

BRIDGES

Asian American Studies Program Newsletter, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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NEW FACULTY FOR AASP

After a four-year search, the Asian American Studies Program is happy to welcome a new faculty member, Dr. Sumie Okazaki. She is an assistant professor with a joint appointment in the AASP Program and the Department of Psychology. Dr. Okazaki received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1994, where she pursued her research interests in Asian American mental health issues. At UCLA, she gained valuable experiences in conducting mental health research on Asian American population at the National Research Center on Asian American Mental Health. She states that the ethnic diversity in Los Angeles and the resources at UCLA provided her with opportunities to work with an interdisciplinary team of researchers on the cutting edge of mental health research, and that now she is eager to apply her knowledge and research skills in pursuing studies here in the Midwest.

This year, Dr. Okazaki is teaching "Asian American Personality and Mental Health," a course new to the UW-Madison campus. The course covers a wide range of topics concerning Asian Americans including stereotypes, gender roles and relations, identity and acculturation, academic achievement and leadership, psychopathology and diagnostic issues, culturally responsive counseling approaches, the refugee experience and mental health, and public policy issues. In addition to teaching in

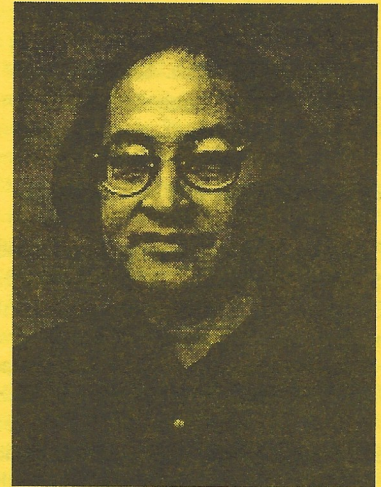
both AASP and Psychology, Dr. Okazaki is pursuing two main lines of research. One research project involves interviewing Asian American patients with serious mental disorder (such as schizophrenia) and their relatives in order to examine cultural and familial factors that influence the recognition of, and seeking help for, mental disturbance symptoms. This two year project is currently underway in Los Angeles, and Dr. Okazaki travels to Los Angeles periodically to oversee the progress of the study. Another line of her research, which Dr. Okazaki is planning to conduct here at the University, involves the examination of cultural factors which may influence Asian Americans' reporting of emotional distress symptoms.

Dr. Okazaki moved to Madison just before the start of the Fall semester. She says that she has enjoyed the slower pace of life in Madison compared to Los Angeles, as well as the beautiful scenery and the seasonal changes. She hopes to take up some outdoor activities this winter, but her main goal is to stay warm.

UPDATES ON AASP FACULTY

Peggy Choy performed her own work, lectured and taught Zen dance and Javanese dance at the University of Nebraska in October 1995. In November, Choy will perform excerpts from her suite, "Seung Hwa: Rape/Rage/Revolution," featured as the opening night performance for the "Resounding: Women in the World Music" symposium in New York city at Hunter College. She will also present a lecture on Asian American dance at Barnard College.

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Arthur Sze

POETRY READING

Poet Arthur Sze will be giving a reading from his latest book *Archipelago* (Copper Canyon Press, 1995) at the Interim Multicultural Center in Memorial Union at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 1995. A one-man multicultural event, Sze, a Chinese American born in New York City, is married to an American Indian artist and teaches creative writing at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Sante Fe, New Mexico; his latest book was inspired in part by famous Zen garden at the Ryoanji Temple in Kyoto, Japan where fifteen stones, representing islands, are set in a sea of gravel, raked to look like waves. A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and author of several volumes of poetry, Sze has received numerous fellowships and awards, the latest this year's \$50,000 Lannan Literary Award. After his reading on campus, Sze will give another reading the Woodland Patterns Bookstore at 720 East Locust Street, Milwaukee, on Saturday, November 18.

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ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

The Asian American Studies Program Film Festival is back! Screenings will start at 7 p.m. in 6189 Helen C. White on February 8, 22, March 21, April 4, 1996. Admission is free.

Thursday Feb. 8, 1996 The Hmong Experience in America

Hmong Tapestry: Voices From the Cloth

Produced by Hmong American Partnership, St. Paul, Minnesota. 1991. 67 minutes.

Created by more than 60 members of the Hmong American Partnership's Youth Program under the mentorship of director Michael Lenzen and playwright Jaime Meyer, the past and present of the Hmong people are woven into a dramatic and entertaining tapestry of personal stories, history, music and traditional folktales in this play.

Seen by over 5,000 people in the Twin Cities area in the spring and summer of 1991, the play received rave reviews. It was performed in Madison in late 1991.

Hmong Youth in Transition

Documentary. Color. 30 minutes. 1992. Written, directed and filmed by U. W. Madison students: Bryan Vue, Mark Niu, and Yung Zhang (who've done a professional job).

A brief introduction to the Hmong people, their origins, the circumstances of their immigration to the U.S., and their struggle to balance the cultures of two different worlds.

Interviews with Wisconsin Hmong students Sao Her, Chong Vang, Khaoly Vang, Neng Xiong, Sala Vang, Khousa Xiong, Amoun Vang, Kong Lee, and Lorry Vang on their memories of escaping from Laos, on the model minority myth, on Hmong music, dance and American roll 'n roll.

Between Two Worlds: The Hmong Shaman in America

Documentary set primarily in Wisconsin, setting the Hmong shaman into the context of the American Indian medicine man. We see the ritual dancing of several Hmong shaman, and the role they play in the Hmong community as intercessors between the spiritual world and the material world.

ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

Thursday Feb. 22, 1996 Asian American Painters and poets

Why Is Preparing Fish a Political Act?

Directed by Russell Leong. Color. 20 minutes. 1991.

A reflection on legacies of struggle, power and self-determination. The video portrait of Asian American poet and activist Janice Mirikitani, author of *Shedding Silence*, begins with a remembrance of the poet's Issei grandmother, and continues with her life, family and her work.

Art to Art: Expressions of Asian American Women

Produced by Valerie Soe. Color. 30 minutes. 1993. A collaborative project between filmmakers, painters and sculptors, this is the first video focusing exclusively on contemporary Asian American women artists.

Featured are visual artists Pacita Abad, Hung Liu, Yong Soon Min, and Barbara Takanaga, profiled by film and video artists Christine Chang, Christine Choy, Karen Kaul and Chuleenan Svetvilas.

Mitsuye and Nellie

Directed by Allie Light. Color. 58 minutes. The lives of Asian American poets Mitsuye Yamada and Nellie Wong, first published in the 70's. Look out for AASP director Amy Ling who appears briefly in the film.

Thursday Mar. 21, 1996 Japanese American Relocation

Who's Going to Pay for These Donuts Anyway?

Produced and directed by Janice Tanaka. 58 minutes. 1992. This film presents clear evidence of the profound effect of the internment on generations of Japanese Americans.

It chronicles Tanaka's fifty-year personal search for her father, whom she had not seen since age three. As a young man, Tanaka was arrested by the FBI for opposing the internment

ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

and diagnosed as schizophrenic with paranoid tendencies. His daughter finds him in a half-way house for the chronically mentally ill in L.A.'s skid row.

History and Memory [for Akiko & Takashige]

Produced and directed by Rea Tajiri. 32 minutes. 1991. An avant garde film about director Tajiri's family's experience as Japanese Americans interned in U.S. concentration camps.

Exploring the memories of a place she has never visited but of which she has a memory, Tajiri surveys the impact of images on our lives and draws from sources such as Hollywood's *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *Bad Day at Black Rock* and United States Defense Department newsreels and relocation propaganda films.

Thursday April 4, 1996 The Filipino Experience in America

Program to be announced.

AASP COURSES FOR SPRING 1996

101 Introduction to Asian American Studies; Open to Fr; 3 credits; 8:00-9:15 TR; Jan Miyasaki.

220 Ethnic Movements in the United States; So st; 3 credits; 9:30-10:45 TR; crosslisted with Sociology; Pam Oliver.

260 Topics in Asian American Culture: Asian/Asian American Movement; Asian American 101; 1 credit; 9:55 TR; meets with Dance 001 Lab 5; Peggy Choy.

342 Asian American Personality and Mental Health; Psych 201 or 202 or 281 or cons inst; 3 credits; 11:00-12:15 TR; crosslisted with Psychology; Sumie Okazaki.

595 Asian American Women Writers; 6 cr of intro lit or cons inst; 3 credits; 9:30-10:45 TR; Amy Ling.

The Neglected Few

by Sophea Mouth

The word Khmer (Cambodian) is hardly known to the American community at large—also unknown are their problems. There are about six hundred Khmer people living both in Janesville and Madison. All that is known about Khmer people is that they had been victimized by the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 to 1979, as featured in the popular film, "The Killing Fields."

Khmer people in Madison have been and are still suffering from the effects of the Vietnam War, which have been identified as Posttraumatic Disorder (PTSD). But PTSD is only part of the problem. While coping with debilitating memories of indiscriminate murders, Khmer people have other problems to worry about. Dropped unprepared into the American culture, they were helpless. Many older Khmer still can't speak, read or write English; their skills brought from home are useless here; their children are more difficult to discipline; their financial hardship and dependency on the system are still rampant; drug and alcohol abuse among teenagers is growing, gang violence which was unheard of before is now taking its root, domestic quarrels and many other problems are emerging rapidly.



Sophea Mouth

The point is, PTSD could have been dealt with more effectively had the above problems been addressed. Only a few white professionals have been able to work with some of these Khmer war victims. Often, I find that fund seeking is a motive for these professionals who exploit the name of Khmer victims or PTSD, for the purpose of obtaining grants for their own use. No effective therapy has ever been discovered. Victims of PTSD are much worse off than they were and everyday their problems are compounded almost exponentially. However, Khmer mental health needs and cultural

Performance Artist from San Francisco

Sachiko Nakamura, an independent choreographer and performance artist from San Francisco, performed "Layers I & Layers II" on Thursday and Friday nights, September 28 and 29 at Mitchell Theater. Using a mound of papers in "Layers I: Landscapes of Paper," she took the audience on a humorous and poignant journey through childhood memories of family, friends, conflicts, and special moments. In "Layers II: Objects of Desire, Journeys into Womanhood," she used large pieces of fabric to explore the metaphor of blood in critical moments of women's lives, such as menstruation, conception, childbirth, and menopause. Accompanied by Francis Wong, a composer and a musician, Nakamura's movement was dynamic, strong, and multi-disciplinary, and multi-cultural. She successfully synthesized her own experiences as a Japanese American into a unique style which incorporates modern dance form with traditional Asian stage discipline such as Noh. We are pleased to have Nakamura here as a visiting professor in the Department of Theater and Drama, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the fall semester.



SACHIKO NAKAMURA

..... adjustment are not a high priority for the Office of Refugee Resettlement. A few non-profit organizations, such as Mental Health of Dane County, tried in the past to bring awareness to such problems by setting up workshops, but such problems were forgotten as soon as the workshops were over.

Despite the pessimistic outlook, the problems could effectively be alleviated. For example, the building of the Khmer temple seemed to have helped with their healing process. But this is only the first step toward that healing. And the American community could play an important part in that healing process. The Khmer community desperately needs resources to meet their basic needs as well as various cultural programming.

UPDATES ON AASP FACULTY

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AASP's director Amy Ling had a busy summer. Using her Vilas Associate in the Arts and Humanities Award, she took a three week research trip to New York and France in June. At the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, she continued her research into theatrical and film versions of Madame Butterfly, reading and photocopying reviews of David Belasco's 1901 Broadway production, Mary Pickford's 1915 silent film, and Cary Grant's 1936 talking version of this 19th century representation of Asian women. After one week in New York, Ling flew to Paris, rented a car, and drove south to Rochefort-sur mer, the small Atlantic coastal hometown of Pierre Loti, author of *Madame Chrysanthemum*, the first Butterfly text. At the Pierre Loti House, which is also a museum and library, and at the Rochefort Public Library, she found so much material on Loti that she is using additional Vilas funds to hire one of the guides at the Loti House as a research assistant.

Two books Ling coedited appeared this year: *Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Writings* by Sui Sin Far. First published in 1909, this volume has long been out of print, but with this edition, these turn-of-the-century stories, the first ever written by a person of Chinese ancestry in the U.S., are available again to students and to the general public. The second book Ling helped to edit is *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the U.S.* (Oxford University Press, 1995), a major reference book that was ten years in the making. Ling was in charge of all the articles on Asian American women writers and wrote the entries on Eileen Chang, Chinese American Writing, Sook Nyul Choi, Maxine Hong Kingston, Wendy Law-Yone, Hazel Ai Chun

Lin, Tai-yi Lin, Han Suyin, Onoto Watanna, and Jade Snow Wong.

Ling also published five essays this year: "Asian American Identity" and "Maxine Hong Kingston" in *A Companion to American Thought*. Eds. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg. (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1995); "The State of Asian American Studies in Wisconsin," in *Reviewing Asian America: Locating Diversity*. Eds. Wendy L. Ng, Soo-Young Chin, James S. Moy, Gary Y. Okihiro. (Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press, 1995); "Whose America Is It?," a personal essay written at the invitation of the editor, in *Weber Studies, An Interdisciplinary Humanities Journal*, 12:1 (Winter 1995) 27-35; and a major essay "Maxine Hong Kingston and the Dialogic Dilemma of Asian American Writers" in *Having Our Way: Women Rewriting Tradition in Twentieth-Century America*, edited by Harriet Pollack (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995).

Our director was quoted twice in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*; first on May 23, 1995 in "Literary tide may be turning as number of Asian voices swells" and on September 25, 1995 in "Amerasian lit finally is finding its voice." Both articles were written by correspondent Matt Miller. Her words appeared as well in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on April 7 1995 in "Beyond 'Belles Lettres'" in an article on *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*. At Chancellor Ward's request Ling gave a slide lecture "Chrysanthemums and Butterflies: Western Representations of Asian Women" to two groups of U.W. Freshman Parents in October.



BRIDGES BULLETIN BOARD

Bridges

♦ FOUR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CONTESTS

To encourage the creative work of UW students and their awareness of the concerns of Asian Americans, the Asian American Studies Program of the University of Wisconsin, Madison announces for 1995-96 contests in four categories: Fiction, Poetry, Video and Oral History. First Prize \$100, and Honorable Mention \$50, in each category. The winning poem will be published in BRIDGES, the newsletter of the AASP. All subject materials must be an aspect of Asian American experience. For further information on contest rule, contact the AASP office, at 263-2976.

- ♦ **Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask** will be giving a lecture entitled "Creative Approaches To Affirmative Action: Challenges of the 21

Century" 5:00 p.m. at Multicultural Center, Memorial Union, 2nd floor on November 13, 1995. A reception will be held 4:00 pm at Memorial Lounge, 2nd floor, Memorial Union.

- ♦ The Association for Asian American Studies annual convention will be held on May 29-Jun 2, 1996 at the Grant Hyatt Hotel Washington D.C. The theme for this year's convention is 'Thinking Power'.
- ♦ The Asian American Studies Program library has a number of books and videos that are available to students, faculty and community members. The books and videos are useful resources for anyone interested in Asian American topics. For more information on how to borrow material from the AASP collection, contact the program assistant at 263-2976, 339 W Ingraham Hall.

Bridges is the newsletter of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Asian American Studies Program. Correspondence should be directed to: **Bridges**; UW-Madison Asian American Studies Program; Room 339W Ingraham Hall, 1155 Observatory Drive, 600 North Park Street; Madison, WI 53706. Telephone: (608) 263-2976; Fax: (608) 265-8110

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