



Bridges

Asian American Studies Program Newsletter, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Issue no. 5. May, 1996



William Ouchi

"Lessons in Leadership: Challenges Facing Asian Pacific Americans," the inaugural joint Asian American Studies - School of Business talk, was held in Grainger Hall on Wednesday, April 10. The speaker was William Ouchi, well-known author and Professor of Management in the Anderson Graduate School of Management at the University of California, Los Angeles. From 1983 to 1985, he served as advisor, then Chief of Staff to Mayor Richard Riordan in Los Angeles.

Speaking to a packed audience, Professor Ouchi described subtle reasons why diversity in leadership can be difficult to achieve, and discussed how the perceived academic success and employment opportunities of Asian Americans lead people to conclude incorrectly that racism does not exist for Asian Americans. Professor Ouchi challenged universities to openly discuss race-related issues and problems.

INSIDE

Decolonizing the Body.....	2&3
Updates on Faculty, Multicultural Mural	4
Asian Am. Contest; Brown Bag Series.....	5
Bulletin Board.....	6

"Decolonizing the Body: Asians/Asian Americans Seeking New Intersections of Gender, Race & Class"

1) Peggy Choy Performs *"Seung Hwa: Rape/Race Rage/Revolution"*

A two-month eleven-event festival, started with a performance by the festival's producer, Peggy Choy, on Thursday, March 7, 8 p.m., at the Union Theater. Accompanied by three musicians from New York, Fred Ho, Allen Won, and Royal Hartigan, Choy performed four dance pieces based on true-life experiences of Korean women: picture brides who suffered abuse and carried the double burden of working in the fields as well as household work after arriving in Hawaii to marry Korean plantation laborers; comfort women who were abducted and mentally and physically raped by Japanese soldiers during World War II; Un Chong Kerr who came to the United States in 1976 to join her fiancé, but died of pneumonia and cardiac arrest in 1985 after suffering 18 months of sexual harassment by her employer; and in the last piece, "Seung Hwa," which Choy describes as a state of clarity and liberation after great suffering and oppression, she gives a dancing ritual to resolve the Korean women's rage and oppression.



Peggy Choy,
Festival Organizer

The second piece, "Comfort Woman," was the most theatrical and visually striking. With a big red rising sun, symbol of Japan, as a backdrop, Choy performed the rape of a Korean woman by three Japanese soldiers impersonated by the three male musicians in army uniforms. While the three men verbally and physically abused the Korean woman, she lay down on stage, lifted her bare feet in the air and moved them in hundred different ways. At the post-performance discussion, one audience member said, "I've never seen such articulate feet before." Some of the audience liked the idea of incorporating the musicians as performers not just as musicians on stage. Choy's dance suite serves as a reminder of the suffering endured by women and their resistance to violence and oppression the world over, not just in Korea. Choy said, "I wanted to give these women a funeral so that their souls can rest and their struggles can be remembered." Even though Peggy Choy has performed this piece in such places as Hawaii, California, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and New York, this was the first time the suite was performed on the Madison campus.

2) A video presentation and discussion, *"The Women Outside"*

Wednesday, March 20 saw the showing of a just-released film by JT Takagi and Hye Jung Park (1996), "The Women Outside" at the Interim Multicultural Center, Memorial Union. The film documents the lives of Korean women who work in brothels, bars, and nightclubs around the U.S. military bases in South Korea, following them from Seoul to the inner cities of America. After the viewing, the audience participated in a heated two hour discussion led by Jan Miyasaki and Miseong Woo on the various issues

[Continued on page 2]

"Decolonizing the Body: Asians/Asian Americans Seeking New Intersections of Gender, Race & Class"

[Continued from page 1]

surrounding prostitution, militarism, and colonialism.

Even though prostitution is illegal in many countries as well as in Korea, U.S. military bases are law-free zones and economically desperate, uneducated indigenous women have been drawn to the areas only to suffer social prejudice and abuse from their own family members as well as bad relationships and unsuccessful interracial marriages. Many discussants agreed that the military has a long history of silently endorsing prostitution as a necessary evil to help young soldiers perform better. Several women pointed out that it is a social misconception that male sexuality is biologically uncontrollable. Several male members of the audience talked about their own experiences in the army and a few women in the audience shared their experiences as volunteers helping women in the sex industry. The general consensus was that sex worker women should be educated to find other jobs, men should be educated to stop exploitation and governments should not permit businesses which use and exploit women's bodies.



Professor Judy Yung

3) Chinese-American Women's Historian Speaks

Chinese American women's historian Judy Yung, assistant professor in American Studies at the University of California, Santa Clara, gave a slide lecture entitled "Un-

bound Feet: Reclaiming Chinese American Women's History" on Thursday, March 28 in the Interim Multicultural Center. Author of *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (1995) compiler of a pictorial history, *Chinese Women of America* (1986) and co-editor of *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*, Yung has traced the struggles and accomplishments of Chinese immigrant as well as American-born Chinese American women in the United States for over a century. From Sieh King King, a feminist student at UC Berkeley in the 1890s, to Wong Mi So, the last prostitute to go to Donaldina Cameron's Mission house in the 1930's, to Jade Snow Wong, ceramicist and writer of the 1940s, Chinese women have demonstrated their talent, independence, and resourcefulness.



Yuri Kochiyama

4) Activist Yuri Kochiyama

"*Passion for Justice*" an informative documentary film about the impressive life and work of Yuri Kochiyama by Rea Tajiri and Pat Saunders was shown on March 28 at 7 p.m. followed immediately by a talk by Yuri Kochiyama herself, entitled "Decolonizing the Mind: the Task of Asian America." The film depicted Kochiyama's activist life devoted to the cause of justice for African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and for all peoples of color. She was a friend of

Malcolm X, who visited her home often and who died in her arms. She has worked indefatigably to free political prisoners, most recently former Black Panther leader Huey Newton, and she urged Asian Americans to become active in political causes.

5) Filipina Filmmaker

Marina Feleo Gonzalez, screenwriter and professor of film at Columbia University, presented her talk, "Once a Moth: A Filipina's Search for Identity," at Van Hise Hall on March 29th. She spoke about decolonizing oneself through the process of speaking out and addressing the root of one's oppression. Gonzalez traced her own emerging identity as a screenwriter during the period of martial law under Marcos. Gonzalez showed one of her films on the assassination of a well-known Filipino leader.

6) Healing and Body Rights

Body rights and human rights were the focus of discussion on March 30th at the Bayview Community Center. A gathering of traditional healers, performers, artists, activists and community people met to discuss the following questions: How does a traditional healing practice relate to the healing of historically oppressed people? How does art promote healing of ourselves? How can social action bring about justice and promote the healing of ourselves, our children and our communities? How can we move toward a new understanding of our body rights.

[Continued on page 3]

Bridges

Issue no. 5. May, 1996

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, Madison, WI 53706.

Editor..... Amy Ling

Writers..... Peggy Choy, Stewart Ikeda,
Amy Ling, Ella Mae Matsumura, Jan Miyasaki,
Miseong Woo

Graphic Design... Venessa Mouth, Chen Zhou

"Decolonizing the Body: Asians/Asian Americans Seeking New Intersections of Gender, Race & Class"

[Continued from page 2]

Presenters included: Anishinabe healer Bob Bullet, Hmong shaman Chong Neng Thao, Chicana performance artist Deborah Pontillo, African American Tai Chi instructor Don Coleman, artist and activist Chris Grussendorf, choreographer and dancer Peggy Choy accompanied by rap artist Jamez Chang, and Sinnary Veng and the Khmer Dance Troupe.

7) Asian American Rap Artist

Jamez Chang, who styles himself as a hip-hop Asian American rap artist, played his guitar and performed his original pieces to an enthusiastic crowd on Tuesday, April 2 in the Interim Multicultural Center. Interweaving Korean folk songs and lyrics with fast-patter verse in hip English about Asian American concerns, Chang held his audience spellbound.

In the second part of this program sponsored by the Asian American Students Union, poet Lawson Inada, from the University of Oregon, read from his latest collection *Legends from the Camp*. A discussion followed the reading.

8) "Mosaic Families"

On April 16, the Asian American Student Union (AASU) presented a panel discussion, "Mosaic Families" highlighting the experiences of biracial Asian Americans and the transracially adopted. The discussion was facilitated by Professor Michael Thornton of Afro-American Studies, who is himself Afro-Amerasian. Five student panelists talked about how race, religion, adoption and culture have impacted on the development of their identity. Panelists gave advice on raising biracial and transracially adopted children.

9) Ninotchka Rosca, Filipina Feminist, Activist, Novelist

On Friday April 19, novelist Ninotchka

Rosca spoke of her rebellious girlhood of wanting to be a boy, and her life as a dissident under the Marcos regime in the Philippines, and finally of her experiences as a feminist expatriot living in New York. Her talk, entitled "Writing in Exile and Writing as Exile," was one of the Friday Forum series sponsored by the Southeast Asian Studies Program.



Ninotchka Rosca

10) Women's Bodies/Women's Words: Mapping Stories of Struggle and Action

On Saturday, April 20 from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the State Historical Society, nine women of color (writers, professors, activists) gathered to read their poetry, tell their stories, and share their concerns, surrounded by the expressive paintings of Filipina-American Isabel Monalo. Professor Nellie McKay opened the symposium with words of welcome and related an injunction that has weighed on the consciences of African American daughters for generations, "Nice girls don't wear red." Continuing the theme of overcoming prior conditioning, by claiming one's own body and wearing red despite all injunctions to the contrary, U W's own Amy Ling, Roberta Hill Whiteman (Oneida poet, professor of English and next director of the American Indian Studies Program) and Andrea "Tess" Arenas (President Lyall's Special Assistant for Multicultural Affairs) read their poems and prose pieces. Speaking from personal experience, Ranjana Bhargava talked about the battered women's shelter she founded for Asian women in Chicago, Sinnary Vang about being an exile from Cambodia and teaching young women to perform traditional Khmer dance, and Janet Saiz about growing up Mexican and American Indian.

Writers Aimee Liu of Los Angeles and Sook Nyul Choi of Cambridge, Mass. read selections from their novels *Face* and *The Year of Impossible Goodbyes*, and Jayne Cortez read poems from her work, including "If the Drum was a Woman". New York-based, Filipina novelist and feminist Ninotchka Rosca wrapped up the symposium by extending personal stories of struggle to the international scene with a talk on the traffic in Asian women in sex industries throughout the world.



Aimee Liu



Sook Nyul Choi

11) Slant, "Di Lop Churn Asian Men."

Our two-month marathon festival, "Decolonizing the Body," ended with a raucously funny performance by *Slant*, a New York-based group of three talented Asian American performance artists- Richard Ebihara, Wayland Quintara, and Perry Yung -to a capacity audience on Saturday, April 20, 8 p.m. at Old Music Hall.

"Di Lop Churn" opened with the three actors on a police lineup for the crime of selling fake Gucci bags in Chinatown. Each of the three Asian males' alibis became a vehicle for individual vignettes of theater, music, and choreography. "No Menu Please" was particularly effective, moving from comic to tragic, as the three men with hats and aprons riding small tricycles to deliver Chinese food became a poignant symbol of hardworking Asian immigrants. In the "penis enlargement" scene, the three actors wore the group's signature prop, strap-on phalluses, and joined arms to sing and dance a hilarious *pas de trois*. Satirizing the common notions that male sexual potency is dependent on penis size with Asians having the smallest and the African Americans the largest, *Slant* used humor to deconstruct such racist assumptions of Asian masculinity.

Updates On AASP Faculty Advisory Committee Members

Stewart David Ikeda's novel, *What the Scarecrow Said*, will be released in May 1996 by HarperCollins' Regan Books. The novel details the life of a relocated Japanese American Nisei and his family from the 1890s through World War II. After facing family tragedy, being uprooted and interned, making some critical mistakes, and becoming "a national hero," Mr. Fujita travels eastward to rural New England. Finding there new allies and enemies, he struggles to build a new life while seeking to recover the shattered pieces of his old life. Ikeda has also recently written and spoken about Asian American writing for the Pacific Citizen, Explanasian, the UW WUD Diversity Conference, and at the Universities of Illinois and Indiana. For his reading tour information on the internet check out <http://harpercollins.com>; Ikeda will be doing the following local readings: Milwaukee - Schwartz Books (5/29) and Audobon Court (6/1); Madison - University Bookstore (6/7) and Canterbury (6/12).

Hemant Shah was granted tenure on April 11 in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Stacey Lee's new book, *Unraveling the Model Minority Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*, was just published by Teachers College Press.

Amy Ling was invited to deliver her slide lecture "Butterfly's Origins" on March 15, at the University of Michigan, Flint as part of their "Seeing History a New Way" series sponsored by the Women's History Month Committee and the Office of Educational Opportunity Initiatives. At the end of March, she was invited to Arizona State University in Tempe, to speak at their conference "Asian Americans in the year 2000 and Beyond." Faculty and students at Arizona State are interested in creating an Asian American Studies Program and were eager to hear how our program became established. On May 8, she will participate in a forum "Changing the Curriculum" at Hunter College in New York City. This summer, completing her Vilas Associates grant, she will continue research on Butterfly's Shadow at the British Library in London.

Ella Mae Matsumura was recently selected as "Professor of the Year" by the Graduate Business Association of the School of Business. This is a faculty appreciation award. Professor Matsumura has also been selected as a Fellow of the UW-Madison Teaching Academy, which recognizes excellence in undergraduate, graduate, and outreach teaching. Striving to enhance the quality of education, the Academy holds monthly meetings to develop strategies for highlighting the important place of teaching at a large research university, for promoting a culture that supports and rewards good teaching, and for encouraging serious reflection on critical issues that concern teaching and learning in a university setting.

Petition to Expand Asian American Studies: On April 18, two Graduate students in the School of Education, Kevin Kumashiro and Joy Lei, submitted a petition to Chancellor Ward requesting expansion of the Asian American Studies Program. For three months, they collected more than 1500 signatures from faculty and students at UW and from schools all over the country. Disappointed that there were no courses in Asian American History or graduate courses in Asian American studies, they decided to petition the chancellor.

Multicultural Mural

Last year, a Multicultural Student Committee held a national competition for a muralist to fill two arched wall spaces opposite the Rathskeller in the Memorial Union. Chicano painter Leo Tanguma, (brother-in-law of UW English professor Susan Friedman) won the competition and came from Colorado to work on the murals. His designs depict the struggles and contributions of peoples of color to the building of the United States and include some familiar faces from UW. On the left panel, as one faces the Rathskeller, a Chinese worker labors on building the railroad while an African slave holds up the Emancipation Proclamation, but faces of the members of the Multicultural Student Committee, including our own Andrea Rosenberger, fill the front rows of the crowd surging forward toward justice and equality. On the right panel, AASP director Amy Ling may be seen in the front right side holding books in one arm and stretching the other toward the small plant, the symbol of hope. Behind her stand Yuri Kochiyama, long-time activist and friend of Malcolm X, and Carlos Bulosan, Filipino American writer of the 1940s whose autobiographical novel, *America is in the Heart*, (regularly studied in Ling's Survey of Asian American Literature course) was the first to give voice to the Filipino agricultural workers of the 1930s.



Amy Ling as depicted in Leo Tanguma's mural flanked by Yuri Kochiyama and Carlos Bulosan

On Saturday, March 23, the murals were dedicated in a ceremony that included speeches by members of the Multicultural Student Committee and muralist Leo Tanguma, a prayer by American Indian leader Jim Thunder and drumming by Wunk Sheek.

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CONTESTS

The AASP sponsored four contests this academic year to encourage students' creativity in the areas of Poetry, Short Story, Video and Oral History. Open to all students, graduate and undergraduate, submissions were required to deal with some aspect of the Asian American experience. Members of the Faculty Advisory Committee served as jurors. Although the category of Oral History lacked submissions, the winners of the other contests are as follows:

Poetry:	Honorable Mention-\$50.00 "Eating the Head of the Fish" by Blenda Yun
Short Story:	First Prize-\$100.00 "Marrow" by Charlotte Kuo-Benitez Honorable Mention-\$50.00 "Merry-Go-Round" by Joyelle Choi
Video:	Honorable Mention-\$50.00 "Dance" by Ushiro Miura

On April 25, the Program hosted an awards reception at which awards were distributed, the winning works were read and viewed, and guests enjoyed a light supper from China House.



(l to r): Charlotte Kuo-Benitez, Blenda Yun, Ushiro Miura.
Joyelle Choi is spending the semester in England.

Eating the Head of the Fish

On the hardwood floors we'd sleep
side by side. I could hear your heavy
heartbeat while you spoke in a tongue
I could not understand.
We'd sing together just the same.

Visiting you, as we walked down
winter's streets, I didn't realize you spent
all you had on the doll I saw
in the glass case. I don't remember
the details of my childhood with you.
I remember how I felt.
What I did.
What I wanted.

Seeing you, it is hard to believe
the stories they tell me.
How could your little frame
endure so much?
It is your blood I have in me.
And I cannot
forget the details of your childhood.

Now, it is you who cannot remember.
You ask your son, my father, the same
questions a hundred times over and you
don't remember the details of our childhood
any better than I do.

But when we sit down to dinner you still
insist on eating the head of the fish
while I eat the body.

Blenda Yun

Brown Bag Series

Curious about the research of our Faculty Advisory Members, our new faculty member, Sumie Okazaki organized an Asian American Studies Brown Bag Series this spring that included four noontime lectures. On February 21, Michael Thornton, Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies, spoke on "Black Perceptions of Asian Americans." His research has shown, somewhat surprisingly, that Blacks generally have friendlier feelings toward whites than toward Asian Americans. On March 27 James Moy, Professor of Theater and Drama delivered a lecture entitled "Fierce Invisibility: Anglo-American Desire Constructing Asian Sexuality." His research into a recent mail fraud case clearly demonstrated that the stereotype of Asian women as sexually desirable has proven to be a profitable business. On April 17, Amy Ling, Professor of English and Director of the Asian American Studies Program presented her slide lecture, "Butterflies

and Chrysanthemums: Dominant Representations of Asian Women in the West" exploring the origins of the stereotype that Moy had earlier discussed. She traced it to Marco Polo, to the craze for Japanese prints in the mid to late nineteenth century in Europe and to *Madame Chrysanthemum* by a French naval captain and author, Pierre Loti. For last lecture of the series, Hemant Shah, Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, and Michael Thornton, shared the floor on the topic "Race, Racial Ideology, and the News: Press Coverage of Minority-Minority Interaction in Four U.S. Cities." Shah reported that in the period 1980-1992 only 30 articles on minority-minority interactions appeared in mainstream magazines and all of them focused on conflict. Thornton, who had examined the Asian American newspapers, found these much more balanced and thorough in their reporting on this topic.

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Asian American Studies Program
339W Ingraham Hall
1155 Observatory Drive
Madison, WI 53706



Bridges

BULLETIN

BOARD

- ◆ The Asian American Writers Workshop has made major improvements in its services to the Asian American literary community, including a book ordering service offering discounts to students and faculty members. Its catalogue of 200+ titles is available for review at the AASP office in Ingraham Hall. Further information: (212) 228-6718; AAWW@panix.com; <http://panix.com/AAWW/>.
- ◆ APA Journal invites submissions, any genre and theme, for Fall/Winter 1996 issue, guest edited by Arthur Sze and John Yau. Send submission with SASE or query to: APA Journal, 37 St. Mark's Place, #B, NYC 10003-7801. (212) 228-6718. Deadline: MAY 15.
- ◆ Venessa Mouth, our Program Assistant has cut her hours since May 1 and will be leaving June 1 for greener pastures at the State Public Defender's office. Miseong Woo, Project Assistant since July 1994, will devote herself full-time to her dissertation in Theatre as of June 30.
- ◆ Geoette Yang, a graduate student in Chinese Literature, will be assuming some of the support staff functions in the interim.
- ◆ Last semester, the UW Madison undergraduate literary journal, *Canvas*, was published after a two-year lapse. The journal was revived largely through the efforts of several former AASP writing students, some seven of whom have served as editors and staffers. The illustrated journal is available at local booksellers.