

Association for Asian American Studies
NEWSLETTER

May 2004

Vol. 21, No. 2

NEWS

AAAS 2004: Many Thanks from Boston

The weather in Boston was crisp and sunny on all three days of the conference with occasional moments of cloudiness and hard winds. The Copley Fairmount Hotel, situated in the very center of the city, stood out from its modern high-rise neighbors with a physical décor that seemed to come straight out of the baroque world of Eighteenth-Century Europe. Inside, we found ourselves meeting old and new friends, discussing the latest developments in our field, and pondering what needs to be done in another year of difficult political struggles, while our reflections peered back at us on the mirror-paneled doors of the Singleton room. It seems unlikely that those who found themselves taking a stroll down ritzy Newberry Street after a long day of such conference activities will easily forget their time in Boston. As a study in contrasts, the conference was somehow deliciously ironic, or even postmodern.

We are pleased to report that this year's conference, according to both formal and anecdotal accounts, was filled with provocative sessions, reached out to a great variety of groups, and helped to build the reputation of our organization in New England. To the approximately 500 people who attended and participated, then, we offer our deepest thanks!

Plenary Sessions

The two plenary sessions highlighted in very different ways the need for Asian American studies to maintain an aggressively critical stance toward repressive politics. It seemed fitting that the first plenary, War on Terror and Its Impact on Asian America, was held on the same evening that George W. Bush was speaking at a hotel a few doors down from the conference site. While there was some disagreement about how best to do so, all the plenary speakers agreed that we need to guard against the exploitation of our minds and bodies in the service of reactionary causes. Alice Yang Murray discussed the lessons learned by the Japanese American community during their years of state persecution, and how these lessons are currently being translated into action on behalf of Muslims in this country. John Tchen sketched some research possibilities that the current moment both demands and makes possible. Biju Mathew made an impassioned plea for the work of activists who, despite their grievances against one another, must find a way to remain united. Panel respondent Mae Ngai suggested that we look beyond the category of race as a foundation for common struggle. Needless to say, the Q&A was quite dynamic.

The second plenary, Politics in Performance, featured author Monique Truong, musician Fred Ho, and actor/director Uday Joshi. All three were unabashed in declaring that politics was central to their artistic projects—telling alternate narratives, forging alliances among people of color, politicizing the next generation. Spoken-word performances by high school students in the New World Theater's youth program brought this session to a moving and powerful climax. Their words and energy were proof that aesthetics and politics can be most effectively combined.

Also in this Issue:

Election Results	3
Call for Papers (2005)	4
2005 Proposal Form.....	6
Announcements	7
New Releases	8
Officers/Representatives.....	10

Reception

The reception hosted jointly by UMass Boston's Asian American studies program and the Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) was standing-room only. Although the lavish hors d'oeuvres played no small part in the allure of this reception, equally compelling were the presentations from current students and alumni of UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program. They spoke about what Asian American studies means to them in their personal and professional lives. And, finally, the APIASF announced the establishment of the first-ever high profile scholarship fund for Asian American and Pacific Islander students. The room was packed with an impressive attendance by members from the Boston community. This reception significantly increased the visibility of Asian American Studies in the Boston area.

Next Generation Participation at AAAS 2004

With the exception of UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program, very few of the Boston area colleges and universities have formal Asian American studies programs, and those that do are severely understaffed. Therefore, we felt it was important to make sure that area undergraduates would be able to take advantage of the resources the conference had to offer. To this end, we asked colleges and universities as part of our fund-raising efforts to pay for undergraduate student registrations. We found that another way to foster student attendance was to draw them into the conference as volunteers. Thus, several students who had planned to come only to work were subsequently lured into spending more time than they had planned at the conference after seeing the program and experiencing the atmosphere created by the attendees.

Our volunteers were absolutely wonderful. We had students from UMass Boston, Boston College, Brandeis University, Wellesley College, Tufts University, Harvard University, and the Massachusetts College of Art. They helped us with registration, stuffed folders and engaged in other chores. Our thanks to area faculty who helped us spread information about the conference and who encouraged their students to volunteer!

We also wanted undergraduates with interests in Asian American studies to have the opportunity to meet each other and establish networks for future cooperation. We had two goals in mind. First, we wished to encourage New England students to make connections among their home institutions. Second, we wished to find out if there would be any interest in a more active undergraduate component to AAAS. We had all heard so many stories about Asian American student groups struggling for institutional change in isolation on their individual campuses and reinventing the activist wheel every four years. With these goals in mind, we convened and moderated a special session on Campus Activism and Anti-Racism work on Saturday and advertised it as being especially for undergraduates. Undergraduate students from Brandeis University, Wellesley College and Tufts University gave presentations on ongoing

Asian American groups' activism on their campuses. Together, their presentations covered topics such as protesting incidents of racism in campus media, advocating issues related to campus civility, lobbying for curricular changes that would incorporate ethnic studies, and increasing the numbers of faculty and staff of color on campuses. Approximately 30 people attended this session, and in the discussion that followed students from the East Coast and the Midwest excitedly shared strategies and situations, asked questions and made suggestions. They discussed everything from the experience of organizing a teach-in to the implications of reporting a school to the U.S. Department of Education as having violated a group's civil rights.

Toward the end of the session, some of the students expressed strong interest in having AAAS sponsor a session like this at future conferences. There was so much momentum that we passed around a sign-up sheet. We are now in the process of helping some of the students start an email list for Asian American student activists for organizing purposes. We would like to encourage AAAS to think about ways to make electronic and material space for these kinds of interested students in the future.

The Power of Youth on Display: Cultural Evening

"The Asian American youth in Boston are so 'together'," one of the attendees of the cultural evening observed. He was reacting to an evening of incredible talent in which Asian American students from area high schools and colleges sang, danced, performed poetry, and played music. Variasians, a pan-ethnic Asian American a cappella group, had people lining up to buy their CDs after they sang. Spoken word performers made no secret of their activist politics and delivered powerful verses of Asian American pride and commitment to social justice, which taught us some of the racial histories of Boston's urban spaces. The food, catered by local restaurants, was plentiful and fabulous. Attendees from Boston took home Tupperware containers packed with lunch for the next day. The cultural event was held at Dorchester House, a community center in Dorchester, home to Boston's African American and Vietnamese American populations.

Awards Night

Daniel Boone, who won the lifetime achievement award for his inspirational scholarship and longstanding activism against U. S. imperialism in the Philippines, made a moving acceptance speech in which he renewed the call for anti-war and anti-imperialist politics, and underscored the urgent need for such action particularly in these times. Boone, despite his frail health, evoked the passion and zeal that mark Asian American studies' foundation in challenges to local and global oppression. The community organizations that won recognition—the Chinese Progressive Association, Asian American Resource Workshop, Viet-AID (Vietnamese American Initiative for Development), and the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund—revealed

in their acceptance speeches a history of community organizing, pan-ethnic solidarity, and fierce commitment to social justice. Once again, the room was packed and the energy was palpable.

Mutiny

The screening of Vivek Bald's film *Mutiny: Asians Storm British Music* followed the awards reception. Despite the late hour of the screening—9:30 p.m.—there was an eager audience. Bald's documentary film on British South Asian disc jockeys and artists who mix different musical styles—electronica, hip hop, reggae, punk, and bhangra—in anti-racist defiance and as a form of political resistance was a deft combination of many of the concerns central to Asian American studies, including popular culture, global influences, cross-racial and cross-ethnic interactions. A lively discussion followed the screening. It seemed as though no one was tired, even at 11:00 p.m.!!

Tours

The conference featured three tours: a special viewing of the famous Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, a walking tour of Boston's Chinatown, and a guided tour of Lowell, the second-largest Cambodian community in the United States. The Peabody Essex Museum, with its recently transformed and architecturally stunning space, hosts one of the largest exhibits of Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean art in the nation. It features Yin Yu Tang, an original Qing dynasty house that was transported from China and re-erected at the museum. AAAS members who went on the museum tour were given a private viewing of the Yin Yu Tang house, the only complete historic Chinese house that is located outside China. In addition, the museum opened an hour early to accommodate AAAS members. Professor Madhulika Khandelwal provided a historical context in which to view the exhibits. Because the museum is located in Salem, MA, some members also took in the witch museum in downtown Salem.

Professor Andrew Leong of the University of Massachusetts Boston led a walking tour of Boston's Chinatown. Leong is a long-time activist and legal strategist in the struggles to save different parcels of land in Chinatown from the ravages of urban growth and overdevelopment. He offered a unique history of Chinatown, highlighting the community's efforts to preserve their space. This was no "tourist glimpse" of an ethnic community!

The Lowell tour was led by Rithy Uong, the first Cambodian American city councilor in the nation. Uong described his campaign efforts and took members on a tour of Lowell City Hall. They also visited a Buddhist temple, met with the head monk, and enjoyed a vegetarian meal in the temple. Uong introduced AAAS members to Cambodian American community leaders and took them to various stores and restaurants to provide a flavor of the Cambodian

businesses in Lowell.

To those who came, we reiterate our thanks!!

ELECTION RESULTS

The Board is pleased to welcome:

S. California Representative:

Term: 2004-06 - University of California, Irvine

Anna Gonzalez
159 Brianwood
Irvine, CA 92604
akgonzal@uci.edu

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Term: 2004-06 - University of Hawai'i

David Mayeda
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Honolulu, HI 96814
mayedad@hawaii.edu
(808) 945-1521

A New England Representative will be appointed by Franklin Ng, President of the Association.

A BIG THANK YOU

I was very surprised and honored at the conference to learn that the Association has graciously named the Graduate Travel Fund in my name. Not only is it in my name, but a huge fund-raising campaign took place right under my nose -- and we have money in the account!!! A big thanks to all who gave so much money for our worthy graduate students. Thank you especially to Shelley, Dana, Franklin, Steve, Shirley, Gail, Viranjini, Derek, Vu, Stephanie, and Gary (for hiring me so long ago). How wonderful and deliciously sneaky. What a great journey it has been.

Even though I will be retired from Cornell, I will have an opportunity to take part in the selection of each year's award recipients. Thank you all again from the bottom of my heart for this recognition and wonderful gift.

Anita Affeldt

P.S. Contributions (tax-free) can be sent to: AAAS, Cornell University, 420 Rockefeller Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853.

2005 ANNUAL MEETING

Call for Papers **DUE: 15 OCTOBER 2004**

Globalization, Regionalism, and Identity

The pace of transnational migration and of capital movements across national boundaries has only quickened in recent years. These dynamics, in turn, have been accompanied by greater distances between those with power and privilege and those without. Los Angeles is an important site to witness the development of these central themes: as a world city, it is a place where Asian transnational capital now underwrites massive urban redevelopment, while at the same time community activists uncover hyper exploitive labor practices in garment factories in El Monte and restaurants in Koreatown. Affluent suburbs in the region draw increasing numbers of professional Asian Americans, while communities of Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders in Long Beach and Hawaiian Gardens are some of the poorest in the United States. Asian Americans of divergent class backgrounds now complicate racial and ethnic politics, locally and nationally. And while the entertainment industry in Southern California still produces and distributes stereotypical images of Asian Americans, Asian American communities in and beyond Los Angeles have created their own counter-narratives. We welcome everyone to the National Conference in Los Angeles to take stock of these developments.

Submissions will be accepted by:

- e-mail (ssh13@cornell.edu); or
 - on-line form
- (See web site: aaastudies.org for form
-- available 1 August 2004).

No late submissions will be accepted.

2005 Program Committee

Kurashige, Lon Co-Chair
University of Southern California

Park, Edward Co-Chair
Loyola Marymount University

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University of California, Berkeley

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Ko, Michelle
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Umemoto, Karen
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Yoo, David
Claremont McKenna

COVER FORM
FOR ALL CONFERENCE SUBMISSIONS

Annual Meeting Los Angeles, California
April 20-24, 2005

INSTRUCTION FOR PROCESSING

Please complete the above cover form as thoroughly as possible. This will alert both the Secretariat and the Program Committee of your intention to participate in the conference.

Electronic Submission (**will receive an acknowledgment via e-mail**) ____ (aaastudies.org)

Postal Submission (**will receive an acknowledgment via e-mail**):

To be considered as a complete submission, you must include a CV, current contact information for each presenter, and the following additional information (depending on the type of submission):

Panels: A brief abstract/description of each paper in the panel (not to exceed 250 words for each)

Workshops: A description of the workshop, including a brief description of the goals for participants and the ways these goals will be met (not to exceed 700 words total).

Roundtables: A description of the roundtable, including a brief description of the topic and its relevance or importance to Asian American Studies, and a description of each presenter's contribution (not to exceed 700 words total).

Individual Papers: A brief abstract/description of the paper (not to exceed 250 words).

Send (**e-mail submissions strongly encouraged**) complete proposal and curriculum vitae of all participants to: Secretariat, Asian American Studies Program, 420 Rockefeller Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

Tel: (607) 255-3320, e-mail: ssh13@cornell.edu.

REMINDER:

- PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 15 OCTOBER 2004
 - REQUESTS FOR AV EQUIPMENT MUST BE INDICATED BY 15 OCTOBER 2004
 - PANEL PROPOSALS MUST INCLUDE A CV, TITLE AND PAPER DESCRIPTION FOR EACH PRESENTER
-
-

SUBMISSION FORM
Los Angeles, April 20-24, 2005

Title of Submission: _____

Paper/Panel Information

Panel Roundtable Workshop Individual Paper

Area of Study/Discipline: (You may check more than one category)

Social Science History Cultural Studies
 Literature Education Poetry
 Health Sciences Law Media Studies
 Gender Social Work/Services
 Other _____

Is this submission directly related to Teaching (to be identified as a teaching session on the program)?

yes no

Presenter 1

Name: _____ Affiliation _____

Mailing Address and Phone #: _____

Role (check all that apply). Chair Paper presenter Discussant Roundtable or Workshop Facilitator

E-Mail _____

Paper Title _____

Presenter 2

Name: _____ Affiliation _____

Mailing Address and Phone #: _____

Role (check all that apply). Chair Paper presenter Discussant Roundtable or Workshop Facilitator

E-Mail _____

Paper Title _____

Name: _____ Affiliation _____

Mailing Address and Phone #: _____

Role (check all that apply). Chair Paper presenter Discussant Roundtable or Workshop Facilitator

E-Mail _____

Paper Title _____

Presenter 4

Name: _____ Affiliation _____

Mailing Address and Phone #: _____

Role (check all that apply). Chair Paper presenter Discussant Roundtable or Workshop Facilitator

E-Mail _____

Paper Title _____

Day Preference

Thursday Friday Saturday

Audio/Visual Needs (Must be reserved by 15 October 2004).

REMINDER: DUE TO FINANCIAL COSTS, AAAS CAN ONLY PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING PIECES OF EQUIPMENT.

TV/VCR Slide Projector Overhead Projector

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Asian America History and Culture: An Encyclopedia

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL FACULTY MEMBERS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

M.E. Sharpe, a New York-based academic and reference publisher, and East River Books, a reference book producer, are seeking contributing scholars for a two-volume reference work on the history and culture of Asian Americans. The project is aimed at the academic high school and undergraduate levels. The General Editors are Dr. Huping Ling of Truman State University and Dr. Allan W. Austin of College Misericordia.

The encyclopedia will include articles on politics and government; economy, labor, and business; society; religion and education; technology, science, and the environment; and arts and culture. There will be entries on individuals, places, ideas, events, institutions, and general themes. Articles will vary in length from 500-4,000 words (depending on significance of topic) and include bibliographies.

We are seeking contributors for articles. Contributors will receive full authorial credit, a modest cash honorarium, and/or copy of the full encyclopedia set (depending on contribution length and contributor preference).

If you are interested in contributing to this exciting and important reference project—one we hope will be the definitive reference work on Asian American history and culture—we would be happy to email you a prospectus with a full description of the project—with deadline, compensation, and other pertinent information, including a table of contents. Please contact Allan Austin at aaustin@misericordia.edu if you are interested.

If you cannot contribute, please feel free to forward this email to any potentially interested scholars (either professors or graduate students).

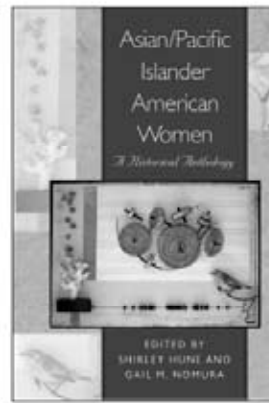
Sincerely,

Drs. Huping Ling and Allan W. Austin, General Editors
Asian America History and Culture: An Encyclope-

This *Newsletter* is published quarterly in March, May, September, and November for members of the Association for Asian American Studies. Deadlines for receipt of copy are February 15, April 15, August 15, and October 15, respectively. Direct correspondence and inquiries to its editor: Sunn Shelley Wong, Asian American Studies Program, 420 Rockefeller Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-2502, (607) 255-3320. Editorial Policy: We do not assume responsibility for the truth or accuracy of the information provided to us by our contributors. We reserve the right, however, to edit copy for clarity and consistency. *The editor* acknowledges with thanks the support of Cornell's Asian American Studies Program.

New Releases

Junji Kitadai and Joseph Thomas, co-editors of *Drifting Toward the Southeast: The Story of Five Japanese Castaways*, by Spinner Publications, is the first complete English language edition of *Hyoson Kiryaku*, autobiographical account of John Manjiro's historic voyage to the United States, as told to the officials of the shogunate in 1852. Manjiro, a 14-year-old Japanese boy, was shipwrecked and cast away on a deserted island with four fishermen in 1841. Rescued by an American whaling ship, he was invited to the captain's hometown of Fairhaven, Massachusetts where he received a formal education and learned the maritime trades. He became an accomplished seaman after working several years aboard American whaling ships. Longing for Japan, he struck gold in the California Gold Rush and earned his passage home. The book depicts the castaways' adventures with stunning detail and a sense of wonder. Manjiro was the **first known Japanese to visit the United States**, become educated, and return to Japan without facing harsh punishment for breaking the isolation law, primarily because he proved too valuable to the Japanese government. This original account was completed just nine months before **Commodore Matthew Perry's** "Black Ships" armada prevailed upon the Japanese to sign the Treaty of Kanagawa, and it became coveted reading of daimyos and samurai leaders. As a result, numerous hand-written copies of *Hyoson Kiryaku* circulated, and the castaways' story spread by word of mouth. It caught the imagination of common people who were eager to know about the outside world, and it shaped their perceptions of mid-nineteenth century America. It also deeply influenced the pioneers of modernization in Japan: men like Sakamoto Ryoma, Katsu Kaishu, and Fukuzawa Yukichi. Today, Manjiro is legendary in Japan but little known in America. Released this winter, *Drifting Toward the Southeast* won the **General Trade Illustration Award** by Bookbuilders of Boston, and is being considered for numerous other awards in design, publishing and translation. Born and raised in Manjiro's home district in Kochi Prefecture, Mr. Kitadai has more than 40 years experience in broadcast journalism both in Japan and the United States as a correspondent and news executive. Joseph Thomas is co-editor and publisher of the New Bedford-based Spinner Publications, specializing in historic works. For more information about the book, please visit www.spinnerpub.com.



Asian/Pacific Islander American Women A Historical Anthology

Edited by Shirley Hune
and Gail M. Nomura

Asian/Pacific Islander American Women is the first collection devoted to the historical study of A/PI women's diverse experiences in America. Covering a broad terrain from pre-large scale Asian emigration and Hawaii in its pre-Western contact period to the continental United States, the Philippines, and Guam at the end of the twentieth century, the text views women as historical subjects actively negotiating complex hierarchies of power. The volume presents new findings about a range of groups, including recent immigrants to the U.S. and understudied communities. Comprised of original new work, it includes chapters on women who are Cambodian, Chamorro, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Native Hawaiian, South Asian, and Vietnamese Americans. It addresses a wide range of women's experiences—as immigrants, military brides, refugees, American born, lesbians, workers, mothers, beauty contestants, and community activists. There are also pieces on historiography and methodology, and bibliographic and video documentary resources.

This groundbreaking anthology is an important addition to the scholarship in Asian/Pacific American studies, ethnic studies, American studies, women's studies, and U.S. history, and is a valuable resource for scholars and students. **Shirley Hune** is Professor of Urban Planning and Asian American Studies and Associate Dean of the Graduate Division at the University of California, Los Angeles. **Gail M. Nomura** is Assistant Professor of American Ethnic Studies, University of Washington.

Restoried Selves: Autobiographies of Queer Asian/Pacific American Activists

Edited by Kevin K. Kumashiro, PhD

Restoried Selves presents the first-person accounts of 20 activists—life stories that work against common stereotypes, shattering misconceptions and dispelling misinformation. These autobiographies challenge familial and cultural expectations and values that have traditionally forced queer Asian / Pacific Americans into silent shame because of their sexual orientation and/or ethnicity. Authors share not only their experiences growing up but also how those experiences led them to become social activists, speaking out against oppression.

Contributors are Ai and Jane Nakatani, Pabitra Benjamin, Nur-e-elam S. Chisty, Lance Collins, Roland Sintos Coloma, Alain Anh-Tuan Dang, Wei Ming Dariotis, TC Duong, Loren R. Javier, Kevin K. Kumashiro, David C. Lee, Jeanette Mei Gim Lee, Cristina M. Misa, Pauline Park, k. terumi shorb, Wendy M. Thompson, “You Yun”, Helen Zia, and Dana Y. Takagi.

Harrington Park Press, 2004.
\$39.95 Hard Cover 1-56023-462-8
\$16.95 Soft Cover 1-56023-463-6

Chinese St. Louis FROM ENCLAVE TO CULTURAL COMMUNITY

by Huping Ling

Forming a community around cultural heritage

St. Louis seems an unlikely setting for a history of a long-established Chinese American community. We expect such histories to be located in coastal cities that have an identifiable Chinatown. In ***Chinese St. Louis***, Huping Ling offers the first empirical study of a Midwestern Chinese American community from its nineteenth century origins to the present.

In many cities, Chinese newcomers were soon segregated in an enclave; in St. Louis the enclave was called “Hop Alley.” Ling shows how, over time, the community grew and dispersed until it was no longer identifiable by physical boundaries. She argues that the St. Louis experience departs from the standard models of Chinese settlement in urban areas, which are based on studies of coastal cities. Developing the concept of a cultural community, Ling shows how Chinese Americans in St. Louis have formed and maintained cultural institutions and organizations for social and political purposes throughout the city. These institutions and organizations serve as the community’s infrastructure and define its social boundaries. Thus the history of Chinese Americans in St. Louis more closely parallels that of other urban ethnic groups and offers new insight into the range of experiences of adaptation and assimilation in the United States.

Huping Ling is Associate Professor of History at Truman State University and the author of *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives*.

280 pp. illustrated \$22.95 paper
Available October 2004

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