piano and he studied classical music until age 15. During junior high and high school, Tsutakawa got hooked on jazz and the Black soul music that was popular during the '60s. He formed his own group with fellow classmates, composing original material and playing school lunches, assemblies, and dances.

"It hit me hard in an assembly one day," Tsutakawa remembered. "Everybody was going crazy after we played, and then I decided, 'I want to do this.'"

Tsutakawa continued studying at the University of Washington and listened to jazz pianists like Ramsey Lewis, McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett, Oscar Petersen, and Chick Corea. "I collected their albums and studied them every day and listened to every note they played and tried to reproduce what I could," he said.

Then Tsutakawa hit the road to become a professional musician. He vividly remembers one job:

"I was playing at this club in Idaho with an all white band. Some people came in and started yelling, 'Get that

Jang is Coming!

Be on the lookout for Jon Jang's new album, "Are You Chinese or Charlie Chan," which will be released on RPM Records in 1984. The album is dedicated to Vincent Chin, Mrs. Chin, and "all Asian brothers and sisters who are struggling together to create a better world for all people."

The album includes "Are You Chinese or Charlie Chan/East Wind" written by Jon Jang as well as two compositions, "Sheng Illusion" and "Wazu's March," written by Mark Izu. Rounding out the album are the standards, "Mood Indigo" and "You Don't Know What Love Is." The album promises to be a dynamic expression of Asian American jazz, fusing influences from the Afro-American jazz tradition, traditional Asian music (using *sheng* and taiko drums on some selections), and Asian American soul. Featured players include: Jon Jang, piano; Anthony Brown, multiple percussion; Mark Izu, bass/*sheng*; Cash Killion, cello; Francis Wong, tenor saxophone; Fred Wei-han Houn, baritone saxophone/horn arrangements; Randy Senzaki, alto saxophone; George Sams, trumpet/vocals; Woody Ichiyasu, vocals; Bob Matsueda, the bad "rapp;" Jose Alarcon, Gary Tsujimoto, and Roy Hirabayashi, taiko drums.

Check it out! Write to RPM Records, P.O. Box 42373, San Francisco, CA 94101 for more information.

Deems Tsutakawa

Jap off stage! Send him back where he came from!' There were too many people to deal with, so I turned my amp up. I was getting paid to stay and play."

The management of that club refused to remove the hecklers. Tsutakawa and the rest of the band walked out.

Between 1972 and 1976, Tsutakawa and drummer Y.K. Kuniyuki tape recorded their gigs and rehearsals, hoping to find a record label that featured Asian American artists.

"Me and Y.K. were in and out of so many different bands," Tsutakawa said, "and they were either all white or all Black. You always had to go along and do their thing. No one was really givin' us a chance to express ourselves.

"The radio dictates who the stars are," Tsutakawa continued. "We were nightclubbin' for years, on the road, and we realized that we could kill ourselves nightclubbin' and not get anywhere. That's why recording became really important to us."

Local record producers and companies were not interested in original Asian American jazz. Even the music industry in Japan, which Kuniyuki and Tsutakawa considered a promising marketing prospect, did not consider them "authentic."

"It's almost a myth," Tsutakawa said. "The Japanese look at white and Black jazz as the real jazz."

In 1976, Kuniyuki and Tsutakawa formed their own record label, "J-Town Sound," and cut two singles at Seattle's Robert Lang Startrack Studios: "Strolling Along" in 1977, and "The Way" in 1978. Tsutakawa considered recording a third single, then realized he had accumulated enough of his own money from working odd jobs during the day and gigging at night to produce his own album. In 1980, Tsutakawa began work on an album, acting as executive producer. He recorded at Seattle's prestigious Kaye/Smith Studios, where the rate to utilize the facility was over $100 per hour. After spending over two years recording, studio time cost $6,000.

"Since I was the sole producer, it took me two years to produce," Tsutakawa said. "If I had all the dough at my disposal, it would have taken six weeks, or less. By the time I finished recording the album in 1983, there wasn't any excitement; it took me a while to regenerate the excitement I had in the beginning because I had been working on it so long. I heard it so many times, but I knew it was a good product."

To convert the studio tapes into a record, Tsutakawa and his wife, Jeanie, perused a Los Angeles telephone directory and contacted all the record manufacturing companies, asking for a price list. They settled on Ward Record Manufacturers, who press the Concord Jazz label.

The cost for 2,000 finished copies of the record album, "Deems," totaled $11,000, including studio time — an impressively inexpensive figure in the recording industry. So far, 1,500 copies have sold locally and in Hawaii and California, returning approximately $3,000. Sansei friends are employed in Los Angeles and San Francisco to market the album. A lot of records are given away to radio stations and for other promotional purposes. "You have to give a lot in this business," Tsutakawa remarked.

But Deems Tsutakawa is confident that his album will sell well. His brand of accessible, easy jazz performed by a racially mixed group of artists is acquiring significant radio airplay.

"There's always been a lot of community support," Tsutakawa said. "Lot of Sansei like to be cool; they might buy a cool car or buy cool clothes, and they like cool music, too. Sansei culture is definitely American culture. I like to make the music I like, and with this album, the Sansei musicians get to be themselves, and I get to be an artist and be what I aspire towards. It's an image that's not stereotypical. When I perform these days, I draw a lot of whites and Blacks. They just enjoy the music. It's just a cool sound and that's the bottom line."

Tsutakawa added, "What I have to do now is move the product, sell — have this album produce the next one. I can't wait; I have tons of material." □

Ken Mochizuki, *is a former actor. He is currently living in Seattle and is a contributing writer for* The International Examiner. *He is a member of the Seattle Taiko Group.*

The album "Deems" is available from J-Town Records, 8818 36th Ave. So., Seattle, Washington 98118.

POETRY

Rebirth of Wounded Knee

Once Black Elk, a thin reed Holy man
of the Oglala Sioux Tribe
Roamed the Black Hills in South Dakota
And spilled wild winter snow-tales
"of another world."

One day Black Elk painted his face red
and charged the soldiers with
his sacred bow
Bullets passed right by him
like the wind.

Loves War and Iron Wasichu were around then
looking down from Pine Ridge —
The gun fire was loud and clear

The shooting below Pine Ridge
carried thru the wind and echoed
A thousand winter battles in the rain
like wild spirits shooting across
The vast plains.

The Sacred burial ground lies south
of Pine Ridge
And stretched far east and west.

Where is the Wichsha Wakan
roaming around now?
Why is she not around Wounded Knee
breaking the spirits loose?

LISTEN TO THE CRIES OF WOUNDED KNEE
LISTEN TO THE CRIES OF WOUNDED KNEE

The heavy guns shattered
women and children

The Wakan-Tanka spirit is more
than just grass bending in
The mind of a Lakota

A handful of buffalo dung
has more spirit
Than a hundred thousand white men.

"A THUNDER BEING NATION I AM, I HAVE SAID
A THUNDER BEING NATION I AM, I HAVE SAID
YOU SHALL LIVE
YOU SHALL LIVE
YOU SHALL LIVE
YOU SHALL LIVE"

Red blood Lakota faces
mount your wild horses
Charge with your sacred bows
drive the white man out
of your sacred ground.

Come rescue your people
grab their hands
Wrap their naked bodies with
a thousand summer buffalo hides

One hundred winters ago
a Wakan woman
Appeared to two Lakotas
hunting for game around Wounded Knee.

The Lakotas' eyes ran wild
after the Wakan woman's body
The beauty of the Wakan woman
bends a thousand cedar trees
And is like a thunderbolt
inside a Lakota's mind . . .
Splitting open hidden mountain-red desires
and rising like one-hundred foot waves
Pushing up like jagged mountains —
touching the heavens
And flaming like a hundred volcanoes.

The Wakan woman turned one Lakota
into a sand bag of winter bones
And the snakes swallowed him up —
even in the wind the bones did not rattle
The Wakan woman told the other pure flowing water
mind Lakota — with fresh grass-rain tongue
To carry the message to Hehlokecha Hajin.

the burning red warriors swallowed
the Wakan-Tanka spirit
and they were proud and strong
women sang a thousand songs
to the great spirit
then bundled their little ones
in buffalo skin
waited for their men
to return from battle
so the feast can begin

after the long battle
a spring mouthful of buffalo meat —
then swallow the full moon

the white man has sucked onto
the sioux indians peace pipe
too long
too long
now the white buffalo cow woman has blossomed

flowering from
a steel gun barrel
remembering —
THE STONE COLD-1890 MASSACRE
OF WOUNDED KNEE

LISTEN TO THE CRIES OF WOUNDED KNEE
like a broken autumn *kinoki* branch
falling on the wet grass
red blood cries pulled
down blue skies
sioux-mohawk-navaho-hopi arrows
burnt the dark night pain
one hundred seasons of buffalo-silence
hidden underneath the white man's gun
sharp apache winds echoed
hunting memories buried deep
buckskins flapped
in a crying sacred grave
alcatraz tales pound
like a giant rock drum
the sound of a thousand whitetail deer.

The autumn battle alone is sad
Bitter cold winter
Frozen hands and feet of children
break in the snow.

Spring battles bring nothing
but hollow-splintered pain
And what good is summer
when the grasses are plentiful
And the buffalo is gone
A full stomach is worth more
Than dead grass.

Storm over Pine Ridge
across the creek to Wounded Knee
Lakotas-Lakotas-Lakotas-Lakotas-Lakotas
Lakotas-Lakotas-Lakotas-Lakotas-Lakotas

The spirit of Black Elk
grows strong in the warriors heart
Let the northern geese circle round
Wounded Knee
and cool the spring pain.

The Wakan-Tanka spirit lives mountain strong
in trees, grass, mountains, rivers & streams —
Once this white buffalo cow woman
carried the Sacred pipe to the Sioux

It is said that the white buffalo cow woman
will appear again
At the end of this "world."

The Sacred pipe will bring back 300 dead
Sioux Indians
Massacred in Wounded Knee

The Ghost Dance will not be empty of
crying winds
Whirling inside a blazing Sioux's mind.

Laughing spirits will rise
and grow wild corn
And the buffalo will come to life.

Al Robles

Photography by Bob Hsiang

Celebrating Ten Years of Asian American Theater

By Sun Hoong Ow and Beth Shironaka

When Frank Chin, a teacher at San Francisco State College, wanted to produce his play *Chickencoop Chinaman* in 1973, he wasn't able to find any Asian American actors and actresses to be in his play. The next thing he did was to advertise in the newspapers. He received many responses from Asian Americans who were interested in theater, but most did not have any experience in acting. Frank then approached the American Conservatory Theater (ACT), the major repertory theater in San Francisco, and got them to sponsor the Asian American Theater Workshop. Over 100 students applied for the classes.

The early days of the Workshop were exciting. "What it (the Workshop) accomplished was to establish a place for Asian American actors and writers which had never existed before," said Jean Wong, an actress. "It was something new, and we tried different things like an all-women version of *Year of the Dragon*," Wong added. "We tried to get everyone involved in the final presentation of the work." Chin's plays *Chickencoop Chinaman* and *Year of the Dragon* were produced by ACT in 1974 and 1975.

Their enthusiasm and interest sparked them to move out of ACT to a small office on Bush Street. However, in order to put on plays, they needed a larger space. They found an old storefront on 4535 California Street and after months of hard work converted it into a 99-seat theater.

The Theater Workshop continued to offer classes in their new location. Hundreds of students, many of whom never participated in theater before, studied acting, voice, movement and stagecraft.

By 1976, the Workshop was presenting four to six plays per season. Some of the plays included: *Honeybucket*, a play by Mel Escuta about a Pilipino American Vietnam War veteran; *Lady is Dying* by Lonny Kaneko and Amy Soles; *And the Soul Shall Dance* by Wakako Yamaguchi. Presenting a regular season meant getting many volunteers to usher, raise money, do publicity, and run errands. It also intensified differences over direction and operation of the group.

In 1978, Frank Chin left the Asian American Theater Workshop. He had his own ideas about what plays to produce. The group used that season to restructure and formed an artistic committee to decide which scripts would be selected and to determine who would be producer for each production.

In 1980, the group decided to change their name to Asian American

Theater Company (AATC), which reflected their desire to become a professional theater. The Company is a stable group of actors, actresses, producers and directors which forms the core of the theater.

Throughout the personnel changes, the Company has tried to create and define Asian American theater. "The Theater Company will continue to perform exclusively Asian American plays, (plays written, directed, produced and performed by Asian Americans). These plays represent an Asian American experience," said Dennis Kinoshita Myers, AATC's Executive Director. The plays which have been produced are historical, social and political by nature. They show the American public that there is something distinctly Asian American besides the typical stereotypes of the quiet, passive, harmless Asian characters portrayed in white theater and films.

One of the important accomplishments of the Company is the production of original works by new playwrights. Among the Asian American plays premiered at AATC are R.A. Shiomi's *Yellow Fever*, Genny Lim's *Paper Angels*, Philip Gotanda's *Song of a Nisei Fisherman* and *Dreams of Kitamura*, Hiroshi Kashiwagi's *Live Oak Store*, and others. Many of these plays have since been produced by the three other Asian American theaters: New York's Pan Asian Repertory, Los Angeles' East West Players, and Seattle's Pacific Northwest Asian American Theater Company.

All the actors and actresses at AATC are volunteers — most are professional actors, who support themselves by doing other jobs. But their dedication and commitment have paid off. Among the AATC alumni are Marc Hayashi, co-star of *Chan is Missing*, who is now appearing in a television series and Lane Nishikawa, an actor/director who took his one-man show *Life in the Fast Lane* across the country with Sansei Productions. Several AATC productions such as R.A. Shiomi's *Yellow Fever* and David Henry Hwang's *F.O.B.* have garnered critical acclaim.

After ten years of work, the AATC is facing a number of questions. "AATC is in a 'funny position,'" says Dennis Myers. "We're a community theater, yet we're seeking to be professional. We want to pay actors, actresses and playwrights, which is a way to retain talented people and give them a chance to perfect their craft. A lot of people here are from the Asian American community and have that sense of community. They feel it's important to serve the community. . . and theater is one way. If we lose our sense of that, we would be soulless as an organization."

One issue for the Company to consider is how to expand its scope. Most of the plays have reflected the experiences of English-speaking, American-born Asians. The works have predominantly reflected the Japanese American and Chinese American experiences.

The AATC is looking for new blood. Myers would like to see "more consistent development of writers; now it's hit and miss." "If you have better writers," said Myers, "then a lot of other things will turn around in terms of opportunities for the artists."

Broadly speaking, AATC is part of the Asian Movement. At the outset of AATC, its initiators were fighting for more adequate representation of Asian peoples in theater. "We have kept the commitment to do plays written by Asian Americans . . . We also have a strong commitment to train actors/actresses . . . We need Asian American audiences to come in to see the work, judge it and criticize it," Myers concluded.

In a time when all Asian American art and cultural groups are on shoestring budgets, AATC is struggling and looking forward to another 10 years of work. The Company recently suffered a setback in September when the San Francisco fire marshals cited the Company for fire code violations. The AATC Board voted to relocate rather than incur the high expenses necessary to bring the building up to code. While the Company looks for a new permanent facility, the current season continues with a reprise of Shiomi's *Yellow Fever* at a temporary location. The spirit of sacrifice, and dedication which are characteristic of the Theater will serve it well in the years to come. □

Sun Hoong Ow *is a counselor with the Chinatown Youth Center.*

Beth Shironaka *is a volunteer at the National Asian American Telecommunications Association. Both Sun Hoong and Beth are members of the S.F. Friends of* EAST WIND.

AATC

Scene from Frank Chin's Chickencoop Chinaman.

On Being Asian-American

For Our Children

Of course, not everyone
can be an Asian-American.
Distinctions are earned,
and deserve dedication.

Thus, from time of birth,
the journey awaits you —
ventures through time,
the turns of the earth.

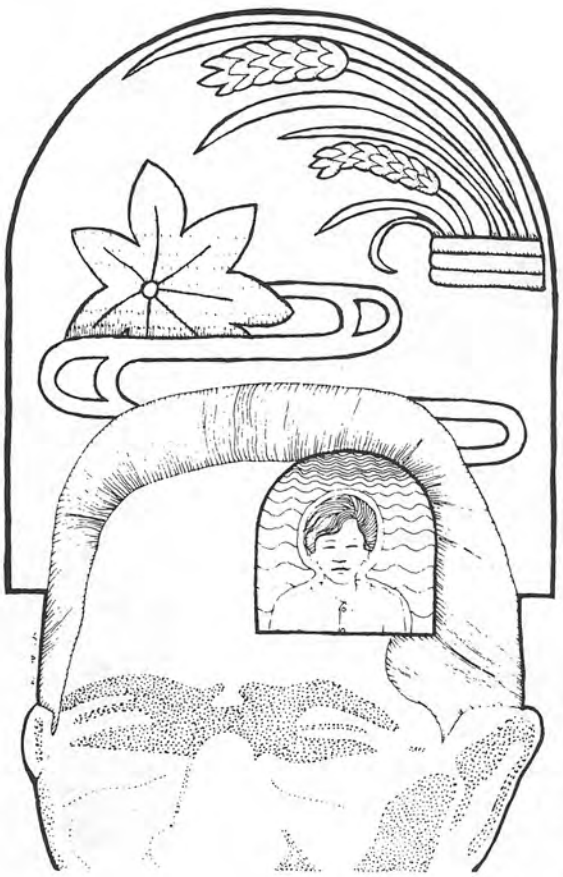
When you seem to arrive,
the journey continues;
when you seem to arrive,
the journey continues.

Take me as I am, you cry.
I, I, am an individual.
Which certainly is true.
Which generates an echo.

Who are all your people
assembled in celebration,
with wisdom and strength,
to which you are entitled.

For you are at the head
of succeeding generations,
as the rest of the world
comes forward to greet you.

Lawson Fusao Inada
June 9, 1983



Mine Senzaki

FOCUS

Asian American Students

College — a time for learning, growth and struggle. Packed into four or five short years is the stuff that shapes the future of each new generation of Asian students. College is like an intensive preparatory course on life; hopes and aspirations are shaped, self-identity is molded, political views are crystallized, and commitments are forged.

Above all, college is a time of struggle. There is the classroom struggle — surviving through the next set of exams; the social struggle — in search of friendship in the jungle that is the University; finding one's self in the historical struggle — learning of the history of oppression and resistance that is the story of Asians in America; coping with today's societal realities — searching for solutions to pervasive racism and injustice; and for each of us, tackling the many personal struggles involved in mapping out our futures, solidifying our values, and making our commitments.

In this issue's FOCUS section, we hear from students themselves describing the struggles and prescribing directions. Some of the major concerns on the minds of Asian students today are wrestled with — we hear from a leading activist in the student movement talk about the current struggle on the campuses for educational rights; four students give their viewpoints on choices and implications for that biggest of questions — careers and commitment; Asian men and women talk about relationships and interracial dating; student activists give us the inside line on prominent Asian student organizations on the campus scene today.

These articles cannot hope to paint a complete picture of the broad diversity among Asian students today. But they can give us some sense of the climate on the campuses, as a reflection of developments in society overall. And as Asian students come to establish their place in society and in the community, they can give us some insight into the future of the Asian Movement which they inherit. □

Erich Nakano

A Look At Today's Asian Pacific Student Movement

By Erich Nakano

The contemporary Asian Pacific student movement has been growing and developing in step with the changes that have occurred on the campus and in society since the late 60's. Today, the economic crisis, Reagan and the conservative tide of the 80's have brought the Asian Pacific student movement face to face with many urgent challenges.

What is the Asian Pacific student movement today? Alongside the Asian Student Unions and Asian Pacific Student Alliances born in the early 70's are growing numbers of nationality organizations — Chinese Student Associations (CSA), Korean Student Associations (KSA), Pilipino student organizations, etc. Many of these groups reflect the particular social and cultural needs of the rising immigrant populations which, on many campuses, comprise over 50% of the Asian student populations. The growing immigrant sector includes Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other Asian nationalities.

There are also countless career-related organizations and service groups including pre-med, engineering, and pre-law Asian student clubs.

The level of inter-campus organization has grown as well. Broad networks of Asian student organizations like the East Coast Asian Student Union, a network in the Midwest, and the Asian Pacific Student Union on the West Coast help to amplify and unify the voice of Asian students. Also growing are networks and ties among the CSA's, the KSA's and Pilipino student organizations.

The diversity and the myriad of activities give the Asian Pacific student movement its vitality and strength.

"The Asian Pacific student movement today is part of the new generation confronting the challenges of the move to the right in society."

The situation on the campuses mirrors many of the contradictions in society overall. The economic crisis and tightening job crunch are felt by everyone. The pressure to make the grades is ever-present; the uncertainty of the future is in the back of everyone's mind.

This high pressure climate is ultimately rooted in the fundamental changes taking place in education today. The concept of a "liberal education" — learning about and critically examining the society and the world — has been all but thrown out of the window. In education today, anything that doesn't specifically meet corporate high-tech skill, research and managerial needs, or that doesn't help to crank up the U.S. military machine is seen as a "luxury." Emphasis is on the sciences, engineering and "computer literacy" with the social sciences generally taking more and more of a back seat.

This has meant tightening the screws and closing the doors to education Third World students had fought so hard to open during the early 70's. Skyrocketing fees, cuts in special admissions and other Third World programs, and an increasingly intense academic "weeding out" process are leading towards a virtual exclusion of all but a handful of Black and Latino students from higher education. For Asians, these attacks have made it harder for working class families to send their children to college.

The conservative political climate throughout society has not left the campuses untouched either. Some university administrators and faculty don't even bother to come off as liberals. An elitist, often cutthroat academic atmosphere is encouraged. The word is: some will make it, and some won't, so you had better make sure "number one" comes first.

Right wing forces have been growing in strength on the campuses as well as often organizing through the rejuvenated fraternity system, student governments, campus newspapers, and through publications like the *Dartmouth Review*, a conservative journal.

Finally, we find on the campuses the rise of more blatant racism. Indeed, this too starts with the changes in the educational system itself — with the racist nature of the attacks on Third World programs like Ethnic Studies, with the exclusion of Third World students from education.

Racism towards Asians is often a double-edged sword. On one hand, we find "success story" and "model minority" mythology rampant in the classrooms and the campuses, glossing over the actual oppression and worsening conditions of the masses of Asian people.

But alongside the "model minority" stereotyping is the rise of more straight-up anti-Asian racism. Out of university think tanks and intellectual circles have come much of the anti-immigrant, anti-Japanese import furor being whipped up in society today. Countless examples of racist incidents directed at Asian and Third World people can be found on campuses today — whether in the form of racist "humor" of the *Dartmouth Review* variety in campus newspapers, harassment of Asian activities, or physical harassment like the beating of four Chicanos by racist fraternity members at Berkeley last year. All of this adds up to increasing tension and alienation on the campuses today.

This is the setting within which Asian student activism takes place today. It is what makes the multitude of activities of Asian student organizations so critical.

At a very basic level, Asian student organizations bring students together to address common concerns. They provide a vehicle, away from the intense cutthroat atmosphere of the classroom to meet other Asians and develop friendships.

Affirming an essential sense of identity and taking pride in being Asian — this is what all the social activities, cultural programs held during Asian Pacific Heritage Week, and educational programs on Asian American history and community are all about. It's the fuel keeping the movement running. Today's generation of Asian students is unfamiliar with the struggles of the 60's and 70's. They have been denied any formal education about their history, and are often from non-Asian neighborhoods and are shut off from struggles within the communities. Students are bombarded daily with pressures to assimilate and are alienated by rising racism. Understanding history and building identity and pride are prerequisites for collective action and struggle.

Community involvement is a major component of the Asian Pacific student movement. Students are a part of the overall struggle of Asian people for full equality and political power, and have historically played a key role in community struggles dating back to the anti-Viet Nam War movement, in fighting for decent housing and needed social services, and in supporting labor struggles among many other things. By joining community organizations and coalitions, students can truly integrate themselves, and draw inspiration from the lives, struggles and aspirations of the masses of Asian people. We realize that not everyone has the opportunity to go to college, that the majority of Asians are working people, and we can reject the elitism we are fed in college — that somehow, a degree and professional career make us "better" than the "ordinary worker." We get an education you can't find in any classroom. Ultimately, community involvement calls upon students to make a long-term commitment to the struggle.

In recent years, students have helped provide needed social services. They participated in the now-victorious struggle to free Chol Soo Lee, the movement for redress and reparations for Japanese Americans, unionization and other labor struggles, the fight against the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill and for immigrant rights, and in the nuclear disarmament movement and support for the *hibakusha* (Japanese American A-Bomb survivors), just to name a few.

San Francisco State University, 1983

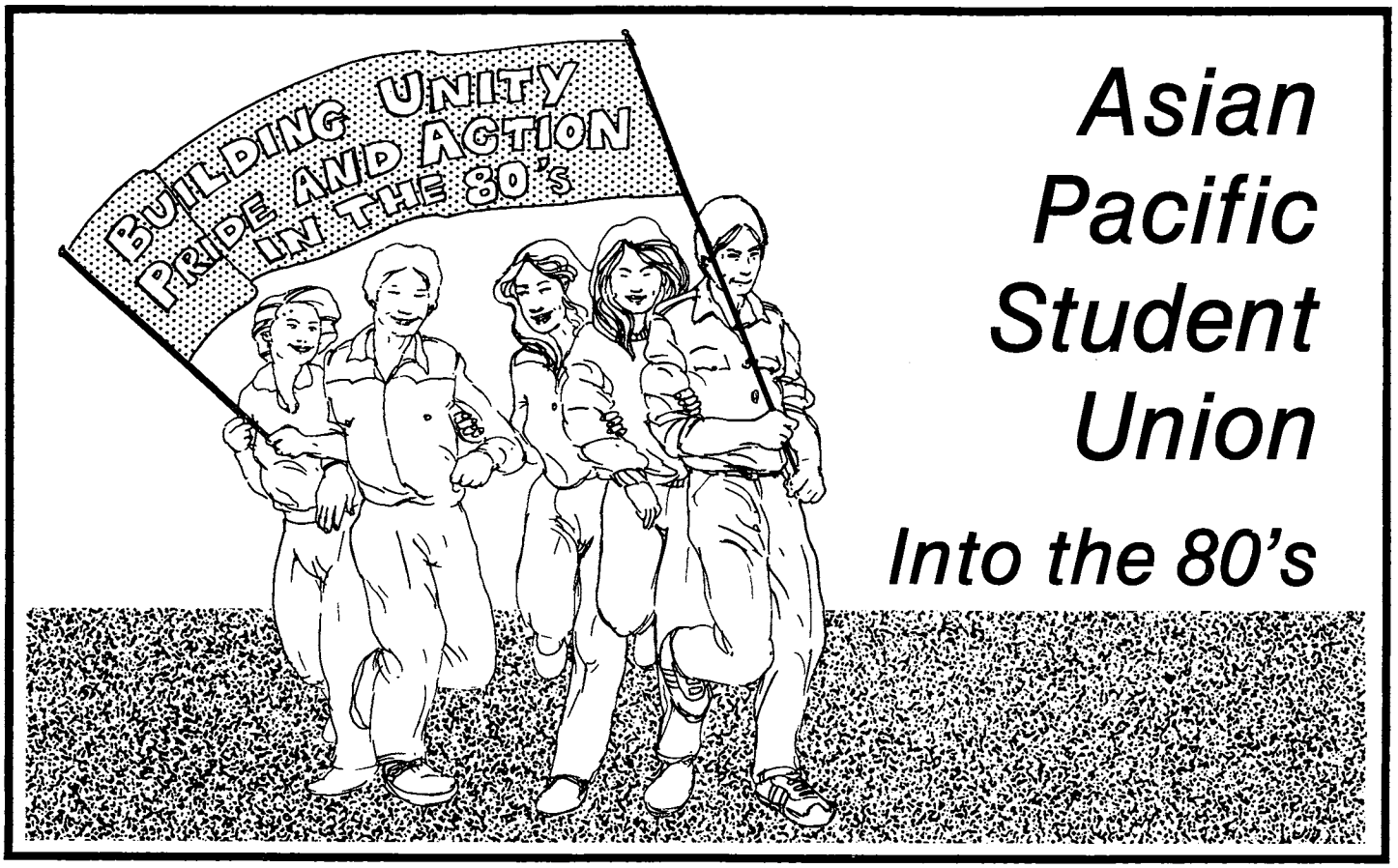
Today, students are in the midst of a movement, galvanizing various Asian nationalities together to challenge rising anti-Asian racism in its ugliest form: racist violence. The cases of Vincent Chin in Detroit, Thong Hy Huynh in Davis and other similar violent incidents bring home a clear message to Asian students: no matter what educational or economic gains individuals can achieve, Asian people still don't have equality and still don't have true political power.

On the campuses themselves, Asian student organizations face the critical challenge of confronting the attacks upon the educational rights of Third World and working class students. Fifteen years ago, Asian students fought alongside other Third World and progressive students during the Third World Strikes to open the doors to education. Today, Asian students play an active role in the student movement's struggle to defend those early gains.

The Asian Pacific student movement today is all these things. It is ultimately part of a broader picture — part of the student movement on the campuses; part of the new generation of the Asian national movements — confronting the challenges of the move to the right in society overall, Reaganomics, and deepening class and national stratifications.

The movement provides a vehicle to act — to take a stand, to work together to fight racist violence or attacks on educational rights. Through this process of learning and acting, commitment is built and solidified — a commitment that will carry Asian students today beyond their college years as it has for past generations of Asian students in the struggle for a more just society. □

Erich Nakano *is a senior majoring in Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, and is a member of the ASU.*



Asian Pacific Student Union

Into the 80's

By Hope Nakamura and Paul Lee

"My own involvement in the Asian student movement was based on my desire to find out what being Sansei meant. Being involved in APSU not only helped me learn about my people, it also gave me a clearer purpose for my education. I now see myself as part of the Asian Pacific communities and the struggle for equality that all Third World people are involved with."

— Hope Nakamura

"I immigrated from Hong Kong eight years ago. Within the short time I got involved in APSU, I learned the struggles I went through as an 'F.O.B.' are struggles shared by other Asian students. Seeing and talking to these students helped me to realize that American-born Asians share those struggles. APSU can help us develop our common Asian identity and the role we play in society."

— Paul Lee

New students often ask us about the purpose of the Asian Pacific Student Union (APSU). Our usual reply is that we are a communications network made up of over 20 Asian Pacific student groups in California. APSU promotes the sharing of ideas, resources and experiences so we can support and learn from each other's activities and struggles.

We trace APSU's roots back to the turbulent 60's and early 70's. It is not easy for young people like ourselves to remember or understand that period. It was a time when Asian Pacific students joined other Third World students nationwide demanding access to higher education, rather than access to the front lines of the Viet Nam War. Students brought the growing awareness of our people's ongoing struggle for equality and justice from communities onto the campuses to form Asian student organizations. Much of what APSU stands for today is a legacy from that early period.

APSU itself was founded in 1978, out of a period when the issue of the day was the Bakke Decision — which threatened affirmative action, special admissions, and many of the gains students had won in the 60's. Thousands of students, joining with Third World communities were organizing between campuses, across the state, and across the country against the Bakke Decision. Out of the excitement and ties that developed between Asian student groups came the birth of APSU.

Since then, we've come a long way. APSU has put on major annual conferences drawing hundreds of Asian students together to discuss and act upon important issues and interests. In the regionals — Southern Cal, Sacramento, Bay Area, South Bay — a wide range of social, cultural and educational activities have involved many more. Community activism has been a big part of APSU all along.

We've found strength in numbers, whether in brainstorming on activities

or figuring out problems, calling out racism in a school newspaper, supporting issues like Chol Soo Lee or the fight for Japanese American redress and reparations.

We've learned that even with the diversity in the interests and priorities of our various member organizations, we have a solid basis of unity. Concerns around building our identity, our education, building pride in our culture, and promoting equality for our people are shared among us all. Sharing different ideas and experiences have helped many of us to build better student organizations.

In the process of working together, we have all come to affirm and reaffirm the importance of an ongoing network like APSU that can unite and build a strong Asian student movement. It has helped us understand that struggles on our individual campuses are struggles Asian students face statewide. Communications between the East Coast Asian Student Union and APSU show us the movement is not in California alone. Tuition increases and the dismantling of Ethnic Studies, for example, are part of the inequities that all Asian students face. In fact, they are part of the inequities all our people face, in the communities and on campus.

Currently, we're seeing a pressing need to work with other progressive student groups in building a united front in the student movement against attacks on our educational rights. We formed an educational rights task force out of last February's APSU Conference to investigate the issues. We've participated in the formation of STERN (Statewide Educational Rights Network). Learning from the struggles of Chicano students in MEChA, and understanding the concerns of various progressive student groups have strengthened APSU's commitment to build up this united front.

APSU starts off as an adventure through the Asian American experience. In the process of trying to understand ourselves better, we learn that many struggles must be waged among ourselves and within society. And as we struggle, our commitment grows.

APSU is a tool we can use to fight the inequities our people face. With the unity we build in APSU, we know we can make change to better our condition. □

Hope Nakamura *was a 1982–83 Coordinating Committee member. She graduated from Stanford and is now attending UCLA Law School.*

Paul Lee *is currently a Coordinating Committee member. He is a senior majoring in industrial technology at San Jose State.*

Pilipino Students Standing Strong

By Pat Catolico

The publishing of this issue of *EAST WIND* coincides with the beginning of another school year. We've got quite a juggling act ahead of us. As we gear up for another round of academia, we are also gearing up for our Pilipino Student Organizations (PSO's).

The stereotype has it that we are mainly socially oriented, and we are pretty keen at organizing social and cultural events (cultural nights, dances, *lumpia* sales), but doesn't it bother us to think that that's all we are good at or even capable of doing? On the other hand, what polarizes us? Is it true that we are politically amorphous? If we "chance" to address politics, are we shunned for being too radical? Successfully unraveling the social/political knot will not be credited to rash and random pulling. Finding solutions to our predicament is not necessarily resigning ourselves to doing only either social or political (we have the potential to do both), nor is it suggesting that we need to be social first and then political (we can be both within a given period of time), but more importantly asking the question: What does it mean (for our PSO's) to address the needs of Pilipino students? What is the role/purpose of our PSO's?

Let's start at a common reference point — we are more or less familiar with the fact that Cultural Night is

UNITY Newspaper

Pat Catolico

"the event" (of the year) on our agendas, and unmistakably so. In many respects, Cultural Night represents the unifying theme of our existence. Yet, it is only one aspect of our work. We need forums for not only traditional, artistic, culinary, and popular expression, but also for dealing with the issues that impact and shape our daily lives (what's happening in our Pilipino communities, what's happening to our education, what's happening in the Philippines?). Addressing issues and politics is a necessary aspect of our work within PSO's.

Within the last year, the struggle for educational rights has been a major campaign for the vast majority of students — fee hikes, budget cuts, imposition of first-time tuitions are hitting us left and right. Pilipino students have been waging their share of the battle also. In the Fall of 1982, the University of California (U.C.) system decided to no longer recognize Pilipino students as being eligible for admission under affirmative action on the assertion that we had reached parity, i.e., that we were adequately represented at U.C. Members of the Pilipino American Alliance (PAA), the Pilipino student organization at U.C. Berkeley, were numbed by the cold and indifferent informality by which the decision was "passed on" to us — via a front page article in the student newspaper. We were the group who would be directly affected by the decision and we had not even been consulted!!

Raising the issue to our general membership brought many questions: Why do we need affirmative action? What is the University implying by dropping Pilipino students from affirmative action? Some claimed that we no longer needed it; that we were "qualified" students already. Discussion and debate continued, and finally we united on taking a stand. Affirmative action was necessary to redress the historic exclusion of Pilipinos from higher education. Furthermore, our upcoming generation of Pilipino brothers and sisters had every right to access higher education. An ad hoc committee emerged and immediately drafted an open letter to the Administration, citing U.C.'s failure to solicit our input

U.C. Berkeley, 1983

in the decision making process, and demanding our reinstatement on affirmative action. Tick, tock, tick, tock . . . no response from the Administration. Did they care?

Figuring out a strategy and tactics prompted another round of struggle and debate. We decided that staging a protest and rally would be the most effective means to articulate our concerns and demands. The questions poured out: Would people show? (they sure did — where did all those Pilipino students come from?) Were we being too militant? (no) Would we pull it off? If it was not the most spirited display of U.C. Berkeley Pilipino student unity in years, then maybe we were sleeping — but I know we weren't sleeping! The rally highlighted countless lessons for us: Firstly, that taking action fundamentally dispelled the many stereotypes of Pilipino students; we proved that we are not passive, apathetic, and indifferent to what is going on around us. Taking a stand, articulating our concerns and demands was the right thing to do; being political can unite us, can be a valid aspect of our work, and can be fun, too!

Secondly, we are not alone! If Pilipino students are dropped from affirmative action, then who is next — Chicano, Black and/or Native American students? Affirmative action is a campus-wide issue; we need to build multinational unity and look to our MEChA's, ASU's and other Third World and progressive student organizations for support.

The issue is bringing us together not only at our own campuses, but regionally as well. At the last Asian Pacific Student Union (APSU) Statewide Conference at SF State in February, at least one quarter of those students attending were Pilipino. This reflects a significant increase and interest in our participation in APSU, and the potential for support and motion around the AA issue is already affirming its impact. UCSD Samahang Pilipino staged a militant rally and march just weeks after the APSU Conference. U.C. Davis Mga Kapatid immediately drafted a support statement following word of the UCB PAA rally. SF State PACE (Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor) has taken a stand also. Yet although the issue is particular to Pilipino students, it is one that concerns all Asian students. The affirmative action issue for Pilipino students received overwhelming support at the APSU Conference because it is a key issue we can unite on in refuting and challenging the increasing media stereotyping of Asians as having made it, as being the "model minority." We need to challenge the claim that Asians are overrepresented in institutions of higher learning.

Finally, we can effect change — our efforts finally moved the U.C. Administration to reinstate Pilipino students on affirmative action for one more year. The reinstatement was a clear victory, but not an end in itself. What does the future hold for affirmative action? What other issues will come up? As Pilipino students, we need to be able to look at the broader picture and see ourselves as part of it. Our roles and contributions are distinct, yet varied. We need to stand strong. We are only beginning to make waves. □

Patricia Catolico *is a student at U.C. Berkeley majoring in Nutrition and Food Science. She is the educational officer of the Pilipino American Alliance.*

ECASU: Strength Through Collective Action

By Lynn Yokoe

We could say that the East Coast Asian Student Union (ECASU) began in 1978, but that wouldn't be historically accurate. We could trace its origins to the Asian nationality clubs of the 30's and 40's but that would take too long. It makes more sense to examine ECASU as an outgrowth of the Asian student movement of the late 60's and early 70's.

The now-legendary 60's coined and popularized slogans like "Asian Unity" and "yellow power." Inspired by the Black liberation movement, the Asian peoples' movements grew, reaching across nationality lines and into communities, workplaces and campuses. New Asian student organizations emerged out of the struggle for Asian representation on the college campuses. They forged the way for Asian Studies — the right to learn about our people's history and contributions. These new groups gave an organizational form for the Asian student movement to continue and grow. By combining political activism with services, educational programs, social and cultural events, they involved students from diverse backgrounds and with all kinds of interests. Inter-campus activities were part of the picture from the beginning but these activities were sporadic and limited.

The late 70's drew the campus organizations together as activists looked for answers to increased cutbacks on minority programs, the dropping Asian admissions rate, and the "reverse discrimination" rationale for attacks on Third World people. The conservative trend in society was seeing its impact on the campuses. On the East Coast, the Inter-Collegiate Liaison Committee (ICLC) formed in reaction to the Bakke issue to bring together Asian students and insure the continuation of minority programs. Out of this motion came the 1978 Unity conference at Princeton University where ECASU was founded with regions in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas. The founding of ECASU was followed by the development of the Asian Pacific Student Union (APSU) on the West Coast and the Mid West Asian Pacific American Student Association Network (MAPASAN). These networks heightened the consciousness of the Asian student movement, raised the level of organization, and set a strong basis for collective action.

With the birth of ECASU, Asian students saw that their campus clubs were part of a broader and larger motion. ECASU allowed activists and memberships to communicate through newsletters and journals. Through East Coast-wide meetings, they exchanged lessons and campus and community resources, and deepened their analysis and strategy for tackling the problems facing Asian students. Cultural pride, combatting isolation for the distant clubs, equal access to the campus for Asians, community awareness and support, unity with Third World and other progressive struggles are both our past and current themes.

ECASU coordinated Asian History Month as Asian student groups sponsored events on their campuses throughout the East Coast every November. Opposition to the infamous Bakke decision's "reverse discrimination" cry, where affirmative action and special admissions for minorities were labeled as discriminatory against whites, became a focal point of the clubs and therefore, of ECASU. The campaign to save C.C.N.Y.'s Asian American Studies Dept. — the only one remaining on the entire East Coast — received letters of support and hundreds of petitions from as far away as Oberlin, Ohio. Huge dances and cultural events introduced a new era of fundraising and "Asians getting together." Conferences of over 200 people gave the movement a sense of its own significance and breadth.

At last year's Mid-Atlantic conference, many remarks reflected why scores of organizations join ECASU: "I've never seen so many Asians all together in my life." "I never realized we could have such an impact on college admissions policies. I always thought — we're only students, what can we do?" Our "Asian Students In Action" conference urged new students to become active in their clubs and in their communities. It stressed the need to train ourselves as leadership, define our own destinies, and continue to contribute to our movement. The conference was particularly significant in reaffirming the goals and direction of ECASU: it was the Mid-Atlantic's first since a split in 1978.

In the fall of 1978, the Mid-Atlantic region of ECASU separated from New England, and by the following spring, ceased functioning. These events were initiated by a small group of individuals in the Mid-Atlantic who failed to work towards unity in the face of different opinions on how to build the network. Instead of trying to resolve the questions in an open and principled manner, they launched personal attacks on two representatives with whom they disagreed. Innuendo, suspicion and distrust predominated. For example, one rep was publicly browbeaten for trying to "sabotage the newsletter" when his article was two days late. Two entire organizations were locked out of the meeting which decided to kick out

those clubs' elected ECASU reps. Confused and demoralized, students dropped out and the destruction of ECASU's Mid-Atlantic region was complete.

After a two-year void, the Mid-Atlantic regrouped in 1980 and today has a functioning network. The destruction of the Mid-Atlantic demonstrates the importance of mutual respect and the open airing of views as we work together towards our goals. We must keep in mind the fundamental purpose of the ECASU: to unify Asian students so that our collective strength will effect change.

The Columbia Conference was the culmination of years of rebuilding and brought together over 250 enthusiastic people from 27 Asian and Asian nationality campus organizations. Its great success reaffirmed the importance of ECASU. It represented the maturity and heightened sophistication of the Asian student movement on the East Coast and the strength of the individual organizations.

Chian Chip Ma

1982 ECASU Mid-Atlantic conference at Columbia.

Our student groups strive in various ways to bring together, raise the consciousness, and unite the Asians on campuses. From the cities to the middle of mountains with sporadic access to the few Asian communities on the East Coast, the clubs are often the only places to go for education about Asian American history, psychological reinforcement, advocacy, advice and support, or even a little Asian food. They introduce Asian identity, community awareness, Asian American singers, musicians, writers and speakers to unfamiliar ears. At Penn, Yale, U. Mass-Boston, and other schools, we tutor and learn from the experiences of newly arrived Asian immigrants. We become aware of and give support to Black, Latino, and Native American struggles through the Third World Centers like those at Princeton and Brown.

Drawing on this collective strength and experience of the member organizations, ECASU, Mid-Atlantic (MA) and ECASU, New England (NE) have flourished and grown. We have held successful Asian Coffeehouses and Asian Spring Festivals, featuring performers and drawing audiences from the different campus organizations. Through the network, the stronger and larger clubs have provided invaluable assistance and support for the new and smaller clubs.

Through ECASU we have been able to contribute to making change in our communities through the force of our collective action. We have come out in numbers to protest racist films like *Charlie Chan*. We've voiced our concerns in community board meetings for better housing conditions in Chinatown and the ever threatening city plan of gentrification. We submitted testimony and spoke at the Commission hearings on Redress and Reparations in New York. Annually, the Mid-Atlantic participates in the Asian Pacific Heritage Day Fair; the New England,in the Dragon Boat Festival. On the campuses we have lent support to countless other concerns: justice for Chol Soo Lee and Vincent Chin, and in the process deepened our understanding of what it means to be Asian in America. Upon graduation, most of us help make up the moving, progressive force in Chinatowns and other community groups — utilizing our skills and professions to better the lives of our people.

We are planning for the Sixth Annual Asian College Days in Boston and New York Chinatown, targeting inner-city, economically disadvantaged Chinese and other Asian youth. Student organizations and/or Asian recruitment committees set up booths and jointly present bilingual workshops on financial aid and application/interview pointers. In this way, ECASU has been able to reinforce, complement, and maximize the individual efforts of the campus clubs. Regional surveys, rap sessions, strategy-sharing, and an East Coast-wide Task Force help develop an overview of the issue, previously impossible for any single organization.

This spring opens yet another chapter: the ECASU, MA and ECASU, NE will jointly sponsor an East Coast conference for the first time in four years. Linking up the two regions again will open even more possibilities for growth and expansion. The strength and breadth of the Asian Student movement is indeed on the move. The future is bright; the future is ours. □

Lynn Yokoe *is a student at C.C.N.Y. She is on the Executive Committee of the ECASU/MA.*

ECASU IN MOVEMENT

By Lydia Lowe

We packed six or seven bodies per rented car and drove west on the Massachusetts Turnpike.

The leaves were still green along the Pike. We talked about courses and homework, fall plans for the Asian clubs, dorm food, the global situation, inter-campus gossip and redevelopment in Boston Chinatown. Somewhere around Chicopee, a freshperson from Harvard remarked, "I've never seen a Chinatown. What are they like?"

It was the fall semester's first meeting of the East Coast Asian Student Union/New England . . .

Founded in 1978, the East Coast Asian Student Union/New England (ECASU/NE) is a network of Asian student organizations from about 15 campuses in the central New England states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. We work to strengthen the Asian student movement by strengthening the campus clubs as social, cultural, political and educational outlets.

Interest in ECASU might just as often grow from personal curiosity as from collective outreach. But for suburbanites and townies alike, "getting involved" is a learning process — bringing us together, organizing for action, involving us in the lives and struggles of our peoples.

This academic year, ECASU is coordinating efforts to increase Asian admissions to the university. Our fall semester Asian College Day complemented the recruitment work of individual campus groups and helped Boston's youth examine alternatives for their futures. The weekend included a workshop for college students on the history and status of Asian admissions, reminding us why we've held College Day every fall for six years. Throughout the year, an Admissions Task Force will compile and publish the statistics from the campuses in an East Coast analysis of the issues. This much-needed manual will bare the story of declining admission rates and anti-Asian biases too long glossed over by the "model minority" image. (For a sneak preview, see "Admissions: Impossible" in *Bridge*, Vol. 8, No. 3.)

Asian American Spirit, a collection of original graphics and writings from ECASU's member campuses, is in its second year of publication.

Our Spring 1984 conference will be held at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, this March. Jointly sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic and New England ECASUs, the conference will merge the two regions into a functioning East Coast-wide network, separated since 1978. Scheduled events include workshops and speakers on admissions and an expertly DJ'ed party.

With a lot of new blood and a strong constitution, it looks like a good year for ECASU. □

Lydia Lowe *is a student at UMass-Boston and active in the East Coast Asian Student Union/New England.*

By Mae Lee

The ECASU, Mid-Atlantic and the ECASU, New England are now in the middle of organizing their first joint conference which will take place March, 1984. The conference will link up the two regions and promote even greater unity among the different sectors of students on the East Coast. The past three years have been very exciting and busy ones for the ECASU Mid-Atlantic. We have concentrated our efforts on attracting as many students as possible from many different schools.

We have also worked very hard to strengthen the ties that have developed between member organizations through activities such as the Asian Spring Festival. The individual members in ECASU have also been strengthened. In the upcoming year, we will continue to work along these lines and in addition to that, there are still questions that we need to address even more.

Here on the East Coast the student make-up is very diverse. There are many immigrants as well as Asian Americans. The City University of New York and the State University of New York are two of the largest networks of public schools in this country. There are thousands of Asian students who attend these schools. Increased tuition and cutbacks in financial aid and bilingual education make it more important than ever for ECASU to try even harder in encouraging immigrant and working class students to become active in their Asian student organization and in ECASU. Through learning from the differences we can continue to address and meet the needs of the students. There is a greater need to unite immigrant and American born students, students from private schools and public schools. There is also a need to draw in more groups like the Chinese Students Association and Korean Students Association as well as the Asian American Student Associations.

For ECASU this will mean organizing events and programs that will enable all students to work together. We will need to find out the interests and goals of immigrant students and students from the city and state schools. Through workshops, group discussions and talks on a one-to-one basis, we want to be able to bring out these different ideas and to be able to understand each other better. □

Mae Lee *is a graduate student in Engineering at City College of New York and on the steering committee of the ECASU, Mid-Atlantic.*

Fighting For Our Educational Rights

Interview with Karen Umemoto, Asian student activist

EAST WIND: How did you become involved in the Asian student movement and in the educational rights campaign?

Karen Umemoto: I grew up thinking that Asians have made it and that I should join them. In Gardena, California, which has the largest concentration of Japanese Americans on the mainland, the mayor, city councilmen, many small business owners, my high school counselor, and even our state senator were all Japanese Americans . . . what more could we ask? . . . . At least that's what they want us to think.

I heard about evictions happening in Little Tokyo. Longtime residents were kicked out of their homes to make way for big business from Japan. I was pretty outraged by the fact that there was clearly a need for more decent, low-income housing for the community, and here they were building an expensive tourist hotel. So I got more involved in the issue through the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization. I started taking some Asian American Studies classes and realized a lot of other things about Asian people. Mainly that, sure, we may have some token representation, but we have no real political power or equality in this country. I learned of battered wives of U.S. servicemen, INS raids of Japanese restaurants, cuts in social service programs, racist Supreme Court rulings like the Bakke decision, and U.S. support for the only remaining apartheid government of South Africa. I couldn't understand how they could say Asians, or any one else for that matter, have "made it." Not only are there many Asian people living below poverty level, but we as a whole don't have real say over the economic, social, or political conditions we live under.

A couple of years ago, another wave of cuts started coming down on education to the point that today, education is considered one of the biggest statewide issues in California. For Asian people, this was really important because we always fought hard and worked hard to get an education. Not only the right to go to school, but our right to learn about our history, struggles and contributions of Asian people came only after mass protest. Now, even those basic rights are threatened and we can't afford to let the government and university boards turn back the clock. A lot of us in the Asian Student Union at San Francisco State looked into what was happening and got involved. We felt that as students we should take up the educational rights issue and take it up as part of our struggle for democratic rights, full equality and political power and to improve the lives of the majority of our people.

"With ethnic studies teaching us our history . . . we threaten them with becoming more than mere "good workers," but people conscious of our identity and willing to take charge over our future."

EAST WIND: How are educational policies affecting Asian students?

Karen Umemoto: I think it's affecting us in a number of ways: fee increases are changing the class composition of students and we're seeing more exclusively middle class and upper middle class Asian students in the universities. At the same time that fees are rising, financial aid is being cut. At San Francisco State, one-third of all Asian students are on some form of financial aid. On top of this, the Solomon Amendment requires proof of draft registration for all draft-age men, before they'll release the money. A lot of low-income students are being driven out of school and many of them into the military.

Changing admissions policies are cutting out Asian students, too. This last year, the U.C. Board of Regents tried to cut Pilipinos out of affirmative action. This year, the California University and Colleges (CSUC) board of trustees is trying to undermine the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP), the special admissions program that admits students who don't meet the regular admissions requirements. They're also raising entrance requirements. I know that at the Cal State universities, they raised the English requirement to four years of English not including ESL. They're putting more emphasis on standardized test scores. Some inner city high schools don't even offer

four years of English. Asian immigrants will have less of a chance of getting into college.

Some universities are using the rationale that "Asians are over-represented" as an unwritten policy for denying us admissions to departments like engineering and computer science. This "over-representation" argument shows the hypocrisy of the universities. On the one hand, they use statistics — like 20% Asians at U.C. Berkeley — on Asian enrollment to prove how high minority enrollment is, and how Asians have made it. But at the same time, they use those statistics *against us* to deny us minority service and support programs, and to put ceilings on our enrollment. It's really racist when you think about it — you never hear administrators saying there are "too many" whites, or that whites are "over-represented."

I think the other way it's affecting us is just by the content of education these days; everything is so specialized and technically oriented. I mean, that's okay, but only as long as people can get a fairly well-rounded education that also deals with values, ideals, history, philosophy . . . or else we'll be cranking out technically skilled specialists with no moral judgment . . . that's dangerous. It's been well documented how the universities were established and developed to serve the changing labor needs of big business and government. I guess the most blatant example now is the U.C. ties to the Livermore Labs which is one of two nuclear testing labs that all nuclear weapons have gone through.

This "mission of higher learning" explains why they keep chiseling away at Asian American and ethnic studies. With ethnic studies teaching us our history of inequality, heritage and struggle and instilling pride in our culture, we threaten them with becoming more than mere "good workers," but people conscious of our identity and willing to take charge over our future. That's how important to us and threatening to them ethnic studies is. Programs are now being cut, like the one at U.C. Riverside, and even efforts to try to expand ethnic studies are meeting obstacles. A bill was introduced in the State Assembly last year which would make ethnic studies a general education requirement for the U.C.'s, Cal State's and community colleges. Even in a state with an almost 60% Third World population, the bill was voted down. I guess this isn't surprising given the fact that it took a massive movement which even shut down universities in the 60's to win ethnic studies in the first place . . . a statement indicating how little conditions have changed since the 60's.

Karen Umemoto

EAST WIND: What is being done to protest the cuts and fee increases?

Karen Umemoto: Because of the severity of cuts, all kinds of people are taking it up. People from student government associations, student organizations, and statewide networks like the MEChA and Asian Pacific Student Union (APSU) are involved. People are using every tactic from lobbying, voter registration for the '84 elections, to networking, demonstrating, and doing mass education on the campuses. Some campuses are actively taking up struggles at their schools like the EOP issue.

A growing number of Asian student organizations are getting involved. This year, the statewide APSU formed an educational rights task force to compile and distribute information and solicit input to formalize a position paper that would express the particular concerns of Asian students. The task force will be reaching other campuses to get involved and find out what's happening.

One really significant development this year was the formation of a statewide network called the Statewide Educational Rights Network (STERN), which includes students and organizations from the three campus systems . . . J.C.'s, Cal State's and U.C.'s . . . and private colleges. Its unity is built on "mutual respect for various political views, the need to involve and struggle for the particular concerns of Third World students, and the need to seek and secure broad support among the majority of students and people in our communities." (STERN Statement of Purpose) STERN is trying to coordinate activities so the different forms of protest can complement each other effectively. Along with voter registration, there's a major action being planned for the Spring of '84 before the '84–'85 state budget is passed.

EAST WIND: What kind of campus organizing has happened?

Karen Umemoto: My main experience in the Asian student movement was at San Francisco State. We have a strong ASU and worked with other Asian and Third World student organizations. We're part of a Third World coalition, called the United People of Color for National Liberation (UPCNL) along with six other Third World student groups. We found out through "leaks" and our own investigation that there were plans to decentralize the EOP program. We organized a lot of support on campus and initiated a rally in Sacramento and brought nine busloads from our campus. We worked with other concerned organizations and put enough pressure to get a bill passed preventing the decentralization for a year. That was really a big victory. We were able to do broad education around the issue, raise student consciousness, and build the movement on campus.

EAST WIND: What kinds of questions have you faced in organizing Asian students?

Karen Umemoto: Involving more Asian students and building the Asian student movement is not an easy

thing. We're all trying to figure it out, and I think we're learning a lot. The whole conservative trend in the country is making it harder in general. People have to work more, are under pressure from parents to stick to the books and the four-year plan, and there's more competition. Education is so narrow; people don't readily understand the significance of the struggle and general inequalities that we face and that they'll even face after they graduate. So a lot of our task is to re-educate. Find out more information on what *is* happening on our campuses and in our communities and let students know. We need to figure out how people can get involved, given the time that they have. We need to encourage a lot of discussion; that's the only way people can learn and even evaluate what's important to their own lives and figure out how to change things, especially when there's so much individualism promoted on campus . . . it's all-out for Number One . . . . We have to promote more camaraderie and collectivity . . . . If one is unequal, we're all unequal.

The struggle for educational rights has to be built in a broad way so that it not only raises the issue of education, but the issue of equality and political power for Asian people in general. To do this, we should link up different issues happening in our communities with educational rights so people see it's all just one basic struggle. Bringing in community support for ethnic studies and EOP can help in this. The campaign should be waged in a creative way, too, building a sense of pride in our history and heritage and a sense of justice in what we're fighting for. We should also tap the creativity of Asian students on campus, using culture to express our feelings and views.

Sometimes it's not that easy, especially bucking a system that doesn't serve our needs. Sometimes people resign themselves to feeling powerless. I feel that way sometimes, but it's a fact that those who control the universities and colleges are few and they can't run them without the students. The same is true for society at large. So for those concerned, we have to all try to collectively figure out how we can make change. It's a critical time all the way around and as students, it is hard to get a well-rounded education, confront questions of society and get involved in making needed change. Sure, there are some activists who have become cynical, but it is also a fact that people have always made change, from the time of slavery until today. Sometimes it seems slow or non-monumental, but it is up to us to figure it out or speed it up. Getting to know people, figuring out how to incorporate the positive ideas that they have, and collectively come up with ideas to build the movement and effect progressive change is key. Building broad, mass organizations is important to facilitate the collective discussion and action. □

Karen Umemoto *is an activist in the Asian Pacific Student Union. She is currently a graduate student at UCLA.*

Lawyers, Law School and the Community

By Roy Nakano

For years, I have heard people say that they would like to become lawyers so that they can "serve the community." My immediate reaction was always the same: "What's stopping you from serving it now?" Heading up the local bar association or attending cocktail parties in a three-piece suit or participating in an endless exchange of business cards never struck me as an avenue for helping those most in need of help. Indeed, I believed that there were too many lawyers and far too many people who wanted to go to law school.

However, being out of school for seven years and working in various sectors of the local community has convinced me that this does not necessarily hold true, particularly in regard to servicing Third World and other low-income people. A series of events have taken place that led me to this conclusion.

My own decision to pursue a legal education was galvanized in the movement to seek redress for the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated over 40 years ago. My direct involvement with this particular movement dates back to Spring, 1979, when a group of us formed the Los Angeles Community Coalition on Redress/Reparations (LACCRR). LACCRR became a forerunner for a national grassroots movement towards redress. One year later, the foundation was laid for the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR).

Roy Nakano

Many gains were and are being made through the redress effort. I soon realized, however, that few people with legal expertise in Los Angeles were involved in this particular issue. For that matter, I realized that relatively few lawyers were involved in community issues I believed were important. For instance, it astounds me at times to think that it took the community 40 years to successfully challenge the Supreme Court decision that legally justified the evacuation order against Japanese Americans.

Today, the ratio of Japanese and Chinese American lawyers remains significantly lower than that of the dominant white population. Even more alarming, however, is the lack of lawyers involved in community issues. The situation is even more intense in other Asian/Pacific American communities. The Pilipino community, for instance, exists with one lawyer for every 8,000 Pilipino Americans, according to a recent Census report. There are more Samoans in Southern California than in American Samoa. Yet, there are virtually no Samoan lawyers in Southern California. In all Asian communities the needs far outstrip the available legal services.

Law has a certain community appeal. It is one of the few fields that cuts across all economic lines. Blue-collar workers can use the services of a lawyer as much as white-collar workers. Lawyers can exercise mobility in ways not always open to non-lawyers. Access inside jailhouses is one example of this. Access to the courts is another. We live in a country that is governed, for the most part, by laws. Although the power behind knowing the law is often overblown, it does exist and it can sometimes be used for the benefit of the community.

Affirmative Action

At first glance, the obstacles that many Third World students face in seeking admission into law school appear insurmountable. At UCLA Law School, a poll was taken in one of the first-year sections, revealing that one-fourth to one-third of the class consisted of (white) students whose parents were attorneys. A large number of the students come from preparatory school backgrounds and have been groomed for law since entering high school.

These facts can be discouraging to Third World students thinking about law as a career alternative, particularly for those who have spent their time working their way through public schools. One fellow Asian law student at UCLA was so discouraged that he didn't bother to apply. His sister took the initiative to fill out an application for him and sent it to UCLA. Ironically, this student is now one of the recruitment coordinators for the Asian/Pacific Law Students Association at UCLA.

My own background is a typical case for affirmative action. During my formative years, my father suffered a stroke and was forced to quit his gardening route that he had maintained for 20 years. After years as a homemaker, my mother took on outside employment working on an assembly line for General Instruments Corporation. She was eventually laid off, and I eventually became the head of the household, working 30 hours a week while continuing school.

Neither of my parents went beyond elementary school for formal education. Surprisingly enough, I had not been informed of this until the night before submitting my law school application. As it turned out, this fact was kept from me for fear that it might affect my desire to pursue higher education.

I have always felt a definite connection between my background and my involvement with the Asian community in Los Angeles. This connection later played an important role in making practical sense out of law school study.

Law School: Rite of Passage or Indoctrination?

During my first year in law school, I was struck by the amount of pressure that permeated in the hallways to conform to an established ideology. Most of the professors had automatically assumed that students want to go into large corporate firms in order to make a lot of money. Thus, even in seemingly minority-conscious classes such as immigration law (taken during my second year), we spent an entire hour learning how to bring domestic servants into this country for those who could afford their services. Some students, fortunately, have taken affirmative measures. One professor, for example, was persuaded by progressive students in one of the property law classes to cover landlord-tenant issues.

Working with the Asian/Pacific Law Students Association (APLSA) at UCLA has allowed me to maintain a certain touch with reality.

"The community should define the role played by community lawyers. Court litigation, however, always carries the potential of reversing the roles, in which the lawyers begin dictating the role of the community."

APLSA programs as well as other programs held by progressive law student organizations have provided some of the connections between law and the community in ways that classes usually do not. The mutual work between Third World law student groups has also provided me with a broader view in which to examine and do something about the critical issues facing many similarly situated people and communities.

This past summer, I had the fortune of being able to work at the Asian Law Caucus in the San Francisco Bay Area. My supervising attorney once told a story about how he almost got kicked out of law school. Apparently, he was very active with the Third World law student coalition on that campus, which in turn had impacted his grades. The dean of the school called him into the office one day and stated, "Well, there is a chance you'll graduate from this law school. But, there is no chance that you'll pass the bar, so why don't you quit now." Fortunately, he ignored the advice and ended up passing the bar on his first attempt.

Community Law

The first image that comes into my mind when I think of a "community" lawyer is someone working for a government-funded neighborhood law co-operative. I still consider this to be an area of great need for the Asian/Pacific American communities. However, I have since learned that the problem is not a lack of people who want to pursue this area. On the contrary, numerous law students at UCLA — both Asian and non-Asian — have expressed interest in working in such a capacity. The problem lies in the lack of job openings in public interest law. The question then is: "What alternatives are available to students who would like to practice 'community law?'"

It has at times been suggested that Third World lawyers are needed in corporate firms just as much as they are needed in public interest firms. I've always believed that the degree of need varied considerably between the two. However, the point is still well taken. The Committee to Reverse the Japanese American Wartime Cases, for instance, received the legal assistance and resources of volunteer, large-firm lawyers.

Between the two ends of the spectrum, however, there is a growing gray area consisting of several alternatives. One alternative taken by some progressive lawyers has

been to start up an independent practice, specializing in areas such as union-side labor, immigration, criminal defense, landlord-tenant, or employment discrimination. An attractive aspect of this alternative has been the freedom to set one's own hours. Small-firm lawyers always seem to have more time for community work. Large-firm lawyers are often working so many hours (60 to 70 hours per week) that they have little time for anything else. Still other alternatives taken by progressive lawyers have included teaching, writing, or pursuing other legally-related work such as public policy planning and administration.

I believe that a legal education can be applied in many ways to change conditions in our communities that need changing. However, I also believe that the limitations of legal channels must be recognized in the context of solving community problems. Community-based organizing and pressure is often a more efficient and effective avenue towards a remedy than court litigation. Moreover, the lawyer's relation to the community can sometimes follow the analogy of the "tail wagging the dog." The community should define the role played by community lawyers. Court litigation, however, always carries the potential of reversing the roles, in which the lawyers begin dictating the role of the community. Hopefully, through the remainder of my legal education, I can get a clearer grasp of these legal limitations as well as a better understanding of the viable legal avenues that can best be used to help those most in need of help. □

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UNITY Newspaper

Asian Students formed an important part of the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition in 1977.

Students and Revolution

From Self-Awareness to Political Consciousness

By Marilyn Wu

My recent graduation from college and queries from friends and family about my future — whether I intend to go to graduate school or get a job — led me to pause a moment to reflect upon my years as an activist in the Asian student movement. My experiences during these years, more than anything else, shaped my world outlook and direction in life. Through organizing Asian students, I became a communist.

My early student years were turbulent ones colored mostly by conflicts stemming from my identity crisis. Seeking to develop a real sense of being an Asian American woman, I became involved in Asian student groups at San Francisco State University and later at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. I was also active in the East Coast Asian Student Union, a network of campus Asian organizations.

My commitment to the Asian student movement was motivated initially by a desire for personal enrichment, self-awareness and ethnic consciousness but it developed into a desire to serve Asian people and to build a movement to change the society that oppressed us. Through Asian American studies courses and student-sponsored events I discovered that I was not alone in my struggle for self-definition and self-respect, that my identity crisis was part of the collective experiences of Asians in the U.S. Just as my life was part of the 130 year history of oppression of Asians, my activism in the movement was part of the history of resistance.

The Asian student movement serves the interests of Asians on campus by providing social and cultural outlets, promoting issues affecting Asians (e.g. non-racist admissions policies, adequate financial aid, support and implementation of Asian American studies programs, condemning violence against Asians) and connecting the campus struggles to the Asian communities and the overall Asian movement. It encompasses a broad spectrum of individuals, trends and points of view.

I first worked with communists on a celebration for International Women's Day. The first shock of my organizing life occurred when I was asked to help write the keynote address; the second, when I was asked to give it. Thinking that I was not particularly intelligent, articulate or profound, it was totally beyond my comprehension why others would see these qualities in me. Having no recourse — my pleadings to beg off fell on deaf ears — I confronted my insecurities, and received encouragement and support from my fellow ASU members. Recalling this event still gives me heart palpitations. There, on the stage before a blur of faces, was I — who never spoke a word in any class (the TA's in one Asian American studies course made it their goal to get me to talk before the end of the semester) and whose palms sweated profusely at the prospect of having to speak at meetings. Though this event wasn't hailed as a milestone in Asian student organizing, it was one for me. For the first time I realized I had something to say and, more importantly, that others thought so too. Those most willing to take a gamble with me were the communists and their supporters. This attitude towards working with me helped me to understand how activism and commitment to the movement set the context for personal growth.

A critical part of building up the organized strength of the masses is to train new activists. Too often I have heard ECASU activists commiserate about the ignorance and apathy of students. The freshman class is a lost cause, they'd say; they all believe in the model minority myth. I'd hear Asian student leaders complain that "nobody is behind the admissions issue," and I'd ask them: "What have you done to educate the membership? Why do the frosh believe in the model minority myth?" What helped you change your ideas? (Most of us are not born revolutionaries!) I am glad that movement people wanted to work with me, to educate me out of my sheltered enclave, and to struggle with me about my incorrect attitudes. Communism is not a question of being "lefter than thou." It is a scientific approach to building the people's movements for democracy and justice by relying on the masses and uniting the broadest possible sectors.

Practical leadership to the movement through scientific, Marxist analysis was a key distinguishing feature for which I looked to the communists. But beyond the immediate concerns of the mass movement, I sought from them a long-term view of building a society free of exploitation, oppression and injustice. What the people needed was a revolution to overthrow monopoly capitalism and to establish a socialist society. I was intrigued intellectually with this view, though not entirely convinced of its applicability. My middle class upbringing told me it was "too much." What fed into my skepticism were common distortions of what revolution and revolutionaries are, ranging from, at best, the idealistic preoccupation of a bunch of college students to, at worst, the rantings of social misfits and malcontents. However, the more I was exposed to the realities of American capitalism the more convinced I became that revolution was the only way that we could win equality and justice.

Corky Lee

New York garment workers strike, 1982

"What gives me hope and optimism is witnessing the power of mass struggle, the strength and endurance of the people and the role of good revolutionary leadership."

What brought home the need for revolution was becoming involved in Chinatown through the community support component of the student organizations. Working with residents and activists in struggles to keep Chinatown a community for Chinese people, not for big business, I came face to face with forms of oppression I hadn't known in my life in the suburbs. Nothing exemplified the gross contradictions of capitalism more than the fight to preserve our communities. In Boston, the Chinatown community has been waging a struggle against Tufts New England Medical Center's expansion. It has been taking land and housing from Chinatown while receiving huge tax breaks because it is a teaching institution. It has given nothing to the community in return.

When confronted with seemingly insurmountable odds, some individuals become cynical and drop out of the movement and feel burnt out because they think no real change can happen. But what gives me hope and optimism about our future is witnessing the power of mass struggle, the strength and endurance of the people and the role of good revolutionary leadership in building the movement. Despite the freezing Boston winter, elderly Chinatown residents and young mothers with their children in tow were out there with the rest of us to demand a halt in Tufts' expansion. From being involved in the struggles on campus and in the communities I saw that the communists had deep ties among the people, were respected and provided good leadership in building the movements. I wanted to be a part of a systematic effort to build the revolutionary forces that would one day overthrow the system and build a society free of oppression.

Occasionally, I've been asked, "If I'm a communist, why did I work in ECASU? Aren't communists against nationalism?" First of all, there is nothing nationalistic about ECASU's principles. It does not claim that Asians are superior or that our enemy is white people. Communists believe in multinational unity because the source of our oppression is the monopoly capitalist system. For Asians to win equality and political power, the Asian movement must join with other oppressed nationalities, the working class, the women's, students' and other social movements to establish socialism.

There is nothing contradictory about a communist supporting an organization like ECASU. True multinational unity is built on the basis of equality and respect for each movement. A strong Asian student movement which builds the pride and understanding of Asians in the U.S. enlarges Asian students' capacity to unite with other struggles.

As I leave my school years behind me, I will value the many experiences and lessons gained from my associations with the many talented, enthusiastic and committed individuals on my campus and in the ECASU. Friendships have been built through our common goals and aspirations for our people. Oftentimes our directions in life diverge but our bonds are sealed through our commitment to the movement.

With the last grueling final exam a fading memory, I've "graduated" into a new set of circumstances and questions about my future. But as I go through these transitions what hasn't changed is my commitment to the movement, the framework from which I will make decisions about going to graduate school or getting a job, and in my personal life. The most important message I retain from my student life is that my future is inextricably tied to the destiny of Asian people.

Right now, I'm involved in the Chinatown committee to elect Mel King mayor of Boston. As a Black candidate he offers real changes for minorities in a city riddled with racism. He also offers the most significant progressive changes for the city as a whole. I am also active in Asian Sisters in Action, a local Asian women's group.

Though I'm still contemplating the choices before me regarding my "career," I've made my fundamental decision: I am a communist. My personal satisfaction and fulfillment comes from knowing that I am doing the best I can for myself and my people. □

Marilyn Wu *is a member of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L). She has been a longtime activist in the Asian student movement.*

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1982 ECASU Conference, Boston, Mass.

Serving the Community

A Profile of Ken Kong

"Instead of being a teacher, I wanted to be friends with them. I find it hard to see myself above them . . . because they have more experience than me. I learned a lot from them about Chinese culture."

Mike Fong

Ken Kong

By Eddie Wong

Ken Kong was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to the U.S. when he was 12 years old. He attended the University of California at Berkeley where he got his degree in chemical engineering. Today, he works for Chevron Oil Company in Richmond, California and by all appearances is the typical, successful Chinese American engineer. But that isn't the whole story.

Every Sunday morning you'll find Ken down at the Chinese Progressive Association teaching English to Chinese immigrants. Being involved with the Chinese community is an important part of his life. "I started teaching English classes at CPA in the summer of 1980 when I was still a student at Berkeley," said Ken. "The students were much older than I, but their situation was similar to mine and my parents. I could see how they struggled to learn English and I wanted to contribute in some way."

For Ken's father, a transportation worker, and mother, a part-time seamstress, deciding to move to America meant leaving familiar surroundings and friends to enter an alien society. "Like a lot of immigrants, my parents simply gave up what they had to provide a better future for their children," said Ken. "If I grew up in Hong Kong, I wouldn't have the opportunity to go to college and get a degree, much less an engineering degree." Thus, in 1969, the Kong family moved to Newman, California, a small dusty Central Valley town where Ken's aunt owned a grocery store.

After Ken graduated from high school, he decided to attend U.C. Berkeley and his father, mother, and brother moved with him to the Bay Area. "Even when we lived in the Valley," said Ken, "we would go out once or twice a month to San Francisco Chinatown. I really wanted to be near a Chinese community, so that was the basis of my decision to go to Berkeley.

"When I first got to Berkeley, I know I wasn't prepared for college so I really had to get down to business and study. I really didn't get involved with the Asian Student Union and community activities until later in college.

"When I was a freshman, I took an Asian American studies class to satisfy the history requirement. You would have thought that I would get involved then, but the stuff just went in and out because I was involved more with physics and chemistry. Two years later when I got involved more with the Chinese community, I could see that what is happening today has a historical basis."

Like many immigrant and Asian students, Ken chose a technical field. "I don't know if I really wanted to be an engineer," said Ken. "The way I looked at becoming an engineer was that it was the quickest way I could get out of college and get a fairly stable job with a high placement rate. I think a lot of immigrant students have a lot of pressure to get through college and get a good job. And talking to those who graduated and got an engineering job, they always had family commitments, whether it was putting their brother through school or supporting their family, which was my situation. There's a lot of pressure to go into the technical field even though a lot of people would like to go into liberal arts. But they go into computer science because it will get them a job.

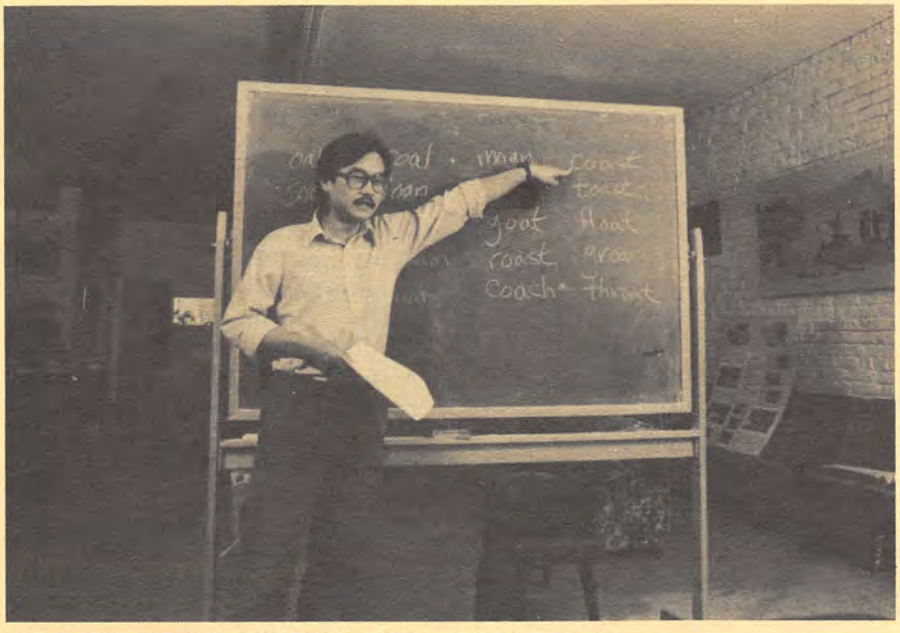
"When a lot of engineering students graduate, they think they have 'made it' because they got a job. But there's a conflict because they know they're not going to get very far. In the corporate structure, I find the Asian engineers at the lower levels. There are a few who go up to supervising engineer but none are at the executive level. And a lot of times, there's pressure on them to move into the 'mainstream' of society to the point that they don't want to speak their language and they feel somewhat ashamed of associating with Chinese. I think that's a lot more for the American-born than foreign-born Chinese.

"Many times, some engineers don't want to get involved in the community because of how they view their job or their relationship with white people. Engineers are promoted as professionals with a certain amount of prestige. There's a lot of social pressure to act as a professional, to dress nice, wear a tie, etc. And as you go around saying, 'This friend is an engineer and this friend is a doctor,' it gives you much more prestige. You are in a so-called elite group. But if you go around saying, 'Oh yeah, my friends wash dishes in a Chinese restaurant and my other friends are garment workers,' they see you differently."

Yet it is precisely his experiences teaching in Chinatown that bring great personal satisfaction to Ken. "Instead of being a teacher," he explained, "I wanted to be friends with them. That is a hard, traditional barrier to break. I find it hard to see myself above them as the teacher because they have much more experience than me. I learned a lot from them about Chinese culture.

"Most of the students are garment and restaurant workers who work 10–12 hours a day. Sunday is the only day they're off and some people are off for just half the day. It's really bad that they have to work so hard to raise their families."

What impresses Ken the most is the immigrants' desire to learn English. "In their view, they have to learn English to get a better job and not have to work 10–12 hours a day. They feel that after they learn English, they will be equal and be able to get all types of jobs. It's somewhat true, but the dreams some have of really getting high up really aren't true. And many don't have those kinds of dreams. They just want to know how to go places. Because they can't read, speak or understand English, they feel they are blind, deaf and mute. And they feel very uncomfortable."



Mike Fong

Ken teaching English at the Chinese Progressive Association

Being in the Chinese community is an essential part of Ken's life. "It's this feeling I can't really explain that well. I just feel most comfortable in Chinatown. I wouldn't want to live out in the suburbs. For one thing, my parents would have nothing to do out in the suburbs. Right now, they go to Chinatown in the morning to shop, have lunch, see their friends and to go to the family association for m.j. (mah jong).

"When I got involved with the community, I found that students are very welcome because they have an educational background that can help the community. But it's hard getting people involved. There's a real, tight tension just going to school and dealing with the family pressures. So when you have free time, many people just want to relax and go to a dance or movie. That's why the Chinese Student Associations have such large memberships. But that doesn't mean that all of them are into dancing. When I was in the Asian Student Union, I did a presentation to the Chinese Student Associations on the proposed elimination of the 5th preference immigration category. There was a lot of concern because it affected them. The important thing is to be aware of what Asian people are going through, and not just shut yourself in. The main thing is to be with the people and see yourself as part of their movement.

"There's some important issues right now such as anti-Asian violence. It's a very dangerous situation. A lot of people want to see it as an isolated thing — this guy went crazy, that guy went crazy — they don't see it as an overall attack on Third World people. Chinese people have to physically fight for their lives. It's very important that people unite around this issue." □

Eddie Wong *is the editor of* EAST WIND.

So You Want To Be A Doctor . . .

By Florence Houn

Don't let anyone bullshit you. The reason why any Asian student activist would go to professional school is because they are concerned with numero uno, theyselves. *They have to be.*

"I want to acquire skills to share with my community." "I want to train myself and be effective helping my people." "It's my social responsibility to work through the system and serve the people." These statements abound on applications. But investing up to $25,000 a year on oneself is a bit of a self-indulging adventure. Not everyone can sacrifice three to ten years accumulating prized scraps of Western knowledge and technical skill.

* * *

When I entered medical school, I knew that medicine was a profession riddled with chauvinism, bureaucracy, racism and profiteering. I had to be wary of socialization forces which sought to make me "one of the boys." Intellectually I understood that competition promotes individualism, rank fosters hierarchy, and specialization encourages elitism. I knew many a male colleague believed M.D. stood for Macho Degree. They resented "unqualified" minorities and women for occupying a little brother's or college roommate's place in med school. Instead of my name tag on my hospital white coat, I should have had a badge saying, "I'm not a nurse, foreign radiologist, or anesthesiologist." Finally, I knew evaluations of students included "relations with colleagues," "appropriateness on clinical clerkships," and other deliciously subjective criteria. In order to enter the professional mainstream, you had to socialize in the "right" circles.

Even as a pre-med in college I was confronted by my political friends about going into medicine. Medicine is defined by the existing social system. If society is based on the division of people into classes which own and reap profit and those which labor for salaries and wages, then medicine is a tool to preserve the status quo. The rich die of diseases of aging while the poor die of diseases of neglect.

While the corporate and upper-middle professional class constitutes 20% of the U.S. labor force, it comprises 100% of the boards of trustees for foundations and private medical teaching institutions, 90% of the boards of state medical schools, and 85% of the boards of voluntary hospitals. All those problems I would face in my medical education were shaped by health professionals who had vested interests to protect. Thus, to become a doctor would be to take a class position. I would argue that individual doctors did not have to conform to the class mold. But now I realize that statement is like the line, "Just because you're a minority doesn't mean you've faced racism." It's true, but almost extinct.

The problems with medical training and medicine seemed very clear to me. I was aware. I would resist socialization, and I would remain principled. My strategy would be to divorce myself from schooling, but absorb facts, methods and skill. I would take the science and not the values and purposes the science serves. I would then contribute to the progressive movement by practicing medicine in inner-city areas and participating in Asian community politics. But can one use the system without getting abused in the process?

I was trained in my Asian organizing through the East Coast Asian student movement. The issues we took up in undergraduate campuses were increasing Third World admissions, supporting Affirmative Action, instituting Asian American Studies, obtaining a Third World Cultural Center, agitating for the divestiture of university investments in South Africa, and opposing racism on campus. These were issues dear to my heart, and I fell in love with politics. Not the politics of Democratic or Republican clubs, not the politics of connections and cocktail parties, not the politics of committees, appointments and titles, I thrived on the juices of change through mass struggle.

Medical school was different. Medical issues such as abortion rights, health care distribution, environmental and occupational safety, and medical aid to Third World countries were new to me. Also present were the same old issues of alienation, isolation and racism minority medical students faced. Only this time, because there were only a handful of minorities per class, the experience was intense. Moreover, many minority students had taken a stand that they had come to school for defined purposes: to be a surgeon, to make

Florence Houn

"It is imperative that Asian professional students be involved in community issues to make abstract commitments real."

money, to train under a specific doctor, and not necessarily to be minority. In addition, it was hard for the school to understand Asians who wanted to be on minority affairs committees. After all, the American Medical Colleges Association doesn't consider Asians minorities; we could have joyously chosen not to be a minority!

Some students got involved in the politics of medicine; I got involved in concerns of Third World medical student organizations. It was familiar to me. When you're trying to memorize the names to every muscle, bone, nerve, ligament, bursa and vessel in the human body, you need familiarity.

However, commitment towards organizations and their activities by med students was different. Because of the pressure cooker atmosphere generated by compressing vast subjects into four-week courses, students had their own agenda. The desire to fulfill individual needs, goals, and desires forces many a sincere soul to pursue trimmed priority lists: Study, Sleep, Eat, Socialize. It is easier to be sympathetic, supportive, and a true believer than actually commit words and intentions into deeds and action.

Minority students who had come from organizing backgrounds were further drained by the knowledge of inequities in the health care system, experiences of racism on campus, and the monocultural approaches towards psychiatry or community health, and the inability to rectify situations via traditional means. The traditional minority refuges in college were the large student organizations or Third World Centers, the minority lower echelon administrators, sympathetic social science departments, and a nearby community which gave one purpose, belonging, and food. Because we are few and are newcomers into medicine, minorities don't have the institutional/organizational mechanisms to forge change. Moreover, the Bakke Decision did as much for administrators' commitments towards minorities as nuclear radiation does for life. Indeed, Third World medical student organizing presents awesome challenges.

Third World medical student organizations cope with recurring problems of membership, embracing diverse needs, time/commitment restraints, and lack of initiative. Plus, after two years of basic science, med students go on to hospital clerkships which divorce them from the campus. Secondary leadership in organizations must take over after only one year of "training," unlike the three years of training in college organizations. Many minorities would rather conserve energy than attempt to change institutions which only affect them for four years. "When I get out of school . . ." the song goes.

Thus, it is imperative that Asian professional students be involved in community issues, whether cultural, political, or professional, to make abstract commitments real. And not that "the community" is a mystical entity of salvation. Rather, it's yet another test of one's priorities. Some Asian professionals seek to be recognized as a leader in this field, a spokesperson on that topic. After all the years of self-grooming, they deserve something, right? Interestingly, some community organizations distrust all professional students. Students are seen as pimping off the community to stuff resumés. This paranoia is just as devastating in establishing constructive relations.

Realize that without group and personal struggle over commitment, direction, and motives, it's very easy to get suckered into the cyclotron of self-aggrandizement or the sewer of cynicism. This is not a tale of cynicism, it is a tale of caution. Professional training is long, difficult, and demanding. Too many Asian college activists get lost and demoralized under this pillar. They retreat into themselves. But no matter how trite, it is true. Skills and knowledge are needed to serve people. Asian professionals can reinvest skills in either community practice, supporting community issues, or taking progressive stands in the politics of their profession. The key is to integrate academics and career with political commitment and development. The solution to implosion is explosion. □

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Becoming A Worker . . .

A Matter of Choice

"The more I got to know people at work, the more I came to identify with them and this changed the way I looked at myself how I looked at working people."

Mike Fong

Sayo Fujioka

By Sayo Fujioka

I grew up in an all-white neighborhood in Berkeley, California. Before our family could move in, the neighbors took a poll and decided it would be OK; they figured that we would, at least, keep our garden looking nice. Growing up in an all-white environment was alienating. There was a lot of racism. I remember my parents telling me not to confront people. They thought the best way to fight racism was to study and concentrate on getting a good education, something that they couldn't take away from you. From the time we were in junior high school, my parents tried to gear my brother and me for college. But I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing in school and just went along taking college prep classes. My parents (a mechanical engineer and a secretary) wanted me to become a professional, but I didn't know what I wanted to do.

I went to U.C. Santa Cruz for two years and studied social sciences. There were things that I liked about college and other things that I couldn't stand. College gives you the time and material to investigate what society is all about and a place to discuss it with people of various backgrounds. There are different skills you can learn, such as those in the arts. And you learn to think, almost as a matter of self-defense. I hated what they were trying to teach me and I would end up doing outside research just to argue my point of view. But no matter what you studied, it was still just study — something abstract and detached. I did presentations in my classes on the concentration camps and on the My Lai massacre, but it didn't seem to affect people; they just absorbed it on an intellectual level. That really disturbed me.

I decided to drop out for awhile and worked a series of jobs in the hotel/restaurant industry. I also decided to go back to school at S.F. State and study filmmaking. I wanted to make documentary films about the Asian community, but I didn't know much about the community or the Movement. My friends would say, "Do you really know what you're talking about?" So, they had me there. I learned that the best way to portray people on film is to get to know them and see them as they see themselves.

During this time I continued working part-time while getting more involved with the Asian student movement and community issues. I'm nearly finished with school now and after I graduate I plan to stay at my job as a cashier at the Holiday Inn. It wasn't an easy decision and was one that I came to over a period of time. I had always

looked at waitressing as perfect for working my way through college: it required no training; it offered part-time positions and it was the kind of job I could go home and forget about. I assumed that I'd be waitressing for two or three more years. But the more I got to know people at work, the more I came to identify with them and this changed the way I looked at myself and how I looked at working people.

It hit me, on my first day of work, that no one at the Holiday Inn looked at work the way I did. They had worked in restaurants and hotels all their lives; most of them had worked there for over ten years. They are there, on time, five a.m. every morning, working overtime whenever needed; they're sick maybe once a year.

It was summertime, during the height of the tourist season, when I started work and the restaurant staff was being overworked to the breaking point. Every week, the bosses experimented with our scheduling, laying off as many people as they could and forcing the rest of us to work two jobs at once or overtime shifts. Our supervisor would follow us around telling us we were lazy and threatening to fire us. The paranoia and exhaustion wore everyone out.

One day, during our break, we noticed one of the waitresses had what looked like paint on her fingernails. She told us that her fingernails were getting torn up and the only way she could hold them together was to attach pieces of bandaids onto her nails with crazy glue. That started the other waitresses talking about infections that they had been getting. One waitress had an infection that never healed and had worked its way into her joints. The whole knuckle looked deformed. They figured it was caused by some chemical or citrus that the restaurant was using. I was shocked and asked what we should do about it. A friend of mine replied, "Well, you should get out of here as fast as you can. You're going to school; you've got a chance to do something better with your life. If you stay here, you'll only ruin your health."

How could I just quit and go on to do "something better with my life?" I was the only one there who had the option of quitting. Everyone else had to stay. They had families to support and parents to take care of. And, for them, quitting the Holiday Inn wouldn't solve anything; conditions in the service industry were the same everywhere. I wanted to do something to help change the conditions at work.

During that time I also became involved in the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR), helping to prepare for the government hearings on the incarceration. We put together community programs and workshops to discuss the campaign for redress and reparations and to encourage Nikkei to testify at the hearings.

I was brought up outside the Nikkei community and all my life teachers gave me the sterile praise of being the "model minority," the Japanese American "success story." Working on the hearings made me realize just how much of these racist myths I had accepted. The testimonies of the Issei and Nisei had the biggest impact on me. Their personal histories gave me a framework to understand the scattered stories my parents told us when we were young: kneeling in the strawberry fields in Santa Maria; standing drenched in the pesticides falling from fruit trees; working in the factories in Chicago during the war. I began to understand that the history of Japanese people in America is a history of working people who built up the wealth of this country and in return were denied all their rights.

The redress and reparations campaign helped me understand the situation at work. I was committed to my friends and to helping to improve the immediate working conditions there. But I also came to see that beyond that was a battle against the source of those conditions, a whole system of exploitation.

I started spending more time talking with my co-workers and workers in other departments. The main problem for everyone was that the bosses kept us understaffed and forced us to work twice as hard to fill in. Our supervisor kept everyone in line by his constant harassment and intimidation. He tried to keep the cashiers quiet by stealing cash from our registers and writing us up for mishandling our banks (three write ups and you can be fired).

The union was there to back us up, but most of the time if we called them in, they would handle everything without consulting us. This happened all the time if the grievances involved Third World workers. The unions might have kept the bosses in check at times, but they did not organize the workers.

After talking it over, we decided to take direct action. A few of us got together and wrote a letter listing all the grievances of the workers. Then we called a meeting and the whole department went up to the general manager's office and read the grievance to him. The general manager put on a good show, but he was visibly shaken. Within the month, our supervisor was fired.

Conditions at work have improved since then. The biggest change is that the workers, even some of those who refused to take part in the meeting, feel that we can actually change things. There is a sense of community at work. We face the same conditions together and support each other day in and day out. I guess that's why I decided to stay at my job. There are many ways you can contribute to the movement for social change — media work, community work or labor organizing are all needed. It's a matter of what opportunities arise. I don't know if I'll be a cashier the rest of my life, but I do know that I want to be part of the working class' struggle to end exploitation. □

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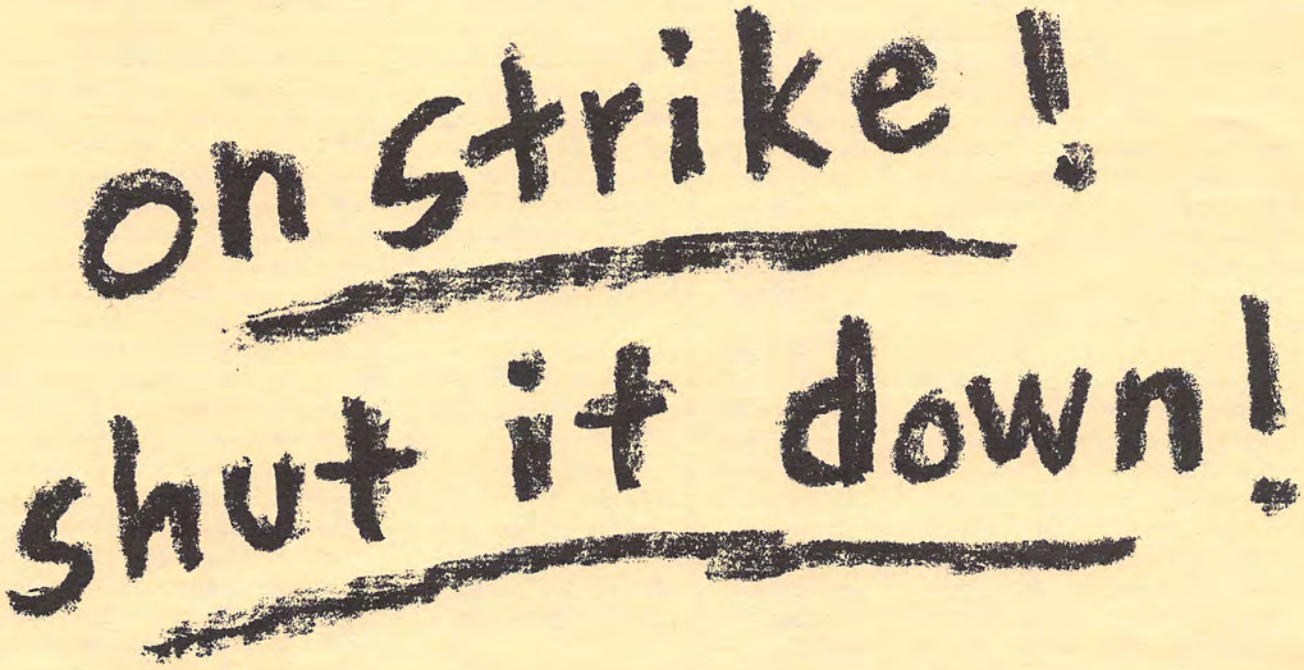
Reminiscences of the S.F. State Strike



By Alex Hing

It's called San Francisco State University now and a futuristic-looking Student Union building dominates the western edge of the quad where once stood the squat, ugly Commons. The dilapidated construction huts which housed the student organizations are finally gone — replaced by comfortable carpeted rooms.

Fifteen years ago, it was called San Francisco State College (SFSC) and revolution was the main trend in the world. The year 1968 saw the flag of the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam raised above the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon during the Tet offensive. Black America was seething as city after city ignited with the flames of resistance and anger following the assassination of Martin Luther King.

At San Francisco State College, a coalition called the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) began a strike on November 6 that was to become the longest student strike in U.S. history.

I was washing dishes in a coffeehouse and doing improvisational political satire at that time, having dropped out of school two years earlier. I was already a revolutionary and beginning to see the shortcomings of the anarchist politics that I held — particularly as they related to the oppressed Third World peoples in this country. I was becoming enlightened to scientific socialism as expressed in the writings of Chairman Mao. There was no Asian Movement to speak of then and I was compelled to seek out other Asians who were fed up enough with the racism of capitalist society to make revolution. I began to reestablish ties with the American-born Chinese street youth with whom I grew up. They had formed an organization called Leways and purchased a pool hall.

Because the strike was aimed precisely at giving oppressed Third World people access to college, Leways became the staunchest supporter of the TWLF in Chinatown. People from Leways were often out at the picket lines, as well as out in the community raising funds and popularizing the TWLF strike demands. This strike support activity helped to broaden the outlook of many Leways activists who later formed the revolutionary Red Guards, along with students who left the campuses to do community work.

Background to the Strike

The strike itself was the culmination of nearly a decade of organizing by students at SFSC to bring about more relevant education. Many students were influenced by the Civil Rights Movement and took part in the Freedom Rides to register Black voters in the South. As students began to get involved in progressive political struggles, however, they found it nearly impossible to raise these issues on campus. State students thus launched their own Free Speech Movement, three years prior to the Berkeley students' highly publicized movement, and forced the Administration to build an outdoor speakers' platform on the quad. From this beginning, students pressed for more relevant courses and more involvement with the communities.

Leading this motion was the Black Students Union (BSU), formed in 1966. The BSU used the student tutorial program to educate Black youth in the Fillmore District, and the Experimental College to set up the beginnings of a Black Studies Department.

The Black students demanded that the Academic Senate pass a proposal for a Black Studies Department. The proposal called for a Black studies extension in the community which would be facilitated by students doing field work, and suggested a five-year plan which would serve a minimum of 2,000 students.

The importance of this demand was underscored by the abysmal failure of the colleges to serve the minority communities. In 1968, 54% of San Francisco's high school students were minorities, but only 10% of SFSC's student body was Third World. Black student enrollment had actually declined every year since the implementation of the 1960 California State Education Master Plan.

For the few hundred Third World students on campuses, the curriculum was the standard WASP education right down the line. There were no ethnic studies classes aimed at promoting the history or culture of Third World people in this country.

While the proposal for Black studies was being lobbied, the political forces in the state were making it impossible, not only for Black studies, but for any type of relevant education. Ronald Reagan was governor then. He took office in 1966 vowing to "cut and trim and squeeze until we have reduced the cost of government." For higher education, Reagan proposed a 10% cut and a $200-400 tuition fee. This would discourage those who went to school to "agitate and not study."

Needless to say, the opposition which the BSU faced was also being faced by all of the non-white students on campus, many of whom were involved in student programs, such as the Tutorial Program, the Community Involvement Program, the Work Study Program, and the Experimental College.

This situation laid the basis for a Third World coalition, and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) came into being in March 1968. It consisted of the BSU, the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), the Mexican American Student Confederation (MASC), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), the Philippine-American College Endeavor (PACE) and the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA).

The Asian Organizations

The formation of the TWLF radicalized the Asian organizations.

The ICSA was originally formed by fairly well-to-do students who had missionary attitudes toward the Chinese community. They worked as volunteers in various social service agencies and ran an English tutorial program with assistance from the churches. At the urging of the BSU, however, two military veterans, Al and Mason Wong, led an intense struggle within the ICSA to ally with the TWLF. The more conservative students feared that such an alliance would jeopardize their standings in the community, while the insurgents argued that what was really needed was a program that was independent of the agencies. With the help of Leways, the decision was finally made to join the coalition, and Mason was elected ICSA chairman. By securing Associated Students funds, the ICSA then proceeded to set up a field office in Chinatown in order to work with an immigrant youth gang and expand the tutorial program. The field office helped to move some of the students to the Left, and at the same time, attracted more working class students to the ICSA.

PACE's main emphasis was recruiting college applicants from the Pilipino community and running a tutorial program. But they quickly saw the need for the TWLF and became one of its founding members. Many of the PACE membership became politicized during the strike as they attended teach-ins, agitated others at mass rallies, and organized community support. The historic fall takeover and sit-in of the Administration Building was led by Pat Salaver, one of PACE's leaders.

AAPA was led by revolutionaries from the outset. It was a pan-Asian organization, although most of its members at SFSC were Japanese Americans and mostly women. AAPA's aim was to unite Asians around a perspective that would enable them to deal with issues such as the Viet Nam War and domestic racism to break the stereotype of the passive, submissive Asian. AAPA conducted political study groups using, among other material, Marxist-Leninist works. By participating in the TWLF, AAPA was able to test revolutionary theory in the heat of actual struggle.

Prelude to the Strike

The newly-formed TWLF united with the radical white students and collectively established a slate to bid for control of the Associated Students (AS). The slate successfully swept the vote by a three-to-one margin over the "jock" slate. Ron Kitachai, an activist in PACE, was elected AS President, and Pat Salaver won a seat on the Foundations Board. This put the TWLF in control of a $400,000 budget from which it could, at least, partially, implement some of its programs.

However, the State College Board of Trustees, which represented California's leading businessmen and politicians proposed revising the State Education Code, giving themselves control over student funds as well as veto power over student-implemented programs through the State College Chancellor, a reactionary named Glen Dumke. The stage was thus set for a confrontation between the Third World students and California's entire system of higher education.

The November 6 strike deadline was first announced at a rally held by the BSU. At that time, George Mason Murray, a teaching assistant in the English Department and Minister of Education of the Black Panther Party, ran down the Party's programme as it related to Black students, including the right to armed self-defense against racist attacks. Immediately, the press raised the scare of Black Panthers bringing guns on campus to implement the BSU demands. Murray was subsequently fired.

Meanwhile, the rest of the TWLF joined the BSU's call for a strike and issued 15 non-negotiable demands. The key demands were that a School of Ethnic Studies be set up; that there be student control over the curriculum, as well as, over the hiring and retention of any faculty, director and administrator; and that all Third World students applying for admission be accepted in the fall of 1969.

These demands were a declaration that Third World students' needs had to be recognized; that ethnic studies be seen as a legitimate academic discipline; and that students have a rightful voice in making decisions concerning their education. The impact of these demands was tremendous. Students across the nation took up similar demands as the State strike became a living example of the slogan, "Dare to struggle. Dare to win."

To fully implement these demands, Third World people have to have full equality — the ability to determine their own destinies. While demands like these can conceivably be granted under the existing capitalist system, it will take nothing short of a revolutionary struggle to obtain them, and even then, only socialism can guarantee full equality. This is because a system whose existence is solely based on obtaining the maximum profits for a few monopoly capitalists will not willingly grant higher education to a sector of laboring people from whom they are extracting an extra measure of profits. Socialism, on the other hand, exists for the benefit of all working people in whose hands political power rests. In order to unleash the full potential of the working masses and build socialism, there must be active support of demands for full equality and self-determination for minorities.

Most of the leaders of the TWLF were revolutionaries; many of them, Marxist-Leninists. They carried the Red Book and tried to apply Mao's thoughts to their situation.

The Strike Begins

On an overcast, drizzly November day, when Nixon's portrait graced the entire front page of the *S.F. Examiner*, the strike began.

Governor Reagan said, "San Francisco State College is a domestic Vietnam," so intense was the conflict. But during the first few days, the external appearance of the campus was quiet. Inside, however, a guerrilla war was being waged. Groups of TWLF members would enter classrooms, explain the demands, and then "dismiss" the class. Small fires were set in trash cans. Windows were broken. The Administration was forced to rely more and more on the police. At the end of the first week, classroom attendance was off as much as 50%.

By that time, the campus was thoroughly occupied by the infamous Tactical Squad — Mayor Alioto's elite corps of political police. The TAC Squad would attack students indiscriminately and without provocation; however, their most brutal assaults were reserved for Third World

students and strike leaders. Because of the widespread police violence, the Administration closed the campus indefinitely.

The victory was short-lived. After rejecting several attempts at cooptation by the Administration, most of the strike leaders were informed that they were being suspended. The trustees had found a new president who would reopen the school, violence or not. This honor fell on the despicable banana, S.I. Hayakawa. His strategy for reopening the campus was simply martial law: the speakers' platform was declared off-limits, amplified sound was forbidden as well as gatherings of five or more persons. Students and teachers who missed classes were to be fired or suspended. A veritable army of police called in from the entire Bay Area was to enforce these policies.

The atmosphere was tense on the day the campus reopened. 1,500 people gathered to challenge the ban on rallies. There were faculty members who were no longer teaching classes; community supporters, many of whom had never been on a college campus before; medical workers in white smocks with large red crosses painted on their backs; legal observers with cameras and note pads; large numbers of white students; and the TWLF. The solidarity among the different peoples of color was truly amazing. Nowhere was there a hint of superiority or jealousy, but rather a desire to learn about each other's cultures and discover the commonality that comes from being non-white in this country. This cross education was brought about mainly through the efforts of the Third World women who became united as they quickly discarded the old stereotypes by bravely and tirelessly taking up all aspects of strike activity.

The police were everywhere, but the people were defiant. "Pigs off campus!" "On strike, shut it down!" "Power to the people!" they chanted. Suddenly, Hayakawa's voice came on the loudspeakers ordering the crowd to leave, only to be drowned out by more intense chanting from the people. The TAC Squad then charged the crowd with riot batons, mercilessly beating anyone they could reach. The shock of the people quickly turned to anger as they responded by hurling everything that wasn't nailed down at the police.

On January 6, a new element was added to the strike as the local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) at SFSC began their own strike. The beginning of the teachers' strike had the immediate effect of broadening the TWLF strike as the AFT strike included the demand that "(the) Black Students Union and Third World Liberation Front grievances must be resolved and implementation assured." The main tactic of the AFT was to engage in massive, legal picketing of the campus, hoping to shut it down that way.

The police responded with violence. While walking the picket line one morning, I saw a Chinese brother who intended to cross the picket line and go to class. He was sporting a crew cut and thick glasses, carrying a stack of books under one arm and clutching a slide rule. His eyes were intently focused on the ground as he ignored the exhortations of the Asian strikers to not betray his community and scab. The brother then proceeded to enter the campus, never lifting his eyes off the ground. He subsequently walked smack into a group of TAC Squad officers who brutally clubbed, handcuffed and arrested him. The next day, the brother was back, his head bandaged, walking the picket line.

The police would seize upon any incident on the picket line — real or imagined — to attack the strikers. In the face of this, the TWLF, just prior to the semester break, called for another mass rally on the quad. As the rally was beginning, cordons of police completely surrounded the quad and arrested all of the rally participants, except for the lucky few who were able to break away. By the semester's end, over 700 strikers and supporters had been arrested on campus.

The arrests and ensuing legal battles placed a huge drain on the energies of the TWLF. Many of the Asians in the TWLF took on the difficult task of organizing the legal defense. Bail monies needed to be raised. Fundraising events were organized to provide for legal fees. Students handled the double duty of picketing and speaking to community groups to raise more support.

With the mass arrests and the strike tactics mainly in the hands of the AFT, the new semester began with what were to become insur-

S.F. State pickets June Tabata, Miya Ota and Betty Inouya of the Asian American Political Alliance

mountable difficulties for the TWLF. Hayakawa tightened his grip by initiating mass suspensions and expulsions of strikers. Falsely accusing the Associated Students of using student body funds to "buy guns," he then got the Attorney General's Office to effectively dissolve the Associated Students and placed its funds in receivership. The student newspapers were also suspended, as was the Educational Opportunities Program.

While desperately trying to deal with these new attacks, the TWLF received what was to be the strike's fatal blow. The college trustees adopted new grievance procedures for the teachers, which was one of the AFT's main strike demands. Coupled with vague promises of a reduced work load, the Labor Council urged the AFT to accept this as a settlement to their dispute or have their strike sanction lifted. As an added inducement, Hayakawa threatened to fire all of the striking teachers. At the end of the fourth month of the TWLF strike, the AFT returned to work. A number of teachers refused to abide by the AFT sellout and continued to strike. However, the TWLF, seeing the end at hand, urged all of them to return to work.

By this time, the cohesiveness of the strike was in bad array. Most of the strike leaders were facing huge legal battles, as were a great number of rank and file Third World students. The white students were beginning to vacillate in their support of the TWLF. A group call the Progressive Labor Party even attacked the TWLF as being "petit bourgeois" for raising demands that allegedly served to "divide the working class."

Given this situation, the TWLF was forced to retreat. So, after nearly six months of intense struggle, an agreement was signed that formally ended the strike.

For some of the participants the settlement meant the strike was a failure, because a number of demands were not granted. But overall the strike was a victory, albeit a limited victory achieved against great odds.

Two major achievements stand out. First, the strike forced the Administration to grant a School of Ethnic Studies. Today, the SF State program is one of the few remaining schools of ethnic studies. Secondly, the Administration was forced to implement the recruitment of minority students which brought in hundreds of new students.

True to form, the Administration began to renege on its agreements shortly after the strike settlement. Student demands for control of ethnic studies were ignored as the Administration exerted dominance over hiring and firing and curricula. Funds for ethnic studies were always in jeopardy.

But these counterattacks by the Administration should not cloud over the significant political victory. The strike showed the power of students who are united. The students literally took over the campus and shut it down to force concessions from the Administration. The strike was a tremendous example for other Third World people, and its effects were felt nationwide.

It was a turning point in the development of Asian consciousness as people asserted a new identity for Asian Americans — one that wasn't stereotyped but defined by the people themselves. The strike welded together the diverse Asian nationalities into a full-blown pan-Asian movement for equality and political power. Ethnic Studies, with varying degrees of student control, were fought for and established on campuses throughout the country.

More importantly, many revolutionaries were created out of the strike, and while they became disenchanted with its actual results at SFSC, the struggle served to increase their commitment to overthrow the capitalist system. Activists left campus to establish community organizations that would fight for the needs of their people. Ex-students, including myself, got working class jobs and eventually helped to develop rank and file workers' movements in several industries. Some students remained on campus to consolidate the gains made by the strike.

For many, the education that they received during the six months of the TWLF strike was to become more indelible than the ink on their diplomas. □

Alex Hing *is a longtime activist in the Asian community and labor movements. He was the Minister of Education of the S.F. Chinatown Red Guards in the late 1960's.*

The Politics of Interracial Dating

By Taiji Miyagawa

Yes No

1. ____ ____ Asian men, do you feel yourselves being constantly rejected by Asian women?

2. ____ ____ Asian women, do you feel that Asian men are insecure wimps?

3. ____ ____ Asian men, do you think Asian women are too inhibited and that white women are sexier?

4. ____ ____ Asian women, do you feel that Asian men are domineering, and that white men are more liberated?

5. ____ ____ Should Asians date and marry Asians just because of ethnic background?

6. ____ ____ If your grandmother tells you not to marry a white person, does that mean she's a racist?

Ask an Asian (especially a member of the younger generation) what they think about Asians dating whites and you can be sure that if the issue is pressed and discussion pursued, emotions will quickly shift into fourth gear. Interracial dating/marriage stands out as a hot topic on campus and in the Asian communities because of the fact that there exists a high rate of interracial dating between Asians and whites. Some studies have indicated that for Japanese Americans and Pilipino Americans, outmarriage actually supercedes intra-nationality marriage. If present outmarriage trends continue, what is to become of "Asian America" two or three generations from now? For younger Asians this issue has to do with how one sees

"If we can't accept who and what we are because someone is telling us that we don't match the standard, we're going to end up hating ourselves and each other."

her/himself and how one sees her/himself fitting into U.S. society.

When confronted with the question of why so many Asians date and marry whites, one finds that there are no simple "check-one-box-only" answers. Each individual case of mixed dating/marriage is different. However, there must be some explanation for a phenomenon which can be labelled as a "trend." Perhaps we can recognize some possible common factors which in combination help to promote interracial (white) dating.

This article is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the interracial dating patterns among Asians so much as an effort to help promote healthy debate and discussion. My sentiments run counter to those who see dating and outmarriage with whites as being a progressive motion. I feel more favorable about intra-Asian nationality relationships. This isn't because I believe in "preserving a purity of blood," but because in the larger societal context, I see that the basis for this high rate of interracial dating and marriage is Asian inequality and white racist rationales. This view is different than one which would explain things in terms of "free choice love."

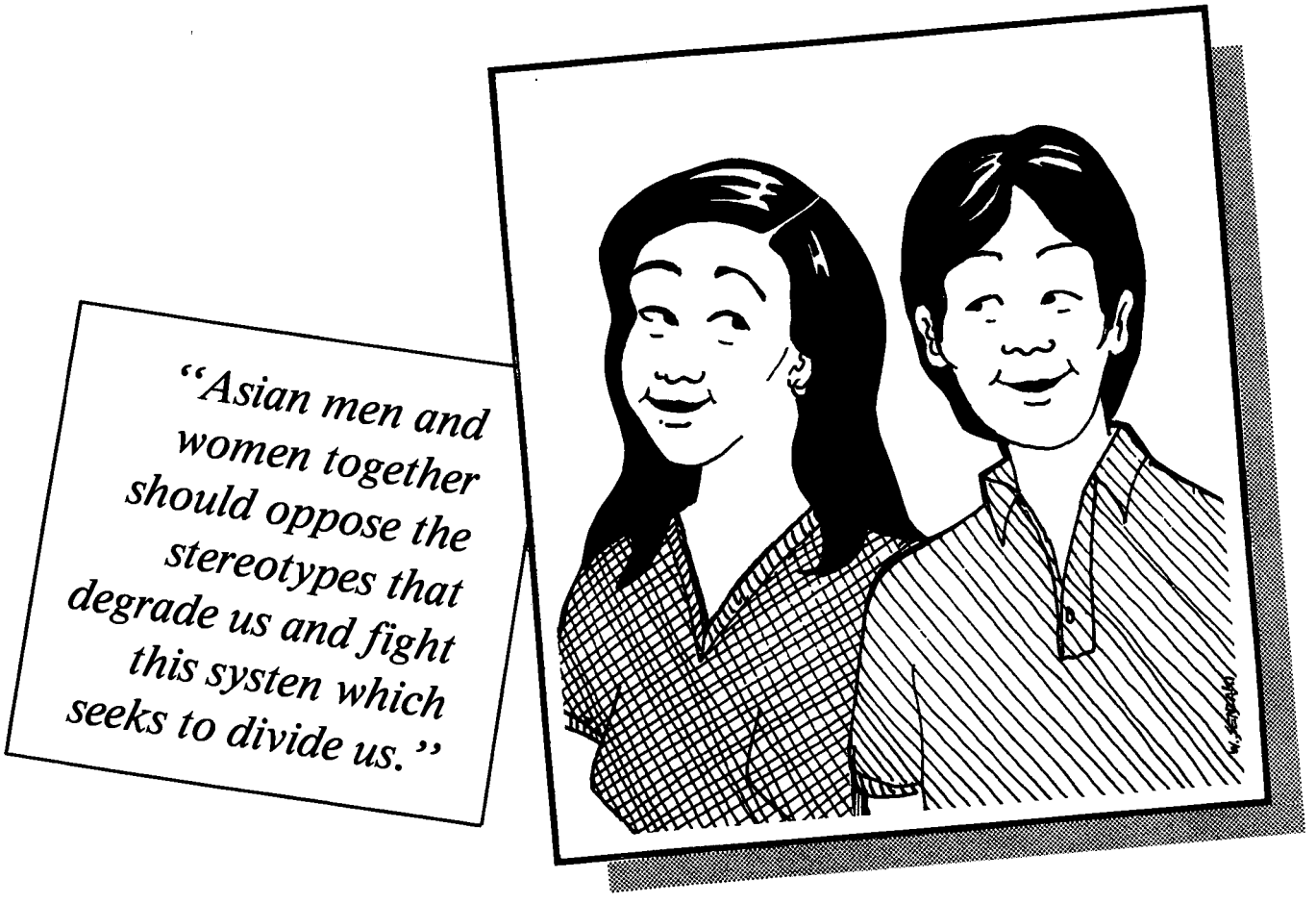
From the day we are born in this country (and also in colonized countries like the Philippines or previously defeated ones like Japan), we are taught that the standard of beauty for humans is the tall white man and the robust white female (preferably blonde at that). Accepting these standards makes life confusing and difficult for Asians. Not too many Asian males can grow to be 6' 3" with round blue eyes, looking like Robert Redford. Likewise, it is hopeless for the majority of Asian women to try and compete to be whiter than white. And yet some of us wear platform shoes (or at least thicker heels) and padded bras. If we can't accept who and what we are because someone is telling us that we don't match the standard, we're going to end up hating ourselves and each other.

Asian males are consistently portrayed in the popular entertainment media either as passive second bananas to white males (*Hawaii Five-O*, *Star Trek*, Charlie Chan movies, *Quincy*, etc.) or as sinister, insensitive, villainous chauvinists (Fu Manchu, the brutal husbands in *Shogun*, etc.). In other works, Asian men are cast in unrealistic stereotypical and one dimensional molds or as flatly inferior to whites. (This holds true for Third World men in general). The prevalent stereotype on campus, promoted by the campaign against Japanese imports and runaway shops in Asia, is that of the quiet, hard-working, robot-like Asian with thick glasses and a calculator for a mind.

For Asian sisters who have been influenced by these images, the tendency will be to "go for the white ideal." This "desirability" (plus the fact that white men earn more than Asian men) implies that Asian men are "undesirable." Hence, these women end up in a place where they don't know what they're missing.

Asian men contribute to their "undesirability" by sometimes responding to these media contrivances in a way which only aggravates the situation. Some brothers end up overcompensating and capitulating to male chauvinist posturing ("like maybe I need to be more macho . . ."). Some of this domineering attitude also has roots in the Asian feudal tradition. I've heard women complain about their fathers and how they treat their mothers, and the mothers tell me that the grandfather was worse. Obviously, Asian men have to change this.

The Asian woman conversely faces a double oppression; she is looked upon by white men as being subservient both by way of race and gender. This double oppression manifests itself in the dehumanizing white male fantasy of the "sleazy subservient oriental girl with the slanted vagina." Because of the way Asian women have been portrayed in the



media (*Courtship of Eddie's Father, Hawaii Five-O,* and *The World of Susie Wong*), white men see Asian women as being "exotic," existing as objects to satisfy their needs. Some white men, because of male insecurities (not restricted to whites), will also chase Asian women because they feel that they are more easily dominated than white women. Asian brothers know this because some of us have heard these things in places where women don't go (e.g. the locker room). The reason so many of us get sharply perturbed when we see an Asian sister going with a white guy has to do with the pain of seeing an Asian woman being degraded and forced to capitulate to a white racist stereotype because they can't fulfill the white woman ideal! Perhaps some Asian women look at the Asian male-white female relationship in a somewhat similar fashion — the white woman seeks to prove herself as being "liberal" by going with a non-white male and the Asian male feels that he has proven his (false) masculinity by winning a white woman. The premise in these above-mentioned cases should be clear: Asians are inferior.

Couple these media images that pervade our consciousness with centuries of colonialism in the Philippines and the forced dispersal of Japanese Americans and one can see why outmarriage rates run so high: We're made to think of ourselves as inferior to whites and our hatred of this perceived inferiority turns us against each other.

Asian men and women together should oppose the stereotypes that degrade us and fight this system which seeks to divide us. Too often Asians date whites for reasons which are tacitly consistent with our unequal status in the U.S. Racist assumptions often underlie these cloudy love affairs. Even if it is possible for an individual Asian and individual white to have a good relationship in today's society (and some may challenge this), I would still advocate intra-Asian nationality relationships because this seems to be a practical way of resisting forced assimilation. For Asians who decide "voluntarily" to enter relationships with whites, they should still try to support the efforts in the communities to continue the work begun by our parents and grandparents: to construct a society where equality is enjoyed by all peoples. □

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Retired Japanese Workers' Hall, Turlock, California

work boots and cloth *zori*
rubbed the floor down
past the bark
finished like
a workingman's hands
rough, swollen, scarred

beds stood still stationed like sentries
waiting for exhausted bodies
to lean into creaky springs
and groan in broken *raku* dreams

oldtimers' snores swallow
warm Turlock nights

issei bachelors'
sun-braised faces
grunt over *go* boards
and *hanafuda* tables
rubbing closely cropped heads
bald shiny domes
worn khakis and white sleeveless undershirts

Ibarra-san the elder
raised pigeons their
  cooings
tangled with twilight
new grass and dew

above harsh summer dust
he followed their flight

his mustache a giant grey white shrimp
perched on his lip
his eyes two distant suns
glinting over water

97 years old
he lived from the time
before electric lights
to watch the tv landing
on the moon

he knew the farming people
as some men knew the grapes
and honeydew, crenshaw and
strawberries
the nisei children grew
into his students

caretaker, confidant, counselor
community conflicts and
  problems
found their way to his wisdom

his orange white carp
finned silent music
under lily pads
in the pond
he sees tiny ripples
like Kyushu waves
koi songs
rice harvest songs
of childhood
dance underwater

Turlock, Ceres, Keyes,
San Joaquin Valley towns
know the bachelors and the migrants
the wives and daughters
by their Fuji mountain sacrifice
for the children
like eight or nine
in the morning

Doug Yamamoto

Long-term Consequences of the Nikkei Internment

By Ben Tong, Ph.D.

This article is based on Dr. Tong's presentation at the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearing on August 11, 1981 in San Francisco, California.

* * *

Until now, many highly respected individuals and organizations have written up — and, in the process, written off — the Japanese American internment as a phenomenon that had little, if any, serious adverse effect on the health and well-being of the incarcerated. A prime example is a book by Stanford professor, Rudolph H. Moos, *Human Adaptation: Coping with Life Crises* (D.C. Heath, 1976). He concluded that:

"Aside from the severe economic setbacks suffered by many families, and the premature end of the education of some Nisei (resulting in permanent occupational handicaps), most people recovered well after their release. By 1960 Americans of Japanese descent ranked very high in education, professional status, and income levels, and one observer has concluded that internment toughened Japanese-Americans while reinforcing their determination to do well within the American system." (p. 334)

This is a familiar litany of dismissal and denial: If Japanese America somehow emerged from the camps with enough gumption to send their kids to good schools, make decent wages, and live quietly in white suburbs, they could not have been injured by the experience.

The case for long-term consequences does exist, of course, as the long rounds of testimony before the 1981 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians have made abundantly clear. It is not a difficult case to argue even though the Internment in all of its complexity has yet to be fully understood and properly documented. Many of the victims have recounted their painful stories in clinical case studies, ethnic journals, Sunday newspaper magazine specials, and secret letters to nobody in particular.

One fact that has made it difficult to comprehend the camp experience resides in the reality that there has yet to appear a *language* for describing and explaining what took place some 36 years ago. In gatherings stimulated by the current efforts at redress, we have heard metaphors like "rape" and "incest" to tell it like it really was. After all these years, a struggle still continues to forge the right kind of language to shed the most accurate light on the experience.

The reluctance of the internees themselves is understandable. As one Nisei put it during a practice hearing in Seattle preceding these official testimonies: "This is a part of my life that's been buried for 30 years. I wanted to bury it, to forget it. I'm still embarrassed to talk about it."

Another factor has been the wholesale *imposition* of white Euro-American concepts and perspectives by certain white social researchers who were obsessed, back then in the early 1940's, with making a name for themselves.

It is not true, contrary to Professor Moos' undocumented claim, that most Nikkei "recovered well after their release." Some problems long repressed are just now manifesting themselves in a manner analogous to the delayed action of Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant employed in the Vietnam War that made its way into the biochemistry of thousands of American soldiers. Allow me to cite three select "cases" of disturbed Nikkei behavior that beg for a language of comprehension.

The first is that of a Sansei female, 28-years-old, who saw me for about a year and a half at a community mental health center. The initial "diagnostic impression" was "chronic dependent personality" with "features of immaturity, disproportionate rage, and extreme preoccupation with self." Among other things, she had been falling in and out of short-lived heterosexual relationships in which she demanded that her intimate partners take care of her in the most complete fashion. All of the men in her life were white and Black. Not a one was Asian American.

Her family history included a dominating, suffocating mother and what she herself referred to as "an extremely weak" father. "Sansei men are just like him — dull, cowardly, uninteresting and plodding." Particularly irritating to my client was her father's practice of taking tuna fish sandwiches to work. "Every year for 20 years he's been going to work in a

place where he's the only Asian. Everyone else is *hakujin*. He makes my mother pack him goddamned tuna fish sandwiches with chopped celery and mayonnaise — *hakujin* food that he hates! — because he had to 'get along' with *hakujins*. How can you respect anyone who's so utterly, totally frightened like that? *I* sure as hell can't!" One possible working concept, then, would be contempt for one's own, growing out of negative role modeling.

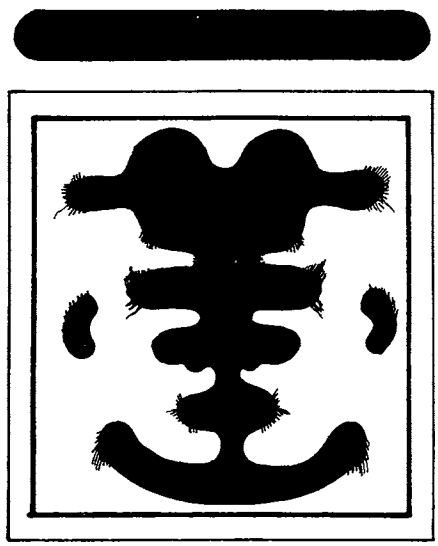
The second case is drawn from the records of a white psychoanalyst who did many years of psychoanalytic therapy with a Nisei male who is now in his mid-50's (Charlotte G. Babcock and Mark J. Gehrie, "Psychoanalysis and Follow-up: The Personal and Cultural Meaning of the Experience of a Nisei in Treatment," *The Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 1977, Vol. 6). This man, Mr. B., was not in the camps.

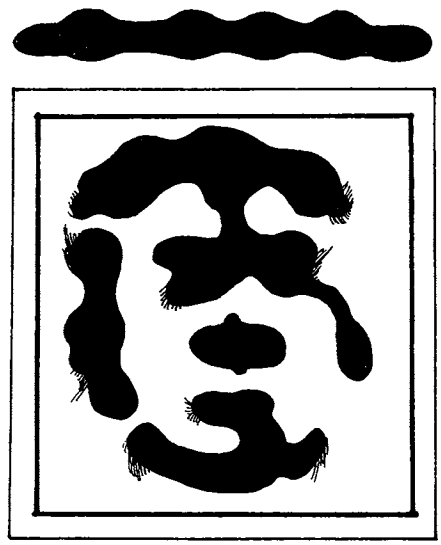
"Evacuation and Pearl Harbor was a traumatic kind of world shaking event. It's like, oh, the one thing I always sympathize and identify with . . . (in) Anne Frank type of stories. And the life that we led during most of our childhood was like Anne Frank. You've got to be quiet; the enemy is outside. But we'll carry on our own feud inside, you know, between ourselves, relatives you know. Within the family you could just kill each other or just raise hell. But outside . . . we can't go outside. If we do go outside, we have to put on our mask, our facade, you know. And that's the type of devastating kind of upbringing, like the Anne Frank type of situation. It really gets to me, where one is sort of running away." (pp. 371–372)

My interpretation of this passage is that this is an individual from a group that was terrorized and humiliated, who, despite not being in camp, nonetheless suffered much of the very same anxieties of people who were in fact incarcerated. The world felt unsafe. It was a minefield: You had to be still, for anything could set white people off, and you never quite knew what that might be. The following paragraph is even more revealing:

"The only kind of discrimination was in what my *parents thought . . .*

(They) instilled in us that this is a hostile environment. Those were pretty bitter days because of the Manchurian crisis. The papers were full of those terrible cartoons of buck-tooth Japs. (He blames his parents for painting such a hostile world, but at the same time, he is aware it isn't just what he's heard from his folks.) And yet I've never been referred to or made fun of . . . and looking back we made ourselves miserable, sort of. Of course with my parents it was more real because they never really associated on a social level. They never had any white friends. And when a group of Japanese would get together they would talk about the war, about discrimination. My parents . . . they think of this hostile world outside." (Brackets contain my observations. B.T.*). (p.368)*





The rage that Mr. B. experienced, particularly rage toward white people, was a natural response. At the same time, it was something that felt *unmanageable*. There were tens of thousands of yellow people with that very same natural human response: Japanese Americans were *angry* at whites. But they did not know *which* whites to be angry at, or *how* to express their rage, and what might happen if they did.

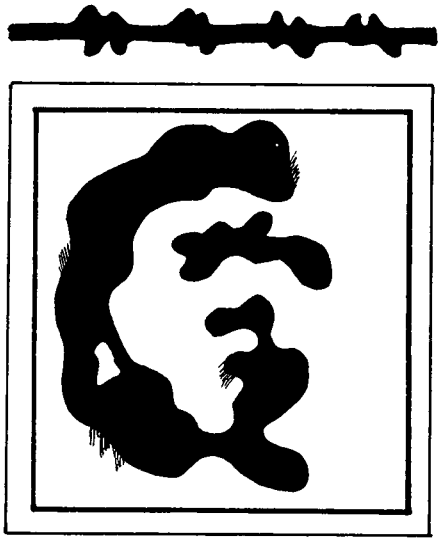
As the psyche is wont to do, the anger was shifted over, and other figures much less threatening and omnipotent were blamed. Mr. B. blamed his parents even though he did not believe his own lies. It were as though he were saying, "My parents are the fools. I've never been mistreated by white folks. If the world is hostile, it's because my parents said it is so." This is what psychotherapists call "defense by intellectual containment." It is a way of taking all the overwhelming, unmanageable feelings and just *binding* them. Unfortunately, it really did not work.

"Again, I saw two worlds. My own world where I had my friends, my caucasian friends, and my mother's world, her church friends, her all-Japanese friends. And looking back, I had a choice then — to be Japanese, to be part of the Japanese community, or to take up this more comfortable American, meaning white culture. And anyways, so way back, I see there was a choice. I kind of made a deliberate choice of not pursuing the Japanese part of it." (p. 377)

Another interpretive or clinical concept might well be this: When Asian Americans, out of contempt for themselves, submerge themselves in the white world, they hide their feelings by saying that it is a natural metamorphosis. "To grow up is to be this way, to let go of certain things. When I was a child, I was Japanese. Now that I am an adult, I let go of those things."

Lastly, I would like to mention a case that left clinicians befuddled. A 21-year-old Sansei female was discovered running about in the wee hours along a major highway, a four-

lane highway, clad only in a negligee. Having swallowed a huge quantity of lye, she was hollering at the top of her lungs, "Mother, Mother, hide! We've got to hide! They just bombed Pearl Harbor!" After the Highway Patrol brought her into an emergency psychiatric facility, she revealed that whenever her parents wanted to needle her or punish her, they would exclaim, "You think you're having a hard time in your life? You think you've suffered? *We've* suffered, and you don't have the vaguest notion what it was like!" Behind the words, they were also communicating, "You don't know what it was like *and* we're not going to tell you, because you're



Wes Senzaki

supposed to know."

Out of conversations with the parents (as well as many other Nisei parents), some of my colleagues and I came away with certain impressions as to why so many Nisei, for so long, have not informed their own children of their own personal history. There are certain psychological purposes to this kind of enforced secrecy. One is that the person himself will not re-experience the trauma and humiliation and, very often, the uncontrollable rage surrounding the experience of camp. This is not exactly healthy behavior. Specialists in "crisis intervention" who work with terrorized human beings — individuals released from hostage situations, individuals victimized by catastrophic loss, etc. — tell us that one of the best therapeutic activities is to encourage the person to talk about the event over and over again until s/he can find a language, a cognitive handle, with which to deal with the situation. That is, to be able to look at what happened and not be overwhelmed by it.

Until recently, instead, a goodly number of Nisei said, "We dare not even talk about it because it would awaken all those old feelings." Another reason for withholding revelations was "to spare the kids." "Spare the kids" meant: "Our kids have to live in a world where those who tormented us won the war. In order for us and the kids not to go nuts, we must encourage them to be what white people expect us to be." Hence, the kids were told, "go to school, clean up your accent, make nice with whites."

Some Sansei, in fact, took it even farther and attempted to "pass" for white by putting silicone in their breasts, going for eye-widening surgical transformations or lightening their hair color. What the parents did not count on when they "spared" the next generation and urged them to live up to white expectations — including live with obliterated history, culture and sensibility — was that the youngsters would come to view their parents as an embarrassment. Mom and Dad spoke in "foreign" accents and were deficient in white protocol, habits, and taste. Parents then berated patronizing children for the very things they wanted them to acquire: "What are you now? Upstart? You're not one of us anymore?" Everyone was put in a terrible bind.

The self-hatred, the contempt for one's own race, the self-deceptive displacement of rage onto non-threatening objects, the wish to "pass" — these and other psychological issues are directly traceable to the cruel legacy of the Internment. Over 70 percent of Nikkei females who married in the last couple of years "married out," mostly to white men. I myself do not oppose interracial marriage. Neither do I actively encourage it. It is an individual matter. The statistics, however, most certainly represent something that goes beyond romantic love and heterosexual compatibility.

There are some psychological problems that do not lend themselves to direct psychological solutions. When we look at the Sixties, we can recall, with nostalgia and awe, the fact of thousands of Blacks putting away hair-straightening devices, stopping the use of skin creams and skin bleaches, and starting to take pride in being Black and beautiful. These things did *not* take place because Blacks suddenly dropped into psychotherapy or marathon encounter groups. Other resources, chiefly of a collective nature, did the trick. I think redress or the attempts at restitution will have the same kind of effect. As a matter of fact, I would strongly suggest that Nikkei American proceed to *sue* for damages if compensation in eight figures is not forthcoming. Money is needed for long-delayed debriefing and intensive psychotherapeutic programs, not to mention in-depth research into the themes I have suggested. If there is to be any hope of recovering shattered humanity and suppressed history, redress will be the critical catalyst. It must facilitate, to borrow the term from established psychotherapeutic language, "the return of the repressed." □

Ben Tong *is a clinical psychologist at the Wright Institute in Berkeley, a social researcher for U.C. Berkeley's Institute for the Study of Social Change, a lecturer in Asian American Studies, and free-lance writer.*

Camp Art: Strength, Dignity and Culture in the Concentration Camps

By Andy Noguchi

When the San Jose Nihonmachi Outreach Committee (NOC) decided to organize the first-ever Camp art show, it sounded like a very good idea. However, it also seemed like a journey into the unknown. How were Kathy Higuchi and myself, the coordinators of this show, supposed to organize it?

After all, what did I know about the Camps? Like other Sansei, there had been little or no talk about the Camps in my family. My main exposure to the Camps had been one Asian American Studies class and a pilgrimage to Tule Lake in 1978. As a non-artist, my understanding and appreciation of art was limited.

All this was to change. Through talking to the Issei and Nisei artists about their lives, the Camps, and seeing their artwork, I've grown to understand the importance of Camp art to Japanese Americans, both then and now.

Through a lot of hard work, NOC, along with the ASIAN (Asian Students In Action Now) Student Club and Asian American Studies of San Jose State University, held two very successful Camp art shows. The first was held on campus on April 20 and the second was held in the Japanese community on April 24, during *Nikkei Matsuri* (Japanese American festival). To our surprise, over 500 people attended.

Eleven Issei and Nisei artists, photographers, and historians generously lent us their works. These included pieces by Mr. Haruo Imura, Mr. Kohei Kogura, Mr. Suiko Mikami, Professor Chiura Obata, Mr. Hisao Omori, Mr. Eiichi Sakauye, Mr. Tadashi Toyota, Mr. Rinji Tsubamoto, Mr. Fred Tsujimura, Mr. Paul Zaima, and Mrs. Tetsuko Aima.

We exhibited almost 200 works including paintings, drawings, photographs, wood carvings, *kobu* (polished natural wood forms), camp documents, stone carvings, poems and rock jewelry.

One thing we found out early was that Camp art wasn't just "art for art's sake." Camp art reflected and was shaped by the Japanese American experience in the U.S.

During World War II, the U.S. government locked up 120,000 Japanese Americans in 10 concentration camps located in the most barren areas of the U.S. People lost their freedom for over two and one-half years on the average; were denied democratic self-government; and got paid only $12–19 per month. They lived in tar paper barracks, suffered from lack of privacy, and endured temperatures ranging from over 120° in Poston, Arizona to 30° below zero in Topaz, Utah.

Once inside the barbed wired Assembly Centers and Camps, people's responses took many forms. These ranged from active protests against the injustice, to support for Japan, to resigned acceptance of the situation, to grudging support for the Camps (due to the fanned-up racist hysteria outside the Camps).

By talking to many artists and reading some of the very few resources on Camp art, we learned that another response was a huge renaissance in art. For example, Tanforan Assembly Center held its first hobby show July 10–12, 1942. The first day only 50 pieces of work were exhibited. As word of mouth spread about this show, the number of pieces grew to over 600. Out of 8,000 men, women, and children, over 9,000 registered to see the show, proving that people saw it more than once.

According to Professor Chiura Obata, head of the Tanforan and later Topaz art schools, 636 people from the ages of 5–78 enrolled in Tanforan art school. Over 90% of those enrolled had never been in art class before.

Despite lack of art materials, poor living conditions, and low wages, Nikkei artists showed their ingenuity. They made carving tools out of pocket knives, screwdrivers, and junk auto springs. They saved paper and string to make decotage. They bleached duffel bags to make canvas for painting. They used pear boxes from which to carve intricate figures.

Besides painting and drawing, which every Camp had, each Camp had its own specialties. Based on the Japanese appreciation for beauty and nature, many people looked to the natural materials available to them.

In Topaz and Tule Lake, shell jewelry abounded due to those Camps being located on dry lake beds. Rohwer and Jerome specialized in *kobu* polished natural wood shapes because of an abundance of gnarled cypress trees nearby. *Bonkei* (miniature tray landscapes) made of sand, rocks, and twigs flourished in Amache. Manzanar and Topaz saw many *suzuri* (ink stone carvings) since slate deposits were located there. Even at the desolate Gila River Camp, located in a desert, people displayed numerous cactus gardens in front of the barrack homes.

The War Relocation Authority (WRA), seeing this art blossoming spontaneously, actually encouraged it. There were few channels for expression open to Japanese Americans and the WRA didn't want the internees' frustrations to erupt in riots. However, the WRA wanted tight control over art and culture. They seemed to equate anything Japanese, anything not 100% white American, with being subversive.

The WRA held the power to approve all teachers and classes, including for art. Of course, schools were headed by whites and not Japanese. In Heart Mountain, the WRA banned the use of the Japanese language and cultural practices in the high school. They banned and later censored the use of Japanese at community talent shows. However, Nikkei resisted these policies too. Groups like the Heart Mountain Mandolin Band, Hawaiian Band, and Takuragawa Band played for people's enjoyment in the mess halls without WRA endorsement. A few people believed that Japanese Americans had a "good time" in Camp. Former Senator S.I. Hayakawa believes that the flourishing of Camp art proves this. Few Camp artists looked at their work as simply having a "good time."

Their art not only served to express their individual creativity as all art does; it also served to maintain the strength, dignity, and culture of Japanese Americans, keeping people together so that resistance to the Camps could grow. Camp art showed the creativity and ingenuity of the Nikkei. Camp art recorded history, exposed the government's unjust treatment of Japanese Americans and united Nikkei people.

Chiura Obata, an art professor at U.C. Berkeley, tried to "find one's growth wherever one was at" and "looked to nature for strength." He believed that through art "the general morale of the people would be uplifted."

Mr. Fred Tsujimura, a former shipping clerk and now a landscape gardener, had his camera confiscated, so he turned to painting for the first time in his life. He "wanted to document the daily lives of the people."

Some artwork told the story of the internees. Mr. Hisao Omori, a former farmer and gardener, carved a Mexican man on a burro just after he got out of Heart Mountain. Mr. Omori told us the story of this piece. "There is an old Japanese tale that says horses can cross some streams easily but there are other streams that no horse can cross. When I got out of Camp I wanted to go across the ocean to visit my family, my old homeland, but the American government would not give me a pass. So there is me on the burro and we cannot cross."

Wood Carving of Mexican Man on Burro

Drawing of Shooting of Mr. Wakasa

Professor Obata documented numerous conditions within the Camp. One drawing depicts Mr. Wakasa, an Issei man, shot while he was looking for his lost dog near the barbed wire fence. The outrage of Nikkei proved so great it forced the WRA to disarm the MPs and place them on the outer perimeters of the Camp.

Some artists actively protested government policies. The WRA hired Mr. Rinji Tsubamoto and other artists to paint street signs when the WRA was building Topaz. The government wanted the street signs to be drab like the rest of the Camp, using names like "A, B, and C Streets." Mr. Tsubamoto and others wanted names to break the monotony of the Camp. After many arguments with the WRA, they won the right to use names like "Cherry, Plum, and Blossom Streets."

Mr. Eiichi Sakauye, a photographer, farmer, and historian, told us about his photographs and the frequent presentations on the Camps he does to this day. He said, "There are only two paragraphs on the Camps in the history book . . . (The American people) have to learn how Japanese American citizens were denied their rights and placed in Camp — all for economic reasons, not sabotage."

And learn they did. These shows served to educate and unite the Japanese American community as I've seldom seen before. We saw Mr. Tsujimura meeting former Camp art teachers, Mr. Mikami and Professor Obata, and his family for the first time in 40 years. We saw Mr. Omori standing by his woodcarvings explaining the moving stories behind his works to viewers. We saw Nisei overcome with painful memories and leaving the exhibit with tears in their eyes. We saw young Sansei parents holding the hands of their Yonsei children, explaining where their parents and grandparents were interned.

These two exhibits sharply brought out to me the importance of Camp art, photos, and artifacts to the Nikkei community today. Without these vivid reminders, the true history of the Camps, the injustices suffered, and the struggles of the people would remain clouded.

Without this history, many Japanese Americans would fall victim to assimilationist distortions fostered by the media and educational system: "That Japanese passively accepted this racist internment." "That Nikkei are a 'model minority' better than those other 'colored folks.'" "That the government always looks out for the just treatment of Nikkei."

Upon seeing these exhibits, many people felt a stronger sense of identity as members of a proud and strong Japanese American people. We were even more united and ready to face the continuing problems today, such as securing redress and reparations.

After this experience, the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee of San Jose feels strongly committed to promoting Camp art work as one of our priorities. We plan to organize future exhibits and encourage others to do so also. Camp art stands out as a valuable tool to teach us more about our past in order to build a stronger, more united Nikkei community for the future.

Camp Art Resources

The Nihonmachi Outreach Committee has the following camp art resources available for others:

— a description and sum up of the Camp art shows in San Jose.

— a guide to organizing Camp art shows.

— copies of the written program containing artists' biographies used in San Jose.

— an excellent slide show on Camp art developed by Janet Miyoko Tsubamoto.

For more information, write NOC, P.O. Box 2293, San Jose, CA 95109. □.

Andy Noguchi *is a member of the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee.*

COLORBLIND

"They just wanted something to shoot at.
I think if it had been a Chinaman or a
Mexican they would have killed him. It
just happened to be a black man."

Clayton D'Arcy
Mayor of Oroville

Driving down the road they could not find
a deer could not find a cow even
but the true soldiers inside them did not
give up a chance denied them to kill charlie
gripping the steering wheel they turn the motor
down the back and shoot to kill.

He had the black hair and the dark skin.
The brown eyes that they never saw.
His back turned, we all look alike.

Back door back room deal plea bargain
nazi hero living in America they were just
kids a whole life behind them behind them.

Doug Yamamoto

english lesson: hands

the new student
has dirty fingernails

his hands lie motionless
on the formica table
crippled flightless birds
struggling to flutter free

"what did you do in laos?"
i ask conversationally.
his gaze takes on weight.
his feet shift under the table.

before the war i planted gardens
(he says)
    hot pepper.
    rice.
    pumpkin.
    onion.
    sweet potato.
each plant a song, a ghost
a story sent from heart to heart.
he puzzles at his hands and
i look at his fingernails
and imagine his hands fluttering soil
spraying seed, harvesting:
    hot pepper.
    rice.
    pumpkin.
    onion.
    sweet potato.

life harvested in a shower of rain.
death harvested in a shower of napalm.

leilani sauter

POEM TO DAD

Bob Hsiang

i can still hear those ancient operas
you brought from shanghai
to fifth avenue in your executive suit.
melancholy love poems sung in falsetto,
and slow vibratos blown out from bamboo
into smoke filled air of n.y. summer night.

the boy in me did not understand
why you lived so far away
in the imaginary world of the T'ang
whose characters spoke
in that flowery dialect
and wore face masks / deep red, black and white,
with sleeves that looked much too long.

how glorious it all seemed
to be able to relive the past
secluded in memory and
always pushing foward with piercing
rapid *erh-hu* melodies,
the smell of dark resin,
jasmine tea and johnny walker red.

experts say that your music is archaic,
that only few masters are remaining
in this world.

do you still remember the music
made before you were born ?

i can still hear those ancient operas
as i gaze at that old photograph / of you
sitting upon a wooden horse
before the boxer rebellion
and ask you a hundred questions.

robert hsiang
september 1983

YEN LU WONG

Asian American Dancer

By Marion Fay

Scene from "Cicada Images Molting."

She beats and writhes within a cage, dressed in fantastic finery, like an exotic creature fighting for its freedom; battles cardboard figures dressed in nuns' habits, with stylized kung fu movements; sits by an imaginary stream in a cloche and sequined dress — a demure maiden from a familiar *genre* of Hong Kong calendars; and finally emerges triumphant, the Woman Warrior. Yen Lu Wong is a dancer, choreographer, and student of many cultures. Her most recent work, "Cicada Images Molting," in which she is symbolically an exotic insect in different stages of transformation, reflects upon and is enriched by various elements of her past.

Born in Kunming, China, a place she describes as "mythic," she has distinct memories of her birthplace in the Himalayan ranges, mild in climate, rich in the dance of the many cultures that have lived there in harmony. She left it when she was five to go to Hong Kong. There, Yen Lu was baptized into the Catholic Church at age fourteen after a girlhood of Catholic school, but she has since rejected missionary Catholicism, one senses, as strongly as she was once mesmerized by it. Her battle with the cardboard figures dressed in nuns' habits is a powerful and angry sequence. She now reflects upon the struggle she waged as one against convention, guilt, easy answers, and hypocrisy. In a sense, it was probably a necessary step towards her becoming an artist.

As the youngest child in a family of six girls and one boy, Yen Lu acknowledges her luck in having had a wise and progressive father. "In old China, girls were born to die," she says with a trace of a British accent. Yet Tsin Forn Wong, a Presbyterian banker originally from Shao-Hsing, did not oppose Yen Lu's early choice of religion and supported all of his children, including his six daughers, through college.

Yen Lu went to New York in 1959.

Yen Lu Wong

While in high school, she was a scholarship student of the renowned innovator and genius of dance, Martha Graham. Yen Lu was, in her time, Graham's only Chinese student; but she points out that Graham was the only dancer in the 50's who would integrate her work with people of all colors, so that the company had Blacks, Latinos, and Asians.

Among her many achievements, perhaps the most striking is Yen Lu's ability to inspire and integrate hundreds of people, most of them amateurs, into her dance works. A trip to Sydney, Australia funded by a grant from the Australia Council in 1979 resulted in a three-day work performed in three historic locations, involving 300 dancers. It took her six weeks to devise. "It would be presumptuous of me to come to Australia and tell the inhabitants about themselves," she says, "so I was a seeker asking them about their history, their culture, and their folklore." The Aborigines or keepers of the land encounter destroyers of the land; the settlers and those who seek to enter or immigrate are also represented. Afterward, it was apparent that the experience had been positive in a variety of ways: for some, as an emotional grasp of their heritage; for others, the recognition that the places where the dances were performed would never be quite the same for them again; and for all, the sharing as a group in creating the performance.

Yen Lu has been performing as a dancer since 1961, and has appeared or choreographed works in San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, New York City, Bali, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles where she now lives. She is the mother of two daughters; Pia, 20, is a junior at U.C. Berkeley, and Maya, 13, attends school in Los Angeles.

Yen Lu is married to Herbert Shore, a writer, director, and Provost of International College, and together they have formed TNR, The New Repertory. TNR creates small works for touring and large, architectural works like the one performed in Sydney. The latest project, funded by the Mobil Corporation, is a video project in which the camera moves along with the dancer, creating a new art form.

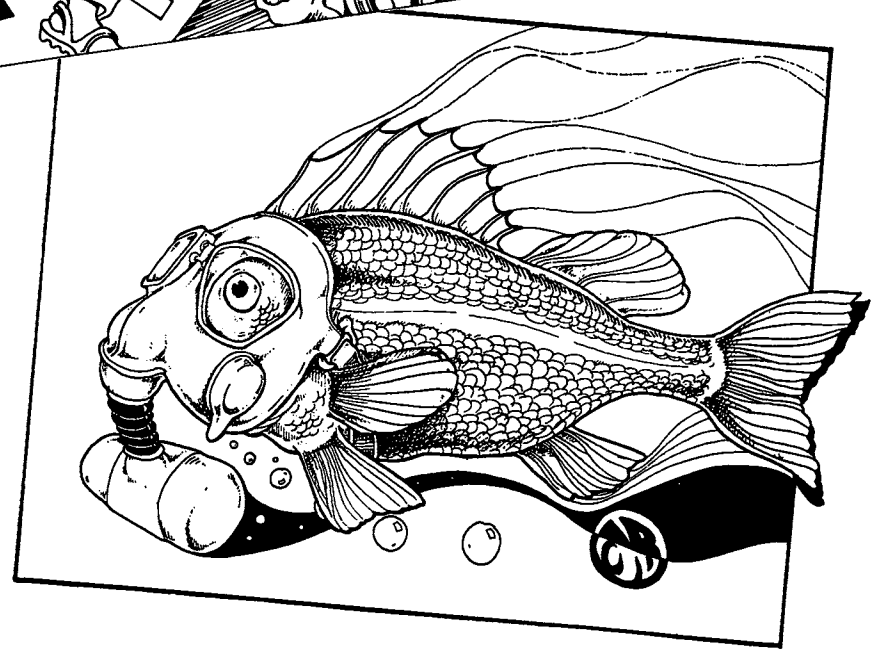
Yen Lu's skills are many: She is an organizer and administrator, creative artist, parent, wife, and spokesperson for art as a vehicle of social expression and change. "Artists are anathema to a society," she says gravely, "because we are not part of it. We are its conscience, or its curios." In spite of, or perhaps because of, her rejection of organized religion, Yen Lu believes that art is linked to religion in its broadest, *un*organized sense — artists are shamans who help to cure society's ills and help to bring about change. Another reason artists are often anathema to society, then, is that change is never easy; there is always tremendous struggle. Yen Lu discusses works by Asian American artists that exemplify this idea: the Maxine Hong Kingston book *Women Warrior*, the David Hwang play "F.O.B.," and the Bernadette Cha work "Salted Linen." She sees each of these as examples of the strength, depth, and courage of the emerging Asian American consciousness, expressed and sometimes defined by its artists. They use a history rich with factual and dreamlike material to help us to grow strong, individually and collectively. They sow the seeds of change.

In one of Yen Lu's recent works celebrating the natural elements, the dancers and musicians appear on stage at the end and slowly parade off, up the aisles and out the back door. Candles illuminate the way. The audience, without being told, follows out into the night, where everyone is invited to dance together with the performers under the stars, among the trees. The moment is quite magical — an affirmation of a shared humanity and joy of celebration of the beauty of the earth together.

At 41, Yen Lu Wong's contributions to the Asian American community as it struggles to define its disparate elements, and to the art of dance are, though considerable, just beginning. □

Marion Fay *is an attorney practicing in Los Angeles. She is an advisor to* EAST WIND.

Left: "Reagan's Pajamas"
Below: "Adapting"



In Memory of Ed Badajos

By Orvy Jundis

Major newspapers and magazines throughout the world today feature political cartoons. Themes dealing with the struggle for power and the acquisition of wealth are among those drawn, focused, and highlighted by the perceptive and often satirical pen of the political cartoonist.

In the United States not too many Asian Americans have been involved in this particular field. Ed Badajos, born and raised in Hawai'i, was a brilliant practitioner of this art form.

Badajos' knowledge of world conditions and events, keen insight on human motivations, and skill in caricature, enabled him to produce strong images and profound statements.

Travels in Europe and the United States gave Ed the opportunity to meet and interact with individuals of diverse economic, social and educational status. A stint in the U.S. armed forces added an understanding of the role of the military in peoples' lives. Graduation from art school further honed his artistic talents.

During the late 60's, Ed Badajos worked for the *L.A. Free Press* as an editorial cartoonist. He depicted the sinister manipulation of the masses by corrupt leaders and exposed the purveyors of pollution and destruction. His wry sense of humor, daring graphics, boldness and veracity gained him a following in the underground press. A collection of his work was published thereafter.

Around the same period Badajos experimented with cartoon panels in sequences to tell stories. He did not use words. His intent was to commu-

nicate ideas in the language most people understood, pictures! From this, the book *Filipino Food* emerged. The outrageous visualizations and innovative compositions captured the mood and essence of the 60's. Ed Badajos received international recognition for his creative effort.

The 70's brought a meaningful change in the direction of Ed's life. While visiting San Francisco, he met Pilipino American artists involved with community work. He was introduced to the problems of the International Hotel, Manilatown, and the world of the Pilipino elderly. Ed decided to stay in San Francisco and set up his studio in an area where many young Pilipino American writers, artists, and musicians lived.

When Ed was fully settled, he was joined by Kevan Miller, also an artist. Shortly thereafter, their son Edan was born. In his new role as a family man and a father, Ed Badajos became more deeply aware of the difficulties confronting Asian Americans in this culture. He began to read about his heritage, and learned about the injustices suffered by his people.

While continuing his artistic explorations, writing poetry, drawing comic books, and playing guitar, he worked for *The Berkeley Barb* doing covers and layouts, produced posters for the South of Market Cultural Center and the Galeria de la Raza.

Fusion: traditional motifs on copy-art

Badajos joined the Kearny Street Workshop and the Liwanag Artists Group. He became interested in the sounds and tones of Pilipino words, particularly Visayan and Tagalog. He fused these sounds with his guitar and brought forth with his music a strange hybrid of electronic primal rhythms that flowed like monsoon waves with the intensity and fury of a raging typhoon. Delving into Philippine mythology and folklore, studying symbols and designs of tribal crafts and artifacts, Badajos created graphic art that imbued the spirit of ancient Pilipino culture utilizing contemporary technical tools such as color xerox machines and Gestetners.

During the 80's, Ed concentrated a lot of time and energy into writing novels. As if sensing that his life was ebbing away, he spent quality time with his son Edan. They went biking together all over the streets and parks of San Francisco, They were constant companions. Ed was the ideal dad, a buddy and a father at the same time.


Ed Badajos and son Edan

He had lost a lot of weight and had pains in the neck area; the medical diagnosis, cancer. Despite the news, Ed Badajos carried his burden with dignity, uncomplaining. He finished several novels and continued to work as a poster designer for punk rock events and also as a security guard. He still had a sense of humor and continued to comment on man's foibles and idiosyncracies.

Though mentally he refused to accept defeat from his illness, in August, his body finally succumbed during a visit to Hawai'i with his young son Edan. □

Orvy Jundis *is a Bay Area poet, writer, and artist.*

POETRY

1984 is a State of Mind

We're the 80's generation.
The T.V. generation.
Static colors our thoughts.
The man from F.C.C.
has got us dolby tested
plugged, socketed
hooked on
to
wired in
out & around . . .
get the picture?

Our kid brothers & sisters
are turning into sit-com characters
& soap opera queens.
They have obnoxious appetites
& a divinity complex.
Movie cameras constantly follow them about.

The Media, Inc. has a monopoly
on our thoughts.
They remember Soweto, China, & Watts
& are launching a vinyl
propaganda campaign
aimed at the genitals of teenagers.
Their billion dollar slogan runs:
'MONEY. POWER. SEX.'

We are white mice
to their white cloaks.
They use videogames
to program our every impulse.
Jackhammers pound from walkmans
making mincemeat of our attentions.
They inject mainstream culture
up our veins
& invade our cerebellums
with a lot of toxic values.

When Jimi Hendrix
threw up amerika
on the lap of Uncle Sam,
people got hip.
Now it's coked-up White boys
with lacerated tonsils
shrieking on a guitar solo
to the dark side of the moon.
Pulp magazines like
POPULAR NIHILISM
are hot sellers these days.

This steady diet
of food commercials, drugs
& paranoia
has taken its toll.
Gut turning
world churning
multitude vomiting up
kentucky fried culture.

It's a perpetual State
of surreality.

We are One Nation
sloshing inside the belly
of a racist cartoon character,
who can't stop guffawing.
Nazi humor is really killing us all.

Thom Lee
San Francisco

Robert Hsiang *is a freelance photographer in San Francisco and a member of the Kearny Street Workshop.*

Al Robles *is a member of the Kearny Street Workshop (San Francisco) and a longtime activist in the Pilipino community.*

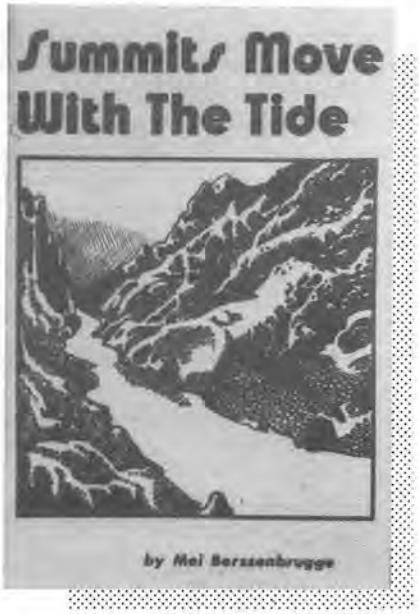
Doug Yamamoto *is a member of the JAM Writers Workshop (San Francisco) and editor for* Yoisho!, *an anthology of Japanese American literature.*

Leilani Sauter *is part-Hawaiian. She teaches sociology and multi-cultural studies in San Diego.*

Lawson Inada *is a Professor of English at Southern Oregon College and a contributing editor to* EAST WIND.

Thom Lee *is a student at San Francisco City College.*

Five Asian American Poets



By Fred Wei-han Houn

Is Asian American Poetry poetry that coincidentally is written by someone who happens to be Asian American? Or is it a *genre* of American literature, a collective body of folk and art traditions that reflects a definitive and common experience shared by Asian and Pacific Islander nationalities in America? Reviewed below are several new books by Asian American writers who locate themselves within Asian American Poetry: Ronald Tanaka, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Garrett K. Hongo, Fay Chiang and Janice Mirikitani.

Winner of the 1982 American Book Award, Ronald Tanaka's *The Shino Suite: Sansei Poetry, Opus 2* (The Greenfield Review Press) is a cohesive, fluid collection of poetry. The language is terse and utilizes Japanese words and expressions. Tanaka explains:

"The every day language of even monolingual Sansei (third generation in America — ed.) like myself cannot be adequately represented without some Japanese expressions though it must be borne in mind that their significance is grounded in a distinctly Japanese American Lebensform."

My interest in Tanaka was piqued by his poem, "I Hate My Yellow Wife" which first appeared in the fiery pages of *GIDRA* (and later cited in Asian American anthologies and most recently appearing in Miya Iwataki's essay in *EAST WIND*). This early 1970's poem captured the anguish of self-hate and shame symptomatic of the humiliating self-images held by victims of racism — the so-called "Asian American identity crisis." However, Tanaka's present volume of poetry is tranquil, tepid and self-complacent with his Japanese American sensibility and identity. Gone is the anger, raw, soul-bearing anguish and passion. It now appears that Professor Tanaka is at ease with his identity as well as his people's struggles. A sense of consciousness and outrage toward the continual inequality, injustice and oppression of his people is absent. Tanaka's politics are now quite tame, non-controversial (no wonder his book received such a prestigious award). Indeed, he might assert that his writing is "apolitical."

But, rather, his politics have actually *changed*: from a consciousness of his community and people's struggle, Tanaka is now individualistic, pedantic and subjectivist. To celebrate his present "apoliticalness" he writes: "intellectuals who turn/ anti-intellectual/turn into fascists." The noncommittal attitude of intellectuals actually divorces them from the people's lives as they elevate their art above social responsibility and thereby (consciously or unconsciously) perpetuate the status quo.

Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge's most recent book, *Summits Move with the Tide* (The Greenfield Review Press), seems to justify being an "individual first" and to minimize the "ethnic." In her own life, Berssenbrugge has not dealt with the lives of the majority of Asian Americans in Chinatown, Japantown, Manilatown communi-

ties. She seems to only have a superficial grasp of Chinese American identity — a mostly intellectual fascination. Her Chinese images and references are like ornaments to add color to her writing and not much more. Having a Chinese heritage and identity seems novel and intriguing to her. Such is her revelation:

Grandfather talked to me,
taught me.
At two months, my mother tells me,
I could sniff our flowers,
stab my small hand upward to moon.
Even today I get proud
when i remember
this all took place in Chinese.

The Greenfield Review Press has published several books by Asian American writers (one of the few presses to do so), albeit of uneven quality. It would behoove the editors to more deeply understand the vital traditions of Asian American literature — from its fierce folk tradition such as the Angel Island poetry, the militant works of premier Asian American novelist Carlos Bulosan, the vibrant earthiness of Louis Chu's stories of Chinatown and immigrant lives, to the powerful anti-imperialist works of today's Asian Movement — and select contemporary writers for future publications who are most strongly connected to their people's communities and struggles.

Basement Workshop director Fay Chiang's *Miwa's Song* (Sunbury Press) is more effective in combining personal introspection and exploration with the collective experiences of Chinese America. *Miwa's Song* is a tribute to her parents. For the most part, Chiang places their lives in the context of the hardships and sacrifices of Chinese American workers. It is a moving account as it connects with our collective shared experiences and emotions. However, I find this second book to be weaker than her first tour de force, *In the City of Contradictions*, a powerful and inspirational work filled with rhythmic vitality, clear images and sharp, hard-hitting lines. However, by deciding to be "less political, more personal,"

Chiang's *Miwa's Song* retreats from the dynamism and evocative stance of her previous work. The writing is less forceful and more introverted. The poems become individualistic musings.

Garrett K. Hongo's *Yellow Light* (Wesleyan University Press) makes ample use of West Coast Asian American references and images — the places, smells, foods, music and mannerisms from Gardena to Seattle. Yet much of this is more for flavor and color — a superficial hipness — than actual meaning and depth. A promising, though aborted, poem is "Stepchild." While the first five of seven parts are a poignant and passionate tribute to Asian American history, his conclusions are disappointing. In the final two parts, by Hongo's own marriage to a white woman, he has rid himself of "bitterness" and "hatred" that he feels characterizes Asian American consciousness. He has "made peace" with the history of oppression and now "seeks to cure the condition of cultural amnesia within (his people)." Hongo advocates: "think about nothing."

"Cultural amnesia" or lack of Asian American identity is more common to middle-class, suburban Asian Americans who tend to be more assimilated, confused, only English speaking, alienated, and out-marry. They are removed from any concentration of Asians and lack the positive strength of an Asian community life. To fight forced assimilation (the white-out of Asian American identity), Asian American writers must participate in the struggles to unite and build Asian American community life and not be divorced from their communities except for occasional poetry readings.

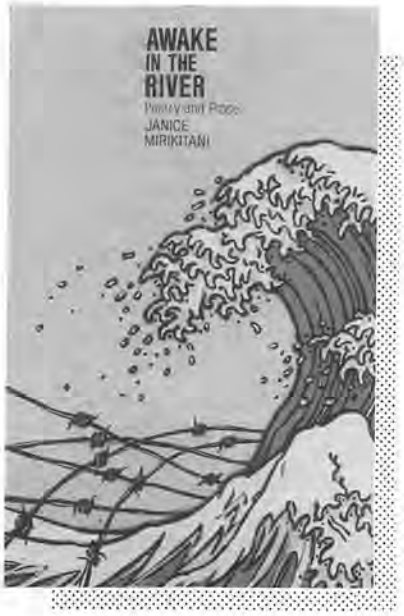
Sansei writer, dancer, choreographer and activist Janice Mirikitani's *Awake in the River* (Isthmus Press) moves solidly within the continuum and tradition of the strongest Asian American literature. She is ever pushing forward, never complacent — a source of burning strength and commitment. Her poetry is never passive, apologetic, "subtle" or "ambiguous." (A petty bourgeois Asian American poet told me that he thought "good poetry" should be ambiguous — *i.e.*, confused, unclear, and non-committal.) Mirikitani's stand is clear. There are no wasted words. Her poems are passionate and penetrating. They fiercely condemn sexism, racism and imperialism. Her outlook is internationalist with universal messages of love for human dignity, self-respect and freedom. "Universalism" is not the abandonment of Asian American identity, but rather, upholding and uniting the Asian American experience with the progressive traditions and struggles of all cultures and peoples.

Awake in the River never retreats into solipsism (individual personal introspection and self-absorption to the exclusion of the world). Mirikitani is an artist who not only conveys reality vividly, but also seeks to change it. Though some of her poems have an "anti-white" tone (*i.e.*, tending to blame white people per se and not the system of white racist monopoly capitalism), the thrust of her focus is to condemn racism and imperialist oppression. Also, Mirikitani at times is preoccupied in an ecstatic enrapture with her sexual experiences and images. But she does not pander sexuality. Rather, her love is sensual, accompanied by a vituperative attack

of sexism. Check out "Bitches Don't Wait."

Most of these new works evince similar common ideological weaknesses: a tendency towards white assimilation, privatism and a peripheral involvement and commitment to the struggles of Asian American communities. This is in contrast to the dynamic tradition of pride in Asian heritage, social responsibility and close ties with the Asian American communities that pulsates through Asian American culture. While it may be argued that these are experiences of individual poets who may not emphasize their "Asian Americanness," their writings can and should be evaluated according to the thrust of the tradition and continuum of Asian American literature and culture. Granted that the characterization of such a tradition/continuum needs further discussion, debate and clarification, yet, it is this author's contention that there is really no other point to begin to genuinely understand and criticize Asian American Poetry. By and large, the criteria of the mainstream establishment of American letters is grossly racist with its monolithic primacy upon the Euro-American and wholesale omission of the literature of Asian, African, Latino and Native American peoples.

Art necessarily begins with the culture of a specific people, their experiences, history and life conditions. And a beginning evaluation of Asian American Poetry must proceed according to its relationship to Asian American peoples. It is my position that the strongest Asian American literature is most deeply reflective of and connected to the lives of the majority of Asians in America. Asian American literature as a *genre* must necessarily embrace the collective experience of Asians in America — i.e., a common history of racism, oppression and the struggle for survival, dignity and equality. Individual artists contribute creative and fresh perceptions of this collectively shared reality, i.e., slices of life, with which we can identify, gain fresh insights to better understand our condition, to keep struggling forward.



Throughout Asian American literature there exists opposing ideological stances as reflections of differing class outlooks in Asian American social life itself. On one hand, the Asian American middle-class experience has been more toward white assimilation and acceptance through accommodation. They are removed from the concentrated Asian American communities and face "identity problems." Racism cannot allow them to ever become totally white (read: equal), yet they are and feel more privileged to be living in white suburbs, to attend white campuses, to have white collar jobs, etc.

On the other hand, the Asian American working class by and large lives and/or works in predominantly Asian or minority communities and workplaces. By dint of this class condition, their concern is less for "finding oneself" and "self-actualization" but for fighting to survive and to improve their lives as a whole.

Asian American writers should draw more from the Asian American communities and working people's lives and struggles as sources for new, creative works, to inherit the progressive traditions of Asian and Asian American culture and to innovate new forms of expression. Asian American writing mustn't be dependent upon white publishers or white critical annointment but can and should make strong connections to the Asian American communities and organizations to publish, distribute and present Asian American novels, plays, poetry, and short stories about Asian American life.

* * *

Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge's *Summits Move With the Tides* ($4) and Ron Tanaka's *Shino Suite* ($5.95) can be ordered from: Greenfield Review Press, R.D. 1, Box 80, Greenfield Center, NY 12833.

Garrett K. Hongo's *Yellow Light* is available from Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT for $5.95.

Fay Chiang's *Miwa's Song* can be ordered from Sunbury Press, P.O. Box 274, Jerome Avenue Station, Bronx, NY 10468 for $4.50.

Janice Mirikitani's *Awake in the River* ($3) can be ordered from Isthmus Press, Box 6877, San Francisco, CA 94101. □

Fred Wei-han Houn *is a poet, writer, musician and political activist in New York City.*

Yoisho!

YOISHO! An Anthology of the Japantown Art & Media Workshop, JAM Writers' Workshop, 1852 Sutter, San Francisco, CA 94115, $3.75.

Reviewed By Lori Kayo Hatta

Asian American literature, like all other literature, is part of an evolving tradition — not necessarily rooted to a "tradition" in the strict

sense of the word, but something more organic, that is, something necessarily involving growth and change. And this is what reading *Yoisho!* really brought home to me.

According to the editors, the word "yoisho, " can mean many things. "The roar of a crowd getting ready for a match. The grunt of Sumo wrestlers pacing the ring. The thud of a mallet pounding against rice . . . — a word rooted in our collective past." In this collection, there is a striking range of voices making contact with the "collective past." The editors evidently did not want to limit their selections by including only those writings reflecting a high level of writing ability and maturity. Indeed, it is important to give audience to young, aspiring writers who might otherwise not be published. We have the young, awkward, flip voice in Warren Kubota's story, "The Outside Jap," and then the more cohesive, mature voice in Sheridan Tatsuno's "The Medicine Man's Lament," both stories dealing with themes about "finding yourself" while neglecting your own people, those who care most about you. The weary voice of the medicine man in Tatsuno's story echoes the many voices of elderly Asian community leaders, the old immigrants who built the early Japantowns, Manilatowns, and Chinatowns. As he sees the younger generation fleeing these community strongholds, he says, "You are like my sons — my crazy sons. They left the reservation to look for work in the big city and they say they will return. But years have passed and still they don't come back. They're like wild, young animals who have run off and lost their way . . . Maybe it's because they lose touch with their tribe and try to live like white men. Who knows?"

The poetry in this varied anthology also displays a broad range of voices. There is the extremely personal, private musings of Hayami Miyasato's "Why Should I Care," and "Friendship," to the more outwardly-oriented poems such as Richard Oyama's "Poems for the Survivors of Tule Lake" and Grace Morizawa's "At the Rainbow Sign," a poem dedicated to one of the fathers of Asian American poetry, Lawson Inada.

The writing workshop where this anthology was produced serves as an excellent model for other groups of Asian American writers to follow. The Japantown Art and Media (JAM) Writers' Workshop is sensitive to the fact that regular creative writing classes cannot meet the needs of Asian American writers and people of working class backgrounds. By meeting and exchanging ideas and personal/political concerns with other writers of color, the Asian American writer can learn more than simply the craft of writing. I look, for example, at some of the very early silkscreened posters produced by JAM and then the bold, stylistically original and exciting posters they put out now. The growth and maturation of the styles we see today obviously did not happen overnight; by regularly contributing its efforts to the community and by working with other Asian American artists, the JAM graphic artists managed to achieve very high levels of originality and skill. With more critical discussion and feedback not only within the workshop, but more importantly, from the Asian American community, from readers of *Yoisho!*, we will hopefully witness a parallel development of the writers in JAM's Writers' Workshop as well. But for now, the important thing is, as Oyama says at the end of his Tule Lake poem, that: "We come together/ to gather, to remember/ the rage, the sorrow,/ the laughter, the loss./ We come together/ to tell our stories." □

Lori Kayo Hatta *is a writer and aspiring filmmaker living and working in San Francisco.*

Kinenhi

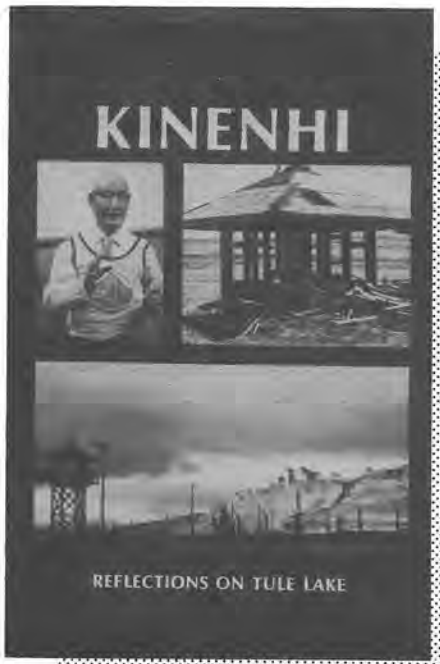
KINENHI: Reflections on Tule Lake, by Tule Lake Committee, San Francisco: 86 pages. Price: $8.50.

Reviewed By Forrest Gok

Kinenhi, which means "tower of memories," is primarily a compilation of excerpts of interviews conducted with Tule Lake internees by members of the Tule Lake Committee, a volunteer group of Asian Americans, predominantly Sansei, formed to explore the camp experience of the Issei and Nisei.

Kinenhi is a well-illustrated collection of remembrances from those who were forced to give up their homes, property and possessions by the government and to spend the war years behind barbed wire.

Kinenhi describes life at Tule Lake as not that different from life at the other camps although Tule Lake was the home for all those the government considered recalcitrant. Over half of the some 8,000 persons who were repatriated or expatriated to Japan after World War II were detained at Tule Lake.



The book delves into many of the internees' experiences returning to the fold after detainment and incarceration. Many of the surviving Nisei had not talked about their experiences until these interviews were conducted.

This book is heartfelt reading without being excessively sentimental or didactic. The interviewees are candid, down-to-earth, and revealing. *Kinenhi* provides a concise historical background to the entire chapter of internment as well as a varied remembrance of Tule Lake.

Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, *Kinenhi* manages to convey a sense of positiveness, a sense of learning from the past, and a sense that we, today, can overcome the injustices and humiliation suffered at Tule Lake and other American concentration camps as long as we acknowledge and respect their painful legacy. □

Forrest Gok *is a Contributing Editor to* EAST WIND. *He is a freelance journalist who frequently reviews Asian American art and literature. This article was excerpted from a review published in* East West *newspaper in June 1983 and is reprinted with their permission.*

Texas Long Grain

Texas Long Grain. A book of photographs published by the Kearny Street Workshop, San Francisco, CA 1982.

Reviewed by Mike Fong

A big bowlful of 42 black and white photographs greets the reader of this anthology by Asian American photographers. Arranged under five themes, the 15 photographers present diverse views of the everyday lives of Asians in America. As the editors say, the "photographs are as familiar to us as a sack of rice."

The five themes, which are used to categorize the works, include Chinatowns of America, Life Has Flowed From My Ancestors, She Sews . . ., Manong Freddy, and Hey Grandpa . . . I thought the strongest section was Life Has Flowed From My Ancestors which features the diverse offerings of eight Asian American photographers. There is warmth, affection and humor expressed in many of these photographs. Janet Yoshii's "A Favorite Place" depicting her Issei grandmother sitting down for a lunch of burgers, fries and soda, offers a funny visual contrast. Another memorable photo in the section She Sews . . . is Corky Lee's picture of conditions in a Chinatown sewing factory.

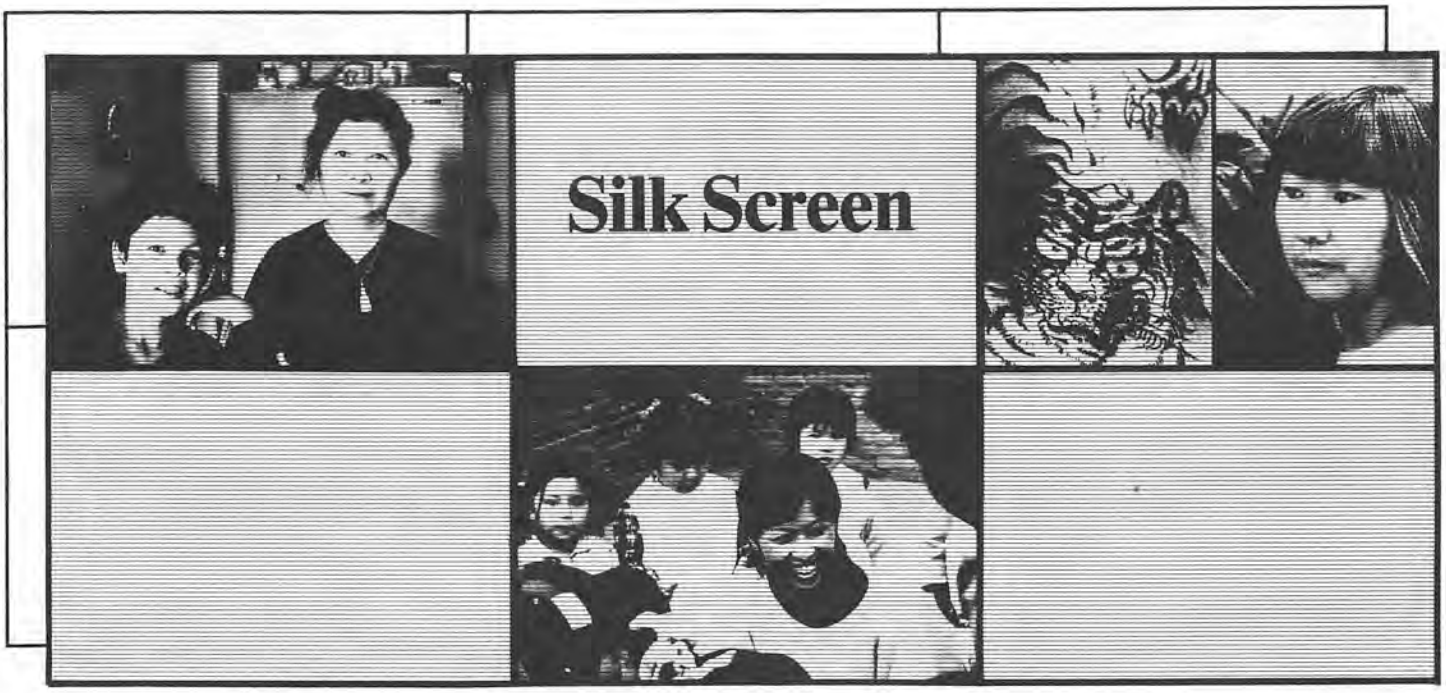
Overall, the book is a good example of Asian American photographers working together. However, I felt that some of the photos were a bit weak and could have used more explanation. Some of these shots are presented simply with a title, place and date. Captions or short explanations might have helped draw out the significance of the picture and held the reader's attention a little longer.

The concept of Asian American photographers pooling their works comes through very strong. *Texas Long Grain*'s editors Jim Dong, Zand Gee and Crystal K.D. Huie affirmed the need to develop Asian American photographic expression: "We hope that *Texas Long Grain* will encourage other Asian American artists to participate collectively to evolve an expression of their experiences as Asian Americans in this country." □

* * *

Texas Long Grain is available from the Kearny Street Workshop, 1550 Lombard Street, San Francisco, CA 94123. Each book costs $7.00, plus 50¢ for postage and handling, and 6.5% sales tax for BART counties, 6% for the rest of California.

Mike Fong *is a staff photographer for* EAST WIND *magazine.*



By Duane Kubo

We have a rare opportunity to view Asian American film and video works on television this fall. Starting October 30, the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) will present *Silk Screen*, a series of six half hour programs made by and about Asian Americans, on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS).

After years of pressure being placed on PBS by the Asian American community, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting initially funded the establishment of a consortium for Asian American programming. (CPB is the funding arm of public television). The consortium's executive director, James Yee, explains, "NAATA hopes that the *Silk Screen* series will serve as an outlet, a source of programs and information about Asian Americans that has not been traditionally available or accessible within the general media."

Yee added, "CPB has a sorry and dismal record in producing Asian American themes . . . we'd like to have *Silk Screen* viewed as a resource, an option for stations who are looking for Asian American programming."

NAATA's first presentation, hosted by Robert Ito, co-star of the NBC series, *Quincy*, will include:

Program One

Bittersweet Survival by Christine Choy and J.T. Takagi.

A compilation of the relocation experiences of Southeast Asian refugees, *Bittersweet Survival* examines the hostility faced by the refugees as they struggle with resettlement difficulties and cultural differences in their new homeland. Veteran filmmaker Christine Choy and her associate J.T. Takagi combine dramatic documentary footage of Vietnam with recent interviews of refugees, some of whom express the hope that the violence and hardship is behind them. But not so. Shortly after the completion of the film, Lam T. Duong, one of the most outspoken of the interviewees, was murdered.

Christine Choy is a founder and co-director of Third World Newsreel. She has directed numerous documentaries and has recently completed her first dramatic short for the American Film Institute. J.T. Takagi has worked as a sound recordist, and was associate producer on *To Love, Honor and Obey* and *Delta Mississippi Chinese*. *Bittersweet Survival* is a production of Third World Newsreel of New York City.

Program Two

Sewing Woman by Arthur Dong and *Pinoy* by Deborah Bock.

Sewing Woman is a beautifully constructed personal account of an immigrant Chinese woman's experiences. Based on oral histories as well as the experiences of the filmmaker's own mother, the sewing woman entered into an arranged marriage at age 13, was separated from her husband when he went off to America, and later had to leave her son behind in China in order to join her husband. In the end, though she has not given us her thoughts on the condition of her fellow Chinese immigrants, the sewing woman reflects, "The many years of hard work have paid off — my family is all here."

San Francisco producer/direc-

tor/cinematographer Arthur Dong has received numerous awards for *Sewing Woman*. He is currently seeking funding for a Chinese language version of the film.

Pinoy recalls the lives of Pilipino immigrant laborers in the Pacific Northwest through the story of Al Masigat, a labor organizer dedicated to the unionization of fellow cannery workers. In one scene, Masigat and younger cannery workers who still travel to Alaska to work, share their contempt at the similar dismal working conditions. One of these younger workers, Silme Domingo, was later murdered in Seattle for his union activities and anti-Marcos organizing efforts.

Producer Deborah Bock helped to produce *Pacific Bridges* and *Pearls*, two series on Asian Americans aired on PBS. *Pinoy* was originally part of the *Pearls* series.

Program Three

Monterey's Boat People by Spencer Nakasako and Vincent DiGirolamo.

This documentary focuses on the controversy surrounding Vietnamese fishermen in the Monterey Bay area of California. The filmmakers draw a parallel between the current conflict and the anti-Asian attitudes faced by the Chinese, who first developed the area's fishing industry, and the Japanese who owned 65% of the fish markets until they were forced into World War II concentration camps.

Interviews with local fishing industry representatives try to bring out the economic and environmental problems the Vietnamese fishermen have created, but the narrative points to a long history of racist legislation directed against Asian fishermen. Since the videotape was completed, the State of California has banned the type of gill net fishing in shallow waters that the Vietnamese fishermen can afford.

Spencer Nakasako is currently operations director at the Bay Area Video Coalition. He has worked as a field producer on a number of documentaries. Vincent DiGirolamo, who has worked as a freelance writer, is now teaching English in Beijing.

Program Four

With Silk Wings: On New Ground by Loni Ding.

In *On New Ground* producer/director Loni Ding gives us glimpses of nine Asian American women in professions not traditionally associated with women or Asian Americans. Personal interest, ambition, and persistence is a common thread in the interviews with a pharmacist, dress designer, judge, park ranger, coxswain, police officer, bartender, television news anchor, and welder.

On New Ground is part of *With Silk Wings*, a project about Asian American women at work by Asian Women United of San Francisco.

Among her many projects, Loni Ding has produced the PBS children's series *Bean Sprouts*, *600 Millennia*, and *How We Got Here: The Chinese*. She has worked as a producer/director for KQED-TV in San Francisco.

Program Five

China: Land of My Father by Felicia Lowe.

Chinese American journalist Felicia Lowe traveled to China to film this personal account. She captured interviews not easily obtained by Western reporters, and also sought her own family roots. In a moving conclusion, Lowe is united with relatives and a grandmother she has never seen.

Now an independent producer, Felicia Lowe has worked as a producer and reporter for KNBC-TV in Los Angeles and KGO-TV in San Francisco.

Program Six

Tattoo City and *Emiko* by Emiko Omori.

These two films by pioneering Nisei cinematographer/filmmaker Emiko Omori reveal a highly personalized approach to cinema. *Emiko*, filmed in 1969, explores the role of women image makers. As Emiko films a group of people, she asks them about their reactions to seeing a woman behind the camera. *Tattoo City* also reveals an intense personal involvement. While making this film about San Francisco tattoo master Don Ed Hardy, Omori's back was tattooed with a Japanese design.

NAATA has fashioned a respectable group of film and video works from a developing Asian American media movement. If there is a consistent weakness in this first presentation (and in Asian American media in general) it lies in the difficult task of giving us highly personal, sensitive portraits of a *Sewing Woman*, but with the larger context and contradictions brought out in *Bittersweet Survival*. Dramatic narrative film can be effective for this, and we eagerly await NAATA's second season for which several Asian American filmmakers have already submitted their narrative stories on film.

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NAATA has developed into much more than an entry into PBS. The long-overdue need for a center of Asian American media has dictated that NAATA become a clearinghouse of information, referral services, consultation, even job placement for Asians in media. Mediamakers are encouraged to contact NAATA at:

National Asian American Telecommunications Association
346 Ninth Street, Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415)863-0814 □

Duane Kubo *was the co-director of Visual Communication's film,* Hito-Hata: Raise the Banner. *He is active in the San Jose Nihonmachi Outreach Committee.*


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